

April 19, 1957
Weekly Report from Pyung Sik Son to the President
(Syngman Rhee)

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Summary:

Pyung Sik Son reports on the "International Anti-Communist Exhibit" held in South Vietnam and the visit of a South Korean naval delegation to Thailand.

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Saigon, April 19, 1957

Excellency,

In the absence of Minister Choi, who is conducting his goodwill tour of the Southeast Asian countries, I have the honour to submit to Your Excellency a brief resume of events which have occurred during the last week in Vietnam covering the following points:

1. International anti-Communist Exhibit in Saigon
2. Visit to Bangkok of ROK Navy Squadron
3. Arrival and Performances of Korean Artists Mission
4. Admission of air parcel post packages of Korean origin to Vietnam
5. Junior International Chamber 7th Regional Conference for Asia
6. General Activities

I. International anti-Communist Exhibit in Saigon.

On Monday, April 8, in the afternoon, the inaugural ceremony of the International Exhibit of documents on Communist atrocities and on achievements scored by the four APACL member nations, Vietnam, Nationalist China, the Philippines and Korea, took place in the Saigon Information Hall.

Among the large attendance, the presence of Mr. Vu Van Mau, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and other government members or their representatives, Vice-Speaker of the National Assembly, members of the Diplomatic Corps Vietnamese, Chinese and Korean delegates to the APACL, as well as local and foreign newsmen, was noticed.

The Secretary of State for Information and Youth, Mr. Tran Chanh Thanh, who is Chairman of the Steering Committee of the anti-Communist Campaign in Vietnam, inaugurated the Exhibit.

The Korean section attracted particular attention of the public. It gave a keen and live impression because it was very realistic in its presentation. It represented in a manner close to reality the Communist subversion and atrocities. Its collection of photographs, documents and cinematographic projections, skilfully displayed, eloquently demonstrated the success recorded by the Republic of Korea and its firm and continuing determination to annihilate Communism.

The concrete success of the exhibit was so obvious that upon request of Mr. Tran Tam, Chief of Cabinet of the Information and Youth Department, it was decided to lengthen its display period until April 19, four days more than scheduled, in order to permit the provincial delegates to come and witness the exhibit.

However, unfortunately, an incident occurred on the third day of the exhibit, at noon, when two people tried to tear off a placard posted on the outside wall of the exhibit room. The placard belonged to the Korean Section and showed a Communist attempt to invade across the 38th parallel with indication of communist troops massing along this line. Happily, the intruders were seized on the spot by the police who took them to the Security Bureau for investigation. They were thought to be Communist subversive agents.

On April 17 at four o'clock the two ROK Aircrafts which had brought in the exhibit group flew back to the Saigon Tan Son Nhut airport. They are now stationed here in good condition waiting for the exhibit group who is scheduled to leave Saigon on April 22. In this connection I have contacted the Vietnam Government and upon my continued request it has been agreed that all expenditures concerning board and lodging of the 38 Officers and non-commissioned men at the Officers Mess from April 3 through April 22 will be of no charge. It was a relief because the Korea APACL Group had brought with them no provision.

Also upon request of the Vietnam APACL, the Exhibit Group agreed to place at the disposal of the Vietnam APACL the anti-Communist documents it had brought from Korea, except the film reels, the weapons seized from the Communists and the mannikins. The Vietnam APACL earnestly requires these documents for its forthcoming moving exhibit through the countryside.

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However, it was also agreed by written note between Korea and Vietnam APACL that these documents will be kept in good condition and sent back to Korea in case of need. The eventual sending fees of these documents will, of course, be borne by the Vietnamese Government.

2. Visit to Bangkok of ROK Navy Squadron.

In compliance with instructions from the Foreign Ministry a note was sent to the Thai Embassy in Saigon enclosing a copy of the Operation Order of the ROK Navy to visit the port of Bangkok for the purpose of ocean navigation practice and observation of naval installations of friendly nations in the Southeast Pacific.

On April 5, a cable expressing the approval of this visit by the Royal Thai Navy was communicated to this Legation and read as follows:

"ROYAL THAI NAVY IS VERY GLAD TO RECEIVE THE GROUP OF BATTLE SHIP OF KOREAN NAVY AT BANGKOK ON THE 4TH OF NEXT MONTH PD THE OFFICIAL ANSWER WILL BE SEND BY THE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS SOON PD

COMODORE YING SRIHONG
CHIEF OF INTELLIGENCE
DEPARTMENT OF THE THAI
ROYAL NAVY

This information was immediatedly transmitted to the Chief of Staff of ROK Navy in Seoul by the following cable:

"ROK NAVYS VISIT TO BANGKOK AGREED BY THAI NAVY PD OFFICIAL INVITATION FORWARDED LATER UPON RECEIPT".

3. Arrival and Performances of Korean Artists Mission.

a. At the same time as receipt of the Foreign Ministry's instructions, requesting assistance and collaboration to the Korean Artists Mission, a cable which reads as follows, informed us of the expected arrival in Saigon of the group:

"APACL ARTIST MISSION LEFT INCHUN APRIL 3 FOR SAIGON ABOARD NAVY SHIP PD SCHEDULED ARRIVE SAIGON APRIL 14 CMA SCHEDULED STAY SAIGON 8 DAYS PD CHIEF MISSION MR CHANG KEEYUNG CMA MISSION NUMBERS I26 CMA SHIP NAME KEBONG CMA CAPTAIN NAME MAJOR KIM TAISUCK CMA CREW NUMBERS IO9 PD DETAILS FOLLOW BY PAUCH"

In this connection I visited Mr. Tran Tam, Chief of Cabinet of the Department for Information and Youth, and through his medium we were able to locate a Vietnamese producer, owner of a big theatre, who consented to cooperate with us in this enterprise. A contract has been set up according to which the Group will have its performances once a day from April 16 to 20 inclusive.

b. As a matter of fact, the vessel carrying the group arrived in Saigon port on April 13 at five o'clock in the afternoon. For this first day, the group personnel remained on board the vessel. On the next day the feminine personnel, including 22 artists, was moved to an hotel in Cholon, whereas the male members remained on the vessel.

c. On April 16, the group gave its first performance under the sponsorship of this Legation. Around 800 guests answered the invitation of the Legation issued in the name of Minister and came and assisted at this first presentation in Saigon. Among the attendance were Cabinet members, Speaker and Deputies of the National Assembly, members of the diplomatic corps, political and social organizations and members of the press.

d. After the first performance it was realized that the theatre was too small for both music and dance performances. I then contact the French cultural counselor, Debuissy, and obtained authorization for the Symphony Orchestra to play in the French Embassy-owned Norodom Theater located in Saigon. Aside from the advantage given to permit the orchestra to give its performance in a more suitable place, this change in theater also gave the advantage of bringing a large attendance, because the citizens of Saigon and most of the foreigners who live in Saigon, appreciate very much classic music, while the Chinese who form the main population of Cholon, about seven kilometers from Saigon, show interest only in dancing and light music. In this connection the Journal d'Extreme Orient a well known French language daily here has given much assistance in advertising the performances to the public and has highly lauded the value of the Seoul City orchestra.

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e. Of great significance was that the Korean Artists Mission was granted an audience with President Diem. On April 18, at noon, under my guidance, Mr. Chang, Chief of the Mission, the Conductor, of the Orchestra, Dr. John S. Kim, and artist Cho Yong Za, called at Independence Palace. President Diem warmly received us in the saloon. He seemed very glad of the visit and talked with us for nearly an hour. At the time of our taking leave of President Diem, he promised to extend every facility to the Mission and also advised us to visit Vice President Nguyen Ngoc Tho. We learned that after the audience, orders had been given by President Diem to exempt all taxes on theatrical performances in favor of the Mission, an exemption which had been before refused to Mr. Chin Hang Gong by the Finance Department.

f. Another success which has been gained is the granting of free charge for transit visas for Hongkong for the Mission's personnel. The Mission's personnel had been given ordinary travel certificates and the British Government regulations require US\$ 1.50 as visa fee per each of the 116 travel certifications. I called on the Consul of the British Embassy and after explaining the financial situation of the mission, obtained free charges for the granting of these visas. The saving to this mission was US\$ 174.

g. The Mission was scheduled to leave Saigon for Hongkong in two groups. The vessel group will leave in the morning of April 22. The second group will leave by air on Tuesday, April 23. In this connection, Mr. Chin Hang Gong, Chief of the Korea APACL delegation left for Hongkong on April 16 in order to make arrangements for the Mission's performances there.

h. May I also add that on this evening April 19, the Saigon National Broadcasting Service will register on tape the musical performance of the Seoul City Orchestra given in Norodom Theater and will diffuse it later on its regular wavelengths.

4. Admission of air parcel post packages of Korean origin to Vietnam.

Concerning the matter of admission of air parcel-post packages of Korean origin to Vietnam, I contacted this morning the Director General of Posts and Telecommunications. The latter revealed to me that the proposal by the ROK Ministry of Communications has been entirely agreed upon by the Director General of Posts and Communications here.

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He said that it now only remains for the Ministry of Communications of the Republic of Korea to decide as to the date of the overture of the operations.

He further stated that it would be a desirable thing for an arrangement to be made between the Communications Ministry and the Legation of Vietnam in Seoul to fix various postal and telecommunications tariff and this would be in the interest of of both the Vietnamese and Korean Governments. He also expressed the hope to see the agreement carried out as soon as possible.

5. Junior International Chamber 7th Regional Conference for Asia.

The Jaycee 7th Regional Conference for Asia opened this year in Saigon on Monday April 15. The Conference will last through Saturday April 20, and is aimed at gathering together the Jaycee of Asia members in order to exchange their experience "in the common ideal of service to humanity and to their communities". The Republic of Korea was represented in this Conference by Mr. Charles Chang.

6. General Activities.

a. On Saturday 13, at 3:00 p.m., Mr. Elbridge Durbrow, new US Ambassador to the Republic of Vietnam, arrived in Saigon Tan Son Nhut airport, coming from Singapore. I was in the official party at the airfield to greet the new US diplomat.

The US career Foreign Service Officer, with the rank of career Minister, was nominated by President Eisenhower to the post here on March 1. He was until his appointment Consul General in Singapore.

Ambassador Durbrow first entered the US diplomatic service in 1930 and served in Warsaw, Bucharest and Moscow until 1937 when he transferred to Naples as Consul.

After special study at the University of Chicago, he went to Rome in 1940. Two years later he was returned to Washington to join the Division of Eastern European Affairs. He became Chief of that Division in 1944, the same year that he served as Liaison Secretary to the UN Monetary and Financial Conference at Bretton Woods, New Hampshire.

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At the end of World War II, he was again assigned to Moscow as Counsellor of Embassy, the post he held until 1948 when he was named Deputy Director of Foreign Affairs of the staff of the National War College.

In 1950, he became Chief of the Division of Foreign Service Personnel until 1952 when he became Counsellor of Embassy at Rome.

The new Ambassador was educated in the US and in France. He graduated from Yale University in 1926 with a Bachelor of Philosophy degree. He did graduate work at Stanford University and the University of Dijon in France in 1927.

Ambassador Durbrow took the solemn oath of office at Washington last month, at the same time at G. Frederick Reinhardt, former US Ambassador to Vietnam took the oath of office as Counsellor of the State Department.

b. On April 15, I attended a reception given by US Chargé d'Affaires a.i. Daniel V. Anderson, to welcome newly appointed US Ambassador Elbridge Durbrow.

c. On the occasion of the Jaycee 7th Regional Conference of Asia, President Diem will give a reception at Independence Palace on Saturday April 20, at which I will have the honor to assist.

I have the honour to be,
with deepest respect,
Your Excellency's obedient
Servant,



Pyung Sik Son
First Secretary
Korean Legation in Saigon.

His Excellency
President of Republic of Korea.

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