

June 15, 1956

Report of a Conversation with Mr. Nguyen Huu Chau

Citation:

"Report of a Conversation with Mr. Nguyen Huu Chau", June 15, 1956, Wilson Center Digital Archive, B-333b-062, 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/121016>

Summary:

Choi Duk Shin outlines his discussion with Secretary of State to the President, Nguyen Huu Chau the possibility of a South Korea-South Vietnam-Tiawan triple alliance.

Credits:

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

Original Language:

English

Contents:

Original Scan

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Excellency,

I submit below report of my conversation with Mr. Nguyen Huu Chau, Secretary of State to the President and Secretary of State for Home Affairs, when I visited him in his office on June 8, 1956.

After exchange of words of courtesy, I praised the progress made by the New Republic of Vietnam during the past one and half years (the President received the appointment of Premiership under Bao Dai's regime on the 16th June, 1954; however, he got full power in October, 1954) and expressed our admiration of the brilliant leadership of President Ngo Dinh Diem. Secretary Chau reciprocated the same admiration they held of the highly farsighted statesmanship of Your Excellency. I then outlined to him as follows the conclusions at which I had arrived when I made a survey of the situation of Indo-China in March, 1955:

- a) that Boa Dai and feudalism should be ousted;
- b) that Colonialism should be completely withdrawn from Vietnam in order to defeat Communist Vietminh in the psychological and propaganda fields;
- c) that the Free World should continue its support of the Government of Ngo Dinh Diem;
- d) that the United States should directly intervene in the affairs of Indo-China.

He was glad to learn of these conclusions. I then tried to turn the subject into a discussion of the Triple-Alliance. I told him that on my way to Vietnam I had stopped in Taipei and Hongkong and had found in both these places much mention of a Korea-Vietnam-China Military Alliance. I said I would appreciate his thoughts

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on this subject. He gave me his opinion as follows:

"From my own opinion of the present world situation I agree with the idea of having a strong military alliance parallel with NATO and SEATO in order to effectively deter Communist aggression. I agree in principle to having such a Triple-Alliance as you mention. However, we are faced with the following hindrances:

i) In the present political society of the world, the position of Vietnam is a little different than the position of Korea and of China. We have only established a new Republic through a political agreement with France, and I have to confess shamefully that we are still not completely independent militarily, politically or economically. The conduct of international affairs can hardly be initiated by us alone.

ii) This country is protected by SEATO, although we did not seek this protection ourselves, and we do not know how it will affect us in case of Communist aggression. France has a very strong voice in SEATO. It is my opinion that France will make every possible effort to restrict any freedom of action by us and that she will insist on our strictly observing the Geneva Agreement.

iii) France is exceedingly jealous of the policy the United States has adopted toward Vietnam and hates to see President Diem's government friendly to the United States. The French politicians think that the United States is taking over all the rights and benefits from them and are even suspicious of their provoking anti-colonialism in the minds of the Vietnamese people. The French do not like to see the Republic of Vietnam become stronger through the

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aid of the United States and will express an objection to whatever the United States might say.

iv) After observing the political situation in France, her policy is to lean to the left and close to the Communist line of thinking so we cannot expect any generosity toward Free Vietnam. France will try in every possible way to restrict our freedom of action.

In conclusion, the aforementioned Triple-Alliance must be concluded sooner or later. I hope the time will come soon."

This is the first time I have listened to a frank discussion by a Vietnamese Government Official. Because of Secretary Chau's highly important position in the present government I have every reason to believe that what he says is the opinion of the President and their present policy is along these lines. The leaders are aware of their weaknesses and are endeavoring with every effort to make themselves strong in order to endure this very difficult period through which they are passing.

Mr. Nguyen Huu Chau is the Secretary of State attached directly to the President and, at the same time, he is also the most powerful Home Minister. His office is in the Presidential mansion and he often acts as the representative of the President.

The above report is respectfully submitted to Your Excellency.

Choi Duk Shin

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

His Excellency
President of the Republic of Korea.

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