

August 9, 1956
**CDS Report No. 13 from Choi Duk Shin to the
President (Syngman Rhee)**

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Summary:

Choi Duk Shin reports on his visit to Cai-San Refugee Resettlement Area, Vietnam-Japanese relations, communist activities in Laos, and recent social activities.

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Thursday, August 9, 1956

CONFIDENTIAL.

CDS REPORT NO. 013

Excellency,

I have the honour to submit my weekly report No. 013 covering the following points:

- 1) Receipt of Instructions
- 2) Visit to Cai-San Refugee Resettlement Area
- 3) Vietnam-Japan Relationship
- 4) Situation in Laos
- 5) Social Activities.

1. Receipt of Instructions.

On August 6th I received a copy of "Speech by President Rhee at the Inaugural Ceremony in Seoul, Korea, on 15 August, 1956" and marked "Tentative change may be made by cable". Yesterday, I received an open cable from KORPITAL reading: "Text of Inaugural Speech completely changed please await new copy in pouch".

Also on August 6th I received Your Excellency's Instruction No. 8 dated August 3rd.

- a) I admit that I should have sent only the newspaper clipping in which the answers concerning the matter with Italy were quoted. I will take the advice of Your Excellency as a lesson when dealing with diplomatic communications.
- b) Concerning the matter of the "Military Alliance", although I handled it according to Your Excellency's

CONFIDENTIAL.

-2-

August 9, 1956

instructions, still the unhappy incident happened. I again sincerely regret this.

c) I shall continue to try and seek every opportunity to warn the people of Vietnam and the Government officials of the danger of the Japanese attempt to redominate. I feel they are aware of the danger. However, it seems there is some pressure from outside to persuade them to accept something which they do not like and do not want to accept. When I talked with the Minister of Telecommunications and Public Works, Mr. Tran Van Meo, he complained of the method of aid by saying that he strongly felt aid should first be given on a priority basis to the weak and underdeveloped nations to get them substantially on their feet. However, he added that we are not in a position to criticize their policy. We can only do the best we can. I will report further on this point in Item 3 of this report.

2. Visit to Cai-San Refugee Resettlement Area

a) On invitation of the Commissioner General for Refugees I made a birdseye view of the Cai-San project on Saturday morning, August 4th. We travelled by Presidential plane. Other guests were USOM personnel and members of the Michigan State University Group. Colonel Lee accompanied me.

In an earlier report I briefly mentioned Cai-San and stated that I hoped at some future date to make a visit to the area, and I now hope to make this ground visit in the very near future.

Cai-San is located at the most western edge of Vietnam. It takes about 12 to 15 minutes to fly to this area from Saigon, but

37

CONFIDENTIAL.

-3-

August 9, 1956

is a six-hour drive by car. Cai-San is now known as the largest single effort of mass resettlement of refugees and has attracted much attention from people of other countries. Foreign visitors of note who go into the area are amazed at the accomplishments in such a short period of time. The first movement of refugees was in the latter part of January of this year when 600 left Saigon for the long journey into Cai-San. The total number resettled to date is 42,427 and the ultimate goal in two crop seasons is the resettlement of 100,000 refugees.

The area is a network of canals, or waterways, which serve as a means of communication and transportation, and are a source of irrigation for the surrounding lands. Because of the lack of proper equipment most of the canal-digging was done by hand. Almost 200 kilometers of canals have been excavated to date and this represents an effort of great magnitude. There are two main canals bordering this area and a series of smaller canals connecting with these two main canals.

I am enclosing an album containing aerial photographs and explanations.

b) In this connection and with reference to my remark that USOM personnel were on the same trip, I shall give a brief outline of the activities of this organization. It is known as the United States Operations Mission to Vietnam and is part of the aid program of the U.S. in the Far East. The program in the main is the resettlement and rehabilitation of the refugees who came down from the North. The staff is composed mostly of trained technicians who go out into the field and into the villages to aid and assist in this program.

CONFIDENTIAL

-4-

August 9, 1956

c) With reference also to the members of the Michigan State University Group, I would explain that this group is here to advise the Government of Vietnam in all matters of public administration. The administrative expenses of the group are borne out of USOM funds and is consequently a part of the USOM program. President Diem studied at Michigan State University and the head of MSUG in Saigon, Dr. Fishel, was a classmate of President Diem.

3. Vietnam-Japan Relationship.

There is no new development concerning the relationship between the two countries. The Japanese Ambassador has not yet returned and the Japanese traders are anxiously awaiting his return.

However, there seems to be contradictory news about the relationship between Vietnam and Japan. In a USOM publication of July 26th we read a news item as follows:

"Relations between Vietnam and Japan become closer day by day. This decides the Japanese Government to grant technical aid to Vietnam.

"On July 24th, the Advisor of the Japanese Embassy to Vietnam conferred with Foreign Secretary Vu Van Mau on the subject of technical aid Japan may bring to Vietnam.....".

In contradiction to the above news item there appear in important Chinese daily newspapers published in Saigon front page news items as follows:

39

CONFIDENTIAL.

-5-

August 9, 1956

"..... we cannot have the trade prior to the problem of reparation is settled the goods came from Japan through the agencies of U.S. aid is trade between U.S. and Japan, not the trade between Vietnam and Japan
.....".

Because of its importance I attach the news clipping together with the English translation.

My observation concerning this matter is as follows:

The Japanese are making every effort to export a large amount of their products to Southeast Asia and it seems that they are through the medium of the U.S. aid agencies going to reach their goal despite the growing dislike of them by the people. The leaders of the people here are aware that economic slavery will eventually lead to political slavery in the end. It seems that the U.S. aid agencies are merely adopting the "two birds with one stone" policy, in buying so many goods from Japan.

Through the often-heard complaints from the leaders of the Vietnamese people, we know it is done without their consent or approval, and we feel that they have to accept it at least temporarily. Without a change in the economic policy of the U.S. it will be difficult to prevent it from happening.

The better solution may be to let the Japanese pay the labors of the technicians, goods, machines etc. out of the "Reparations" and not in the form of "Technical Assistance" or "Trade".

CONFIDENTIAL.

-6-

August 9, 1956

We cannot ignore the fact that Japan has many highly trained technicians who are so badly needed in the underdeveloped countries.

Again I repeat that my personal observation is that without a change in the U.S. economic policy it will not be possible to prevent this from happening. I believe the U.S. economic policy should be:

"The underdeveloped countries should have every priority in assistance to them to develop in order to catch up to the advanced countries and so become self-sufficient. Eternal peace will only come after all countries have reached an equal standard of living."

4. Situation in Laos.

It is known to the world that in the Kingdom of Laos there is also a division between "Royal" and "Communist" Laos. These people are known as "Pathet-Lao". This little kingdom had trouble with the Pathet-Lao during the war of Indo-China. There still exists the same Pathet-Lao trouble.

Last week they suddenly opened a conference. The leader of the Pathet-Lao himself flew in an aircraft of the International Control Commission under their protection. They were discussing a "peaceful settlement" of their problems. They claimed their negotiations would be based on respect for the Geneva Agreement and the recommendations of the International Control Commission.

Sunday night's communique said agreement was reached to adhere to the five principles of coexistence outlined by Indian Prime Minister Nehru at the Bandung Conference of African-Asian 4/

CONFIDENTIAL.

-7-

August 9, 1956

powers last year. The two parties agreed to stop all hostile acts toward one another. The two provinces which have been under the Pathet-Lao will revert to the control of the Royal government and Pathet-Lao forces will come under command of the crown.

"Military and civilian committees will be established to work out details of integration of Pathet-Lao elements into the Royal Government."

It seems as though Communist tactics have changed face in Laos too. They may think it is better to fight and win over the government power from the inside. This would not be impossible because the "Pathet-Lao" leader, Prince Sonphannon Vong, is a half-brother of the Prime Minister, Prince Sonvanna, and a nephew of the old King. The Communist-inspired Prince may well win the power in the Palace's wrestling. I report this situation with regret because I cannot ignore the fact of another supposedly defeat in the Free World.

There is much danger and great threat in the area surrounding Vietnam. The only answer to this is "they do not have a strong leader to lead the people to stand firm and fight". I make this statement on my own long-time observation.

5. Social Activities.

a) The Secretary of State for Telecommunications and Public Works returned his call at the Legation. We had a pleasant talk.

b) On Sunday I attended a memorial service for the former Chinese Consul-General, Mr. Yen, who was a very brave patriot during the Sino-Japan war. He had also helped our Goodwill Missions here in the past.

42

CONFIDENTIAL.

-8-

August 9, 1956

c) General Williams returned his call at the Legation.

With sentiments of deepest loyalty and esteem,

Respectfully,

Choi Duk Shin

Choi, Duk Shin
Minister of Korea to Vietnam.

His Excellency

President of the Republic of Korea.

- Attachments:
1. Album of aerial photographs
 2. Newspaper clipping.