

**August 21, 1957**

**Letter No. 85 from the President (Syngman Rhee) to  
Minister Duk Shin Choi**

**Citation:**

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<https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/120938>

**Summary:**

President Rhee discusses the order of President Diem's foreign travels and orders Choi to be careful of his involvement in other country's foreign relations.

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Original Scan



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No. 85

To: Minister Duk Shin Choi

From: The President

I am in receipt of your Report Number 051 dated August 8th and a copy of the minutes of conversation held between you and the Vice Minister of the royal Thai government. The Thai government has agreed to exchange envoys on an ambassadorial level as soon as formal notes of acceptance are completed.

I have carefully read the schedule of President Ngo Dinh Diem's trip to several countries. As there was no discussion in connection with his visit to Korea, I thought you were quite right to raise the question of his visiting Korea first before going to India and other nations. According to protocol ours is an invitation from President to President. I am glad you made it very clear to the President what the Indians plan to do with regard to Korea. People must know "what is what."

According to an article in a Japanese daily, Nehru is opposed to Korea getting up-to-date weapons as that would lead to a new war in the Far East.

There is another matter which I shall bring up in a separate letter.

With regard to the conversation you had with the Thai Foreign Minister concerning the visit of the Vietnamese president to Burma and Thailand, I am afraid you overstepped your position and I hope they will not misunderstand your motive for expressing your views. Naturally the Thai ambassador was pleased that you stood up for Thailand by indicating that President Diem should first visit Thailand and later go to Burma, but I wonder if it is not out of propriety for you to suggest it and the Vietnamese government may resent your interference in their internal and foreign affairs. I should like to caution you on that matter. For instance, when the Thai ambassador informed you that he heard on the radio the Burmese government announced the visit of the Vietnamese president to Burma would be on August 20th, you should not have commented on it. Nor should you have talked this over with the Minister of Information and Youth. Your frank talks might be misunderstood. These people will take it once but in future please be discreet in your conversation. Do not let other people make you say something they themselves do not want to express.



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Ambassador Yang has talked with several ambassadors in Washington in connection with our admission to the Colombo Plan and also with officials of the U.S. State Department. Minister Cho has also approached Ambassador Evans of Britain and asked him to get the support of his government so that ROK will be accepted as a member.

I am very appreciative of the Vietnamese government's intention to propose full membership for ROK at the forthcoming Colombo Plan meeting.

Visit of Vietnamese officers: As I am in Chinhae I have called up our office to ask the Defense Minister to cable an affirmative answer to you. I think you are very right in suggesting that the Vietnamese government ask us directly and not through the American authorities.

No doubt you will have read in our papers that we have also recognized the Republic of Tunisia.

I am sending you a copy of the Saturday Evening Post which contains an article concerning Vietnamese action with regard to overseas Chinese.

I am glad you were given time on the radio to make the August 15th speech which I am sure was appropriate and effective.

Enclosure: As noted.

(Sent without seal as His Excellency is in Chinhae.)

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