

**September 7, 1956**  
**Letter No. 15 from the President (Syngman Rhee) to  
Minister Duk Shin Choi**

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<https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/120992>

**Summary:**

President Syngman Rhee praises the Vietnamese dispatch of a naval force to the Spratly Islands, saying it is an example of "openly standing up against Red China."

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Original Scan

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#15

To: Minister Duk Shin Choi

From: The President

I want to thank you for your report No. 016 dated August 30th.

I appreciate your lengthy but very pointed report which gives me an inside picture of the situation in Vietnam.

You will fully understand that a Vietnamese Mission abroad to study administrative organizations is sponsored by America and it naturally favors Japan and the Philippines. As you know both countries had American help in setting up their democratic government system and the U.S. would naturally prefer the Vietnamese to visit these countries.

In your talks with some of the Vietnamese and foreigners you may tell them we had our local administration (goon, myun, etc.) for centuries long before America had even such a system. I do not have to elaborate on that point because you know about our old administrative system.

I am very happy to know the Vietnamese Minister to Korea has been promoted to a 2-star general.

I was much interested to read that the Vietnamese naval force has occupied the Nan-Sa Islands. By doing so they are openly standing up against Red China. This is a very good sign of the Diem administration and if you see some of the high officials please express to them that only by action can we fight communism.

I feel that the Vietnamese government has made a very wise move by requesting all Chinese born in Vietnam to become citizens of Vietnam. I can fully realize that the government sees this as the only way to control the many Chinese nationals.

I read both editorials on the economic independence of Vietnam. I do believe the Vietnamese government is going the right way by stressing the point that by attaining economic independence we must try to get along without aid as much as possible.

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As you know I have told our people over and over again that by accepting aid they will sooner or later become economically dependent. During the first 10 years America put all its dollars for Korea into Japan and made us economically dependent on Japan. Only through my vigorous fight I succeeded in getting the dollars put into industrial development so as to make Korea independent of Japanese goods.

It is good to know that General O'Daniel is taking such a keen interest in the development of Vietnam. If you see the General please give him my best regards and remind him that he promised to visit Korea. He was one of the best generals we had and not only we but all our soldiers loved him.