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July 19, 1956
CDS Report No. 10 from Choi Duk Shin to the President (Syngman Rhee)

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Summary:

Choi Duk Shin reports on anti-communist sentiment in South Vietnam, the exchange of diplomatic documents with Laos, and recent social meetings.

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Thursday noon, July 19, 1956

CONFIDENTIAL.

CDS REPORT NO. 010

Excellency,

I have the honour to submit my Weekly Report No. 010 covering the following points:

1. Receipt of instructions
2. General situation of Vietnam
3. The Vietnamese Paratroopers
4. Exchange of Diplomatic Documents with Laos Delegation to Republic of Vietnam
5. Social Activities.

1. Receipt of Instructions.

(a) Receipt of your Instruction No. 5 dated July 13, 1956 acknowledging receipt of my Report No. 008. In this connection I am happy to advise Your Excellency that Mr. Kim Il Hwan, Minister of Commerce and Industry, gave me a list of products which can be traded and a letter stating that a Goodwill Economic and Trade Mission will come to Saigon from Korea.

(b) I received from the Foreign Minister a communication dated July 5, 1956 instructing me to assume the responsibilities for the Korean people in Cambodia, Laos and Thailand as follows:

(i) Registration
(ii) Issuance of passports
(iii) Consulate affairs, and if necessary
(iv) Possible protection

I am happy to comply with these instructions and am sending to the Foreign Minister in this pouch the result of our issuance of Registration Cards to Koreans in Vietnam and Cambodia. We have had a registration of 31 in Vietnam and one in Cambodia.

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We will continue this registration in Cambodia, Laos and Thailand.

2. General Situation in Vietnam.

Vietnam has been praised by the Free World very highly. The progress and the improvements that Vietnam has accomplished in the past two years demonstrate the loyalty of the people to the Government and to their President. I feel there is no immediate danger, especially military, to Vietnam, because the people have found a great and determined leader and for such a leader they have waited a long time. A second reason is that U.S. aid stands very firm behind Vietnam. And, thirdly, the people of Vietnam are so rigidly anti-Communist. The following two examples illustrate how firm they are in their fight against Communism:

a) In Chapter 1 of the Constitution Article 7 denounces the Communists as follows:

> "Article 7. - All activities having as their object the direct or indirect diffusion or realization of the communist doctrine in whatever form are contrary to the principles embodied in the Constitution."

b) About ten days a go a weekly newspaper called "TIEN THU" in its publication made a pro-Communist statement. Immediately after the publication the anti-Communists demonstrated against the newspaper causing much damage to the building and the press. The newspaper no longer exists.

This month, July, is the proposed "election" month. However, Your Excellency, I do not feel that anything will happen. On May 8th, 1956, after several talks in London by the Russians and the British, a joint message was issued to the Republic of Vietnam and Red Vietnam. The Co-Chairmen of Britain and Russia are not expecting an election will be held in the near future. They merely hope there will be no violation of the Agreement. They urge both the Republic

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of Vietnam and Red Vietnam to make every effort to prevent any future violation of the military provisions of these agreements and also to ensure the implementation of the political provisions and principles embodied in the Final Declaration of the Geneva Conference. They further have been asked to transmit their views about the time required for the opening of consultations on the organization of nation-wide elections in Vietnam and the time required for the holding of elections in Vietnam as a means of achieving the unification of Vietnam. Pending the holding of free general elections for the reunification of Vietnam, the Co-Chairmen attach great importance to the maintenance of the cease-fire under the continued supervision of the International Commission for Vietnam. They recognize that the dissolution of the French High Commandhas increasdd the difficulties of the International Supervisory Commission in Vietnam in carrying out the functions specified in the Geneva Agreements, which are the basis for the Commission's activities, and that these difficulties must be overcome. The Co-Chairmen are confident that the authorities in both parts of Vietnam will show effective cooperation and that these difficulties will in practice be removed. There is thus at present a threat to the fulfilment of this important provision of the Geneva Agreements, although both sides in Vietnam have accepted the principle of national reunification by means of free general elections.

I am submitting with this report a pamphlet entitled "Vietnam in Worlds Affairs." In this pamphlet are included the Text of the Geneva Agreement; Statements and Communiques concerning International Affairs.

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The danger is not in Vietnam itself, but in the surrounding areas: for example, Laos, Cambodia and Thailand. The Communists are infiltrating these areas politically, economically and to a small degree militarily. A good example is that Cambodia now claims to be a 'Neutral' nation. Thailand and Laos are still anti-Communist. However, if the Free World's policy (especially that of the U.S.A.) does not remain firm towards the Communists and permits the "Neutral" nations to gain momentum, then I am not sure how long Laos and Thailand will remain in the Free World.

3. The Vietnamese Paratroopers.

In my last report under Item 2 "Vietnamese Observance of Double-Seven Day", I did not mention that I had attended the Paratroopers' demonstration, but I did include a photograph of the demonstration in the No. 1 Album of Photographs which was an attachment to the report. In this report I would like to mention a few words about the Paratroopers and also enclose a special album of photographs.

The Paratroopers, or Airborne Group of the Vietnamese Army, came into being under the French Command during the fighting of the Communists. The Airborne Group consists of a strength of 4000 men and is divided into four battalions and forms a part of the Vietnamese Armed Forces, which numbers 155,600 men in strength.

Of course, it is expensive to form an airborne unit. However, its existence in combat will surely give the enemy greater threat, will accomplish more than ground units and will thereby bring us tremendous military achievements if it is properly organized, equipped and trained.

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In the event that an army can increase its combat capability with the same strength the transferring of an infantry division into an airborne trained division is a good method to be adopted.

4. Exchange of Diplomatic Documents between Le Delegue de Gouvernement Royal du Laos to the Republic of Vietnam.

Laos has now sent a diplomatic representative to Vietnam and we received an official communication advising us of this. In acknowledging receipt of this communication and because today is their National Day, I sent a letter of congratulation to the Representative on behalf of our Government. Tonight I am going to attend their reception. I believe in doing this we have made a good gesture since they have not forgotten that Your Excellency offered troops during their crisis.

5. Social Activities.

a) Last Thursday I was invited by the Rotary Club to attend their monthly dinner and the main speaker of the evening was the President of the National Constituent Assembly, Mr. Tran Van Lam, formerly the Government Delegate of South Vietnam. His speech in the main covered the work of the drafting of the Constitution. In my last report I did attach The Vietnam Times in which issue they had printed the text of the draft of the Constitution and in this report for the information of Your Excellency I am attaching a folder containing the text of the draft Constitution.

At this point I would like to mention to Your Excellency that immediately after my arrival in Saigon I presented to the National Constituent Assembly our Handbook of Korea which contains 84

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the text of our Constitution and other Information booklets and pamphlets. On the several occasions when I have talked with members of the National Assembly they have told me that information contained in these books were very good references in drafting their Constitution and in doing their Assembly work. They have told me that the Constitution of the Republic of Korea and the Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines formed a good basis for the drafting of their Constitution.

The monthly dinner of the Rotary Club is an important function and attended by high-ranking Assembly men (the President and Vice President of the Assembly); Committee Chiefs, and members of the Diplomatic Corps and other Rotary Club members.

b) July 14, Bastille Day.

The celebration of this National Day by the French is probably one of the most important of the National Days observed in Saigon. Ambassador and Madame Hoppenot received at a very large reception, and which I attended.

c) On Monday of this week I received a return call at the Legation made by the Commissioner General for Refugees. He has invited me to visit with him the Cai-San project in the near future. This project aims at the recultivation of some 77,000 hectares of abandoned rice lands and the resettlement of 100,000 refugees from Communist North Vietnam. It is expected that the project will be implemented in two crop seasons. The area involved lies partly in each of the Provinces of Longxuyen and Rachgia, the Southwest portion of Vietnam.

d) I received a return call from the Secretary of State for Health and Social Affairs, Mr. Vu Quoc Thong, who is also the main deputy of the National Constituent Assembly. Mr. Thong is the

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best English-speaking member of the Cabinet. He also told me that the Constitution of the Republic of Korea was valuable to them as a guide in the drafting of their Constitution.

e) On Wednesday evening, July 18, I gave a cocktail party and received a miscellaneous group of persons who had either served or worked in Korea. Most of the guests were American civilian and military. Included in the group were also a few members of the Vietnamese Army who had visited our country and our Army. About 90 persons in all. I believe all deeply appreciated my inviation extended to them.

I respectfully recommend to Your Excellency that my Second Secretary, Mr. Son Pyung Sik, be considered for promotion to the rank of First Secretary of the Legation. Mr. Son is a very capable man, highly intelligent and enthusiastic. He works without regard to hours or time and is untiring in his efforts to do his job well. He has had a varied career in the diplomatic and international fields. He has remained as Second Secretary since his promotion to that rank in Paris in 1950. Secondly, and of importance, is that as a Second Secretary Mr. Son is not invited to the important diplomatic receptions held in Saigon. Only diplomatic officers to the rank of First Secretary are invited. It follows that I must attend these functions as the only member of our Legation and, further, since the French language is still the main diplomatic one used in all social activities it is most necessary that Mr. Son accompany me.

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It would add prestige to the Legation to have an Officer of the status of First Secretary. I would add that the Minister of Vietnam to Korea has with him in Seoul a Legation Officer with the rank of First Secretary.

With sentiments of deepest loyalty and esteem,

Respectfully,

Choi Duk Shin

Choi, Duk Shin
Minister of Korea to Vietnam

His Excellency

President of the Republic of Korea.

Attachments:
1. Pamphlet "Vietnam in World Affairs" June 1956 Issue
2. Album of Photographs
3. Folder "Text of the Draft Constitution" Republic of Vietnam
4. Documents Exchanged with Delegation of Laos in Saigon
5. News clipping

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