

**November 1, 1957**  
**CDS Report No. 61 from Choi Duk Shin to the  
President (Syngman Rhee)**

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**Summary:**

Choi Duk Shin reports on Vietnam's National Day celebrations, his discussion with the Vietnamese Foreign Minister concerning South Korea's admission to the Colombo Plan, and recent political events in Vietnam and Laos.

**Credits:**

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November 1, 1957

CONFIDENTIAL

CDS REPORT NO. 061

Excellency,

I have the honour to submit the Weekly Report No. 061 which is covering the following subjects:

1. Receipt of Instructions.
2. National Day's Celebration of the Republic of Vietnam.
3. Meeting with the Foreign Minister.
4. Major Events in Vietnam and Laos.
5. Social Activities.

1. Receipt of Instructions

I have received the copy of congratulatory telegram of Your Excellency sent to President Ngo Dinh Diem of Vietnam on the occasion of the third anniversary of the proclamation of the Republic of Vietnam together with two informational data excerpted from Japanese newspapers. In the last week's pouch, I have received no instructions on any matter.

2. National Day's Celebration of the Republic of Vietnam

The National Day of this country was highlighted on October 26 by an impressive military parade and other events such as sports contests, open-air movie shows, fire-works displays held in all quarters of this city and also

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throughout the country.

At 8:10, the Presidential car escorted by a heavy motorcade arrived at the reviewing stand while an out-of-sight field battery boomed out a 21-gun salute and the crowds erupted into deafening cheers and ovations.

Then in the company of General Le Van Ty, the President of the Republic facing the guard of honour, attended the trooping of the colours ceremony when the national anthem was played by the military band.

As soon as the Commander-in-Chief of the Vietnamese Armed Forces, the President, had a seat in the main platform, the loud-speaker announced the starting of the parade. A strong emotion swept through the awaiting crowd.

Four white-uniformed companies of the Brigade of Presidential guard corps led the parade. Next came five companies of cadets of the Dalat military academy, two battalions of soldiers' sons, five companies of students of the military preparation high school, two battalions of new recruits from Quang-Trung training center and an Air Force company.

The Navy was represented by a battalion of cadets of the Navy School followed by a battalion of infantry.

Four battalions red-beretted paratroopers wearing full battle fatigue and sub-machine guns, preceded by a battalion of civil guard, were also taking part in the parade.

Three infantry regiments of the famous 4th March Division and its artillery battalion followed the paratroopers. The rear was brought up by a group of armored units.

Present at the military parade were Crown Prince Moulay Abdullah, representing Moroccan King Mohammed V,

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the leaders and members of different delegations to the Colombo Plan Conference including Lord Reading, leader of the British ministerial delegation and Mr. R. Casey, Australian Minister of External Affairs, Mr. J. Garcia, Philippine Minister of Public Health. However, the Japanese Vice-Premier was not in sight.

Vice-President of the Republic Nguyen Ngoc Tho, the Speaker of the National Assembly as well as the diplomatic corps' representatives also attended. Mrs. Choi and the Military Attaché were invited.

And then at 11:00 a.m., the President received a large turnout of distinguished dignitaries including Morocco's Crown Prince Moulay Abdullah and the leaders of the Ministerial delegations to the Colombo Plan Conference including Mr. Richard G. Casey and Lord Reading and the diplomatic corps' representatives lead by their Dean, the Thai Ambassador.

I was also received at the reception. Upon arrival at the Independence Palace, I put my signature in the souvenir Golden Book.

At the reception, Japanese Vice-Prime Minister Ishii who had attended at the Colombo Plan meeting delivered his congratulatory message and so were the Australian Foreign Secretary, Lord Reading of Britain, Crown Prince of Morocco and the Thai Ambassador, dean of diplomatic corps.

I attach the texts of those addresses at the reception to this Report together with the reply by the President of Vietnam, for Your Excellency's information.

I wish to report to Your Excellency in a frank manner that Japan who has dispatched the second largest delegation, next to Vietnam, to the Colombo Plan Conference

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tried deliberately to raise her prestige by sending her Vice-Premier for this occasion. I could not help but feeling bad in seeing this sort of Japanese attempts.

At noon, the President delivered an address through Radio-Vietnam and I attach the text to this Report.

WMM  
In the evening, Mrs. Choi and I were invited to the dinner but could not find the said Japanese Vice-Premier and Mr. Reinhardt, the U.S. Chief Delegate to the Colombo Plan Conference and at the same time to the Vietnamese National Day celebration. Following the state dinner, the official reception was held at the huge garden of the Independence Palace. The classical dances and other stages were performed.

3. Meeting with the Foreign Minister

cc  
At 9:00 a.m. on October 30, the Foreign Minister of Vietnam invited me to his office to tell me the result of his efforts for our membership in the Colombo Plan. According to the Foreign Minister, delegates from India and Indonesia were certainly maintained a position "as unfavorable".

The Foreign Minister added that the friendly countries such as the Philippines and Thailand were very sympathetic and ready to support our admission; in particular the Philippines delegate was believed to be instructed by his Government to support our membership.

As for other Western countries, the Foreign Minister told me that they were "very clever" on this matter. Those countries such as the United States and Britain maintained a stand that such problem must be decided by Asian countries themselves.

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4. Major Events in Vietnam and Laos

a. Tragic Accident at Cultural Exhibition

A most regrettable accident was broken out on the evening of National Day at the Cultural Exhibition and Fair in Saigon.

The Fair visitors numbered many ten thousands streaming hurriedly into the fair place.

At 20:40, a unicorn and lantern dance party from Botanical Garden proceeded across the ferro concrete bridge spanning the Thi Nghe river, to the Fair place where it planned to make a show. The Fair visitors, from the other side of the river, upon hearing the procession's drums and seeing its lanterns, dashed to the bridge in an effort to scramble for a glimpse of the procession. They met the inrush of the cheering crowd from the other bridgehead. A tumultous and upside-down confusion happened.

During this wild jostling and mêlée, many persons collapsed under the crowd charges, resulting in 45 killed including 15 women and 21 children. A certain number of persons were injured and sped to the prefectural hospital; most of them went home after receiving first-aid care.

At the meeting with the Vietnamese Foreign Minister I have asked him to convey my letter to President of Vietnam in which I expressed profound sympathy for the families of those who lost lives and the injured survivors at the tragic accident which has been occurred at the Cultural Exhibition Fair on the evening of October 26. I attach the copy of the letter to this report for Your Excellency's information.

b. Vietnamese President's Visit to India

President Ngo Dinh Diem of Vietnam is expected

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to leave Saigon for New Delhi on November 4 for his five day visit to India. The Foreign Minister told me that the main purpose of this forthcoming tour is to pose counter-measure against frequent diplomatic offensives by north Vietnamese Communists.

He further said that the Republic of Vietnam is so eager to push strong step forward against this sort of Communist diplomatic maneuvers by taking positive actions.

c. Vietnam-Japan Reparations Talks

Up till now, there are no progress of Vietnam-Japan reparations negotiations. Certain diplomatic sources said that the Japanese side still keeps the position for \$50 million to pay to Vietnam, while this country stick to payment of \$150 million from Japan. The sources added that there is no possibility of successful conclusion of the negotiations if the amount will be below \$100 million on the part of Vietnam. Meanwhile, Japan is posing absurd threats upon Vietnam that she will not send the new Ambassador to Saigon unless the present negotiations be successful.

The Special Envoy for reparations talks, Mr. Uemura, left Saigon on October 30 without any result and was reported to be back Saigon sometime in December for resumption of the negotiations.

d. News from Laos

The enlarged cabinet of Prince Souvanna Phouma in Laos was reported to be presented before the National Assembly on November 1. The new Government comprised 10 Ministers and four Secretaries of State.

The breakdown of portfolios is as follows:

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Prince Souvanna Phouma      Prime Minister and Minister for  
   Information and Telecommunications  
Ngon Sananikone              Minister of Foreign Affairs  
Katay Don Sasorith          Minister of Interior and Social  
   Welfare.

Mr. Sasorith was the Premier designate but the Government he formed failed to be approved by the Parliament.

Meanwhile, Hanoi Radio recently said that mutual agreement has been reached by political delegations of the Royal Laotian Government and of the Pathet Laos forces. According to Radio Hanoi, Communist mouthpiece of north Vietnam, both sides have agreed on a draft law which stimulates the supplementary general elections with the participation of the Pather Laos forces and which should be submitted to the Laotian Parliament for adoption.

5.            Social Activities

a.    On October 27, Sunday, I was invited to attend the National Festival's Chess Game.

b.    On October 29, Tuesday, Mrs. Choi and I were invited by French Ambassador Jean Payart to a reception honoring Moroccan Prince Moulay Abdullah.

c.    On October 30, Wednesday, in the evening, Mrs. Choi and I were invited by Moroccan Prince Moulay Abdullah to a reception.

d.    In the same evening, the Acting Defense Minister invited Mrs. Choi and I to a dinner honoring the Assistant Secretaries of U.S. Defense Department, Mr. Spragne and Mr. Bryant. The two U.S. dignitaries said to me that they will be in Seoul by next week and that they have received the program of this visit to our country and felt great honour 169

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that they will be received and also honoured at dinner by  
Your Excellency.

With sentiments of deepest loyalty and  
highest esteem,

Respectfully,

*Choi Duk Shin*

Choi Duk Shin

Minister to Vietnam

His Excellency  
The President  
Republic of Korea

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- Attachments.
1. Copy of the letter sent to the President of Vietnam
  2. Text of Speeches on Vietnam National Day Celebration.

Copy : Minister of Foreign Affairs

ATTACHEMENT 2

TEXT OF SPEECHES  
ON  
VIETNAM NATIONAL DAY CELEBRATION

OCTOBER 26, 1957