

January 25, 1957
**CDS Report No. 33 from Choi Duk Shin to the
President (Syngman Rhee)**

Citation:

"CDS Report No. 33 from Choi Duk Shin to the President (Syngman Rhee)", January 25, 1957, Wilson Center Digital Archive, B-330-097, The Korean Legation in Vietnam, Reports from the Korean Mission to the United Nations and Republic of Korea Embassies and Legations, Syngman Rhee Institute, Yonsei University.
<https://digitalarchive.umd.edu/document/120926>

Summary:

Choi Duk Shin reports on his visit to the Chinese Resettlement Center, plans to visit Caisan Refugee Resettlement Area, and recent Vietnam affairs.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from Syngman Rhee Institute, Yonsei University

Original Language:

English

Contents:

Original Scan

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CONFIDENTIAL.

CDS REPORT NO. 033

Excellency,

I have the honour to submit my Weekly Report No. 033 covering the following points:

1. Receipt of Instructions
2. Visit to Chinese Resettlement Center called "Freedom Village" on Freedom Day
3. Plan for visit to Caisan Refugee Resettlement Area
4. Appointment of Cultural Attache to this Legation, my humble suggestion
5. Vietnam Affairs
6. Social Activities

1. Receipt of Instructions.

In the last pouch I received no instructions other than No. 40 which enclosed THE KOREAN CORRESPONDENT NO. 69.

2. Visit to Chinese Resettlement Center called "Freedom Village" on Freedom Day.

As we recall the day of January 23rd, 1954 was the day marked for the victory of freedom of human beings which we have fought for under the highly inspired guidance and leadership of Your Excellency. On that day the UN Command had received the then POWs of Korean citizens and Nationalist Chinese from the custody of the so-called Five-Nations Neutral Supervisory Commission and Indian Troops and released those freedom-longing youngsters to the free side of the world.

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The Nationalist China commemorated the day as "FREEDOM DAY" for the more than 14,000 Chinese who chose to go to Formosa instead of the Mainland of China where their families were waiting for them. That day marked the turning point of the Nationalist China's prestige, both internal and external. From that day the world began to look at President Chiang's government as still being the spiritual régime of the Chinese in the mainland and the unsuccessful rule of the Communists in China aroused the attention of the people of the Free World.

It is most noteworthy that China commemorate this very important day as her "FREEDOM DAY".

Although the Chinese community here in Vietnam has no direct concern with the action of three years ago in our country, however, for those people who have tasted the Communists rule in Northern Vietnam and escaped from there about two years ago, the same FREEDOM DAY is to them worthy of commemoration and celebration.

There are two Freedom villages formed with the Chinese refugees from North Vietnam. There were about 40,000 Chinese out of 60,000 in North Vietnam who escaped the Communists' rule and fled to the South. Among these 40,000 Chinese refugees there were about 4,000 who could not take care of themselves or be taken care of by relatives, so these 4,000 formed their own Freedom villages.

At the commemoration ceremony at which I was invited to speak, I reviewed for them very briefly the actual story of the POWS issue and I emphatically gave them the two main lessons to be learned from this issue:

- a. That freedom was secured by the efforts of freedom-loving anti-Communists themselves, not by the help of any other people; and

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b. The determination to "rescue" them by our government and Free China's government, using every means available to us, if the UN Command could not rescue them. This determination by Korea and Free China was the key factor to reflect the Free World's determination, and that this day three years ago marked the turning point of the downfall of world communism and the uprising of the Free World.

My speech drew a very strong applause.

3. Plan for visit to Caisan Refugee Resettlement area, and general overall picture of refugee resettlement villages.

I asked the Commissioner General for Refugees to furnish me with appropriate information in order that I might better understand the general situation of this very important problem, and also asked if a trip by car could be arranged to Caisan where I could view at first hand the successful efforts which have been achieved in this area in resettling the refugees.

The United States Operations Mission (USOM) also furnished me with reports they had compiled along with pamphlets and brochures. The first large undertaking by USOM was the assistance to the Vietnamese government in the resettlement of the refugees who had come down from the North in the operation EXODUS, and without this assistance the Vietnamese Government could not have accomplished the task of taking care of the refugees, which task was of great magnitude.

As I reported to Your Excellency in a much earlier report Caisan is the largest known mass refugee resettlement effort to have been undertaken and it has been completely successful.

I give below a general overall picture of the refugees in Vietnam:

a) Statistics:

Actual number of refugees to flee from North Vietnam 860,206

Added to this the 40,000 Chinese making a total of 900,206

The breakdown into religious groups is:

Catholic	-	676,348
Buddhist	-	182,817
Protestant	-	<u>1,041</u>
<u>Total</u>	-	860,206

These refugees live in a total of 286 villages which are divided into religious camps as follows:

Catholic	-	265
Buddhist	-	18
Protestant	-	3

b) From a cultural point of view:

From the commencement of the great movement of the EXODUS and amidst great difficulties and privations, schools were immediately opened. For the scholastic year 1954-1955, there were facilities for 85,000 pupils. However, for the scholastic year 1955-1956, there were sufficient classrooms and teachers for 160,000 refugee students of school age.

c) From a social point of view:

Parallel to the scholastic action, and of equal importance, social activities have been pushed and developed in all of the refugee villages. They are supported by the government or by the many humanitarian organizations of friendly nations, or by private organizations, and finally by self-help initiative on the part of the refugees themselves. There are already 99 dispensaries and 46 maternity wards in the villages. A large hospital for refugees is under construction. This is only a first step in their rehabilitation. Their activities will be multiplied in the future.

d) From the economic point of view:

The first step in the resettlement of the refugees was to give them the means by which they could build their homes and establish their villages. More than 80,000 families already have their own dwellings. There still remain 30,000 families to be provided with necessary materials to put up homes.

The first step is to assist the refugees to become independent and self-sufficient and they can only do this by earning their own living. The Refugee Commissariat and other interested voluntary organizations have sought a means whereby the refugees could earn their own living by encouraging them to revive their craftsmanship. Up to the present time there have been created 328 artisan centers and 98 cooperatives of all sorts; 545 cooperatives are in formation. It is their hope that with the development of the cooperatives and craftsmanship the standard of living of the refugee will be raised and their future thus assured.

The creation of the Commissariat for Refugees, first set up as an emergency agency to look after the refugees exclusively, was a very important one without which the resettlement and rehabilitation of such a large number of refugees would not have been possible.

In the coming week I hope to visit Caisan and the adjoining countryside when I can personally view the accomplishments of this great effort.

4. Humble suggestion that a Cultural Attache be attached to this Legation.

The existence of our Legation here in Saigon I would say has a direct bearing on the anti-Communist movement and also for the first time in history shows the very existence of the

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Korean race and their country under Your Excellency's leadership. However, I humbly confess that I feel we have been inadequate in our efforts to do very much here in the past eight months.

After making a review of the situation of Vietnam and in the adjacent countries of this area in my last few reports, I feel it is my obligation to humbly suggest to Your Excellency that a Cultural Attache be attached to this Legation.

The issue of the weekly bulletin by this Legation was to develop the cultural relations between the two countries. We have worked very hard, but have never been satisfied with our results. I feel the importance is ever-growing, but I do feel that our Legation has not been able to spare the time and work necessary to produce more than this tiny publication. The weekly bulletin serves in the main as a news dispatch.

Our country is great in culture and yet it has not been known nor recognized even slightly by the people in this or the adjacent countries. On the other hand, we also have very little knowledge of them and their cultures. The importance of a 'cultural exchange' is needless to stress. I consider it most necessary to have under me a staff equipped with the necessary knowledge and background of our country who can contribute in a real effort to develop the cultural relations and make a real and lasting friendship through cultural channels.

The scope of the activities should be broad and the coverage of the area should include most of Southeast Asia.

I particularly noticed that the recent National culture convention here in Saigon showed how much the Vietnamese people are stressing the importance of 'culture' and the government is endorsing and fully supporting this movement.

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I attach with this report "The Times of Vietnam" dated January 19, 1957, and would draw to the attention of Your Excellency on page one the item entitled "Meaning and Intent of the National Culture Convention".

The ever-increasing activities of our country will meet the high tide of the 'culture' with much welcome by the people of this country.

5. Vietnam Affairs:

a. Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Vu Van Mau, left for India on the morning of January 22, 1957. He will represent the Republic of Vietnam at the Seventh Anniversary of the Independence of India to be celebrated on January 26th. In his official letter to me I noticed that he will go from India to France to tend to his own private affairs. I was told in conversation by someone that his wife who is still in Paris has been ill for about one year. I gather from this that his private affairs means he is naturally going to see his wife. He will be absent from Vietnam for a period of about three weeks. I was on hand at the airport to say bon voyage to him.

It has now been announced that Secretary of State to the Presidency, Mr. Nguyen Huu Chau, will be acting Foreign Minister during the absence of Mr. Vu Van Mau.

b. A three-member Vietnamese Military Delegation left for Bangkok on January 22, 1957 and will represent the Armed Forces of Vietnam in the capacity of Observers to the Military Exercises to be held in Bangkok within the framework of SEATO January 23rd to January 24th.

c. There was an exhibition of local products held at Saigon Chamber of Commerce on January 19th. Mr. Son Byeng-Sik, my First Secretary, in the capacity of Consul, was invited to attend the opening ceremony. In the congratulatory speech the President of

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the Republic of Vietnam said:

"After having recovered our sovereignty and established our democratic institutions, it remains for us, as I have pointed out many times, to consolidate our independence on the economic field, to reorganize the national economy in order to raise the standard of living of the population, in other words, to achieve democracy in the economic point of view."

d. Colonel Choi, Cheng Hang, Surgeon Chief of First Army ROK, was in Vietnam.

On his way to attend a medical conference which was to have been held in New Delhi, India, from January 21, Colonel Choi came to Saigon. En route to Saigon he was suddenly informed that the conference was postponed indefinitely. The apparent reason for the cancellation is the visit of Russia's Defense Minister Zukov to India. It has been reported that the Russian Minister would visit India from January 22nd through to India's Independence Day on January 26th.

Since he had to stop his trip here in Saigon, I arranged for him to visit several medical installations in Vietnam and he made the acquaintance of several medical officers of the Vietnam Armed Forces. I also asked him to see the hospital in which the Captain of our ship "Chang Hang" is hospitalized. After he had talked with the doctor who attended the Captain he learned that the operation had been successful, but that the Captain's life had been in danger as the illness was a most serious one. We are indeed grateful to the medical staff of the hospital "La Grall" for what they have done for the Captain.

Colonel Choi left for Korea this morning. I assure Your Excellency that he did not waste any of his time and his short

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stop-over in Saigon was worthwhile for him to become acquainted with the medical situation and the people here, especially from the military point of view. I regret that his visit was so sudden and so short.

6. Social Activities.

January 20th. A charity bazaar organized by the Vietnamese Armed Forces Women's Aid Group was officially opened on January 20th at 1700 hours. Mrs. Choi and I were invited to attend this inaugural ceremony. We were happy to buy some of the goods to support this charity movement.

The same evening I invited three Vietnamese friends to dine at my Legation. One of the guests, Mr. Thiep, is a National Assemblyman and is also the Secretary-General of the same Assembly. At the same time he is the Director of the only Vietnamese owned French language newspaper "La Gazette". He was also Chief Delegate to the previous three APACL meetings. He is one of the powerful persons in this country. Another guest is Mr. Tran Tan who is in charge of the press in the Department of Information and Youth. The third guest is the Chief Editor of the above-mentioned "La Gazette".

I expressed my appreciation of their constant help in the matter of publications and they all promised me to assist us continuously in their capacity.

January 23rd. At 0900 hrs General Lemnitzer and his party left Saigon for Manila. Ambassador and Mrs. Reinhardt; General and Mrs. Williams, and the Vietnamese Chief of General Staff General Le Van Ty, were present at the airport. Mrs. Choi and I were also at the airport to say bon voyage.

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At 1000 hrs the same day the newly-appointed Minister of National China to Vietnam made his first courtesy call on me at the Legation.

On the same evening Mrs. Choi and I were invited by the Acting Chief of USOM, Mr. and Mrs. D.C. Lavergne, to a dinner. U.S. Ambassador and Mrs. Reinhardt; Dr. and Mrs. Fishel, the Chief of the Michigan State University Mission to Vietnam; the Governor of the National Bank of Vietnam and his wife, Mrs. Phuong, and Miss Paquette, and one other high ranking government official were the guests. We had a very nice opportunity to talk over various subjects between us.

January 24th. At 1100 hrs I received a formal courtesy call at my Legation by the new Australian Minister to Vietnam. He has just arrived and presented his credentials only a few days ago.

On the same evening Mrs. Choi and I gave a dinner for the visiting Colonel Choi and several other American Officers and their wives from MAAG.

With sentiments of deepest loyalty and highest esteem.

Respectfully,



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

His Excellency
President of Republic of Korea.

Attachments.

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