

September 6, 1956
**CDS Report No. 17 from Choi Duk Shin to the
President (Syngman Rhee)**

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Summary:

Choi Duk Shin reports on his participation in the National Day of the Tree inspection tour and discusses Vietnamese relations with India, China, and Japan.

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CONFIDENTIAL.

CDS REPORT NO. 017

Excellency,

I have the honour to submit my Weekly Report No. 017 covering the following points:

1. Receipt of Instructions
2. Accompanying the President of Vietnam on inspection tour on "National Day of the Tree".
3. Vietnam Affairs
4. Social Activities

1. Receipt of Instructions.

On September 3rd in the same pouch, I received Your Excellency's Instructions No. 12 dated August 28; No. 13 dated August 31, and No. 14 dated August 31.

a. According to Instruction No. 12 I transmitted in person on September 5th at four p.m. Your Excellency's letter to the President of the Republic of Vietnam. A copy of my letter of transmittal is attached to this report.

In my audience with the President the only other person present was the Secretary of State to the Presidency and for Interior Affairs, Mr. Nguyen Huu Chau. The President read Your Excellency's personal letter immediately and expressed his personal gratitude at receiving it. During the audience also the President called the photographers in and one or two photographs were taken. We talked for about fifteen minutes, at the close of which the President asked Secretary Chau to escort me downstairs to the entrance.

In conversation with Secretary Chau I asked him if he had had

-2-

a good trip to India and he said "No, that the weather was bad". I then asked him if this was the reason he had returned ahead of the delegation. He said "No, this was not the reason, I have my own program" and added "We have a lot of problems here to solve".

b. I and my staff are very much honoured to have the praise of Your Excellency concerning publications and the public information services of my Legation. The credit is due to Mr. Byong-Sik, my Second Secretary, and to a Vietnamese civilian employee, Mr. Tran, who have done this work and are continuing in their endeavours to improve our publicity.

THE KOREA CORRESPONDENT No. 59 will be widely used by the Legation. Again may I express to Your Excellency your thoughtfulness in considering our need.

c. As instructed by Your Excellency's Instruction No. 14, I will keep a beaver eye on the caucus of APACL, which will be held in Saigon September 10 through 13.

The crusade and movement of APACL were initiated by Your Excellency and I shall never forget that Your Excellency gave me instructions during our trip by plane flying from Seoul to Taipei and return at the end of November, 1953. I feel much honoured to have participated in this APACL movement and I shall continue to participate until the goal of this movement is reached. I do not aspire for any recognition or credit from it. I want only to put my best efforts into it in order to achieve our aim as soon as possible. I did it when I was an active duty General Officer of the Army and according to Your Excellency's instructions I shall continue in the same manner as an official diplomat of our country.

215

-3-

Again I assure Your Excellency that I shall continue to do this work without any formal title or credit. I shall clearly know when we have achieved our aim. There will be recognition and credit for those who have put their untiring efforts into this great work and a great personal satisfaction of knowing that the goal has been attained. I know we cannot fail. I also know that if we fail there can be no personal reward at all.

I take the liberty to report to Your Excellency that I have already participated in the arranging of this caucus in Saigon. I also have communicated directly with Mr. Chin Whan Kong, the Chairman of APACL of Korea, several times. We will do our best to get everything going well.

d. I also received from Mr. Won-Hi Lee (이원희), one of Your Excellency's Secretaries, the letter of Your Excellency expressing thanks for the congratulatory telegram from my Legation on the occasion of August 15th.

2. Accompanying the President of Vietnam on an inspection tour on the "National Day of the Tree".

After his tour on Saturday of two of the seacoast provinces in a naval boat, President Ngo Dinh Diem devoted Sunday to the inspection of the realizations obtained in the agricultural section by automobile - a trip of approximately 400 kilometers in one day, the President having left Saigon at 7.30 a.m. and returned to Saigon at 7.10 p.m. General O'Daniel was in the President's party. American Ambassador Reinhardt, Mr. Etherington-Smith, Charge d'Affaires of Great Britain, Mr. Barrows, Chief of USOM, and I represented the Diplomatic Corps accompanying the President.

-4-

The Chief of State presided first at the ceremony of the "National Day of the Tree" at Trang-Bom - about two hours drive from Saigon - which is under the auspices of the Department of Agriculture and Forestry. After the ceremony the President and official party went to a plot of ground to proceed with the symbolic plantings of trees. The President planted the first tree and then asked all the diplomatic representatives and the Members of his Cabinet to plant trees.

The second stop on this trip was a place called "Hung Loc" where we visited a model breeding station. Hung Loc constitutes one of the three breeding centers endorsed with vast grasslands about to be realized in the framework of the five-year programme of development and industrialization of the breeding of Vietnam. In his speech to the crowd of people gathered around he concluded as follows:

"With the efforts of the government and with the active cooperation of the people, I am convinced that in five or six years, we will be able to resolve the problem of shortage of cattle, to produce meat, milk and eggs in sufficient quantity in order to satisfy our internal needs and cause a general fall in the price of these foods. This will permit all our compatriots to consume these products, without being under the dependence of other countries."

The third and final stop on this trip was Blao where the Agricultural, Forestry and Breeding School is located. When we left our cars we passed between a double row of young boys and girls in white uniforms, members of the 4-T Rural Youth Clubs who were holding their National Congress there.

217

-5-

During the ceremony, Mr. Barrows, Chief of the United States Operations Mission (USOM) delivered a speech. He stated:

"..... In a nation like Vietnam, where 85 percent of the people make their living from agriculture, an organization dedicated to introducing improved methods of cultivation and raising livestock is necessary

"Although American financial and technical contributions to you have been large, we realize that only the will of the Vietnamese Government and its leaders can translate these contributions into enduring accomplishments.

"We who have worked with you in the formation of your clubs are proud of the results. Your produce will mean a higher standard of living for your people. Your example will inspire other people to join you. May your white and green emblem symbolizing purity, youth, life and growth be seen throughout Vietnam. And may your pledge to dedicate "your heads to clearer thinking, your hearts to greater loyalty, your hands to larger service, and your health to better living" become the rallying cry for the youth of Vietnam".

The 4-T Clubs of Vietnam were organized as an example of the 4-H (Head, Heart, Hands and Health) Clubs.

The President in his speech affirmed that democracy also consists of improving the living standard of the rural masses. He also pointed out the efforts of the Government of the Republic of Vietnam to renovate agriculture, in order to permit Vietnam to reach the same living standard as other modern countries.

218

-6-

I noticed also that the President at each stop during the trip exhorted the people to unmask the Communists who are hiding under multifarious disguises in order to engage in sabotage and as deceitful propaganda. I also noticed how the people enthusiastically cheered their President, and his manner of approaching the people is one of ease and directness.

My observation is that the main object and first effort of this country is to increase their agricultural products firstly to improve their living standard and make the people self-sufficient and, secondly, enable them to export these products and in exchange to import much-needed commodities from industrialized countries.

3. Vietnam Affairs.

a. Vietnamese Mission to India.

The trade delegation to India has now returned to Saigon as scheduled. As I mentioned earlier in this report Secretary Chau, the Chief of the Delegation, returned to Saigon ahead of the delegation.

The acting head of the mission declared in Calcutta just before departure for Saigon:

"..... the visit to India has permitted the delegation to have a better understanding of the present economic and commercial conditions in India and study the possibilities to develop their commercial relations between the two countries.

"Vietnam desires to import from India electrical goods, raw cotton, yarn, textile goods, jute and machinery. Vietnam in exchange could offer India mostly agricultural products." 219

-7-

Also follows a comment of the Indian Press - the Daily Hindustan Times (organ of the Party of the Congress) - giving impressions on the arguments used by Mr. Nguyen Huu, Chau, Secretary of State to the Presidency..... and Head of the Vietnamese Delegation:

"The South Vietnam Delegation led by Mr. Nguyen Huu Chau, ... has made considerable impression by the earnestness with which its members have talked to the people concerned with trade and industry. Indian opinion is particularly amenable to the type of arguments used by Mr. Nguyen Huu Chau. If South Vietnam is with the SEATO powers, it is because she wants security. Her people, however, are afraid of forging trade links with countries which may use such ties to establish political hegemony over their country. Their country is culturally linked with India and, politically, feels at ease with the India Government which, it knows, will not try to extend its political sway outside its frontiers."

In reading the above two news dispatches I make the following deductions::

- 1) I assume the Vietnamese mission to India was an economic and commercial one; and
- 2) I believe that Secretary Chau going as head of the mission meant a reciprocal gesture of Prime Minister's visit to Saigon.

b. Vietnam and Japan

In this connection a UP dispatch says:

"Japan and South Vietnam are opening serious World War II reparation talks on widely conflicting stands. South Vietnam is asking at least two hundred million dollars and perhaps a little more ... from Japan. Well-informed sources said Saigon wants to receive reparation in the form of capital goods, technical assistance and cash. But Japan considers Vietnam's request far too high and out of proportion with actual war losses. The Tokyo envoy declared "Japan is obliged to pay for damage caused by the Japanese Army, but there was no fighting in Indochina between Japan and France. Japan occupied peacefully in 1941 before Pearl Harbor. French continued to administer this colony before March 1945 where Japan seized control of the administrative system in a bloodless coup d'etat. On the other hand from Vietnamese point of view, the Vietnam Government bases its indemnity claim largely on two points:

-8-

"1. Repayments for supplies furnished to the Japanese occupation force; and

"2. Damage caused by allied bombing raid against Indochina.

"There would not have been bombing if the Japanese were not in Vietnam", the Vietnamese said.

Through this short news dispatch, we are given some idea of the negotiations between Vietnam and Japan. As the Foreign Minister told me "To negotiate with Japan is very difficult". I believe the Vietnamese will realize this.

There is a news dispatch saying that Japan has agreed to pay World War II damages to Burma. The sum will be the equivalent of \$US 53 million and they will pay in ten years. Japan will not pay Burma in cash but furnish Burma with Japanese industrial products and some in the form of technical assistance.

Through the Burma-Japanese Agreement on the reparations we can foresee the sum that will be paid by Japan to Vietnam cannot be higher than \$US 50 million. There is a rumor that the Japanese Government is ready to give \$US 20 or 30 million to Vietnam. The Vietnamese Government will certainly feel it is too low a price and will also not agree to the pattern of the Burmese type of payment.

c. Vietnam-China Relations.

There is no new development concerning the 'Citizenship' of Chinese born in Vietnam since I reported to Your Excellency in my last report on this matter. The Chinese Government in Taipei has not yet decided what she is going to do and the Ordinance has already been in effect since the beginning of September.

Wednesday evening, after the dinner which I gave in honour of General O'Daniel, I had an opportunity to talk to the Charge

-9-

d'Affaires of Free China. In his opinion the decision made by the Government of Vietnam concerning the citizenship of Chinese born in Vietnam was based on good intentions. However, he regrets that before the announcement of this particular Ordinance the two Governments' officials had not talked nor discussed this matter inasmuch as diplomatic representation between the two countries has existed for some time now and there is one Chinese representative in Saigon. Further, he feels that this particular ordinance is too drastic. Further, there is no possibility of enjoyment of freedom of choice of nationality for the Chinese people born in Vietnam. There are many Chinese people who were born in Vietnam before the ordinance was announced and many of these are pretty old adults. These people feel that they should have the liberty to decide their own nationality in a certain period. He further told me of the incident of a young man - of about 25 years of age - who left his father's home to go to the Chinese mainland stating in a letter which he left behind that although he knew life would be uneasy there he would at least be living as a Chinese.

The Charge d'Affaires personally is hopeful I believe that because I am a good friend of both Free China and Vietnam that I might be in a position to bring this matter of freedom of nationality to the Vietnam officials. I would not, of course, attempt to intervene in any way without the instruction of Your Excellency.

Mr. Tsiang, Free China's Charge d'Affaires to Vietnam, will make a trip to his own country in order to get instructions from his government.

-10-

At the last moment of writing this report I received information that the President of the Republic of Vietnam has just signed Ordinance No. 53 containing the enumerations of the professions forbidden to nationals of foreign countries. I attach the news items which contain this information in the newsclipping for your Excellency's information.

I had a Chinese visitor this morning. He stated this Ordinance No. 53 is really a very 'tough!' one; that it will affect about 80 percent of the Chinese people here in Vietnam.

4. Social Activities.

a. On September 4th, Mr. Barrows, Chief of USOM, invited Mrs. Choi and me to a dinner party. General O'Daniel and several notable guests were present.

b. On September 5th, I gave a dinner in honour of General O'Daniel. The guests were the Acting Defense Minister; Information and Youth Minister; Chief of Staff of the Vietnam Armed Forces; General Williams and General Perry of the U.S. Army, and the Charge d'Affaires of Free China.

General Le Van Ty spoke very strongly against the International Control Commission whose Chairman is Indian: the other members are Poland and Canada. Poland is Communist and Canada is a neutral country and it is not necessary to have Canada protect their interests. As previously reported to Your Excellency the situation here is patterned on the Korean situation. General O'Daniel asked whether it was correct that in Korea there is no longer a Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission and I replied that it was a fact.

227

-11-

Concerning the promotion of my Second Secretary, Mr. Son Byong-Sik, I was happy to receive a letter from the Foreign Minister stating that the recommendation for Mr. Son's promotion was now being processed.

I thank Your Excellency for the kind consideration you gave my request for the promotion of Mr. Son to the status of First Secretary. He is most deserving of this promotion. Besides his many functions which he performs in such an excellent manner, he is, as I mentioned earlier in this report, responsible for the success of our public information services in the Legation here in Saigon. It is also a relief to me that as First Secretary he will be in a position to accompany me to the many important diplomatic activities and functions here in Saigon.

With sentiments of highest loyalty and deepest esteem.

Respectfully,



Choi, Duk Shin
Minister of Korea to Vietnam

His Excellency
President of the Republic of Korea.

Attachments: 1. Copy of Letter of Transmittal
2. Newsclippings.
3. Photo Album.