

**December 6, 1957**  
**CDS Report No. 66 from Choi Duk Shin to the  
President (Syngman Rhee)**

**Citation:**

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<https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/121040>

**Summary:**

Choi Duk Shin reports on Japanese PM Kishi's trip to Southeast Asia, the promotion of Korea-Vietnam cultural relations, the upcoming SEATO war maneuvers in Thailand, and other recent Vietnam and regional affairs.

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CONFIDENTIAL

CDS REPORT NO. 066

Excellency,

I have the honour to submit to Your Excellency this Weekly Report which is covering the following subjects:

1. Receipt of Instructions
2. Promotion of Korea-Vietnam Cultural Relations
3. Kishi's Trip to Southeast Asian Countries
4. Our Fishery Delegation Visits Vietnam
5. Affairs in Vietnam and Neighboring Countries
6. Social Activities.

1. Receipt of Instructions

In last week's pouch, I have received Your Excellency's instruction No. 100 dated November 27, together with various informational data. Of three copies of the data, I have sent one copy to the Press Office, Presidential Office of Vietnam, another to the Vice-Presidential Office for reference, and the other was filed in this Legation and some of them were published in the Bulletin.

I am most appreciative for Your Excellency's continuous kindness and generosity in sending those materials to me.

As for Your Excellency's instruction on attendance at dinner in honour of Japanese Prime Minister Kishi, I have received the cable from Your Excellency's office belatedly,

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as Your Excellency's instruction indicated. From my own conscience and humble judgement, I thought my attendance at the party became the occasion to pay homage to our cruel enemy's leader, because it was formal dinner honouring Kishi.

I have never tried to invite Japanese officials to our party nor accepted their invitation, and there was no direct contact with any Japanese.

I fully understood the meaning of Your Excellency's instruction regarding the attendance of official party and will act accordingly.

2. Promotion of Korea-Vietnam Cultural Relations.  
a. Establishment of Vietnamese-Korean Cultural Association

There are most remarkable moves on the part of Vietnamese people to establish Vietnamese-Korean Cultural Association for better understanding and friendship between the two peoples. It was learned that Mr. Ngo Dinh Nhu, Political Adviser to the President of the Republic of Vietnam and the younger brother of the President, is positively supporting this move, indicating that there must be consent of President Ngo Dinh Diem in this regard.

This proposed organization is strictly one of people-level, but the Vietnamese Government and this Legation should render support and help in every possible ways.

On December 6, six Vietnamese leaders including three Congressmen who are holding active role in forming this association called on me. There was Mr. Nguyen Phuong

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Thiep, Secretary General of the National Assembly and Chief Delegate of APACL Vietnam Chapter. The Vietnamese asked me to be adviser to the said association and I accepted their offer. There will be several advisers of which one will be Vietnamese Acting Defense Minister Tran Trung Dung.

It is said that a joint meeting of Vietnamese and Korean residents in Vietnam will be held Sunday, December 8, for finalizing the establishment of this association.

In my views, we have to devote some efforts to form the counterpart association in Korea under leadership of a man who has been keeping active relations with this country.

b. Korean Language Course

Regarding the Korean language course now under progress in this capital of Vietnam, Lt. Col. Teak-Kun Lee, military attache, is teaching the Korean language to Vietnamese people. He graduated from Hongik College in Seoul and also the Korean Military Academy, knowing Vietnamese and English.

I have received Korean text books from the Education Ministry last week, together with the letter of the Education Minister which expressed his readiness to render all possible help and assistance for the Korean language course.

At present, there are thirty students, full up the class, and there are increasing demands of the public to study Korean language. General Williams, Chief of MAAG,

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told me that he wish to see the Vietnamese Army officers learn Korean prior to their visit to Korea in the future.

Seoul National University has granted a two-man scholarship this spring under the condition that the students eligible must understand Korean; thus the plan was failed up till now. I hope that the scholarship is still effective for Vietnamese students and will be filled up by our friends in the near future.

I am quite certain that the present tendency will greatly expedite cultural relations between our two countries and this trend becomes so high after returning of President Ngo from Korean tour.

For everlasting friendship with the people in Vietnam as well as those in Southeast Asia, I feel that there must be some long-range programs for cultural exchange between the nations. In considering the economic life of our people in the future which will largely depend upon the trade with the people of Southeast Asia and in considering the expansion of our national influence in this area, I feel great necessity of setting up a Language Institute in Seoul for teaching various languages of Southeast Asian countries. It will certainly help for raising our national interests if we have many people who can speak the native tongues of theirs.

As the colonial rule of European power retreated and that of Japan failed after the end of World War II, nationalism is strongly up raising among the people in this area, and the people in this area wish to acquaint with

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those who can speak their native tongues.

3. Mr. Kishi's Trip to Southeast Asian Countries.

By the time when this Report will draw Your Excellency's attention, Japanese Prime Minister Kishi might be back to Tokyo after his trip in this area.

The major highlights of Kishi's trip in this week were the controversy on press report that Kishi has bought some jewels in Singapore, and remarkable anti-Japanese sentiments in Australia. Further, in the Philippines, many bitter voices were spoken out against the Japanese Prime Minister's ill intention.

In my judgement, the results of Kishi's tour could be summarized as follows:

(a) Prime Minister Kishi made overall apology to his visiting countries for Jap's crimes during the Pacific War. The strong anti-Jap sentiments were prevailed in Australia, in the Philippines and among the overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia.

In Australia, despite the unwillingness of the Australian Government to put it in the itinerary, the Japanese Prime Minister has begged to lay a wreath on the Monument of Unknown Heroes who had sacrificed their lives in defending their Freedom against Jap's invasion.

In the Philippines, I think that Mr. Kishi will "bow as low as possible" in order to cool down the Philippines people's hatred of Japs.

To the overseas Chinese, Mr. Kishi has praised the economic role played by overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia.

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(b) Kishi has obtained some conclusion on reparations issue in Indonesia for which he can be proud of his success.

(c) Kishi succeeded to make a step for economic penetration into Cambodia and Laos.

I attach all the data available in Saigon to this Report.

4. Our Fishery Delegation Visits Vietnam

A nine-man Fisheries Market Research Delegation arrived on November 29 for the fact-finding tour in this country.

As I have reported to Your Excellency in my previous report, the delegation had originally intended to stay here only a day before leaving for Singapore, but actually it was too short. Due to flight of airplane, the delegation has stayed in Saigon four days.

On December 3, under my guidance, the fisheries group paid a call on the Vice-President of Vietnam, concurrently Minister of National Economy. At the meeting, the Vice-President said that the President already knew about the visit of Korean delegation. The Vice-President asked if Korean fishermen may help Vietnamese people develop their fisheries industry. He further wished to see Korean fishermen cooperate with the Vietnamese in order to keep the fisheries industry of Vietnam from being monopolized by the Japanese because at present only Japanese fishermen are working together with the Vietnamese fishermen. The Korean group also expressed its deep gratitude and

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thanks for the kindness and hospitality extended by Vietnamese authorities.

(On December 3, the group paid a courtesy call on the Foreign Minister of Vietnam, expressing regret that the Korean delegation could not pay their respect to the President directly considering the President's busy works.)

The group also exchanged very useful information with the members of Chamber of Commerce in Saigon, and it was, in my judgement, very worthy for their future planning on trade with this country.

In connection with the particular suggestion of the Vice-President, the fisheries group will report to our Marine Affairs Office after returning home, and I believe there are enough possibility to make cooperation with Vietnamese fishermen for mutual benefit and interests of our two countries.

The delegation left for Singapore on December 4 and will proceed to Bangkok before returning home via Hongkong.

5. Affairs in Vietnam and Neighboring Countries  
a. Australian destroyer "Tobruk" Visits Saigon

Her Majesty's Australian destroyer "TOBRUK" steamed into Saigon on December 5, on a courtesy visit to the Republic of Vietnam.

She is a "battle class" destroyer of 2,500 tons displacement and 380 feet in length. She is the leadership of the 10th Destroyer Squadron and is commanded by Captain R.I. Peek, O.B.E., D.S.C., Royal Australia Navy.

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She has a crew of 19 officers and 250 men.

b. U.N. Study Mission For the Development of  
the Lower Mekong Continues Her Work

Before the said mission proceed from Saigon to Laos, the Chief of the Mission, General Wheeler, held a press conference. I attach the contents of this press conference to this Report, because it gives some light into the situation of the Mekong River and also some idea of the works of the U.N. mission.

c. Japanese Charge d'Affaires Returns to Tokyo

There is a United Press dispatch saying that Japanese Chargé d'Affaires Seishiro Ogawa returned to Japan on December 4 from Saigon to confer with the Foreign Ministry on the problems of war reparations to the Republic of Vietnam. He was expected to report to his superior on the Vietnamese attitude toward the reparations problem after Prime Minister Kishi's visit to Vietnam. The said Japanese Charge d'Affaires will return to Saigon ahead of Japanese Reparations Ambassador Kogoro Uemura who is scheduled to be in Vietnam around the middle of this month after last-minute conference with Kishi.

d. American Aid to Cambodia in 1958

The U.S. Ambassador to Cambodia Carl Strom announced at a special meeting of the Cambodian Planning High Council that American aid to Cambodia for 1958 will amount to 33 million dollars.

e. SEATO Would Stage Combined War Maneuver in  
Bangkok Next Year.

An Associated Press dispatch from Bangkok said: 27



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"Thailand's SEATO Adviser said this organization would stage a major land, sea and air exercise here early next year. This exercise would be jointly sponsored by the United States and Thailand, but would include forces from all SEATO nations.

"The Chief of the General Staff of Thai Army, General Jira Vichit Songgram, branded as "pure speculation" the report that SEATO is to be reorganized along NATO lines, but he said an important meeting of SEATO members would be called soon to discuss the organization's future.

"At the same time, William Worth, Acting Secretary General of SEATO, denied reports from Baguio that Japan, Nationalist China, Malaya and Republic of Korea were to be invited to become Treaty members".

f. Thailand Marshall Sarit Prefers Military Command to Premiership.

There is an Associated Press dispatch from Bangkok saying:

"The Thai Secretary of the Army said Tuesday strong-man Marshall Sarit Thanarat would not trade his post of Armed Forces Supreme Commander for the Prime Ministership at any price."

g. First U.S. Ambassador Presents Credentials to Malayan Ruler

A U.S.I.S. dispatch from Kuala Lumpur says:

"Mr. Homer Byington Jr., the first U.S. Ambassador to the newly independent Federation of Malaya, has presented his credentials to that country's supreme ruler."

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6. Social Activities

a. On November 30, in the evening, this Legation offered a garden-party to the intention of the students of the Korean language class. During the party, a movie in Korean language has been shown.

b. On the same day, I invited all the members of the Korean Fisheries Market Research Group to a dinner.

c. On December 2, Monday, at 1800 hours, I guided the Fishery Delegation to a courtesy call on the Vice-President of Vietnam, concurrently the Minister of National Economy.

d. The same day evening, I attended a reception given by Secretary of State for Public Works in honour of the U.N. mission for the development of Lower Mekong River.

e. On December 3, at 1000 hours, I guided our Fishery Delegation to a courtesy call on the Foreign Minister. At 1100 hours, always under my guidance, our Fishery Delegation made a call on the Chairman of the Vietnamese Chamber of Commerce.

f. Later in the evening, Miss Lam Phuong Dung, accompanied by her aunt, came to the Legation and received the Korean doll, which was a gift from Your Excellency. The attached photos showed how happy she was in receiving the doll.

g. On December 3, I was invited by U.S. Ambassador Durbrow to a reception to introduce the newly arrived Counsellor of Embassy, Mr. Elting.

h. In the evening of the same day, I offered

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a very intimate dinner to the visiting Chief Delegate of APACL, Hongkong Chapter, Mr. Ye Tin Song.

i. On December 5, on the occasion of the Birthday of the King of Thailand, the Thai Ambassador had a reception. Mrs. Choi and I were invited to attend. We expressed to the Ambassador's couple our wishes to the King.

j. Later in the evening, Mrs. Choi and I invited the couple of Vietnamese Acting Defense Minister and three more couples of distinguished Vietnamese friends to a dinner at the Chancery. After the dinner, we had a movie show in the Legation's courtyard. The technicoloured reels "Korean Perspective" was very highly praised by the Vietnamese friends.

k. On December 6, I received the call of the sponsoring members of the proposed Korean-Vietnamese Cultural Association.

l. On the same day evening, Mrs. Choi and I were invited to a reception given by the newly appointed Vietnamese Ambassador to France on the occasion of his coming departure.

m. Later in the evening, there was also a reception given by the Vietnamese Navy Commander honouring the visiting Australian Navy Captain Peek.

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With sentiments of deepest loyalty  
and highest esteem,

Respectfully,

*Choi Duk Shin*  
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Minister to Vietnam

His Excellency

The President

- Attachments:
1. Data on Japanese Prime Minister Kishi's trip to Southeast Asian countries. (No.3)
  2. Data on the plan for development of Lower Mekong River.
  3. Photos on the presentation of Korean doll to a Vietnamese girl.

Copy to the Minister of Foreign Affairs

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Choi Duk Shin

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