

**August 8, 1957**  
**CDS Report No. 51 from Choi Duk Shin to the  
President (Syngman Rhee)**

**Citation:**

"CDS Report No. 51 from Choi Duk Shin to the President (Syngman Rhee)", August 8, 1957, Wilson Center Digital Archive, B-331-015, 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/120939>

**Summary:**

Choi Duk Shin reports on President Ngo Dinh Diem's planned foreign travels, discussions with foreign dignitaries, and recent Vietnamese and regional affairs.

**Credits:**

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

**Original Language:**

English

**Contents:**

Original Scan

August 8, 1957

CONFIDENTIAL

CDS REPORT NO. 051

Excellency,

I have the honour to submit the Weekly Report No.051 which is covering the following points:

1. Receipt of Instructions
2. President Ngo-Dinh-Diem's Visit of foreign countries
3. Meetings with dignitaries
4. Viet-Nam Affairs and News from Laos and Cambodia
5. Social Activities

1. Receipt of Instruction.

In the last pouch I received Instruction No.82 dated August 2, 1957, which acknowledged receipt of my report No.049 and Special Report No.13.

I am very grateful to Your Excellency for giving me the correct text of cable No.4. After having read it carefully, I found that instead "I not" it should be "if not". I further checked that this mistake did not occur by decoding of this Legation.

2. President Ngo-Dinh-Diem's Visit of foreign countries.

Through the informations I gathered, the program for President Ngo-Dinh-Diem's visit of foreign countries in the year 1957 is as follows:

a. In August - Thailand

As I have already reported in my Report No.049, the President of Viet-Nam is definitely going to visit Thailand. Up to this moment

- 2 -

there is no official announcement on this matter. An official communique is expected in one or two days on this visit. The Thai Ambassador told me the other day that his visit to Thailand will be as state guest of the King of Thailand. The 5 days visit in Thailand will be from August 15th to 19th. The invitation was forwarded by the Thai Ambassador at the end of last year.

b. In September - Australia

cc  
by  
It has already been announced that the President will definitely visit Australia as state guest from September 2 to September 8, 1957. (Report No.048) Two days ago the U.S. Ambassador told me at his dinner party that the President of Viet-Nam will also stop over for a few days in New Zealand after his visit terminated in Australia. The diplomatic relationship between Viet-Nam and New Zealand has not yet been established. They have related in "SEATO" and "Colombo Plan".

c. In November - Korea

There has been no detailed discussion with any Vietnamese authority on this matter. However, the Foreign Minister of this Government indicated the middle of November will be suitable for them. I will observe very closely the development of the President's visit to Thailand and Australia in order to gather some valuable information for our programming of his visit.

d. India

There have been rumours for several months of the President's visit to India. We recall that this Government had sent a Mission headed by the Secretary of State for Home Affairs and to the Presidency, Mr. Nguyen-Huu-Chau, to India in the Spring of this year. We also noticed that the President's younger brother and his wife visited India on their way back from U.S.A. and Europe. I believe both Mr. Nguyen-Huu-Chau and the President's younger brother brought back

108

- 3 -

the invitation from Mr. Nehru; and I also believe that they are the men who insisted very strongly that their President make the visit.

I wish to apologize for not having noticed the recent announcement of the visit before the information was given by Your Excellency. There is no announcement made by the Government of Vietnam on this matter. However, today I called on the Foreign Minister and he confirmed that the President accepted the invitation from the Indian Government, and the time will be in November. Since this visit falls in the same month as the visit to our country, I asked the Foreign Minister which will be first. He indicated that the visit to India will be in the first part of November. I was very surprised to learn this. I told him that the Korean people will be much disturbed when they learn this news that his President will visit us after he comes back from India.

He wondered if there exists any diplomatic relation between Korea and India. (I do not know if this is his pretention only or if he really does not know) I told him that we have no diplomatic relations with India and brought out the recent historical facts of how India opposed to our unification and how the Indian troops brutally treated our ex-POWS. After listening to my statement he promised me that he will make a suggestion to his President if he can be available earlier than the middle of November, let say the first or last part of October. Apparently, they decided long ago the early part of November as the date for the visit to India. I regret that I did not notice this before and wish to apologize to Your Excellency.

I felt that I should talk to him more frankly, so I asked if I could say something very frankly and earnestly to him.

Here is a brief note of my statement to him related to this matter.

106

- 4 -

"I believe the President's visit to India is a "reciprocal" one to the visit of Nehru last year. However, I am afraid that the people of the Free World will criticize it because of the following reasons:

one, Mr. Nehru is Prime Minister, not Chief of State of India. The reciprocity of call by Head of State is too much;

two, Mr. Nehru's visit of last year was not a Special Visit to Viet-Nam. As I understood he was on his way back from Red China and North Viet-Nam;

three, I believe the state visit by a Head of a country to a country in which you have no diplomatic relation, seems to me serious to "protocol" and "custom" in international affairs. After all people of the Free World all know what role India's Nehru is playing in world affairs. I, as one of the admirers of your President, would regret very much to see the prestige of your President hurt."

After the above talk, I again told him that this statement is strictly my own personal one to an intimate friend.

He listened to it very earnestly and assured me again that he will bring this up to his President.

According to my observations, the Foreign Minister is an honest gentleman. However, it seems to me that he has only little authority. There are two powerful men living in the President's Palace. I hope their observations of world affairs benefit the Free

World's struggle against Communism and will not oppose the suggestion made by their responsible Minister of Foreign Affairs.

e. Burma

There have been also rumours about the President's visit to Burma. Firstly, the Thai Ambassador told me that there was a radio broadcasting by Burma announcing that the President of Viet-Nam will visit Burma on August 20th. However, I have been told by the Minister of Information and Youth the other day and it was also confirmed by the Foreign Minister today, that the visit will not be on August 20th.

The Foreign Minister told me that he received the formal invitation from Burma a few days ago and the invitation was accepted but no date was fixed yet. He said that it cannot be on the aforementioned date. There is a very secret episode on this matter which I would like to illustrate in the following item under the subject "Meeting with Thai Ambassador".

3. Meetings with dignitaries.

During the past period I have met with three dignitaries, they are, Thai Ambassador, Minister of Information and Youth, Foreign Minister. I will describe the meetings as follows:

a. Meeting with Thai Ambassador.

During last week I met the Thai Ambassador twice. On August 2, Thai Ambassador called on me at this Chancery. On August 6 I called on him at his Chancery.

The main purpose of these calls was to continue the discussion of exchange of Envoys between our two countries.

On page 3 of my Weekly Report No.043 dated June 14, 1957, I reported:

"I was instructed by Foreign Minister to talk with the Thai Ambassador in Saigon on the matter of exchange of diplomatic Envoys. On June 12,

- 6 -

I called on the Thai Ambassador and discussed this matter. I informed him that I had talked with his Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs concerning this matter while I was in his country. He said he would report the matter to his Government immediately and keep in constant touch with me concerning this."

The Thai Ambassador's call was to inform me of the reply from his Government saying that his Government is waiting for the outcome of the budgetary appropriation. I thanked him for his kindness to come personally to inform me. He asked if I could not give him a copy of the note of conversation between his Vice-Minister and myself. I promised I would give it to him, so I called on him on August 6 and handed him the private note. I am attaching a copy of this note to this report for Your Excellency's information. I feel the answer of Thai Government on this matter is rather delayed and also incomplete. The reasons for this delayed and incomplete answer, as I see, are the following:

- (i) It was the period that provided Field Marshal Pihul's Government to consolidate herself after the general election, so it was delayed.
- (ii) The Thai Ambassador in Saigon was not familiar with this matter, therefore it caused the Thai Government's incomplete answer.

In my personal opinion, I feel our centre of diplomatic activities in Southeast Asia should be established in Bangkok, for the following reasons:

- (i) Geographically Bangkok is the central location of Southeast Asia and also constitutes the centre of communication and traffic.

182

- 7 -

- (ii) Thailand is the most prominent member among the Southeast Asian countries in international affairs. More diplomatic missions are established in Bangkok than in Saigon or other capitals.
- (iii) Bangkok represents the centre of international conferences in Southeast Asia.
- (iv) Thailand is the only country in Southeast Asia which participated in the war against communists in our country and there are still Thai expeditionary forces in our country. This relation of blood is the most important fact to have the closest friendship.

If Your Excellency approves the above illustrated humble opinion, I feel obliged to ask our Foreign Minister to give me formal instruction and issue me a credential in order to conduct it officially.

After our general discussion on the matter of exchanging Envoys, the Thai Ambassador told me a secret episode on Burma's invitation to the President.

The Vietnamese Government tried to combine the program of visiting Burma with the visit of Thailand. That is to say that the President was to proceed to Burma from Thailand after he terminated the said visit. The Thai Government objected this proposal and the visiting President will come back from Thailand before he goes to any other country.

The Thai Ambassador further gave me an information. He said he heard over the radio that the Burma Government announced the visit of the President of Viet-Nam to be on August 20th, and the same radio broadcast said Burma Government announced that they will also invite communist Ho-Chi-Minh. The Thai Ambassador and myself both feel it was



- 8 -

an insult to the President of Viet-Nam and tried to hurt his prestige. I praised the success of Thai Government to stop the President to go to Burma from Thailand. However, I wondered if someone should inform the Vietnamese of the radio broadcast. I thought the U.S. Ambassador should be in a good position to let them know this insulting radio broadcast. But the Thai Ambassador felt that the Western diplomats hang too much to the "protocol", they will not do it.

b. Meeting with Minister of Information and Youth.

The Minister of Information and Youth, Mr. Tran-Chanh-Thanh, is one of the ablest Cabinet members and a very courteous gentleman. He handles all the Youth and Social Activities. He also controls and guides all propaganda activities. His Ministry is also the responsible agent for organizing APACL and other international conferences. He has a broad responsibility and authority.

On Monday, August 5th, I called on him and congratulated him on his very successful Mission to Malaya. He was the chief of the Good-will Mission. In reciprocity he complimented on my trip to South-east Asia. Then I asked him if he has learned about the radio broadcast of Burma stating that the President of Viet-Nam will visit Burma on August 20th and told him the fact that Burma Government will also invite Ho-Chi-Minh. He said he knew for sure that his President is going to visit Thailand, but he never heard about the "visit to Burma". I explained to him that as a diplomat actually I should not say anything concerning this matter. However, I feel it is much too important that we should be able to frankly advise a true friend rather than hang on "protocol" too strictly. He welcomed my opinion and asked if I had more to say on this matter. I told him the following:

"As I understood, the invitation of Burma Government is a sort of reciprocity of the visit of U Nu to your country last year. I know also that

184

- 9 -

Burma's U Nu has been cultivated by your President during last year's visit. Your President's visit to Burma may still have the same purpose of "cultivate U Nu", but I feel that it will endanger your President's prestige more than his gain of "cultivation". If I may say very frankly as a true friend, I would advise not to do it, because U Nu's visit of last year was not as a state guest. He was private citizen at that time. Even now he is Prime Minister, not chief of the State of Burma. Furthermore, the Burma Government did not recognize your Government and you have no diplomatic relationship, it will certainly embarrass a lot of your good and true friends. I repeat again what I said already, is my personal opinion as a true friend to a true friend."

It seemed to me that he listened with earnestness, and said he will check it immediately and answer me.

Next morning, he telephoned me and told me that his President is not going to visit Burma this time. At the dinner party given by U.S. Ambassador he again assured me that the President's visit to Burma is not dated at all.

It was rather too frank a talk; however, I feel it was worthwhile to have an intimate discussion with such an important Cabinet member of a friendly nation. He is the "propaganda" boss of this nation.

c. Meeting with Foreign Minister

On August 8, I called on Foreign Minister. My tentative subjects to talk to him were the following three:

- 10 -

One, the exchange of Trade Mission., two, Colombo Plan., three, the visit to India, "Burma" by the President of Viet-Nam.

Exchange of Trade Missions:

I informed him that nothing has been decided by my Government and as soon as a definite decision is reached our Government will let him know.

Colombo Plan:

He assured me again that his Government is going to propose our full membership. He again expressed the hope that the British Government will not object to it.

Visit to "India" and "Burma" by the President of Viet-Nam which has already been described in item 2 of this report.

4. Viet-Nam Affairs and News from Neighbouring Nations.

a. Vietnamese officers will study our KSC.

At a social gathering the other day, U.S. General Williams, Chief of MAAG and veteran of Korean war, asked me if the Korean Army still has the KSC (Korean Service Corps) in exist. I told him as far as I knew there is still one KSC group in active duty. He then told me that he was going to make a suggestion to the Vietnamese Defence Department to send Vietnamese officers to study it on the spot. He further told me that the U.S. Army will take care of all their expenses, such as transportation, quartering, feeding etc.

I expressed that my Government will mostly welcome their visit. I indicated, however, that it would be better to let Vietnamese authority approach us directly on this matter, because I was afraid that U.S. authority in our country often ignore the correct procedure. General Williams, as a good soldier friend of mine, understood right away what I meant and promised me to proceed the right way.

I attach herewith copy of a letter from Vietnamese Acting Defence Minister concerning this matter which I just received. In his letter he stated:

156

- 11 -

"We should be obliged if you would kindly let us know whether there is any inconvenience for the proposed trip.

In case your Legation would concur with our request, this Department will inform you of the departure date of this team."

On this matter I have suggested to Minister Kim of our Defence Ministry to formally extend our welcome so that I can reply the Vietnamese Defence Minister to his request.

b. Vietnamese Government officially recognized Republic of Tunisia and its Government.

In a letter from Vietnamese Foreign Minister addressed to the Republic of Tunisia's Foreign Minister, Mr. Vu-Van-Mau stated:

"I have the honour to inform Your Excellency that the Government of the Republic of Viet-Nam is happy to welcome the Republic of Tunisia in the assembly of Nations and to officially recognize it as well as its Government." (Aug.4,1957)

c. Moroccan Sultan accepts President Ngo-Dinh-Diem's invitation to Viet-Nam.

The special envoy of the President of the Republic of Viet-Nam, Dr. Buu Hoi was received by the Sultan of Morocco, H.M.Mohamed V.Ben Youssef in audience and the envoy handed the Sultan, President Ngo-Dinh-Diem's invitation to make a state visit to Viet-Nam.

The two Governments are expected to agree on "the most opportune date" for this visit.

It is also learned that the Sultan has agreed to designate Crown Prince Moulay Hassan, Chief of the Moroccan Army Staff, to attend the Vietnamese National day celebrations of October 26, 1957.

d. National Assembly delegation to visit Australia next September.

187

- 12 -

At the invitation of the Speakers of both Houses of Australian Congress the Speaker of Vietnamese National Assembly, Mr. Tran-Van-Lam will lead a delegation of four deputies to visit Australia from September 15 to September 30, 1957.

This visit reciprocates the trip made by an Australian delegation to Viet-Nam late last year.

e. A Philippine Cultural Mission is to visit Viet-Nam.

It was announced that a Philippine Cultural Mission will visit Saigon some time this month.

This good-will Cultural Mission is said to aim at tightening the cultural bounds between the Philippines and the Southeast Asian countries, including Viet-Nam, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Malaya, Singapore, Burma, Indonesia.

This is a similar one to our cultural mission in April of this year.

f. Viet-Nam is to attend Frankfurt anti-Communist Conference.

At the invitation of the Russian anti-Communist Association POSSEV, Viet-Nam will attend the anti-Communist conference to be held in Frankfurt September 13-16, 1957.

POSSEV was represented as "observer" in the recent APACL congress in Saigon.

g. Viet-Nam will be represented at the international Conference of Students.

The seventh annual international Conference of Students will start on September 11 and end on September 21, 1957 at Ehadam, Nigeria. Viet-Nam will be among about 60 countries sending representatives.

h. A Japanese Trade Mission is visiting Viet-Nam.

A Japanese Trade Mission of the Hyogo Prefecture arrived in Saigon on August 6. The 6-member mission will stay in Saigon until

- 13 -

August 10. It was said in Viet-Nam Press that during its stay in Viet-Nam the mission will contact many business circles in view of increasing trade relations between the two countries.

1. Chinese Problem.

As I reported in a previous report, the Vietnamese Government granted a last time-limit to force the Chinese repatriaters to leave for Formosa not later than the end of August.

On the other hand the Chinese Government made a decision to change from ship transportation to "air transportation".

I believe the Chinese authorities weighed many factors to make this new decision and I think it is a very wise one, especially from the psychological point of view. On August 2, the first group of 250 Viet-Nam born Chinese left Saigon aboard five (5) CAT airplanes.

The Chinese society in Saigon made a big show to bid "farewell" and it was reported that in Tai-pei the Chinese people also showed the warmest and earnest welcome just like they had showed years ago the ex-POWs repatriated from Panmunjom. On the contrary the Vietnamese side showed rather too cool an attitude which undoubtedly is creating the dislike of Chinese people and is drawing criticism from outside world.

1. Laos

AFP report of August 8 indicated that the Cabinet crisis of Laos was nearing a solution. The former Premier but the new Premier-designate switched his efforts to form a very restricted 6-member Cabinet in order to solve at least temporary its ten week crises.

As I understood, the constitution of Laos provided to have two-third majority's consent of the Assemblymen present at meeting to form a Cabinet. There is also a restriction stating that the Cabinet designate members are not allowed to vote at the investiture vote. So, the more they have picked up from Assemblymen to form a Cabinet, the

- 14 -

less votes they have for investiture. If those Assemblymen who have not been picked up as Cabinet members line up and oppose the investiture, then the Cabinet has a very slight hope to be formed at all. I do not believe this kind of restriction could do good for a 39-men Assembly in a country like Laos which is troubled by the lack of able politicians.

In order to get at least a "temporary" settlement of the Cabinet crisis, the Premier-designate Prince Phouma, this time tries to form a very limited Cabinet. In the 6-men Cabinet there are only three (3) who are Assemblymen.

k. Cambodia

I have reported in last week's report that Cambodia had formed a Cabinet on a "temporary" basis. There is a news dispatch of August 6, stating:

"Crown Prince challenged the opposition party to make a showdown next Sunday before the Royal Palace and eyewitnessed by religious leaders and the crowd. Pressmen were also invited to ascertain that the Democrats (opposition party) will have all freedom of speech. The Prince who had been requested by the people to resume the leadership of the Cambodian Government, engineered to move to stamp out the many persistent criticisms carried by the opposition newspapers alleging that "the people is suffering in realizing that the Government is rotten and the national economy is mastered by the foreigners".

However, the opposition Democrat Party turned down the showdown challenge, because they respect the Crown Prince whom they describe as a "national hero" and thus they would not like to jeopardize the National Union.

- 15 -

5. Social Activities

a. On August 2, the Vietnamese Charge d'Affaires to Seoul Legation called on me as scheduled. I expressed my grateful welcome of his appointment as diplomatic representative to my country. I also explained to him some of the problems which exist between our country and Japan in order to let him have a correct fact on it.

My Secretary Mr. Son, was at the airport to say "bon voyage" to him.

b. On August 2, I received the Thai Ambassador's call at this Chancery.

c. On August 5, I called on the Minister of Information and Youth, Mr. Tran-Chanh-Thanh.

d. On August 6, I returned my call to Thai Ambassador at his Chancery.

e. On August 6, I was invited to a dinner given by U.S. Ambassador. The Minister of Information and Youth, French Ambassador, Canadian Representative and several others were at the same table.

During a conversation the U.S. Ambassador told me that he had received words from Mr. Wright, U.S. Consul General in Malaya, stating that he (Mr. Wright) had informally asked the Chief Minister of Malaya what will be the reaction if Republic of Korea recognizes his country and Government. Mr. Wright got the answer from the Chief Minister, saying that he of course will welcome this as a friendly gesture, although he may not be able to spare some men to send to Korea in the near future.

f. On August 8, I called on Foreign Minister of Republic of Viet-Nam.

In closing this report I have the honour to inform Your Excellency that the Vietnamese Government has again invited me to



- 16 -

speak to her people over the radio broadcasting system on the 15th August. I attach herewith a copy of the text of speech.

With sentiments of deepest loyalty and highest esteem,

Respectfully,

*Choi Duk Shin*  
Choi Duk Shin  
Minister to Viet-Nam

His Excellency,  
President of Republic of Korea.

- Attachments:
1. Copy of a private Note
  2. Copy of the text of Speech
  3. Copy of a letter from Vietnamese Defence Minister

192