

March 15, 1957
**CDS Report No. 37 from Choi Duk Shin to the
President (Syngman Rhee)**

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Summary:

Choi Duk Shin reports on his planned trip through Southeast Asia, the upcoming APACL meeting to be held in South Vietnam, and recent Vietnamese affairs.

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Confidential.

GDS REPORT NO.037

Excellency:

I have the honour to submit my Weekly Report No.037 covering the following points:

1. The trip to Southeast Asia
2. APACL
3. Vietnam Affairs
4. Diplomatic calls and social activities.

1. The Trip to Southeast Asia.

On March 12 I received a telegram from FORMIN, translated into English as follows:

"PLEASE REPORT THE ITINERARY OF THE TRIP"

On the same day I received from Hong Kong a telegram stating that Chang and Lee (the two who were named to accompany me on this trip) would arrive in Saigon on Tuesday, March 12. However, due to a delay in transportation caused by an accident, they will not now arrive in Saigon until some time today, March 15, and as I write this report I am expecting their arrival.

Upon receipt of this definite information on March 12 I commenced to make the necessary preparations for the trip and pending their arrival I have tentative schedules drawn up as follows:

- 1) Trip to Laos and Cambodia, March 18 to March 25.
- 2) Trip to other suggested countries will be scheduled sometime during the period March 29 to May 10.

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I have the instructions of Your Excellency and have also collected some materials which I can use during the conversations I will have with the people whom I shall meet. However, since I am in receipt of no definite instructions regarding possible publicity being given to this intended trip, I am a little concerned for the reason that it is not possible to keep such a trip a secret and, as it becomes known, the press and information services may attach some significance to the fact that no announcement was made by the Government of Korea, nor this Legation. My thoughts are that we do not have to make special efforts to widely publicize this intended trip, but if pressmen should take the initiative and ask for an interview I shall talk to them along the following lines:

- 1) My trip is an informal one and one of goodwill.
- 2) Extend sympathy to them and praise them for their efforts to build up their countries into true democracies: independently, politically and economically.
- 3) Colonialism is fading away, but we must be watchful of the new form of colonialism and the possible revival of the old imperialism.
- 4) "God helps those who help themselves", and we, the new-born nations should stick together which is more important than to ask some big powers for help and assistance.

I strongly feel that if publicity of this trip is too strictly controlled, suspicion of our intentions will be aroused.

Due to necessary confirmation of airline flights and other procedural matters, I can submit my detailed schedule only in my next Weekly Report.

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2. APACL.

The preparations by the Vietnamese Chapter of the APACL for the Third General Meeting are remarkable. They are also ready to receive our Artists Mission and the anti-Communist exhibition. The responsible Vietnamese official, Mr. Tran Tam, today called on me and told me that everything is in readiness, but that they are urgently expecting that responsible persons will come to Saigon with the necessary propaganda materials and programs in order to have wide publicity as early as possible.

I, therefore, feel it is necessary and also worthy to have travel to Saigon, as early as possible, by air transportation two responsible persons, one from the Artists Mission and one from the anti-Communist exhibition team. I have cabled the Chairman of APACL, Mr. Chin Han Kong, through Foreign Minister, on this matter.

I offer to Your Excellency the humble suggestion that perhaps Your Excellency might consider sending a congratulatory message to this Third APACL General Meeting.

3. Vietnam Affairs.

a. Vietnam is recognized by Lebanon, and the newly independent Ghana is recognized by Vietnam.

A Vietnam press dispatch on March 9 announced that the Government of the Republic of Lebanon has officially recognized the Republic of Vietnam. This brings to 42 the number of countries which have officially recognized the Republic of Vietnam.

Another Vietnam press dispatch on the same day said the Government of the Republic of Vietnam had decided to officially recognize the newly independent state of Ghana.

In this connection it is worthy of comment that the Republic of Vietnam has scored many successes in recent times in the diplomatic field.

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Further, in fact, although officially not having announced their recognition the following countries recently voted in favour of Free Vietnam's admission to the United Nations: Ireland, El Salvador, Peru, Panama, Uruguay, Iran, Ethiopia, Denmark and the Dominican Republic.

b. Foreign Minister of Vietnam returns to Saigon.

Foreign Minister Vu Van Mau returned to Saigon on Sunday, March 10, after a private visit to Paris. I was in the party at the airport to greet him.

Today, March 15, I made a call on him and informed him of the fact that I am going to make an informal goodwill visit to several countries in Southeast Asia. He responded with great pleasure by saying that he considered it a very very good idea to make these goodwill visits and expressed that I might tell the people in those countries where I am going to visit the improved situation of Vietnam as coming from a person of a third country.

We then talked about the recent SEATO Conference in Canberra. The Vietnamese Government has been invited to send an observer. This government has sent the number two man in the Defense Department to attend it. An American diplomat told me that the Vietnamese observer had been received very cordially and had had many talks with high ranking officials of SEATO.

The ^FForeign Minister was very pleased with the news that so many ^{Member}/countries of SEATO had expressed their willingness to support the membership of Vietnam. He told me that there had been no decision on this matter at the conference. He is concerned that Great Britain will oppose it because she was co-Chairman of the Geneva Conference on the Indo-China matter. He

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expressed his optimism by saying that some day it will come! I congratulated him on the favourable voices raised at the SEATO Conference. However, I told him that SEATO is an organization for "defensive" only. The "defensive" may still be good for those countries who are in the unified status, but that will not do good to those countries who are divided and have the determination to unify their countries, such as Korea, Vietnam and China.

He answered my above statement in the affirmative. However, his willingness for admittance into SEATO still remained in his face.

c. President's brother and his wife visit America.

Mr. Ngo Dinh Nhu, the President's brother and the closest political advisor to the President, and his charming wife, who is the official hostess at the Palace, left Saigon on March 12 en route to the United States.

There are speculations which are varying and rather contradictory to each other. Some say since Mr. and Mrs. Ngo Dinh Nhu are very important figures in the political scene of Vietnam that their trip to the U.S.A. is indeed a very significant one. However, some say their trip is a kind of "recreation" one since there are rumours that since the attempted assassination of the President last month that this couple is being blamed for having too active a role in the home affairs.

d. Vietnam-China Relationship. (Observance of Ordinance No.48 of August 21, 1956)

It is recalled that Ordinance No. 48 of August 21, 1956 requires that Chinese nationals born in Vietnam territory are required to adopt Vietnamese citizenship. The date for the

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accomplishment of these formalities expired on March 8, 1957. However, the Government of Vietnam has now issued the following statement:

"To comply with the wish expressed by the people concerned, the Government of the Republic of Vietnam decided to grant a one-month last-ditch time limit of reflection starting March 8 to permit them to fully contemplate the advantages from which they can benefit in observing this Ordinance."

There is no indication whatsoever that the Chinese people here are sufficiently satisfied to apply this Ordinance. They are insisting on a free choice of nationality which is customary in international life.

The new Chinese Minister has said that he is still endeavouring to negotiate with the Government of Vietnam to obtain a justifiable solution.

5. Diplomatic Calls and Social Activities.

March 11. The Managing Director and the staff of Free Pacific Press invited me to a dinner at their new office building.

March 12. On the occasion of the 18th Anniversary of the coronation of His Holiness Pope Pisu XII, a brilliant reception was given by the Visitor Apostolic, Monsignor J. Caprio. Mrs. Choi and I were invited to attend.

March 13. My First Secretary, Mr. Sohn, went to the Laotian Legation in Saigon to inform the Minister of my impending visit to his country and to make the necessary arrangements for me to call on him before my trip to Laos.

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The Laotian Minister told Secretary Sohn that he will telegraph his government advising them of this trip and will invite me and my assistants to tea tomorrow afternoon, March 16.

March 14. I called on the Charge d'Affaires a.i. of the U.S. Embassy in Saigon, Mr. Daniel V. Anderson. He told me that the U.S. State Department had dispatched a Circular describing the trip I am going to make and also asked me if he could be of further assistance to me.

I told him the general plan of my trip and asked him if he would inform the U.S. diplomatic representatives in the respective countries where I am going to visit. I told him this request was made because in those countries where I am going to visit there are no diplomatic or consular representatives of our own, and we need the assistance of the U.S. diplomatic missions.

Mr. Anderson promised to assist my trip in every way he can. First of all he will dispatch an urgent telegram to the U.S. Ambassador in Laos informing him of my visit there.

I am attaching newsclippings with this report. In this newsclipping I have placed three items. One is Your Excellency's speech. Of course, it is a little bit late because the newspaper LA GAZETTE which publishes it was formerly a daily paper, but for financial reasons it has now become a weekly one. We appreciate their publishing the speech of Your Excellency in its full text in a very significant space in their paper even though a week old.

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The other two items concern the bad reputation of Japan in Southeast Asia and these items might be useful to our Office of Public Information.

With sentiments of deepest loyalty and highest esteem.

Respectfully,

Choi Duk Shin

Choi, Duk Shin
Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary
of Republic of Korea to Vietnam

His Excellency

President of Republic of Korea.

Attachment: Newsclippings.

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