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**CDS Report No. 9 from Choi Duk Shin to the
President (Syngman Rhee)**

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Summary:

Choi Duk Shin reports on Vice President Nixon's visit and his statements in Karachi concerning communism in East Asia, discusses the "Cao Dai" religion in relation to communism, and briefly mentions his visit with French Ambassador Hoppenot.

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July 13, 1956

CDS REPORT NO. 009.

CONFIDENTIAL.

Your Excellency,

I have the honour to submit my Weekly Report No. 009 covering the following points:

- 1) Receipt of Your Excellency's Instruction Paper No. 4
- 2) Vietnamese Observance of the "Double Seven" Day
- 3) U.S. Vice President Nixon's visit
- 4) "Cao Dai" Religion
- 5) French Ambassador's call at Legation.

1. On Monday, July 9 I received from Your Excellency Instruction Paper No. 4 dated July 5, 1956. I regret to learn that the name of Your Excellency was incorrectly spelled in the Letter of Credence which the Vietnamese Minister presented to Your Excellency. Our Legation had correctly informed the Vietnamese Foreign Ministry of the correct spelling of the name of Your Excellency and this error should not have occurred. Further, in the Letter of Credence which I presented to His Excellency the President of Vietnam the name of Your Excellency was clearly printed in English. I apologize for the misspelling of your name. This error occurred only through carelessness and is regretted. The people of Vietnam respect Your Excellency as they do their own President and look to the Korean people's struggle against Colonialism in the past and against Communism at the present time as an example and model of what they must do in their fight for independence and freedom.

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2. Vietnamese Observance of the "Double-Seven" Day.

In my previous report I mentioned the occasion of the ceremony of the completion of President Ngo Dinh Diem's two years as Chief Executive of Vietnam. The observance has been called "The Seventh Day of the Seventh Month", or "Double-Seven" Day.

The ceremony was a most colorful one and the people demonstrated their expressions of loyalty and respect of their great leader, President Diem, on this great occasion by having great celebrations in the streets, the most significant of which was the Torchlight Parade down the main avenue to the Palace. The people of Vietnam enjoyed for the first time in their history their independence as a democratic republic.

For Your Excellency's information I attach herewith a news folder the contents of which are:

- a) The record of "Two Years";
- b) Message by President Ngo Dinh Diem to the people of Vietnam;
- c) Speech by the Secretary of State for Youth and Information, Mr. Tran Chanh Thanh

3. Visit of U.S. Vice President Nixon.

I was in the official welcome and farewell party, and also listened to his speech in the Constituent Assembly. At the American Ambassador's reception in his honour I had a few minutes to talk with the Vice President. He expressed his regrets that he could not visit Korea on this trip and express to Your Excellency personally his high respect for the Korean people who are still fighting so firmly the world Communists. He also expressed his welcome of the presence of a diplomatic representative from the Republic of Korea to Vietnam.

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In his statement upon arrival Vice President Nixon praised the President, Mr. Ngo Dinh Diem, as "a symbol of independence, of freedom for all peoples to respect."

In his speech to the Vietnamese Constituent Assembly he said: ".....We have also shared with you and thrilled with you at the changes, the progress, that have occurred here. Now, although your country is divided, the militant march of Communism has been halted. Behind the bulwark of the enlightened leadership of your President, Vietnam, for the first time, can look forward to achieving her rightful place among the free nations of the world. I do not exaggerate when I say that your friends everywhere have derived great inspiration from the successes which have marked the first two years of President Diem's administration. It is because of the importance which the American Government attaches to this leadership that I have come on President Eisenhower's behalf to extend to your President on the second anniversary in office the warmest congratulations and good wishes of the American Government and people the United States is proud of the part we have been able to play in the common battle against Communist aggression in all its forms"

In his farewell address, the Vice President told the press that "Any aggression against South Vietnam would be looked upon as a foolish act on the part of aggressors."

He said also: "..... But now, I see everywhere determination and courage to fight for a brighter future of the country."

The government officials and the Vietnamese people were very happy to have Vice President Nixon visit their country and

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and bring to them a further assurance of the support of the U.S. to the young Republic of Vietnam.

I am also very happy to note that the observations we made in the past years concerning the Indo-China situation were correct.

In the CORADO Report No. 3 dated 4 March 1954, we (Mr. Young P. Lee and I) clearly and strongly stated: "The Mission feels that one appropriate action would be for the United States to take over the Indo-Chinese situation."

In the "Reports on the Indo-Chinese Situation" 28 May, 1954, I stated "Here is what every Vietnamese national wants:

1. Complete national independence from the French rule.
2. Firmly rooted Democratic Government.
3. Betterment of conditions in living, education and economically."

And I also strongly stated:

"INDOCHINA IS WORTH SAVING AND MUST BE SAVED."

In his statement in Karachi the Vice President said:

"Soviet aid is offered not with strings, but with a rope. And the recipient runs almost the certain risk of having the rope tied around its neck....."

"Communism is out of step with Asian independence, my answer to Nehru is that anyone who suggests that Red assistance is not inconsistent with freedom is reading history incorrectly."

"History showed Communist States gave economic and military aid only with the purpose of creating a satellite.

"On the other hand, American help is simply intended to assist countries to maintain independence."

I am happy to learn that his statement concerning economic

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aid coincides with that which I made on May 3 in my interview with the UP correspondent. I quote UP's dispatch as follows:

"Seoul Envoy General Choi Duk Shin warned that the threat of economic aggression is "more dangerous" than the possibility of war.

"As a military man, I don't think military aggression is as dangerous as economic aggression. Military aggression is in the open they hit you and you hit back. More dangerous is the threat of economic aggressions."

The soldier-diplomat praised American aid to Asian nations but warned against accepting help from Soviet Russia.

"As we know", he said, "when the U.S. gives aid no political conditions are attached. But when Russia gives aid, we know that behind the smile is the knife."

The words spoken by the Vice President during his visit here and in his stop-overs in Bangkok and Karachi are worthy of consolidating into one clipping for submission for Your Excellency's information, which I submit with this Report.

4. "CAO DAI" Religion.

The Cao Dai religion is one of the Vietnamese religions which is not strange to us. The former Pope of the "Cao Dai", Mr. Pham Cong Tac (范公則) visited Korea in 1953 and paid a courtesy call on Your Excellency. And in the very darkest days of Vietnam in 1955 when it was becoming alarmingly obvious that

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certain followers of Caodaism, who were politically minded, were joining the usurpers in rebel action against the Diem government, Your Excellency sent to the area the Lee-Choi mission to try and persuade the leader of Caodaism, the Pope, and his followers not to join in this rebel action against the government. Your consideration in sending the mission at that time is deeply appreciated by the present government officials who were in the government at that time and knew the facts. The Lee-Choi mission and its work will long be remembered.

Since that time the Cao Dai religion and beliefs have not changed but the scene has changed. The Pope has been exiled from this country because of his political differences with President Ngo Dinh Diem. Nonetheless the Government of President Diem recognizes the Cao Dai religion as it is today. They are anxious to support the church and its members and as a demonstration of their desire to assist the government covered all the expenses of invited official guests and members of the Diplomatic Corps who attended the ceremony of the 31st year of the founding of the Cao Dai Missionary Church held at Tourane during the period July 7 through July 11, 1956.

I attended the ceremonies on Sunday, July 8 and returned to Saigon the following morning. I was called upon to speak as a Member of the Diplomatic Corps to an audience of many hundreds and in my speech I stressed the following two points to illustrate our feeling and belief that:

- 1) Any man who destroys religion, will destroy himself, and
- 2) No religion can remain non-military and non-political if it is oppressed or suppressed by an outside force.

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To illustrate these points I referred to the period of 1 March 1919 after World War I when we had a revolutionary movement against the Japanese rule. I stated that the movement was led by religious leaders consisting of Bhuddists, Christians and Chon Do Kio (天道教). That the principles of these three leaders were non-military and non-political, but that to preserve these principals it was necessary for them to rise in one body against Japanese imperialists who were suppressing their principles and beliefs.

Also in my talk I tried to illustrate that sometimes persons under the cloak of religion fight against us as in the Burma campaign in World War II when we were fighting against the Japanese aggression that religious followers carried concealed weapons under their religious garb which was used against us. That at first when we received shots from these concealed weapons we were much surprised at their cruelty. Later we found that they had been inspired and even secretly organized by the Japanese to be anti-British and anti-American.

I emphasized again that whoever suppresses the freedom of belief or utilized religion as his tool of aggression would get punishment from God and that he would be destroyed. The defeat of Imperialistic Japan in World War II was a good lesson to learn.

Then I told them that it was not necessary to explain how the Communists are suppressing and denouncing the religions of the world, but that I would predict that the Communists would be destroyed, the most important reason being that they were suppressing and destroying religions and were usurping the freedom of their fellow beings including the freedom of belief.

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I am attaching for the information of Your Excellency the pamphlet "A Short History of Caodaism" with this report.

5. Courtesy Call by the French Ambassador to the Legation.

On July 11, the French Ambassador, Mr. H. Hoppenot, called on me at the Legation. Ambassador Hoppenot is a man of a long and varied diplomatic career and very important. He will leave Saigon very soon. He has served at UN as the French representative in the Security Council in the years 1952-1953. During World War II, in 1942 and 1943, he served in Washington as the diplomatic representative of the DeGaulle government in London. He opened his conversation by referring to the kind references made by Your Excellency in a recent press conference concerning the relationships which exist between France and Korea and expressed his appreciation. Prior to the visit of the Ambassador I had prepared a paper quoting from Your Excellency's statement in the event that he was not aware of it and mentioned this fact to the Ambassador.

With sentiments of highest loyalty and esteem,

Respectfully,

Choi Duk Shin

Choi, Duk Shin
Minister of Republic of Korea
to Vietnam.

His Excellency

The President of the Republic of Korea.

Attachments: 1. Photograph album
2. Speeches and Statements by Vietnamese officials on the occasion of "Double-Seven" Day
3. Vice President Nixon's speeches and statements
4. Newspaper clippings
5. Pamphlet "A Short History of Caodaism".

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