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CDS Report No. 4 from Choi Duk Shin to the President (Syngman Rhee)

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Summary:

Choi Duk Shin outlines his discussion with American General Williams about the possibility of South Korean military training assistance for the South Vietnamese military as well as several other conversations with foreign diplomats.

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CDS - REPORT NO. 004

CONFIDENTIAL.

Your Excellency,

I have the honour to submit, Your Excellency, my weekly report No. 004 covering the following points:

1. Received from Your Excellency's office instruction paper dated May 30, 1956 which acknowledges receipt of my letter of May 10. It advised me of the following:

- a) The Korean Chapter has suggested the preliminary meeting to be held in Hongkong the end of July; and
- b) That General Williams' idea is acceptable, and that you have already instructed the Minister of National Defense. I shall continue to discuss this very important issue with General Williams.

2. My call on General Williams.

On June 5 I called on General Williams. I had prepared for discussion with him the following items:

- (i) the use of Korean instructors to help in the training of the Vietnamese Armed Forces; and
- (ii) what his thoughts were concerning the Triple Alliance.

His reply to Item (i) was that he had already talked to his 'superior' and to his 'senior'. He did not disclose the names. He did state, however, that the French Army is 30 years behind the Korean Army, and he said he certainly meant this. It would appear he is awaiting instructions from his 'superior' on this matter. As for Item (ii) his answer was that in his one year's experience here

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/he had

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he had learned PATIENCE. They are doing things slowly. To illustrate this 'slowness' he gave as examples two of his own experiences: one, he had waited several months for a decision, and, secondly, for another decision, 42 days. The reasons in the main are that the Deputies of the President had learned the French way of handling things. Secondly, perhaps for the reason of security, and because he doubted the ability of his Deputies, he, the President, handled almost everything himself. In other words, information passed to his Deputies would easily be passed to the French. There is a strong feeling that the French would be delighted to see the Government of President Diem eventually collapse, and so the information passed to the French could pass to the 'enemy'. This in itself is sufficient reason for the President to keep all the powers to himself.

At this point I asked General Williams if it was known that the French were destroying military equipment such as armored cars, tanks, signal, etc. and selling it as scrap and that this equipment was American-aid provided for use in fighting the Communists. The General said he knew all this and had reported it to all concerned, including Mr. Dulles.

The General mentioned at this time that the French would like to see him relieved of his post here because of his frankness and attitude towards them.

At the conclusion of my conversation with the General I felt I had achieved the following:

/ a) He had already

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- a) He had already advised his 'superior' and his 'senior' of the necessity of inviting ROK personnel as instructors to the Vietnamese Armed Forces; and
- b) The possibility of the Triple Alliance is feasible, but will take a comparatively long time.

3. UNC SUSPENSION OF NNSR.

The action of UNC to suspend the activities of the so-called NNSR and kicking them out of our country is big news and has won the appraisals of the people of Vietnam. It is thought that there is a possibility of the Vietnamese people in due course taking the same action in dealing with the Armistice Commission here.

4. COURTESY CALLS.

Last Saturday I called on the American Ambassador, Mr. G. Frederick Reinhardt. This week I continued courtesy calls on Vietnamese government officials. So far I have called on the Minister of Social Action and Health; the Minister of Home Affairs; the Chairman of the Constituent National Assembly, and the Minister of Agrarian Reform and Land Estate. I shall continue these calls this coming week.

The Chairman of the Constituent National Assembly conveyed the wishes of the Assembly to the Korean people. I have written a letter in this pouch to the Speaker of our National Assembly conveying these wishes.

5. RETURN COURTESY CALLS AT THE LEGATION.

Return courtesy calls were made at the Legation this week by the following members of the Diplomatic Corps:

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/The British

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The British Ambassador
The Italian Minister
The Australian Minister
The Philippine Minister, and
the Chinese Minister.

The British Ambassador opened his conversation with questions concerning the Korean language, its history and its characteristics. I told him that it was considered one of the oldest languages in the world; that the Korean grammar even though China and Korea adjoin geographically is entirely different from the Chinese grammar. That our language is strictly phonetic in writing which is not the case with the Chinese. In essence, I tried to briefly, but analytically, give him the history of our language and the writing of it. We turned then from the culture of Korea on to a more general discussion.

In my conversation with the Italian Minister, he said "we really need a strong leader such as Syngman Rhee, that since our Premier died three years ago there is not a sufficiently strong leader in Italy to take his place."

The Australian Minister in his conversation with me suddenly mentioned the Japanese here and said that these people in Vietnam are suspicious of the Japanese. Whereupon I asked him how much his country had suffered as a result of the Japanese in World War II and he replied "We suffered very much". It is my firm opinion that not only the Vietnamese people, but the people in all the Southeast Asian countries are "suspicious of the Japanese".

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With deepest sentiment of loyalty and esteem, I remain,

Respectively,

Choi Duk Shin

CHOI, DUK SHIN
Minister of Korea to Vietnam.

His Excellency

President of the Republic of Korea.