

October 18, 1957
**CDS Report No. 59 from Choi Duk Shin to the
President (Syngman Rhee)**

Citation:

"CDS Report No. 59 from Choi Duk Shin to the President (Syngman Rhee)", October 18, 1957, Wilson Center Digital Archive, B-334-044, 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/121055>

Summary:

Choi Duk Shin reports on his discussions with Vietnam's President Diem and Foreign Minister and the dangers of Japan's economic involvement in the region.

Credits:

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

Original Language:

English

Contents:

Original Scan

October 18, 1957

CONFIDENTIAL

CDS REPORT NO. 059

Excellency,

I have the honour to submit this Weekly Report No. 059 which is covering the following subjects:

1. Receipt of Instructions
2. Meetings with the President and the Foreign Minister of Vietnam
3. Japan's Attempt of Economic Penetration in Southeast Asia
4. Major Events in Vietnam
5. Social Activities.

1. Receipt of Instructions.

In the latest pouch, I received one photo-album and two volumes of Korean newspapers' clippings and two sets of newsreels relating to the recent visit of President Ngo Dinh Diem of Vietnam to Korea, and informational data condensed from Japanese newspapers. I have conveyed the photo-album and newspapers' clippings to the President in person and the newsreels to the Chief Press Officer of the Office of Presidency. As for the newsreels, I wish to have a reception for the purpose of its showing to prominent figures in Vietnam in the near future.

- 2 -

2. Meetings with the President and the Foreign
Minister of Vietnam

In this week I have called on the Foreign
Minister and the President. I wish to report the contents
of the conversations as follows:

a. Audience of the President

On Friday, October 18, at 9:00 a.m. I was
received by the President of Vietnam at his Independence
Palace. First of all, I have presented the excellently
compiled photo-album and the newsclippings. The President
was very pleased with the albums and called in Cameraman
to take pictures on the presentation of photo-album to
him. I hope that I will be able to send the pictures
to Your Excellency next week.

After the presentation of albums, and after
glancing at it for a few minutes, we had a discussion on
the following current problems.

(1) Colombo Plan Conference

It seemed to me that the President has
been reported by the Foreign Minister on the problem of
our membership in Colombo Plan. As the Foreign Minister
assured, the President also expressed his views that there
should be no reason for India and Indonesia to oppose
Korea's membership. He said his Government will make
efforts to get cooperation from the member nations on
this matter.

(2) Cultural Problem

When I showed the news clippings, the
President paid particular attention on "The Korean

176

- 3 -

Republic" which has reported the full text of his addresses at the National Assembly and Seoul National University, and expressed complete satisfaction.

The President, meanwhile, expressed his deep regret over the fact that the Republic of Korea will not be able to join the forthcoming Cultural Exhibition which will be held in Saigon from October 23. He said the cultural treasures of Korea, as great as he witnessed during his recent visit, must be displayed for all the people who have no knowledge on Korean culture. He further said there had been only Chinese and Japanese cultures being introduced to this part of the world, and the people here are not aware of the fact that the Korean culture is so high in value. He expressed the hope that sometime in next year the Korean culture can be exhibited in Saigon.

In this connection, I wish to refer briefly to the Cultural Exhibition for Your Excellency's information. The preparation of the said exhibition is underway for opening on October 23. "The Organizing Committee for the Nation-wide Cultural Exhibition" has asked us to join this forthcoming Exhibition on July 23. On July 25, I reported to the Foreign Ministry on this matter and on August 31, I made another request to the Foreign Ministry for earlier reply. On September 18, I received the reply dated September 5, notifying the impossibility of joining in this Exhibition.

This is my firm conviction that the Legation should devote much greater efforts for introduction of Korean culture to the peoples in Vietnam and her neighboring countries so as to make them realize that Japanese 177

- 4 -

culture is no more than simple imitation of ours. I am confident that Your Excellency will render high consideration on this matter and take the trouble to instruct the Foreign Ministry to furnish us materials that Your Excellency deem necessary to introduce to this part of the world.

(3) Korea-Japan Relationship

I told the President that we have participated in a series of conferences with Japan since 1951 in the hope of establishing a good neighborly relation with Japan, forgetting unpleasant past, and only tried to lay a firm foundation of friendship. It has always been the intention of our Government to forget and forgive the cruel Japanese occupation of Korea that started from 1910 and ended in 1945. However, the well-known insincerity of Japanese character reflected in the conferences caused the delay of the settlement. Especially the statement made by KUBOTA was a most insulting one toward Korean people. The Chief Japanese delegate KUBOTA said :

"The Cairo Declaration describing the "enslavement" of Korean people to Japan was based on wartime hysteria, and Japanese occupation of Korea was beneficial to the Korean people;

"The evacuation of the Japanese from Korea in 1945 was a violation of international law, so all the properties (85 % of all Korean properties) which belonged to Japanese authorities and people are still to be possessed by Japanese;

"The establishment of an independent Korean state before a Japanese peace treaty was signed was a

178

violation of international law".

We asked the Japanese to withdraw their statement, but the Japanese have not yet complied it, thus blocking the progress of Korean-Japanese talks.

I further explained to him that there are three most outstanding problems which are existing between Korea and Japan. They are :

- (a) Property Claims
- (b) Peace Line
- (c) Korean Residents in Japan.

As to the "Property Claims", I told him that against a minimum legal claims on the part of Korea based on a spirit of reconciliation and friendliness, the Japanese insisted on a fantastic and absurd property claims.

As to the "Peace Line", I explained to him its dual purposes, namely, the sea defense of Korea against aggression and the fishery conservation.

As to our views on Japanese aims in Asia, I declared to the President that Japan's proposed Asian economic development through the trinity of capital from the U.S., the natural resources of Asia and the techniques and control of Japan, is nothing more than the old Asian "Co-prosperity-sphere" under a new name, and is designed to give Japan economic dominance in Asia. I further illustrated how Japan capitalized the Korean War in rebuilding up its industry at the expense of the United States of America. I have seen myself during Korean War that Japan-made trucks supplied to the U.N. Forces were brought only for money-earning, not for the cause of struggle

- 6 -

against Communism, though at that time, U.N. soldiers had engaged in desperate fighting, and Japan had made absolutely no contribution to U.N.'s aims in Korea. During the actual fightings, we could enjoy no freedom of choice, and have no way but to accept Japanese products. Frankly, we had to have all what we could.

However, after the "cease-fire" in 1953, we tried very hard to explain to the American friends our stands on the necessity of industrialization of our country and the importance of economic independence. Now we are independent from Japanese industry and also almost completely separated from Japanese economy. I do not believe that there should be any reason to say that we have to depend on Japanese industry and economy.

The President of Vietnam has carefully listened to my comments, with much interest, and it seemed to me that he shared with our views on Japanese aims in Asia.

The audience lasted about fifty minutes.

b. Meeting with the Foreign Minister

On Thursday, October 17, at 11:00 a.m., I have called on Foreign Minister Vu Van Mau at the Foreign Office. At the meeting, the following topics were discussed :

(1) Japan's Moves in Southeast Asia

In order to enlighten the Foreign Minister on ominous threats of Japan's reviving expansionism in this part of the world, I have made a series of explanations to urge him to compose an eventual united front against Japan's economic penetration. I said that recent development in Southeast Asia has been focused in

- 7 -

remarkable attempts of Japan's expansionism through her economic plans under the pretext that she wishes to contribute prosperity of the under-developed countries in this part of the world.

Japanese Foreign Office claims its so-called "Asian diplomacy" which eventually means "economic penetration" in Southeast Asia. This has become openly the dominant goal of Prime Minister Kishi's policies.

Premier Kishi attempted to sell his plan of "Southeast Asia Development Fund to the United States on his recent trip, apparently with only moderate reaction, but he has not given up the hope and send his Foreign Minister Fujiyama to Washington to pursue the U.S. officials on this matter.

Prime Minister Kishi, on the other hand, is expected to try to enlist the active support of Southeast Asian countries in his forthcoming second tour. Additionally, he has the task of lulling Asian suspicions of Japan, which were strongly and openly voiced the moment the plans for Japanese economic penetration were made public.

What Japan advocates so eagerly is Asian economic development with the trinity of capital from the United States, the natural resources of Asia, and the techniques and "control" of Japan. Such a plan is nothing more than the old "Asian Co-prosperity Sphere" under a new name, designed to give Japan economic dominance in Asia and eventual political control.

Reactions shown by the Vietnamese Foreign

/d/



- 8 -

Minister were very good. He was completely in accord with me in his views on Japanese Prime Minister Kishi's Asian development plan, and he confidentially revealed the fact that the Government of Vietnam has warned the United States not to be lured by Japanese trap prior to Premier Kishi's trip to America.

The Vietnamese Foreign Minister further declared that it is impossible to divide economic problems from politics, while expressing his agreement on my view that economic control will result in political dominance. When we touched on the recent visit of Japanese Roving Ambassador Kobayashi, he said to me that the Japanese Envoy did not refer to the Kishi plan at all.

It is apparent that Japanese officials know too well the stands of Vietnamese Government that no economic cooperation be expected prior to settlement of reparations. The Japanese Envoy, according to the Foreign Minister, said that his tour simply aims at reviewing diplomatic posts and surveying economic situations in Southeast Asia. He said that at the meeting President Ngo Dinh Diem has talked with him only about "philosophy". The Foreign Minister disclosed that his Foreign Office has obtained informational data on Kishi's plans, not from Japanese Government but through his own envoy in the Philippines.

Through the meeting with Foreign Minister Vu Van Mau, I was given strong assurances that Vietnam and Korea are just at the same position in dealing with Japanese economic plans in Southeast Asia.

182

- 9 -

(2) Colombo Plan Conference

The Foreign Minister told me that he had again a talk with the British Ambassador to Vietnam on the admission of Korea into the "Colombo Plan". The Foreign Minister revealed that the British Ambassador did not make any definite answer on this question, but he expressed that the relationship already existing between Korea and Britain is very good and it will continue as it is.

The Foreign Minister of Vietnam thought that the objection did not come from the British Government but from other few countries. He assured me that he will try his best to persuade India and Indonesia unofficially for our membership. If there is no objection from any of them, the Vietnam delegation will propose to put the admission question on the agenda of Ministerial Meeting.

In this connection, I have sent the following coded telegram to Your Excellency's Office and the Foreign Ministry on October 18:

"VIETNAM GOVERNMENT PROMISED TO PURSUE INDIA AND
INDONESIA FOR OUR MEMBERSHIP IN COLOMBO PLAN PD
DETAILS IN NEXT POUCH PD "

3. Japan's Attempt of Economic Penetration in
Southeast Asia

As our Government has already paid attention, there are desperate attempts of Japan to make economic infiltration into Southeast Asian countries. As the prelude of Prime Minister Kishi's second tour, Roving Ambassador Ataru KOBAYASHI has made a trip around Southeast Asia in the hope to obtain support and cooperation upon

1/23

- 10 -

the proposed "Southeast Asia Economic Development Fund Plan".

Kobayashi said on October 8 that Southeast Asian countries supported "in principle" the Japanese economic development fund proposal. However, I am certainly doubtful on his remarks which revealed support "in principle" from countries concerned. As Kobayashi himself admits, the Governments in this part of the world "desire additional details for study and evaluation before joining the plan."

Support in principle, in my frank judgement, is no more than diplomatic usage. Although I am quite doubtful about the success of Kishi's forthcoming tour, we should not relax our efforts to expose the real intention of Japan in Asia. A general plan of dispatching again a mission to Southeast Asian countries, which will take place prior to the second trip of Japanese Prime Minister Kishi, was already submitted for Your Excellency's approval and necessary materials on this matter were collected. As soon as Your Excellency's approval will reach me, I will begin preparation and arrangement for the tour. In my judgement, the tour will better begin after October 26, the National Day of Vietnam.

4. Major Events in Vietnam.

a. National Assembly Elects Committee Chairmen

The National Assembly reconvened on October 14 to elect the Chairmen of various committees for the parliamentary year 1957-58.

The meeting was placed under the chairmanship

124

- 11 -

of the President of the National Assembly Pham Van Nhu assisted by the two Vice-Presidents Vu Quoc Thong and Truong Vinh Le. Soon after the opening of the meeting the majority and minority blocs, were invited by the Chairman to put up their candidates for the election to the presidencies of the commissions. The result of the vote was as follows:

- President of the Budget and Finances Commission :
Mr. Ngo Sach Vinh;
- President of the Economic Commission: Mr. Do Cao Minh;
- President of the Agriculture Commission: Mr. Dang Hieu Khan;
- President of the Foreign Affairs and Information Commission: Mr. Pham Khac Hy;
- President of the Culture Education and Youth Commission:
Mr. Tran Huu The;
- President of the Public Works, Tourism and Reconstruction Commission: Mr. Nguyen The Thoai;
- President of the National Defense Commission: Mr. Tran Si Don;
- President of the jurisdiction and Legislation Commission:
Mr. Do Manh Quat;
- President of the Home Affairs Commission: Mr. Vo Nhu Nguyet;
- President of the Social Welfare, Labour and Public Health Commission: Mr. Nguyen Viet Canh;
- President of the Internal Regulations Commission: Mr. Cao Van Tuong;
- President of the National Assembly Budget and Accountancy Commission: Mr. Tran Van Kha.

185

- 12 -

b. Colombo Plan Exhibition Held

The Colombo Plan Exhibition was opened on October 15 through a ceremony presided over by Mr. Tran Chanh Thanh, Secretary of State for Information and Youth.

Many member countries such as Australia, North Borneo, Burma, Canada, India, Malaya, New Zealand, Pakistan, Sarawak, Thailand, United Kingdom, United States and Vietnam were represented in panel displays of enlarged black-and-white photographs and coloured transparencies, set in a variety of modern display forms. Several pictures of President Ngo Dinh Diem's visit to Korea were also posted significantly.

c. Two Japanese Fishermen Arrested

Six of the eight Japanese fishermen arrested by the police on October 12 after the incident in Saigon port, during which a Vietnamese worker was sounded by blows and another stabbed, were released after investigations. The two have been put in jail at Chi Hoa prison to await trial.

The move has seemingly appeared the discontent of population of Saigon who was profoundly shocked at the unfriendly attitude of the Japanese fishermen in call at this capital.

5. Social Activities

a. On October 11, Friday, at 1000 hours I received the visit of two Hungarian Freedom fighters.

b. On the same evening, Mrs. Choi and I were invited by the Minister of Information and Youth at a reception.

- 13 -

c. On October 12, Saturday, the Popular Cultural Association invited Mrs. Choi and I to a reception in honour of Miss Anderson, the famous Negro singer.

d. On October 14, Monday, Mrs. Choi and I attended a cocktail given by the Vietnamese Red Cross.

e. On the same day's evening, Mrs. Choi and I were invited to attend a reception given by the U.S. Ambassador in honour of the official delegates to the Colombo Plan Conference.

f. On October 15, Tuesday, I was invited to assist at the opening ceremonies of the Colombo Plan Exhibition.

g. On October 17, Thursday, Mrs. Choi and I were invited to a cocktail given by the Rotary Club of Saigon.

h. On October 18, Friday, afternoon, I made a call on the Minister of Education.

In the evening, Mrs. Choi and I attended a reception given by the Education Minister and his wife.

Later on the same evening, we were invited by the Minister of Information and Youth to a film showing. At the same time, the newsreel on President Ngo's visit to Korea was also shown.

With sentiments of deepest loyalty and highest esteem,

Respectfully,

Choi Duk Shin

Choi Duk Shin
Minister to Vietnam

His Excellency

President of Republic of Korea

187

- 14 -

**Attachment : News Clippings On Officials' Meeting
of Colombo Plan Conference**

Copy: Minister of Foreign Affairs

108