



**Wilson
Center**

Digital Archive
International History Declassified

digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org

May 3, 1957

**Weekly Report from Pyung Sik Son to the President
(Syngman Rhee)**

Citation:

"Weekly Report from Pyung Sik Son to the President (Syngman Rhee)", May 3, 1957, Wilson Center Digital Archive, B-330-038, The Korean Legation in Vietnam, Reports from the Korean Mission to the United Nations and Republic of Korea Embassies and Legations, Syngman Rhee Institute, Yonsei University.
<https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/120909>

Summary:

Pyung Sik Son reports that the Korean artists mission in Saigon has successfully introduced Korean culture to and has made good impression upon the Vietnamese people.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from Syngman Rhee Institute, Yonsei University

Original Language:

English

Contents:

Original Scan

Saigon, May 3, 1957

Excellency,

I have the honour to submit to Your Excellency this Weekly Report covering events in this area during the past week as follows:

1. Invitation to visit Bangkok by ROK Navy Squadron
2. ROK Artists Mission's successful performances in Saigon
3. May Day celebration in Saigon and incident at the Chinese Legation
4. Official visit of President Ngo Dinh Diem to Washington and Korean proposal for a Presidential visit to Seoul
5. General Activities

I. Invitation to visit Bangkok by ROK Navy Squadron.

Following the agreement of the Royal Thai Navy to a visit to Bangkok by the ROK Navy Observation Squadron as reported by me in my last report dated April 19, 1957, I received on April 26 an official invitation from Mr. Pramote Chongchareon, Ambassador of Thailand to Vietnam, extended to the ROK squadron by his Government. The Thai Ambassador informed me that his Government sees no objection to the proposed visit.

On April 20, I received from the Foreign Ministry the following cable requesting the Bangkok callsign and frequencies:

"INFORM BANGKOK NAVY CALLSIGN AND FREQUENCIES VIA CABLE"

The reply was transmitted by cable on April 22 to the Chief of Navy, Korea Navy Headquarters in Seoul, reading:

"BANGKOK THAI NAVY CALLSIGN HSZ FREQUENCIES 6469KCS 5750KCS 4240 KCS EMISSION TYPE CW CONTINUOUS"

- 2 -

By verbal note of May 2, I notified the Foreign Department of the Government of the Republic of Vietnam of the following particulars concerning the visiting Korean squadron:

a.) the squadron is expected to arrive in Saigon seaport on May 11, 1957 at noon, and will comprise four ships: the PF 61, PF 63, PF 66 and AO 30.

b.) the squadron has a total personnel of 722 men, including 24 officers, 142 cadets and 555 sailors, under the direction of Commander Rear Admiral Chang Whon Kim. Each of the four ships will operate under the command of a Captain.

c.) the squadron is scheduled to leave Saigon on May 14, 1957 at noon. I also contacted the Vietnamese Naval authorities in order to arrange the facilities of the Korean Observation squadron which include the pilotage of the ships through the canal leading to Saigon from the sea; the supply of potable water; the visit to high civilian and military personalities of Vietnam, as well as other welcoming procedures to be extended to the ROK squadron. All these arrangements have been completed.

2. ROK Artists' Mission's successful performances in Saigon.

Following advice given by President Diem during an audience the Artist's Mission had with him on April 18, the Mission called on His Excellency Nguyen Ngoc Tho, Vice-President of the Republic of Vietnam, on April 22. I was present at the conference which lasted for more than an hour. Vice President Tho conferred with us for quite a while asking a number of questions concerning Korean culture and seemed greatly interested in the swift development of Korea in the field of modern art. A series of photographs were enclosed in the last pouch for the information of Your Excellency.

After completion of successful performances here, the Mission left Saigon for Hongkong in two groups.

- 3 -

The vessel group left on the morning of April 22, while seven other mission members, under the guidance of Mission Chief Chang, flew to Hongkong on the next day, April 23.

The Mission had a real success in Saigon, The Vietnam Press Agency wrote in its April 17th edition:

"Performances of a high artistic value were given yesterday evening at the Dai Quang Theater, Cholon, by the Korean Artists' Mission the program included classical and Korean music played by the 90-member Seoul Symphony Orchestra, and the attendance particularly enjoyed the Korean folk songs and dances"

In an editorial, the Vietnamese language daily "TU DO" stated that the Saigon population was "astonished" at the hearing of such "valorous musical performances by an Asian country" and put a question mark as to when Vietnam's capital would have such an able orchestra as the one of Seoul City.

To sum it up, in their introduction of Korean culture, the Artists' Mission has made a good impression in Saigon. It is my opinion that they will obtain as good results while performing in Hongkong and Taipei, in its efforts to bring forth the Korean flourishing culture to the knowledge of other Asian nations which up until now have been almost totally ignorant of the artistic side of Korea.

3. May Day celebration in Saigon and incident at the Chinese Legation.

In celebration of this international day of labor, Saigon dressed in a colorful atmosphere. Flags were seen flying on every house and slogans on the main arteries of the capital, expressing the workers' class desires and its gratitude and confidence in the Chief of State.

In Saigon May Day was calm and solemn. The demonstrations in the streets, the meetings in the stadiums and public gardens by the workers' unions to celebrate the day took place in good order due to the efficiency and assistance of the very able police force.

On this occasion, President Ngo Dinh Diem made an appeal addressed to his "laborious compatriots" in which he appealed to the spirit of unity among the intellectuals and manual workers and urged for the taking part of every element in the work of national reconstruction. The translation of the Presidential appeal will be found in the next information

bulletin edited by the Legation.

On the morning of April 30 an incident, which I think indirectly had some connection with May Day, occurred at the headquarters of the Legation of the Republic of China here.

A number of Chinese nationals, estimated at several hundred persons, came to their Legation headquarters and asked to be received by their Minister. It was on the question of census of the Chinese nationals and the question of nationality of persons born in Vietnam of Chinese parents. Resulting from the growing impatience of the crowd, the entrance door was forced, some window panes were demolished and many pieces of furniture inside the Legation damaged.

The problem of nationality of persons born in Vietnam of Chinese parents has been long discussed and has become a serious issue between the Vietnamese Government and Formosa. Until now no concrete results have been reached from the negotiations. The impatience of the Chinese has besides been swelled up by Radio Peking's piece of propaganda announcing that if Formosa fails to bring satisfactory results, the Peking regime will take the matter in hand.

4. Official visit of President Ngo Dinh Diem to Washington and Korean proposal for a Presidential visit to Seoul.

a) President Diem is scheduled to leave Saigon on Sunday May 5, 1957 for a visit to the United States, upon the official invitation of United States President Eisenhower. He will be accompanied on his visit by Secretary of State to the President and for the Department of the Interior, Nguyen Huu Chau, Secretary of State for Public Works and Telecommunications, Tran Le Quang, Major General Tran Van Don, Director General of Plan, Mr. Huynh Van Diem, and Administrator General for Foreign Aid, Mr. Vu Van Khai, and three other persons.

President Diem will spend three or four days in Washington and will then visit several other American cities before returning to Saigon.

As reasons for President Diem's visit to the United States a high ranking government official informed me for my own top confidential information that the President's trip to the U.S. is

1) to prepare negotiations for treaty of friendship between the United States of American and the Republic of Vietnam. Until now there has been no official treaty between Vietnam and any other country and this is the first step towards any official treaty.

2) The second reason for this visit is for the purpose of the increase and reconsideration of foreign aid to Vietnam.

3) Lastly, is the matter of reconstruction and town planning and this is the reason President Diem is taking with him his Secretary of State for Public Works.

In this connection the press has not ceased for some weeks now to comment on the forthcoming visit of President Diem to Washington. The mass circulation daily "Cach Mang Quoc Gia" emphasizing the high importance of the Presidential trip abroad said in an editorial on April 12:

"These visits not only will contribute to cement the friendly relations between Vietnam and Free World nations, they will also trigger the enhancement of the personal prestige of the President of the Republic and his universally known virtues These visits will be an excellent opportunity for friendly nations to better understand the Vietnamese nation and the cause so far championed by its people".

The Hongkong newspaper "South China Morning Post" published in its April 26 issue the following dispatch from Washington:

"American officials said today they regarded the visit of President Ngo Dinh Diem to Washington as significant proof of the solid foundations and stability of the anti-Communist Government of South Vietnam".

- 6 -

It is recalled that Mr. Ngo Dinh Nhu, Political counselor to the Presidency and brother of President Diem, has returned to Saigon on April 23 after a three-week trip to Washington, Paris and New Delhi.

b) A cable from Foreign Ministry reached this Legation at ten o'clock on the evening of May 2 and read as follows:

"JOYONGHI WULNAM DAITONGRYUNGEUL DAIGYUNHAGO MANIL
OORIJUNGBOOESU CHOCHUNGHAMYUN SOORAK HAGETNEUNJI
YOCHUNGHAYU BOSIAP HANGOOK BANGMOON GIILEUN
ODAITONGRYUNGEUI MIGOOKBANGMOON IJUNINA IHOONA
MOOBANGHAM GEUGA OGETTAHAMYUN JUNGSIK CHOCHUNGEUL
BONAIGETSEUM"

In compliance with the instructions contained in the above cable, I called on Foreign Secretary Vu Van Mau at the earliest hours of this day May 3, and transmitted to the Foreign Secretary the contents of the cable. He advised me to go directly to the President.

At 9.30 a.m. I obtained an audience with President Diem. He appeared to be very busy. However, after taking knowledge of the object of my call, he said he would consider at once the proposal and would let me know the reply that same afternoon. Finally, at four o'clock, I was invited to go to the Foreign Department when Foreign Secretary Vu Van Mau advised me of the President's answer. He expressed his high appreciation for the thoughtful proposal and the honour of the opportunity see Your Excellency, whom he deeply respects, in a special visit directly from his country. He also revealed that he will welcome with the greatest pleasure the eventual kind invitation of Your Excellency and he hoped that honour will be given to him to see Your Excellency before his scheduled next visit to the Philippines and to Thailand.

The afore-said fact has been transmitted this day to the Foreign Ministry by the following cable:

83

- 7 -

"ODAITONGRYUNG KESU MIGOOKBANGMOON DOJUNGEA
HANGOOK BANGMOONEUN YEISANG JOCHIANEUMEURO
MIGOOK BANGMOON HOEA TUKBYEULHI BANGMOON
HAGETAHAM HANGOOK BANGMOON GIILEUN JUNGSIK
CHOCHUNGEUL BADEUNHOO KEULCHUNG HAGETAHAM
PD DETAILS FOLLOW IN POUCH"

5. General Activities.

a) On April 18, in company of Mr. Chang Kee Young, Chief of the Artists' Mission, Miss Cho Yong Za, artist, and Mr. Kim Soo Kil, member of Seoul City Council, I made a courtesy call on Saigon-Cholon Mayor Nguyen Phu Hai at the City Hall.

b) On the same day, April 18, I attended a luncheon given by the Secretary of State for Information and Youth Mr. Tran Chanh Thanh, at the Majestic Hotel in honor of the JCI delegates.

c) A cocktail Party was given on Sunday, April 21, in the large garden of this Legation, gathering all members of the Korean Anti-Communist Exhibit Group, all members of the Korean Artists' Mission, the ROK Navy's LST "KEBONG" Captain and its whole crew, as well as the Korean residents in Saigon. The attendance numbered approximately 500 persons.

d) A four-person dinner party was given on Monday April 22, at Arc-En-Ciel Hotel, by Public Works and telecommunications Secretary Tran Le Quang, gathering beside the host, Mr. Chang Kee Young, Miss Cho Yong Za, and Myself.

e) On the occasion of the 31st Anniversary of the birthday of Queen Elizabeth II of England, April 23rd, I attended a very brilliant reception given by Her Britannic Majest's Chargé d'Affaires and Mrs. Etherington Smith at the Embassy Residence. A congratulatory note was delivered the same day by this Legation to the British Embassy in this connection.

84

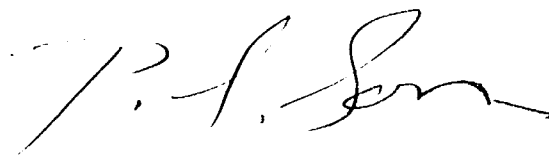
- 8 -

f) I attended on April 30 in the late afternoon a cocktail Party given by the Consul General of the Netherlands on the occasion of the birthday of the Queen of the Netherlands.

g) I was in the official party to welcome the new British Ambassador to Vietnam, Mr. R.W. Parkers, who arrived this day May 3 on board the SS "Vietnam" at Saigon Seaport.

Mr. Parkers, who was born in 1909, served in the Indian Civil Service from 1931 to 1948, when he entered the foreign service. Since then Mr. Parkers has served in the Middle East at Cairo and Beirut and in Southeast Asia at Djarkarta. He was recently Ambassador of Great Britain to Saudi Arabia. Mr. Parkers succeeds Sir High Stephenson who was appointed United Kingdom Consul General to New York.

I have the honour to be,
with deepest respect,
Your Excellency's obedient
Servant,



Pyung Sik Son
First Secretary
Korean Legation in Saigon

His Excellency
President of Republic of Korea.

Enclosure: Itinerary of President Diem's
visit to Washington

85