

August 23, 1956
**CDS Report No. 15 from Choi Duk Shin to the
President (Syngman Rhee)**

Citation:

"CDS Report No. 15 from Choi Duk Shin to the President (Syngman Rhee)", August 23, 1956, Wilson Center Digital Archive, B-333b-011, 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/120995>

Summary:

Choi Duk Shin reports on current Vietnam affairs, General John O'Daniel's visit, Vietnam's opinions toward Red China's presence in Burma, and his recent social activities.

Credits:

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

Original Language:

English

Contents:

Original Scan

file

23 August 1956

CONFIDENTIAL.

CDS. REPORT NO. 015

Excellency,

I have the honour to submit my Weekly Report No. 015 covering the following points:

1. Receipt of Instructions
2. Vietnam Affairs
3. Expressions of Opinions in Vietnam towards Red China's Invasion into Northern Burma
4. Social Activities

1. Receipt of Instructions.

Today, 23 August, I received Your Excellency's Instructions No. 9, dated August 8th with the text of speech; No. 10 dated August 10th and No. 11 dated August 16th, all in one pouch.

Although the English text of Your Excellency's speech on the occasion of the Third Inaugural Ceremony is now rather late for use at the appropriate time, we still will put the text in our Weekly Bulletin as a documentation and the Korean text will be mimeographed in sufficient copies for distribution to our countrymen and women here in Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and Thailand.

THE KOREA CORRESPONDENT will be most useful to us in our publicity work here and I thank Your Excellency for considering our need and we will be happy to receive this publication regularly in Saigon.

2. Vietnam Affairs.

- a. Vietnamese People and Government express their 'solidarity' toward Korea.

There follows a news dispatch of the Vietnam press reading:

15

-2-

"A second meeting of the "Association of Aid Women" of the R.O.V.A.F. (Republic of Vietnam Armed Forces) was held the ladies afterwards drove to "Dinh Doc Lap" (the Mansion of the President), most of them accompanied by their husbands. They were received in audience by the President of the Republic The President told them of the disastrous floods that have caused so much damage and devastation to the people of the Republic of Korea. He said: "I have made known to General Le Van Ty (the Chief of Staff) and the General Staff my desire to see you, ladies, bringing your contributions to alleviate the sufferings of a friendly country. Many a time, our R.O.V.A.F. Delegations have been warmly welcomed by the Republic of Korea authorities while on survey trips to this country." "Furthermore," the President went on, "our two peoples are pursuing the same objective: the struggle against the Communists. Moreover, we share the same culture : that of Confucious and Moncius. So we must show our sympathy towards a friendly nation which is pursuing the same ideal, having the same culture like us and with which we have always been tied up by brotherly relations"

As I reported to Your Excellency in Report No. 014, the President of Vietnam personally expressed to me his sorrow at the flood disaster. He said: "this is an expression of our solidarity". The other day I met Secretary of State for Health and Social Affairs. He also expressed his sympathy by saying "solidarity of our two countries."

I can assure Your Excellency that these expressions are on their own initiative and voluntary. For example, the eight thousand and four hundred dollars offered by the President of the Republic of Vietnam was known to me only through the Vietnam press. Further, the thousand dollars offered by the Red Cross

-3-

was also donated before getting any information from us. We should be really thankful that the people and the Government of Vietnam are expressing so much solidarity towards us.

In this connection, I should report to Your Excellency the fact that our Acting Foreign Minister, Dr. Cho, wrote me a letter in which he stated that efforts to collect contributions for the flood victims are no longer necessary.

b. Vietnamese Mission to India.

A Vietnamese mission, headed by Mr. Nguyen Huu Chau, Secretary of State to the Presidency and for Interior Affairs, left for India on the 18th August. This mission will return to Saigon on 2nd September thereby completing 15 days of stay in India.

On departure the Chief of the Mission, Secretary Chau, expressed "hopes of success for the Vietnamese mission as a contribution to the tightening of friendly bonds between India and Vietnam".

The character of this mission is described as a "commercial" one and will be the Indian Government's host during its stay in India. It will successively visit Nagal, Agra, Bombay, Madras, Calcutta where it will come into contact with different personalities from the Indian commercial and industrial circles.

It is rather a surprise that so strong an anti-Communist nation as Vietnam is making this kind of contact with such a significantly neutral nation as India.

17

-4-

It seems that they did this thing without even consulting with any Americans here in Saigon. Indirectly, I heard that an American official who is concerned with these matters, told somebody that he did not know before it was announced.

At a dinner party given by the Defense Minister in honour of General O'Daniel, who just arrived here recently, Foreign Minister, Mr. Vu Van Mau told me that Secretary Chau's mission to India is a "reciprocal" one in character because Mr. Nehru did visit this country in the early part of 1955. He then said President Diem could not go because of his present heavy burden with national affairs and further said, in a laughing tone, that his President does not agree with Nehru's five principles of coexistence, so he will not personally visit Nehru. He then clarified his statement to me by saying that Secretary Chau's mission is, of course, not for the five principles of coexistence either.

In conclusion of this item may I make the following statements which are purely my own observations on the matter with the limited information there is at hand:

- (i) I assume that the Chau's mission is a "reciprocal" one, because Mr. Chau, the Secretary of State to the Presidency, in this instance is really acting as the Vice-President or Premier. At the time of U.S. Vice President Nixon's visit, Mr. Chau greeted Vice-President Nixon at the airport apparently in the capacity of Vice President of Vietnam. In this instance, Mr. Nehru is the Prime Minister of India not the President of his country.

18

-5-

(ii) I assume that the mission is not a voluntary one. I think the Indian Consul General in Saigon might have made the request and showed his anxiety of a 'reciprocal' visit to India. The British Embassy might also have aided the effort.

We should recall that India is the Chairman of the three-nation International Supervisory Commission for the truce in Indo-China (namely, India, Canada and Poland). We should also recall that the British Foreign Minister was one of the two co-Chairmen in the Geneva Conference concerning Indo-China's Truce.

c. Republic of Vietnam to declare October 26th her National Day

At the same dinner I mentioned above in honour of General O'Daniel, the Foreign Minister told me that the draft constitution will be signed and announced by the President on the date of 26th October, 1956, and, accordingly, will make this same day their National Day.

We will recall that on the 26th October last year (1955) the result of the people's referendum was officially announced and that Premier Ngo Dinh Diem won overwhelmingly the vote against the absent Chief of State, Bao Dai. On that date Premier Ngo Dinh Diem became the President of the Republic of Vietnam and our Government recognized the New Republic on the next day, 27th October, 1955.

This forthcoming date, 26th October, will be an historically meaningful day for the people of Vietnam.

-6-

d. General O'Daniel's Visit to Vietnam.

United States (Retired) Lieutenant General John O'Daniel was IX U.S. Corps Commander during the fighting in Korea. He retired from active service after he finished his tour of service in Vietnam last year.

He is visiting here in the capacity of Chairman of the American Friends of Vietnam Association on the invitation of the President of Vietnam.

He was very cordial toward our goodwill missions of last year and I am confident he is a good friend of Korea.

I was at the airport to welcome him. He said he was very sorry he could not visit Korea this time and asked me to send his best wishes and greetings to Your Excellency.

He was greeted by the Vietnamese people almost like we greeted General Van Fleet when he came back several times to our country after he had retired from the Army and had officially left Korea.

General O'Daniel is deserving of receiving these greetings and welcome because he passed through the darkest days of last year with President Diem and the people of Vietnam.

In his message to the President and the people of Vietnam he said: "..... our heartiest congratulations on the past year's progress in the development of Your Republic and institutions. Your parliamentary approach in the task of drafting a new constitution is a dramatic indication of your devotion to the cause of freedom. Just as our Founding Fathers faced the gravest of difficulties, both external and internal, and came through their time of trial to victory. We have confidence that you will lead

"the great Vietnamese people through uncertain events to a future of peace, democracy and prosperity. We pledge our enthusiastic support and that of the overwhelmingly majority of the American people for your continued leadership in the service of our common heritage of freedom."

General O'Daniel is busy going out into the countryside making friendly tours of the villages. He spent this last week-end travelling with the President into the many refugee villages. He will remain in Vietnam until September 7th.

e. Vietnam-Japan Relationship.

The following decision made by the Vietnamese Government towards Japan has been printed in a Chinese daily newspaper:

"Saturday, 18th August, the Vietnam Republic published a decree stating:

- "1. The real estate on the Free Vietnam's land, which at present belongs to Japanese individuals or Japanese organizations, should be returned to the Government of Vietnam
- "2. The Agencies concerned with this real estate have the authorities to transfer the above mentioned Japanese real estates to the name of Vietnam Government.
- "3. Finance Minister and Agrarian Reform Minister should assure the above-mentioned decree being executed according to law.

"Signed by the President of Vietnam
on the date of Tenth August, 1956.

"This decision is made according to the Vietnam Provisional Constitution of October 26, 1955, and through the recommendations made by the Finance Minister."

-8-

The above was not published in many newspapers or dispatched by the Vietnam press yet. However, I believe it to be true. I attach this news item in the newsclipping.

There are no significant changes in the relationship between Vietnam and Japan to report outside of the above-mentioned fact. The Japanese Ambassador has not yet returned to Saigon. The extensions of stay are still being refused by the Vietnamese Government to the Japanese here in Vietnam.

3. Expressions of Opinions in Vietnam toward Red China's Invasion into Northern Burma.

Although it is not directly concerned with Vietnam, I am watching the development of these incidents with much concern.

The area of concern is the area where the Allied (American, Chinese and British) fought under the unified command of the late United States General Stilwell during World War II, where I was also as a staff officer of the Command fighting against the Japs.

The people of Vietnam and the Overseas Chinese people are very much concerned with the Burma-Red China incidents.

There is also a news dispatch from New Delhi saying:

"Red-China soldiers entered the land of India; and

India is now ready to accept the proposal from Red

China to put this disputed area into a "neutral zone."

Many daily newspapers are critically bitter in their editorials. For example:

(1) In the government-sponsored newspaper in the French language, under the subject "Failure of the Peaceful Coexistence" it stated:

"For us, the people of Free Vietnam, who are the Burmese's neighbors, there is no possible doubt but that the aggression is continuing. So we are engaged in a new crusade, the

-9-

crusade of democracy against the mystic totalitarian communism."

(2) In a Vietnamese-language newspaper called "Ngun Luan" under the subject "Mr. Nehru's coexistence principles" it stated:

"..... So the invasion of Burma constitutes a flagrant violation of the coexistence principles recommended by Mr. Nehru. What does he think about it?"

(3) In a newspaper, under the subject "Invasion of Burma", it reads:

"..... Anyhow, the invasion of Burma provides the peoples of Asia with a new opportunity to ponder on the coexistence thesis recommended by Mao Tse Tung and draw the following conclusion: 'Mao's peaceful words only contain lies and hypocrisy'."

These will give an indication to Your Excellency just how much the people of Vietnam are concerned with Red China's move toward Southeast Asia as a whole, not restraining themselves only to their own land. They say: "Peoples of the Free World should take all necessary steps to check the Communist".

Although the present Burmese Government is still dreaming of 'peaceful' settlement according to the principles of coexistence, there are quite a few Burmese newspapers expressed their protests towards Red-China, for example, saying:

(1) "..... that Red China had turned a deaf ear to all protests and was blandly continuing planned operations, whose obvious objective is land grabbing."

27

-10-

- (2) "..... the Chinese Communists have no excuse for their penetration of Burmese territory."
- (3) "..... In the case of Burma, the Chinese map making has been directly followed by the occupation of Burmese territory, notwithstanding adherence to the five principles of coexistence"

For Your Excellency's information I have had retyped several translated texts of the editorials of Vietnamese, Chinese and Burmese presses concerning Red China's invasion and attach them in a newsclipping folder.

4. Social Activities.

a. On last Thursday afternoon, August 16th, the French Ambassador, Monsieur Hoppenot, and Madame Hoppenot left Saigon for his new post in France. I was in the official farewell party.

b. On Thursday evening, 16th August, the Thai Ambassador and Mrs. Chongchareon had a formal dinner in honour of Mrs. Choi and me. The British Minister and American Minister were amongst the guests.

c. On Friday afternoon, August 17th, U.S. General (Retired) O'Daniel arrived in Saigon. I was in the official welcoming party.

d. On Sunday evening, August 19th, Lt General Williams gave a reception in honour of General O'Daniel. I was present.

e. On Monday evening, August 20th, the Defense Minister gave a formal dinner party in honour of General O'Daniel to which I was invited.

24

-11-

f. On Wednesday evening, August 21st, the Belgian Minister, Mr. Buckens, gave a reception. Many high-ranking Vietnamese officials and members of the Diplomatic Corps were present. I told him how gallantly the Belgian troops had fought in Korea against the Communists.

With sentiments of deepest loyalty and highest esteem.

Respectfully,

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

His Excellency

President of the Republic of Korea.

Attachment : Newsclipping Folder .