

**July 25, 1957**  
**Kolisa-57 Special Report No. 13, 'Colombo Plan'**

**Citation:**

"Kolisa-57 Special Report No. 13, 'Colombo Plan'", July 25, 1957, Wilson Center Digital Archive, B-331-032, 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/120948>

**Summary:**

Choi Duk Shin carefully discusses the possibility of South Korea's inclusion in the Colombo Plan.

**Credits:**

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

**Original Language:**

English

**Contents:**

Original Scan

July 25, 1957

CONFIDENTIAL

Kolisa-57 SP Report No. 13.

Subject: "Colombo Plan"

Excellency,

On July 24, this Legation received a coded cable "Cable Reply Four Korpital". It reads:

"REFER YOUR LETTER 47. COLOMBO CONFERENCE AND MY REPLY LAST PARAGRAPH. GLADLY ACCEPT INVITATION DEEPLY APPRECIATIVE IF THEY WILL PROPOSE FULL MEMBERSHIP. I NOT WHAT COUNTRY IS SUGGESTED TO PROPOSE SUCH MEMBERSHIP."

The underlined word "not" is not clear to me, so I could not get the exact meaning of the sentence after the word "not".

On July 25, I made an appointment with Vietnamese Foreign Minister Vu-Van-Mau. I informed him that our Government is happy to accept the invitation and would very much appreciate it if the Vietnamese Government proposes the full membership. The Foreign Minister told me that his Government is certainly delighted to propose it.

We then discussed the possible arguments from certain member Nations on the participation of Republic of Korea to this Colombo Plan organization. Those are:

one, geographically the Republic of Korea is not in South or Southeast Asia. To this argument I would like to quote a paragraph of my Kolisa-57

SP Report No.8 (Trip to Ceylon). On page 11, I mentioned that Finance Minister of Ceylon did desire to propose that Korea be included in this meeting. I quote:

"d. Finance Minister, Mr. Stanley de Soysa.

On his own initiative, he asked his assistant about the inclusion of countries in Colombo Plan. When he learned that Korea is the only Nation in Asia not connected with "Colombo Plan" he said repeatedly - why has Korea not been included? - (By the word only Nation, he meant the exclusion of either Red China or Free China).

The assistant explained to him the reason might be that this Plan is only confined to the South and Southeast Asia. He further stated that the next meeting of the members of Colombo Plan will be held in Saigon and he would like to propose that Korea be included in this meeting....."

Since our neighbour "Japan" is already included in this organization, this geographical argument seems without reality. However, they may answer this question "why Japan" by saying that Japan is participating as "donor". I do not know whether Korea will be "donor" or "receiver" or be both at first time. However, it should be possible that one day we also become a "donor". It is also possible that these countries presently "donor" may some day in the future become "receiver".

There is already a strong objection on the classification of "donor" and "receiver". On page 132 of the pamphlet "Viet Nam and the Colombo Plan", I quote:

- 3 -

"The classification into "donor" and "receiver" countries already becoming a little unreal, however. Some receiver countries such as Ceylon, India, Pakistan and Singapore are at present also donors. They furnish capital goods for other countries, organize training centers and technical instruction courses on their territory and supply experts.

Moreover, as some of the most distinguished representatives of the donor countries have admitted, the interest of the Colombo Plan is not a one-way interest. It has benefitted not only the receiver countries but also the donors who, by the mere fact of helping to solve some of the problems of the underdeveloped countries, have obtained a clearer understanding of their own problems."

The above mentioned pamphlet has already been sent to Foreign Ministry for study. Now I enclose one copy of it with this report for reference.

Furthermore, I feel the geographical argument has no ground, because the "Colombo Plan" is mainly for co-operative economic development. The economic tie between Korea and the countries in the South and Southeast Asia is indivisible. The artificial division of the earth on the map for the purpose of geographer's studying geography, should not affect the co-operative economic development.

According to my personal thinking, the above mentioned geographical argument is most likely to be raised by the most

- 4 -

important originator of the plan, the United Kingdom.

two, the second possible argument is a political one. As we know, there are several Nations in the organization of "Colombo Plan", their foreign policy is generally against us, they may raise the objection. However, it is not likely that they will openly use "the country is divided" as the reason of objection, but it is very likely that they will still use the "geographical issue" as a tool to isolate us from this "Colombo Plan". But they are only few among the 21 member Nations and British territories. As the Vietnamese Foreign Minister expressed: "They are the minority".

Since the Vietnamese Government has initiated this movement and we have accepted the Vietnamese suggestion, we should take every possible measure to prevent the above mentioned possible argument come out openly or even behind the scene.

In order to achieve this, my suggestion is that our Government should contact the British Ambassador in Seoul to inform him of the proposal made by Viet Nam, and to discuss with him the details on this matter. If his Government agrees on it, we may well ask his Government to consult with the members of the "Colombo Plan" on this matter.

The United Kingdom is the originator of this plan; I feel her Government's view is the decisive one. The Vietnamese Foreign Minister expressed his anxiety of getting the United Kingdom's agreement on this matter.

With sentiments of deepest loyalty and highest esteem,

Respectfully,

*Choi Duk Shin*  
Choi Duk Shin

Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary  
of the Republic of Korea

240

- 5 -

His Excellency,  
President of the Republic of Korea.

Attachment: "Viet Nam and the Colombo Plan"

24/