

October 10, 1957
**CDS Report No. 58 from Choi Duk Shin to the
President (Syngman Rhee)**

Citation:

"CDS Report No. 58 from Choi Duk Shin to the President (Syngman Rhee)", October 10, 1957, Wilson Center Digital Archive, B-334-057, 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/121056>

Summary:

Choi Duk Shin reports on his meeting with President Diem and other Vietnam dignitaries, plans for the Colombo Conference, Vietnam's National Day celebrations, and Vietnam's National Assembly meeting.

Credits:

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

Original Language:

English

Contents:

Original Scan



October 10, 1957

CONFIDENTIAL

CDS REPORT NO. 058

Excellency,

I have the honour to submit this weekly report No. 058 which is covering the following subjects:

1. Receipt of Instructions
2. Meetings with President Ngo Dinh Diem and Other Dignitaries
3. National Day of the Republic of Vietnam
4. Major Events in Vietnam
5. Social Activities

1. Receipt of Instructions.

In the pouch of this week, I have received the following instruction and informational data:

a. Letter from Foreign Minister Chung W. Cho instructing me to approach the Vietnamese Government in order to enlighten it to the ominous threats of Japan's reviving expansionism toward Southeast Asia.

b. Informational copy of Ambassador Yu Taek Kim's report on the talks with Secretary-General of the Office of President, Republic of China.

c. Copies of excerpt from various news agencies on Japan's economic plans in Southeast Asia.



- 2 -

I am deeply appreciative for Your Excellency's generosity and kindness in sending those informational data to me.

2. Meetings with President Ngo Dinh Diem and Other Dignitaries.

a. Audience of President Ngo

On October 8 (Tuesday) at 6:30 p.m. I was received at the Independence Palace by the President of Vietnam. First of all, I conveyed the greeting from Your Excellency together with profound gratitudes and thanks of our people and Government for his state visit to Korea. I made it clear once again that his visit has tremendously encouraged not only our people, particularly the soldiers on the frontline, but entire peoples of the Free World in the struggle against our common enemy, international Communism.

The President requested me to send his personal greeting to Your Excellency and the people of Korea, while praising highly the wisdom, courage and leadership of Your Excellency in bringing about Nation's recovery after so severe battles against invaders. He also expressed his thanks and gratitudes for enthusiastic and spontaneous welcomes of Korean people, which was the first experience throughout his whole life. The President repeatedly emphasized that this compliments were not merely courteous but from the bottom of heart. Further he commented our people as highly disciplined.

The President also mentioned about the weather of our land, saying that he has seen very healthy and sound faces in the crowd despite hardship and bitterness of the War,

231

and thought it would be brought about by incomparably nice climate which never be felt in his country. He told me that he is going to urge the people of Vietnam to go to under-developed highlands in the north-western part of Vietnam to enjoy better climate; thus becoming healthier than ever before.

The third comments made by the President was related with the inspection tour on the frontline, declaring that he made renew the determination to fight against Communism, in seeing mountains and valleys where tens of thousands of youth shed the blood for defense of human liberty and peace. During our conversation, I recalled the fact that it was rainy when the President went to the frontline, and said, "God blessed you at the time when you went to the frontline by bringing rain and cloud to protect you from the eyes of enemy, just being across the Demilitarized Zone." The President said that the Almighty expressed deep sorrow and grief for those who died on the valleys and hills of battle and I prayed we should make our utmost with all abilities to prevent any repeat of such tragedies on the earth.

As for the demonstration of our Military Academy cadets, he confessed that he never see such wonderful events. Also about "Taekwon," () the President said he realized the real strength of individual soldier of the Republic of Korea Army and praised without stint the combat capability shown in the tank-infantry-artillery demonstration.

The President of Vietnam told me about

- 4 -

Industrial Exhibition that he visited under the guidance of Minister Il Whan Kim. He said he can declare without a moment's reluctance that Korea's industry is more advanced than his and other neighboring countries in Southeast Asia, and expressed deep regret for not being able to see some manufacturing factories of Korea. It seems to me quite certain that industrialization and post-war recovery of our Nation has given most strong impression to the President of Vietnam who has been explaining it to his Government officials at every occasion.

The Vietnamese President then made another applaude about our cultural achievement being displayed in part at the National Museum by declaring that what the Japanese claim as their culture was no more than "the imported" from Korea. "For instance," said he, "the roofing tiles which I had seen in Japan previously are only the exact imitation of Koreans." I made it clear that those being displayed at the Museum are just a small part, since many others were moved to the rear during the War and some of them have been sent abroad for showing to foreigners. The President expressed enormous satisfaction in having the opportunity to see our traditional culture during his visit. He, furthermore, pointed out that Japan has taken away many of Korea's cultural treasures and she did not return them to Korea yet.

At the moment when we were relating to cultural matters, the President referred to a press report quoting Indian Prime Minister Nehru as saying that India, Japan and Red China were "the key big countries in Asia." Nehru, who is currently visiting Japan, told a press conference in

- 5 -

Tokyo that the three countries must try to develop relations for what they will do will affect Asia and eventually the world. The President of Vietnam said Nehru is "a curious man." He further threw cold water over Nehru's attitude and way of thought. At this point I said that Nehru's ambitions based upon the huge population would be far from realization and that his policy would not become the ground of assumption of Asian leadership, adding that he better think of betterment and prosperity of his own starving millions of people.

b. Meeting with the Vice-President

On October 8, I have called on Vice-President Nguyen Ngoc Tho, concurrently Secretary of State for National Economy. During my courtesy call, the Vice-President said President Ngo Dinh Diem explained two hours about his visit to Korea, and advised him to send as many officials as possible to Korea for studying. The remarks by the Vice-President were almost same with what I have heard from the President himself. He confessed to me that it was the first time that the President was so strongly impressed by his visit to our country, in consideration of the fact that he never did so after returning from the same sort of visits to the United States, Australia and Thailand.

As I have reported previously, the Vice-President of Vietnam, the former Ambassador to Japan, is the first man in advocating reparation from Japan.

Permit me, Your Excellency, to report one event which the Vice-President involved. When the Japanese Envoy to Vietnam paid a call on him in the purpose of negotiation

234

- 6 -

for reparation in an arrogant manner, the Vice-President ordered the Japanese Envoy to go out the room, bitterly blaming that his attitude would bring nowhere at the talks. It is said the Japanese Ambassador apologized later. Although there might be no direct connection with this event, Japanese Ambassador Konagaya is relieved from his post recently and due to leave this country next Monday.

c. Meeting with the Foreign Minister

On October 8, I paid a courtesy call on Foreign Minister Vu Van Mau and conveyed the greeting from our Foreign Minister. He said the Presidential party had been received "wonderful and warmest welcomes" from both the Government and people of Korea and repeatedly expressed his thanks.

The topics of our talks were as follows:

(1) Colombo Plan Meeting

To my surprise, the Foreign Minister told me that British Ambassador Parkes in Saigon advised the Vietnamese Government not to invite the Republic of Korea to the Colombo Plan Conference this year.

So I had to send a coded telegram on October 9 as follows:

ACCORDING TO VIETNAM FOREIGN MINISTER WHOM I MET
TODAY COMM BRITISH AMBASSADOR HERE ADVISED HIM NOT
INVITE KOREA TO CURRENT COLOMBO PLAN CONFERENCE PD
BRITAINS GEOGRAPHIC ARGUMENT APPLIES ONLY TO QTE
RECEIVER UNQTE NOT TO QTE DONOR UNQTE PARA
IF GOVERNMENT FEELS NECESSARY TO TAKE SOME ACTION
ON THIS MATTER COMM IT SHOULD BE MADE BEFORE OCTOBER
TWENTYFIRST WHEN MINISTERIAL MEETING BEGINS ENDIT

235

- 7 -

As I was so assured by Ambassador Yang in Washington who has had "almost unanimous approval of our membership" in this organization through the letter of Your Excellency dated 4 September 1957, I told the Vietnamese Foreign Minister that as far as I know, Britain has no objection to the membership of Korea. The Foreign Minister promised me to invite the British Ambassador to his office to clarify the previous advice to the Vietnam Government.

In order to obtain the cooperation of India and Indonesia, I have sent the letter, as was revised, to Mr. Stanley de Zoysa, Finance Minister of Ceylon. A copy of the said letter is attached to this report.

The Officials' Meeting of Colombo Plan Conference began on October 7 in the closed door session.

Countries and localities participating in the current Colombo Plan Conference are:

Australia, Burma, Cambodia, Canada, Ceylon, India, Indonesia, Japan, Laos, Federation of Malaya, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, Philippines, Thailand, United Kingdom, United States of America, Vietnam, North Borneo, Sarawak and Singapore.

For the forthcoming Ministerial Meeting, the United States will dispatch Mr. G. Frederick Reinhardt, Counsellor of the State Department, former Ambassador to Vietnam, as the head of American delegation. Meanwhile, Japan which has sent the second largest delegation, next to Vietnam, is planning to dispatch Vice-Premier Mitsujiro Ishii. Lord Reading, former Foreign Secretary, will be the head of British delegation to the Ministerial Meeting.

38

- 8 -

Canada will be headed by Mr. Browne, Minister without Portfolio; Australia by Mr. R.G. Casey, Minister of External Affairs; Indonesia by Foreign Minister Soebandrio; New Zealand by External Affairs Minister MacDonald and Vietnam by Foreign Minister Vu Van Mau.

The Ministerial Meeting is to be held from October 21 through 24. This Ministerial level meeting is the most important policy-making conference, and also the final stage of Colombo Plan Conference.

(2) Trade Possibility

The Foreign Minister promised me his further efforts for trade expansion between our country and Vietnam on the barter system. Noting that our industry is more advanced than his, the Foreign Minister expressed high hope to export rice and rubber to our country, and in return to import our products.

As for sending a trade good-will mission, the Minister said he is in touch with Vietnamese Chargé d'Affaires in Seoul.

In my humble judgement, Your Excellency, dispatch of a trade mission composed of the minimum number of officials from our Foreign Ministry and Commerce-Industry Ministry to this part of the world is one of the most urgent importance in paving the way for markets of Korean products.

(3) Cultural Exchange

For the everlasting friendship and cordial relations, it was stressed at the meeting the necessity of cultural exchange between the two countries. Foreign Minister Vu Van Mau assured me that the Vietnamese Education Minister would make some concrete plans for this purpose.

27/1

- 9 -

d. The Acting Defense Minister called on me
at this Chancery

On October 10, the Acting Defense Minister called on me at this Chancery. He expressed deep regret not having been a member of the Presidential party to visit Korea, but he said he has heard many things about Korea from the President, General Le Van Ty and other officials. He said the President repeatedly talked about strength and might of the Republic of Korea Army, urging him to make the Vietnamese Army as strong as ours. He said he is planning to send more officers and men to Korea for study of military affairs.

The Acting Defense Minister also disclosed that his President said about Korea's cultural treasures and civilization being "stolen" by the Japanese. At the time when he was going to say good-bye to me, the Acting Defense Minister paid intensive looks at nylon and plastic products of ours being displayed in this Chancery and praised it very highly.

e. Meeting with the U.S. Ambassador

On October 7, I have called on American Ambassador Durbrow to hear from him about the Vietnamese President's state visit to Korea. As a foreign friend and sideseer, the Ambassador said President Ngo's tour was "very successful." He told me that he was invited by the President of Vietnam after his Korean tour and heard from him about extremely high spirit of struggle of the Korean people.

I have been so assured at the talks with the American Ambassador that the President had told him almost exactly what he said to me.

238

- 10 -

f. Meeting with General Williams

At a reception I have met our old soldier-friend Lt. General Williams who is the head of American Military Mission to Vietnam. He told me that the President of Vietnam at a three-hour long talk urged him to help build up his Army as strong as the Korean Army.

At the conclusion of this chapter "Meetings with President Ngo Dinh Diem and Other Dignitaries," I wish to report to Your Excellency with great pleasure that the Vietnamese Education Minister asked me to furnish some text-books of Korean language for the purpose of opening of a Korean language course at the Foreign Languages School. The Free Pacific Language Institute also decided to open a Korean language course as soon as the text-books and instructors are available. In this connection I will ask our Education Minister to furnish the text-books for Vietnamese people, while instructors will be provided for the time being by this Legation.

3. National Day of the Republic of Vietnam

October 26 is the second anniversary of the founding of the Republic and further the first anniversary of Proclamation of the Republic of Vietnam's Constitution.

It is expected that several heads of delegations to the Ministerial Meeting of Colombo Plan Conference, whose countries have recognized the Republic of Vietnam and have been maintaining good relations with this country, will remain until that day to participate in the celebration.

Permit me, Your Excellency, to ask for

239

- 11 -

instructions about whether our Government will send special envoy for the ceremony or designate me as the representative. Also I wish to have message from Your Excellency to be delivered to the President of Vietnam on the occasion of National Day.

4. Major Events in Vietnam

a. National Assembly Convenes

The National Assembly of the Republic of Vietnam convened on October 7 at 9:00 a.m. its second regular session of 1957.

The opening ceremony was presided over by the President of the Republic.

In his address at the National Assembly, the President stressed the necessity for "building on this land of Asia a strong and flexible democracy, capable of facing and solving the problems which are prevailing in all newly independent countries."

In view of importance of his address, I wish to attach herewith the official translation of it for Your Excellency's reference.

b. New Speaker of the National Assembly Elected

On October 10, the National Assembly convened to elect its new Speaker and Vice-Speakers.

Former Speaker Tran Van Lam announced his intention not to be candidate for a new mandate and expressed favor on Vice-Speaker Nhu as his successor. As the result of secret voting, Deputy Pham Van Nhu, former first Vice-Speaker, was elected new Speaker with 93 votes against 3 and 10 abstentions. Vu Quoc Thong, former Vice-Speaker and

240

- 12 -

Truong Vinh Le were elected respectively first and second Vice-Speakers while Deputy Nguyen Phuong Thiep was re-elected Secretary-General.

5. Social Activities

a. October 5 (Saturday)

Late in the afternoon I returned to Saigon.

Both protocol chiefs of the Presidency and the Foreign Office were at the airport to greet me.

b. October 7 (Monday)

I was invited to attend the opening ceremony of October regular session of the National Assembly of Vietnam.

At 1100 hours I called on the American Ambassador.

At the same evening, the British Ambassador invited me to a reception in the honour of the British delegation to Colombo Plan Conference.

c. October 8 (Tuesday)

At 1000 hours I called on the Foreign Minister.

At 1500 hours I called on the Vice President.

At 1815 hours I was received by the President of the Republic of Vietnam at his Independence Palace.

In the evening, I and Mrs. Choi were invited by Mr. and Mrs. Sanderson of Michigan State University's Mission to Vietnam at a dinner.

d. October 9 (Wednesday)

At 1030 hours I called on the Speaker of the National Assembly.

In the evening the Minister for Reconstruction and Town Planning and Director of National Tourism Office invited me to a reception on the occasion of the opening of the Vietnamese Restaurant.

241

- 13 -

e. October 10 (Thursday)

At 1100 hours the Acting Defense Minister called on me at this Chancery.

In the evening, I and Mrs. Choi were invited by the Chinese Minister to Vietnam to a reception commemorating "Double Ten" National Day of China.

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

Attachments: 1. Text of speech by President Ngo Dinh Diem at the opening ceremony of the National Assembly (English translation).
2. Copy of letter sent to Mr. Stanley de Zoysa, Finance Minister of Ceylon.

Copy: Minister of Foreign Affairs

242