

May 25, 1956
**Report on a Conversation with the American
Ambassador in Saigon**

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Summary:

Choi Duk Shin discusses the possibility of a military pact between South Korea, Formosa (Taiwan), and South Vietnam, as well as Korean assistance to Vietnam, with the American Ambassador to Vietnam.

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Confidential.

Excellency,

I submit below report of my conversation with the American Ambassador on May 19 in his office.

On May 4 I visited the American Embassy and met the Deputy Chief of Mission, Mr. Daniel V. Anderson, as the Ambassador was absent in Bangkok. On May 19 at eleven o'clock I had an appointment with the Ambassador in his office and discussed with him the following points and questions which I had prepared :

1. What is your opinion on the possibility of a military pact or alliance among Korea, China and Vietnam ?
2. What do you think of the possibility of Korean assistance to Vietnam ?
3. What was the usual interval of time between the arrival of a diplomatic representative and the presentation of his credentials ?
4. Could you give me some names of persons who are very influential to the policy of this country ?

His replies were as follows :

1. For the time being it is hard to get the agreement of the Government of Vietnam to have an openly or written document such as the one you mention. They are bound to observe the Armistice Agreement. They do not like to give the neutral nations supervisory commission a bad impression and do not want to cause embarrassment to nations such as Britain, France and India, etc. The Armistice Agreement has a provision to prohibit such an alliance.
2. He asked me if I had already talked to the Vietnamese officials about this and I told him not as yet. He said it would be very interesting to them. I then asked him about the idea of General Williams of inviting Korean Army instructors to assist in the training. He again said that reinforcement from a foreign country was prohibited, that the American military personnel are also restricted by this prohibition. I asked him whether the

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French instructors had all gone and he said 'Yes, in the Army; the Navy and the Air Force still have some French. I asked whether he thought we could replace those French instructors who had already gone; or whether his people, or people of other countries who are in a position to help. He replied that as long as the Vietnamese Government want to observe the Armistice Agreement nothing can be done along these lines. In brief, he said the agreement was signed with the French Union and that he and I are foreigners.

It is to be noted that while we were waiting for Mr. Robertson's arrival at the airport I asked General Williams if he had given any more thought to the matter of inviting ROKA instructors to Vietnam which he had mentioned previously. He said "Not yet". He thinks it is not the proper time right now and that we should wait for two or three months. At present he is keeping it in his mind and giving it a lot of thought.

3. As for the answer to Question 3, he said that it was usually two or three weeks, and further stated that the President was frequently on trips - more so recently - and that also the President had not been well lately.
4. He mentioned the following names in reply to my question No. 4 :

Mr. Nguyen Huu Chau - Secretary of State to the Presidency
Mr. Vu Van Mau - Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs
Mr. Tran Trung Dung - Secretary of State for Defense
Mr. Tran Chanh Thanh - Secretary of State for Information and Youth.

Then he tried to mention all the names of the Cabinet Members and he finally mentioned all the brothers of the President. Attached to this report is the list of Members of the Cabinet.

With deepest sentiments of loyalty and esteem, I remain,

Respectfully,

Choi Duk Shin

Choi Duk Shin

Minister to the Republic
of Vietnam.

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His Excellency
President of the Republic of
Korea.

Attachment : List of Members
of the Cabinet