

**August 22, 1957**

**CDS Report No. 53 from Choi Duk Shin to the  
President (Syngman Rhee)**

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**Summary:**

Choi Duk Shin reports on his meeting with the South Vietnam Foreign Minister, President Diem's visit to Thailand, and recent Vietnamese and regional relations.

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CONFIDENTIAL

CDS REPORT NO. 053

Excellency,

I have the honour to submit this weekly report No. 053 concerning the following points:

1. Receipt of Instructions
2. Meeting with ROV's Foreign Minister
3. President Ngo-Dinh-Diem's Visit to Thailand
4. Viet-Nam Affairs
5. Social Activities

1. Receipt of Instructions.

There was none of the expected instructions in this week's pouch from our Foreign Minister concerning the representation to the Malayan Independence Ceremony as Your Excellency indicated in the last letter, therefore I had to cable Your Excellency as follows:

"Honor to inform Your Excellency that Formin's directives not received in pouch as to subject in letter number 84".

In this week's pouch I received two copies of informations from Your Excellency's office. One, concerning the possible actions of India on our Unification Problem"; two, information copy of Korean Legation in Manila, subject "Nippon-Sino Team develop Southeast Asian countries".

I appreciate very much this kind consideration from Your Excellency's office.

2. Meeting with ROV's Foreign Minister.

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On August 22, I had an appointment with Foreign Minister. The topics of our conversation this time were:

- a. President's Visit of our country.
- b. Appointment of new ROV Minister to our country.

After a few words of greetings and congratulating the presidential visit to Thailand, I told him that I would like to discuss with him the above mentioned two subjects.

For a. President's visit to our country, he assured me that his President will change the dates of his visit to our country to earlier dates than November as we were previously informed.

When we took out the calendar to discuss the possible dates, he indicated between 25th September and 12th October as favourable dates for the President's visit and made special mention about 9 - 12 October. He asked if those dates would be convenient to us. I said that I would have to report these to my Government.

My recommendations on this matter at the moment are:

- (1) If the dates indicated above are convenient to us, the Minister in Saigon should be instructed by cable to inform the Government of Viet-Nam immediately that the dates are suitable for the visit.
- (2) Responsible officials should be directed to meet the preparations.

Since I feel this change of dates for an earlier visit is very important, I have cabled in code on August 23rd as follows:

"Presidential visit takes to more advanced date PD details follow."

As for the official announcement of the pending visit of President Ngo-Dinh-Diem, I would like to have certain directives to use in discussing with the Vietnamese Foreign Minister at the next

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meeting with him probably right after I get the instructions on the "dates".

For Your Excellency's information I have to report that the travelling program of the President of Viet-Nam has been known to certain people already. At our National Day's reception several foreign pressmen tried to confirm this news from me, my answer to them was "no comment". At another occasion the Chief of USIS in Saigon told me that his office has already reported to his superior in Washington the visiting plan of President Ngo-Dinh-Diem. In this plan, he said "to visit Korea" is included, although the exact dates are unknown. Those few informations indicate that the news of this visit has already leaked out pretty widely.

If I may, please allow me to make a suggestion on this official announcement: About a month before his visit, announce that Vietnamese President Ngo-Dinh-Diem will visit Korea in very general terms, merely mentioning there will be a state visit before the end of the year; and one week or less before his actual departure, to announce his visit program in more details.

I feel this way we can prevent unpleasant or unwishful speculations that could embarrass both our Government and his, and for security reasons, the exact dates are better kept in secret until the last moment.

The above mentioned suggestion on the announcement is merely my own thinking at the moment. I am not sure what the Vietnamese Foreign Minister will say, especially for security reasons we have to respect their opinion. However, next time I discuss this matter with him, it would be better that I have general instructions.

I felt quite relieved when the Foreign Minister told me that he made the suggestion to the President and it was decided that his President will visit our country before India. He again assured me

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that there will not be the slightest change on the policy of anti-Communist and solidarity between our two countries will be stronger and firmer after the visit of his President to our country. Although I still feel uneasy about his visit to India in November, I have to admit that it is a matter entirely beyond my control.

It is true that India's Nehru is making every effort to approach the Republic of Viet-Nam to try and persuade the Government to adopt a policy of "neutralism" to follow him. Today I learned from very confidential source that India's Vice-President is coming to visit this country in September, probably the middle part of that month. It is regrettable that I could not persuade them to stop all association of this country with Neutral Nations such as India, Burma, etc. However, I am pretty sure that the Government of this country will continue its anti-Communist policy internally as well as internationally, as long as President Ngo-Dinh-Diem is in power.

For b. Appointment of New ROV Minister to our country.

The second subject which I discussed with the Foreign Minister at the same meeting was concerning the new Minister of Viet-Nam to replace the outgoing General Douong-Van-Duc. He expressed the regret that there are very few officials who are qualified in English to serve as diplomat. However, his President is seriously concerned about this matter, and the selection procedure is going on.

I told him that in my personal opinion it is better that a full powered envoy be sent to our country before his President's visit. He agreed on this point and will do his best to speed up the matter.

During this meeting I also congratulated him on the successful trip made by his President just recently to Thailand of which the Foreign Minister took part. He said it was a very pleasant trip and the King of Thailand showed his President the most unprecedented courtesy. He further said his impression is that it is almost impossible that a

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country of monarchy and religion as Thailand will ever get a pro-Communist attitude.

3. President Ngo-Dinh-Diem's Visit to Thailand.

The President of Viet-Nam returned from Thailand on Monday afternoon. His plane landed in the middle of a sudden storm, and all the people at the airport prayed for his safe landing.

It seems to me that the King of Thailand had not received any head of state in the recent years, and the President of Viet-Nam received unusual courtesy from the King.

I collected head news on his visit to Thailand and attach these to this report. The Vietnamese Public Information office may publish an official pamphlet later on similar to the pamphlet of U.S. visit.

For Your Excellency's reference I attach herewith an official pamphlet of the President's visit to U.S.A. last May.

4. Viet-Nam Affairs and News from neighbouring countries.

a. Viet-Nam Press has published President Ngo-Dinh-Diem's message of congratulations on our National Day, in English translation as follows:

"On the occasion of the Korean National Day, Republic of Viet-Nam and myself extend our most sincere wishes for your health and your success as well as for the prosperity and happiness of the Korean people."

I am sure that Your Excellency has received this message through Vietnamese diplomatic channel.

b. Viet-Nam - Japan's relations.

As it has been announced some time ago Premier Kishi of Japan will make his second trip to Southeast Asia during the coming month

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of November, and it was also learned that Mr. Kisi will try to solve the "Reparations problem" with Viet-Nam, because Vietnamese Government very firmly insists on "first reparations then economic relations".

On Monday of this week Japanese Ambassador Konagaya (小笠原) left Saigon for Japan. No disclosure of the purpose of his trip; however, there are some rumours saying that the main purpose of his trip is to get concrete proposal on the "Reparations" from his Government. This Japanese Ambassador knows very well what Viet-Nam wants and he knows also that the benefit to be gained from the trade in the future will be much bigger than the amount of "Reparations". He may insist to accept a half-way compromise of Vietnamese proposal in order to sweep out this hindering stone for "Kisi's Southeast Asia Development Plan". Although there is sign of Vietnamese strong stand on "Economic Independence", I have a feeling that the present U.S. Government presses Viet-Nam to accept "Japan's Economic Cooperation". There was a news dispatch to prove that our worrying is not wrong. I attach herewith copy of this news dispatch "Japanese technicians help Viet-Nam develop handcraft and fishery".

I feel these present actions of U.S. aide agencies could hardly be stopped or be persuaded to stop here in Saigon, because those actions were only the result of the policy of U.S. State Department in Washington. We ought to concentrate our efforts on Washington. Newly independent nations have many weaknesses, often they know some of the things are wrong, but they feel sometimes they have to accept suggestions of aide-offering friends.

c. Viet-Nam - Nationalist China's relations.

There is no new development up to this moment to break the deadlock existing between Viet-Nam and Nationalist China on the air transport of repatriating Chinese born in Viet-Nam. China's diplomat expected to solve the deadlock caused by the Vietnamese insisting on repatriating the Chinese criminals in prison, after the return of the President from Thailand. Four days passed and there is still no sign of a solution.



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The Chinese authority tried to let the youngsters of school age go on their own expenses, in order to let them enter school on time. However, it has also failed because of certain reasons.

d. American technicians to help Viet-Nam in Industrial and Economic development.

A group of American technicians arrived in Saigon to help the Vietnamese Government towards the goal of "industrialization". I am attaching to this report the whole text of news dispatch on this matter.

e. Japan - Indonesia Reparation Issue to be solved before Kisi's visit.

AP dispatch said:

"Foreign Minister Fukiyama Sunday said he hopes the pending Japan-Indonesia reparation issue will be settled next December before Prime Minister Kisi visits the Island of the Republic. He told newsmen that negotiations between the two countries have not come to any definite conclusion, although Japanese Consul General Takagi has been negotiating the issue in Djakarta. He said Japan would give priority to her economic cooperation offer in the reparations negotiations."

f. News from Malaya.

Firstly, I have the honour to convey the greetings from the Chief Minister of Malaya to Your Excellency. I attach the letter from the office of the Chief Minister to this report.

There were several dispatches from Malaya concerning the internal as well as international affairs of Malaya which are interesting to note on the eve of her independence.

One, Malaya clamps crackdown on Communist sympathisers;

two, Malayan Chief Minister moves to win over Chinese residents in Malaya;

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three, Malayan Chief Minister warns of Communist danger in Malaya;

four, Malaya to open diplomatic offices in 10 countries after Merdeka celebrations;

five, Malaya would not recognize Red China after obtaining independence;

six, Malaya shall not become an atomic base.

I attach these news dispatches to this report.

5. Social Activities.

a. Friday, August 16, in the evening I attended a reception given by the Chief of Mission of C.A.R.E.

b. Saturday, August 17, in the evening I attended a reception of the Agriculture Division of USOM. At this reception I was introduced to a Vietnamese who is one of the Vietnamese experts on fishery. He asked me about the "Rhee Line". I told him the dual purposes of this line and explained all I know on this line. I was glad that he agreed with our opinion. He complained that the Vietnamese seashore is generally very shallow and that he could not have good fishery products in the limit of 20 kilometers from shore. It seemed to me that my discussion with him on this matter aroused his interest concerning their fishery problems.

c. Monday, August 19, at 1340 hours I went out to the airport to welcome back the President of Viet-Nam returning from Thailand.

d. Tuesday, August 20, in the evening I was invited by Mr. Truong-Vinh-Le, Chairman of the Economic Committee of National Assembly, at a dinner. The Speaker of the Assembly and few other Vietnamese and foreign dignitaries were present.

e. Thursday, August 22, at 1000 hours I called on the Vietnamese Foreign Minister.



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With sentiments of deepest loyalty and highest esteem.

Respectfully,

*Choi Duk Shin*

Choi Duk Shin  
Minister to Viet-Nam

Your Excellency,

President of Republic of Korea.

- Attachments:
1. Photo Album of our National Day celebrations.
  2. Pictorial pamphlet of President's Visit to U.S.A.
  3. News from Malaya.
  4. President Ngo-Dinh-Diem's Visit to Thailand.
  5. News Items.
  6. What Happened in Viet-Nam, Laos, Cambodia.