

March 1, 1957
**CDS Report No. 35 from Choi Duk Shin to the
President (Syngman Rhee)**

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Summary:

Choi Duk Shin reports on March 1st celebrations, recent South Vietnam affairs, including the attempted assassination of President Diem and the possibility of entrance into the U.N. for South Vietnam and South Korea, and his proposed trip to Southeast Asia.

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March 1, 1957

CONFIDENTIAL.

CDS REPORT NO. 035

Excellency,

I have the honour to submit my Weekly Report No. 035 covering the following points:

1. Receipt of Instructions
2. Celebration of March 1 Day
3. Diplomatic Activities
4. Vietnam Affairs
5. Proposed Trip to Southeast Asia
6. Publications

1. Receipt of Instructions.

In the last pouch I received instruction paper addressed to all Representatives abroad in which the speech of March 1 of Your Excellency was enclosed and on February 27 I received a cable saying:

"CORRECTION SAMIL SPEECH PAGE SIX DELETE LINES ONE TWO THREE FOUR PD YOU SHOULD RENUMBER POINTS SO THAT THERE ARE FIVE POINTS INSTEAD OF SIX PD ALSO MAKE SAME CHANGES KOREAN TEXT PD ADVANCE RELEASE WILL BE MADE TWENTY EIGHTH 1600 HRS KOREAN TIME"

Correction in both English and Korean texts was made accordingly.

In the same pouch I also received Instruction No. 45 in which the KOREAN CORRESPONDENT No. 71 was enclosed.

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2. Celebration of March 1 Day.

At 0900 hrs on this great day I summoned most of our compatriots in Saigon and all staff of our Legation to the new Chancery in celebration of the "Birthday of our Republic".

The speech of Your Excellency was read by me and also I made a few remarks along the following lines:

- a. that we should pay respect to those heroes who had already passed beyond
- b. that we are indeed fortunate to have as our leader one of the greatest men of all times to lead us in the struggle against Communism and Japanese imperialism
- c. that the present Government of Japan is continuing to make a few empty gestures of pretended interest of conciliation with our nation in an attempt to influence world opinion, but that they have flatly refused to join us in a constructive move to restore just relations
- d. that the people in the general area of Southeast Asia are still filled with hatred and resentment of the cruel and inhuman acts which they suffered at the hands of the Japanese soldiers during World War II. The people will remember these inhuman acts of cruelty for generations to come. In this connection I cited to them an incident which occurred recently in The Philippines reading from a news dispatch as follows:

"Feb. 8A member of a special Japanese goodwill mission to the Philippines, who served here with Japan's notorious war-time Kempeitai secret police, flew back hurriedly to Tokyo today.

"Captain Shoichi Yanase, formerly attached to Japan's Imperial Military Police at Port Santiago in Manila -- where many Allied

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"prisoners were killed in World War II - boarded the plane under heavy police escort.

"His presence in Manila, which became known when a member of a war widows organization protested his arrival, evoked a flurry of resentment and protests from war veterans associations and former victims of the Japanese Kempeitai."

- e. that we should know the true worth of independence of a people. We should protect at all times our independence from again being taken from us.
- f. that they, our compatriots in Southeast Asia, should be proud of being the forerunners of our country to this area and to have been given the mission of creating good relationship with the people in this general area. In order to further this good relationship I advised them to change their old ideology to a new one; namely, that we are now the people of an independent country not as we were before the year 1945. And also further that they should remember that we are not more in the area of colonial rule. We are living in a new-born independent country.

The ceremony closed with a solemn prayer for the long life of a great nation and our compatriots expressed their wishes to pray for the long life of Your Excellency and the continuance of the guidance of Your Excellency towards unification.

3. Diplomatic Activities.

In the past week there were communications made by this Legation with the appropriate authorities of the Republic of Vietnam and also with the diplomatic corps which I report to Your Excellency as follows:

a. APACL.

I received a letter from Mr. Chin Hang Kong, Chairman of APACL Korean Chapter. In this letter he informed me that there

will be a Korean Artists Goodwill Mission coming to Saigon and Bangkok on a naval boat.

The responsible official of the Vietnam APA CL, Mr. Tran Tan, called on me the other day and expressed the welcome of the Vietnam APA CL to this forthcoming visit and asked if it would be possible to lengthen their stay in Vietnam from seven days to ten to 14 days days. This request was made with the thought in mind of giving an opportunity to the visiting mission to visit and exhibit to the larger and smaller towns and villages outside of Saigon.

I have communicated this request directly to Mr. Kong and also made the suggestion that all proceeds from the tickets purchased go to "charity".

I feel that the idea of the members of the said mission living on the boat is a very good one. It is good not only from the viewpoint of saving expenditures, but also from the point of view of discipline.

The artist mission is a very worthy one which I would like to recommend very strongly.

The same Vietnamese APA CL official told me that they are also expecting to have an anti-Communist exhibition in Saigon. The newly built exhibition hall has already been reserved for this purpose.

When I was last in Seoul I was briefed by the responsible officer Colonel Choi on the plan of a roving exhibition. I believe the preparation of such an exhibition has been completed. I have written to Mr. Kong and suggested that this anti-Communist exhibition team could probably also be on the same naval ship in order to save added expenditures.

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b. A cruise program by the Republic of Korea Navy.

Our Foreign Minister had instructed me to arrange the good office of Thailand's Embassy in Saigon to grant an authorization for a visit to the Port of Bangkok by a Republic of Korea Navy Squadron and to render necessary assistance and cooperation to her during her visit to the said port.

On February 27 I visited the Thai Ambassador to Vietnam and consulted with him the purpose of the matter and transmitted to him a letter, copy of which is attached to this report. The Ambassador assured me that he would take up this matter immediately with his own government.

c. On February 21 I called on the Secretary of State to the Presidency and also the Foreign Minister ad interim during the absence of Foreign Minister Vu Van Mau who is still in Paris for the purpose of his private affairs. There is still no definite schedule for his return to Saigon.

This call was purely a courtesy call and to inform him of my return to Saigon from Korea.

d. On February 26 I called on the Vice President and also Secretary of State for National Economy for purpose of courtesy call only.

e. On February 26 I called at the American Embassy to see Mr. Anderson who is at present chargé d'Affaires following the departure of the former Ambassador, Mr. G. Frederick Reinhardt.

Mr. Reinhardt left Saigon for his new assignment as Counselor of the U.S. Department of State during my absence in Korea. The assignment which he has now received was formerly occupied by Douglas McArthur II and who has now left to take up his appointment as Ambassador to Japan.

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I expressed my regret that I could not see Mr. Reinhardt prior to his departure for the States and said that I had been acquainted with him since 1955 when I had headed a mission to Vietnam. That during the past ten months in Saigon I had appreciated his friendship and that we had many times exchanged views.

Mr. Anderson further told me that Mr. Reinhardt's new job in the State Department is really a very important one.

As far as I know Mr. Reinhardt is an expert on Russian affairs and he had served in Moscow, Germany and Paris before coming to Vietnam. He possesses the knowledge of many important languages such as Russian, French and German.

I will not lose contact with Mr. Reinhardt and will attempt to keep in correspondence with him.

4. Vietnam Affairs.

a. Talk with the Secretary-General of Foreign Ministry of Vietnam.

Today, March 1, the Secretary-General of Foreign Ministry, the second man to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Pham Dang Lam, called on me at this Legation and we talked for about 50 minutes, the essence of the conversation which I report as follows:

Firstly, he offered his congratulations on this great day of Korea, then he told me the following story: Recently, in Manila, the Foreign Minister of the Philippines had summoned the envoys of Korea, Vietnam and China and asked their opinions as to the kind of attitude their respective governments would take if the U.S. Government would recognize Red China.

I told him that I believed Mr. Kim, our Envoy in Manila, would have to report this matter to my government, and that I had as yet not

received any instructions from my government. I then asked him if his government had reached any decision on this matter. He could not tell me any decision from his own government. I judged that apparently the Government of Vietnam is withholding a decision pending a search of expressions from other concerned countries.

He said that in his opinion this expression of opinion matter probably was initiated by the Philippines. It is also possible that the U.S. Government had given a hint in order to hear an expression of opinion from the Asian group of countries before she made a final decision. I did tell him that in my own opinion that in any event we the most concerned nations should unify our actions. If there are some Western powers who affect the U.S. policy, why should we not make a combined effort to persuade the U.S. Government to stand firm.

We then reviewed the many similarities of our two countries, even in the recent vote in the United Nations General Assembly was the same number of nations (40) to support the entry of our two nations into the United Nations Body and also the same number in the Russian block (8) against us. He also cited the facts that Canada (a member of the International Supervisory Commission in Vietnam) is neutral to Vietnam but ^{favourable/}to Korea, but he also mentioned that India is neutral toward Vietnam but against the Republic of Korea.

We both emphasized the real necessity of our cooperation.

It was a very fruitful and constructive talk with this high-ranking official of the Foreign Ministry of Vietnam.

b. President Ngo Dinh Diem's narrow escape in attempted assassination.

As reported to Your Excellency in my last report a most unfortunate incident occurred at the inaugural ceremony of the Economic Fair at Banmethuot. It was not until Monday, February 25, three days after the incident, that an official communiqué was issued on the Banmethuot incident stating:

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"The author of the Banmethuot attempt declared he had intended to shoot at the President of the Republic, but that at the last moment he had one instant's breakdown: he shot a fraction of a second too late and missed his mark."

It is said that the shot was made with a sub-machine gun at a distance of four meters. A shot came out, but the sub-machine gun got jammed immediately.

During these past few days there are many groups of people who are praying for the blessing of the Almighty in saving their President so that he may continue to perform his noble mission as Saviour of the Motherland.

The day following the incident, February 23, I received from our Foreign Minister Cho a telegram which I immediately transmitted to the Foreign Ministry of the Republic of Vietnam and on February 25 I personally went to the Presidential Palace to sign in the book which is specially designed to receive the signatures of dignitaries for the purpose of sympathy or congratulation to the President.

Although the investigation is still going on it is said that this attempt was made by the elements of old feudalism and it is still maintained that this is in an attempt on the part of the Communists. In any case, it was a lesson without big sacrifice.

c. Land Allotment Operations.

Recently, the Government of the Republic of Vietnam issued Ordinance No. 57 relating to the allotment of lands to tenants. The authority has been working very hard these days to portion land which must not exceed three hectares for any farmer having less than four children and five hectares are available for those persons having over five children. (One hectare is equivalent to 10,000 square meters.)

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This land registry operation has proven to be of great necessity to farmer tenants and it has contributed to:

- i) the establishment of a land property file for each new landowner, and
- ii) the adjustment by the land-registry agents of the area to be allotted to each tenant.

5. Proposed trip to Southeast Asia.

As far as the proposed trip to Southeast Asia is concerned, I am now ready.

I have been in contact with the concerned diplomatic and consular officers here in Saigon. There will be no difficulty for Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, Malaya and Singapore. It is also possible to get the cooperation of the Consul-General of Indonesia in Saigon. For Burma and Ceylon I believe we can get an entry visa in Bangkok or in Singapore as there are no representatives in Saigon at the present time.

Geographically, and from air traffic point of view, the trip to Laos and Cambodia can be separated from the trips to other areas. Since the scheduled 3rd General Meeting of APAAC will be held at the latter part of this month in Saigon, I may suggest that the trip to Laos and Cambodia be completed before 25th March and that I will resume the trip to the other countries after the meeting is ended.

6. Publications (Text of Speech of Your Excellency for March 1 Day)

Your Excellency's March 1, 1957 speech was published in our Weekly Bulletin on the last day of February as instructed and dispatched to "Vietnam Press" for its use. On March 1, the

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the "Vietnam Press" documented it in its evening edition.

The majority of the Chinese newspapers had printed excerpts of the text. The only French language daily newspaper "Extra-Orient" printed the said text of speech and a photograph of Your Excellency in a very important section of their paper.

I enclose with this report the above-mentioned "Vietnam Press" and also a newsclipping in which the collections of the excerpts and texts of your speech published by French and Chinese language newspapers are included.

It is also of importance to note that the "RyuKyu" matter has also aroused the attention of the people here. The publications about RyuKyu are also enclosed in the newsclipping.

With sentiments of highest esteem and deepest loyalty,

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.

Attachments: