

November 1, 1956
**CDS Report No. 22 from Choi Duk Shin to the
President (Syngman Rhee)**

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Summary:

Choi Duk Shin reports on South Vietnam's National Day celebrations, the introduction of Vietnam's constitution, and recent Vietnamese political affairs, including the arrest of a Japanese fishing boat.

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November 1, 1956

CONFIDENTIAL.

CDS REPORT NO. 022

Excellency,

I have the honour to submit my Weekly Report No. 022 covering the following points:

1. Receipt of Instructions
2. Observance of National Day of Vietnam
3. Constitution of The Republic of Vietnam
4. General Chung Il Kwon and Representatives of Korean Pressmen leave Saigon for Home
5. Vietnam Affairs
6. Social Activities

1. Receipt of Instructions.

In the last pouch I received Instruction No. 22 dated 25 October 1956 together with a personal letter and a copy. I will have the honour to transmit in a few days the enclosed personal letter of Your Excellency dated 22 October to the President of the Republic of Vietnam.

I also received Instruction No. 23 dated 25 October 1956 in which I had the honour to receive the praise of Your Excellency and to know that my humble suggestions had been warmly received by Your Excellency.

2. Observance of National Day of Vietnam.

The date of 26 October this year has a two-folded meaning. Namely, one, to mark the one-year history of the New Republic, and, two, to promulgate the Constitution of the Republic of Vietnam.

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The ceremonies to mark this great occasion were colorful and numerous. The celebrations began in the early morning by a solemn ceremony in memory of the National heroes and heroines at a crossroad boulevard in the town of Saigon, where an imposing memorial was erected.

At 5.30 in the morning, high-ranking Vietnamese officials, as well as diplomats and Vietnamese dignitaries, began to arrive and lined up on both sides of the street in front of the Memorial. General Chung and his party and representatives of the Korean pressmen, Mr. Pyun and Mr. Hong, were amongst the other foreign guests present.

At six o'clock sharp the President of the Republic and his entourage arrived. It is to be noted that the President and all Vietnamese officials and dignitaries were in their National dress only for this early morning ceremony in memory of the National heroes and heroines.

The ceremony started with the lighting of the Sacred Torch at the front of the Memorial by the President. A senior member of the Constituent Assembly delivered a speech of mourning paying homage to their glorious ancestors. A minute of silence was observed while the anthem resounded and the ceremony came to an end with the last sound of the anthem.

At 8.30 the same morning the ceremony of promulgation of the Constitution of the Republic of Vietnam took place at the same crossroad boulevard under the Chairmanship of the President. The Vietnamese officials had changed from their traditional dress they had worn earlier in the morning to their usual Western style of dress.

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After one minute of meditation in memory of their fallen heroes, the Home Minister, Mr. Nguyen Huu Chau, read the text of the Presidential decree promulgating the Constitution.

Then came the solemn ceremony of oath-taking of the President. He solemnly swore to:

- 1) "entirely devote myself to fulfill the functions of President of the Republic; to
- 2) " respect, preserve and defend the Constitution; to
- 3) "loyally serve the Fatherland and devote myself to the service of general interest".

After the oath-taking ceremony, the President read his message of address to the people. The translated text in English is attached for the information of Your Excellency in the newsclipping.

During the 21-gun salute to the promulgation of the Constitution, the President, flanked by the Speaker of the National Assembly and the General Prosecutor, the Acting Defense Minister and General Le Van Ty, reviewed the long line of troops.

It is reported that about 300,000 Vietnamese and foreigners had gathered since the early dawn at the aforesaid place to see the different ceremonies, especially the parade of the troops. It is said that Saigon had never witnessed so impressive a march past. 20,000 soldiers belonging to all Arms, with their respective flags, participated in the parade. During the parade several formations of Vietnamese airplanes flew over it, followed by exhibitions performed by jets of the United States and the United Kingdom. The parade ended at 11 a.m.

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From 11.30 to 12 noon, the President received the Heads of the Diplomatic Corps and the honourable State guests of friendly countries. I and General Chung were present and greeted the President of Vietnam with our best wishes for prosperity and success on behalf of our Government and the Armed Forces of Korea. The same afternoon the President and representatives of friendly nations passed in review the warships of the Vietnamese Navy and friendly ships in the Saigon River.

There were warships from the United States, Australia, Thailand and France and one squadron of British Jet Airplanes, to participate in the celebration of the National Day of Vietnam. Among them the USS "Los Angeles", a 13,000-ton heavy cruiser, was the most notable demonstration of the Free World to assist in the defense in case of Red aggression. This heavy cruiser was built during World War II for the purpose of participating in the war against Japan. This cruiser participated in the UN war in our country and was the flagship of Rear Admiral Arleigh H. Burke, the present Chief of the U.S. Naval Forces.

The cruiser was opened to the public for visiting and it gave the Vietnamese people an opportunity to see a huge warship of a mighty navy-nation and which opportunity they had not had before.

I was happy to see in the story of the ship's history which had been printed and which was on display that it was mentioned that this ship had received commendatory scrolls from the Officers of the Republic of Korea Army. It further explained that the scrolls had been presented in appreciation for the highly effective gunfire support provided by the 'Los Angeles' in bombarding Communist installations and interdiction fire on their supply routes and troop

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concentrations along the East Coast. I am attaching this printed paper in the newsclipping.

On the same evening the President gave a state dinner to honour the big occasion. General Chung, Mrs. Choi and I were invited to attend this large function. All Cabinet members and Heads of the Diplomatic Corps and honourable guests of friendly nations were present. It was the largest dinner ever given by the President.

The various activities to celebrate this big occasion were not limited to one day. The bicycle race; swimming contest in the deep Saigon River; football match; boxing and motor cycle race and basketball game were held on the successive days extending to the 28th October. The social activities in connection with this National Day continued until the 29th of October.

The people of Vietnam are to be congratulated on their efforts of the past year. Further, they have assured the friendly nations that they will endeavour more and more in their efforts to catch up to the far more advanced countries. We, in the eyes of friendly nations, have found a new hope and encouragement from their New Republic, as Your Excellency told me when I was in Seoul recently.

3. Constitution of the Republic of Vietnam.

The English translated text of the Constitution of the Republic of Vietnam is attached to this report.

The issue of "The Times of Vietnam" of October 27, 1956 has very clearly defined the characteristics of the said Constitution. Also on page two (2) is printed the final Presidential recommendations on the Draft Constitution and the opinions of the Constituent Assembly O.K.'ing these recommendations. The aforementioned paper "The Times of Vietnam" is attached to this report.

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According to the promulgated Constitution, the present Constituent Assembly elected on March 4, 1956 will be transformed into legislature and begin its term as the First National Assembly on the date of the promulgation of the Constitution.

Deputies are elected for a term of three (3) years and are eligible for re-election. In the Constitution drafted by the Assembly, the term for deputies was four (4) years. However, the President recommended three (3) years, and this recommendation was approved by the Assembly.

The Acting President of the Republic, Mr. Ngo Dinh Diem, in whom the people vested power by referendum on October 23, 1955 shall be the first President under the Constitution.

The President is to be elected by universal, direct and secret vote, and for a term of five years and is eligible for re-election twice.

In the Constitution drafted by the Assembly the term for President was six (6) years. However, the President recommended five (5) years, and it was approved by the Assembly.

The Vice President shall be elected simultaneously with the President and on the same ticket. However, it is exceptional that the first Vice President of Vietnam will be nominated by the President, Mr. Ngo Dinh Diem, and approved by the Assembly. This will be done at the first meeting of the Assembly.

The promulgated Constitution of Vietnam has one significant point in that Chapter VII in describing the National Economic Council states that the Vice President shall be the Chairman of the said Council.

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One more very important point to be noted is that Article 7 of the Constitution states:

"All activities having as their object the direct or indirect propagation or establishment of Communism in whatsoever form shall be contrary to the principles embodied in the present Constitution."

4. General Ching Il Kwon and the Representatives of Korean Pressmen leave Saigon for Home.

a. General Chung has been very busy since his arrival. After completing his official activities in Saigon on the 28th October, he visited the training center which is located 30 miles from Saigon, and also visited the "Truong Tan Buu" Operation Headquarters where he listened to the Commanding General's briefing on the operation and also gave a lecture-like speech to the Officers and men. He was received by the Officers and men of the Vietnamese Armed Forces in a courteous manner and with much respect, particularly when they learned of his past history of fighting against Communist aggression.

General Chung and one of his aides departed from Saigon on the 30th of October. However, he decided to leave one Assistant, Colonel Kim, behind to inspect several military installations and also to seek the opportunity to give some lecture-like talks to the Officers and men of the new Republic. Colonel Kim graduated from the Command and General Staff College of the U.S.A. in 1952 and was asked by the U.S. Government to stay in the same college to assist the foreign students in the same college. He was the first man to have had this kind of honour offered by the U.S. Government, and that gave him the chance to become acquainted with several

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Vietnamese officers who attended the same military college. He is really the right man to have accompanied General Chung and also a good person to have left behind for further inspection. I have the honour also to bring to Your Excellency's mind that Colonel Kim was also the officer who graduated from the Training School as the number one prizeman and received Your Excellency's prize, the most honoured and coveted award. I was the Commandant of that Training School at the time.

Colonel Kim will tour the widespread Vietnamese military installations for about two weeks.

b. The representatives of the Korean Pressmen departed Saigon for home on the 1st of November.

Mr. Pyun Young-Ro from The Korean Republic and Mr. Hong Chong-In from the "Chosen Ilbo" have left a very good impression on the people of Vietnam and left Saigon today, 1st of November.

They were tied up with pre-arranged schedules and have had a very heavy schedule of activities along with other pressmen. They travelled to the Caisan Resettlement area by air and also visited other refugee resettlement villages by automobiles and only returned this morning by train and immediately had to get ready to depart. It seems that they will take back with them very good impressions and will put them into print for the information of our countrymen.

5. Vietnam Affairs.

a. Mr. Ton That Hoi, the newly appointed Vietnamese Minister to Nationalist China, has gone to Taipei as President Ngo Dinh Diem's special envoy to congratulate President Chiang Kai-Shek

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on the occasion of his Seventieth Birthday. He told the press that he would not resume his diplomatic post until he goes there again late in November. It may be considered to be a good move on the Vietnamese side to somehow reconcile the present tension. The relationship between Free Vietnam and Free China has not improved at all. The Chinese disappointments aroused by the recent moves on the part of the Vietnamese Government are still existent.

b. There is a news dispatch saying that the Japanese SS "Nan Kai Maru" has recently been arrested by the Vietnamese Navy in the water zone of Poulo Condore Islands 50 kilometers off the Vietnamese coast. The ship was caught as it was indulging in illicit nacreous-oyster fishing. This Japanese ship is now awaiting the decision of the Vietnamese tribunal on the case. The ship is made up of 28 crewmen, including underwater fishermen.

c. Read in local press. A vietnamese paper called TROI NAM said: "Right in this moment where in reason of the weakening of their economy, Soviet leaders are forced to 'flirt' with Western powers, Polish and Hungarian peoples suddenly revolt against the regime of Communist barbarous domination. They are not afraid of guns, tanks, not even of A-bombs of the Red imperialism. They are determined to struggle to break their chains and reconquer freedom.

"North Korea will also rise against Red Dictatorship.

"Time has come for Soviet Russia to expiate her faults. It is only at these conditions that the world will know peace and happiness to mankind."

d. There has been much talk and many questions as to who will be nominated as Vice President. Several newspapers have mentioned

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three possible candidates, namely, the present Speaker of the Assembly, the present Economic Minister and the present Home Minister.

However, the possibility of the present Home Minister being nominated as Vice President is ruled out since the Assembly rejected the President's recommendation that the age requirement be "thirty-five years of age" and voted that the age requirement be "forty years of age".

The present Home Minister, Mr. Nguyen Huu Chau, is the man I have mentioned several times in my previous reports. He works directly with the President, serving also in the capacity as Secretary of State to the Presidency, and he has always acted as Vice-President.

The people here believe that the most likely candidate for nomination to the post of Vice President is the present Economic Minister, Mr. Nguyen Ngoc Tho. He is the man who is insisting on "Reparations first; trade later" towards Japan. Also he recently recommended the barring of the Chinese people from the eleven important provisions, recently.

5. Social Activities.

The heaviest social gatherings have been in the past week. Especially, the evening of the 25th October which was occupied by four receptions given by the American, Thailand, Australian and British for the purpose of meeting their respective honourable guests who came to attend the National Day of Vietnam ceremonies. We were fortunate in that this Legation held our Reception in honor of General Chung and the Korean pressmen on the Wednesday evening and not on the 25th when there were so many other diplomatic functions.

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October 27th. I attended the reception given by the Speaker of the National Assembly.

October 28th. At 6.30 o'clock I visited on board the ship of the visiting Thai Admiral.

At 8.30 o'clock, the Acting Defense Minister gave a dinner in honor of Thai's Admiral and General Chung.

October 29th. I attended the French Ambassador's reception.

With sentiments of deepest loyalty and highest esteem.

Respectfully,

Choi Duk Shin

Choi, Duk Shin
Minister of Korea, to the
Republic of Vietnam

His Excellency
President of the Republic of Korea.

Attachments: 1. The Times of Vietnam.
2. Newsclipping.
3. English Translation of Text of
Constitution.