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"The United States and the Prospects for Democracy in  
the Third World"  
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It is a great honor for me to appear before such an important audience.

Before I begin, let me express my gratitude to Presidents Carter and Reagan who in 1980 played decisive roles in saving my life. I also wish to express gratitude to the Reagan administration which made it possible for me to leave prison in Korea and come to the United States in 1982. The administration has also assured my safety and freedom during my stay here.

In a few days, as you know, I am going back to my country where some danger may await me. As I stand here, I am aware that an anonymous State Department official recently was quoted in the New York Times Sunday Magazine as expressing some weariness with having to res/jie Kim Dae Jung so many times. I understand that weariness. I am rather weary myself of being the victim of assassination attempts and imprisonment by military regimes.

But at the same time, I think perhaps that same official should have expressed his gratitude to me for my personal situation has provided this administration with one of its most frequently cited illustrations of the positive results of "quiet diplomacy". So perhaps the score is even between us.

I. American Ideals and the Third World

The other day I made a pilgrimage to Monticello and the University of Virginia. I have long admired Thomas Jefferson. I believe he is one of the greatest originators of the American revolutionary spirit and a continuing source of inspiration not only for Americans but also for people the world over. It had long been my dream to make that pilgrimage to those spots so beloved by Jefferson. I wanted to do this before my return to Korea.

I also had some issues to raise with Thomas Jefferson. When I was sentenced to death by a military court in 1980, my adoption of his remarks during a public appearance was cause for one of the charges against me. The remark was: "The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time with the blood of patriots and tyrants." At Monticello and at the University of Virginia, I addressed Jefferson silently saying, "Your words are strong enough to inspire people even in Korea far across the Pacific these 200 years later. These words caused a tyrant to react by sentencing me to death. It would be fortunate if the people of the Third World could see clearly that the United States supports their aspirations to Jeffersonian democracy!"

When I came to this country in December of 1982, the most remarkable changes I noted since I was here in 1973 were the appearance of black anchorpersons on TV and the number of black mayors in various U.S. cities. I was also greatly impressed to see Korean residents along with other minorities enjoying the full privileges and respect to which they are entitled by American law. Such privileges are not so well accorded them in other countries. I have also observed that

Japanese-Americans have become senators and congressmen and one has become a governor. I was greatly touched when I saw that the United States Congress adopted Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday as a national holiday. Even Abraham Lincoln was not recognized in this way.

While the United States upholds and honors the idea of equality in domestic policy, I feel the United States has not been successful in convincing the people of the Third World that it supports the same aspirations of other people. Many people in the Third World think that since World War II the United States has mainly supported dictatorial governments around the world using anti-communism as an excuse, thus disappointing them. As a consequence, the United States has become severely isolated from the Third World, which gives the Soviet Union and its allies a chance to attack the United States in international arenas.

I recall historian Arnold Toynbee's remarks at an American university after World War II. He pointed out that while the principle of representative government came from England, the United States was the first in the world to practice majority rule. Majority rule in the United States was a bold and new idea 200 years ago, but it was an extremely great and attractive one. That is why the proud French were able to adopt American-style democracy. Many Latin American and other European countries followed the lead of the United States on this as well. Toynbee also said the United States should not fail to continue to maintain its support of majority rule everywhere to counter the Soviets' contention that they are the real supporters of the majority.

Let me here cite some very interesting information from a recent survey of the Korean people. It is on the question of Korean attitude toward the United States. 56% of those who responded that they like the United States said that they did because the United States is a land of freedom, equality, social justice, and opportunity. Only 13% of those liking the United States named military and economic support for Korea as factors.

## II. Democracy and the Third World

A. Leaders and scholars in the United States and Europe have repeatedly said that democracy was created by western society and is not easily adapted to the Third World and non-western societies.

Such a theory is somewhat persuasive, but only superficially. France required some 100 years before democracy could take root there with the establishment of the Third Republic. Germany and Italy failed to realize democracy until after World War II with a few minor periods of exception. Spain and Portugal were ruled under dictatorship until very recently. On the other hand, democracy is running smoothly in Japan, a country long dominated by Confucian thought and Buddhist culture. Israel, a nation of Jews, who mainly come from non-western countries, is a democracy. India, a nation dominated by Hinduism, also has an admirable democratic system.

The continuing development of democracy in Argentina, Venezuela, Ecuador, Uruguay, Brazil, Costa Rica, and elsewhere in Latin America gives us reason to be encouraged. I am pleased that the United States gives its blessing to these improvements in Latin America. I hope this U.S. attitude will develop to an even stronger degree.

I would also like to note that there are many democratic principles embodied in the culture and tradition of Korea.

In the Third World, suppression, corruption, and economic and social injustice carried out by governments are great problems. However, the most serious problem is that under dictatorial rule, the people have no outlet for appeal against a government's wrongful actions, and they have no vehicle for expressing their opinions. Under the present military regime in Korea, the media, the courts, the opposition party, and the National Assembly are all rubber stamps for the dictator. The people have nowhere to turn. Finally, under such repression, I am concerned that people may be forced to choose radicalism.

Western-style democracy is nothing more than a political system that structures protection for the principles of freedom, justice, and human dignity. Democracy must be understood as a system or measure to give people free choice in deciding their fate. In this sense, only when government is handled "by the people" is it real democracy. To realize this, freedom of speech, fair elections and local autonomy are essential.

B. "Security" has sometimes been a reason for support of dictatorship used by some in western countries. In my opinion, this is not a proper attitude. I strongly believe democracy and security are inseparable. If we want to realize strong security, we need something to secure.

In West Germany, the government has provided economic and social justice and democratic freedoms for the people. Thus, West Germany can be confident in its dealings with East Germany.

Israel is another case worth mentioning. It has a population of only four million; its economic situation is critical; it is surrounded by 150 million very hostile neighbors, many of whom are rich with oil revenues. Nevertheless, Israel has always succeeded in national security. One of the reasons is that democracy in Israel is much stronger than in surrounding states. Once again, we see that democracy and security are inseparable.

My country also demonstrated this same lesson at the time of the Korean War more than thirty years ago. At that time, freedom of speech, direct election of the president, local autonomy and independence of the judicial branch and National Assembly were largely assured. Such liberties gave our people strong reason to fight against the communist invaders. Our people in cooperation with United Nations forces, mostly from the United States, succeeded in repelling these invaders to the North. Then, the people had something to secure; now the people have lost all these freedoms which they were able to enjoy in wartime.

Only when there is democracy in South Korea can we have a strong government which will enjoy the people's full support. That is why communist propaganda is not successful in the United States. With democracy in South Korea, there can be real stability and security which will force North Korea to give up its long-lasting ambition to communize South Korea. Then, we can expect to have a sincere and fruitful dialogue with North Korea and a lasting peace on the Korean peninsula can follow. Such peace is what we Korean people really want to achieve. It would also be very beneficial for U.S. national interests because it would prevent communist expansion and reduce

U.S. defense burdens in this region.

If the United States really understands the importance of preventing communist expansionism, it must first gain the support of the people of the Third World in their aspirations for liberty, justice and human dignity under democratic government. In return, the people of the Third World will help the United States on the road to a lessening of communist influence in the world.

C. Some leaders in western countries say that to achieve economic growth, strong and even repressive government is preferable to democratic government which may yield an inefficient economy and social chaos. Such a theory is persuasive, but it is not supported by the facts of history. In this regard, I'd like to make some observations.

First, under suppressive rule, we might expect growth in the economy, but we can seldom expect the fair distribution of the fruits of economic growth.

Second, capitalism under democratic systems has naturally ~~continuously~~ continuously undergone reform to meet the people's demands and needs. Western industrial democracies have succeeded in realizing ever stronger economic growth, advanced technology, creation of a broad middle class, and strong social stability. These achievements have tempted the communist Chinese giant to adopt portions of this system. Eastern European countries are similarly attracted.

Third, I recognize that the highly educated and diligent South Korean people have succeeded in bringing about some brilliant economic growth. But, in spite of this internationally celebrated economic growth, because of corrupt dictatorial rule, there are numerous

problems which place the economy in a precarious state. Economic growth has been heavily dependent on the introduction of huge foreign debts amounting to more than \$42 billion. 30 big companies dominate 72% of the South Korean GNP and soak up 48% of the bank loans but only employ 13% of the work force. 59% of the workers suffer from low wages at half the cost of living. Farmers' debts in 1983 increased by 57% over the previous year. Korean workers and farmers are not allowed to have their own free trade unions and farmers' cooperatives. Consumers' rights are also disregarded.

There is no real free market system in Korea. It is strictly a government-controlled economy which creates massive corruption and a huge gap between urban and rural areas, between big industry and medium to small sized industry, between heavy and light industries, and between regions. All of this causes economic and social instability. As Park Chung Hee's surprising assassination showed, there is no genuine political stability in Korea.

Only under a democratic system can we expect truly healthy and strong economic development. We should be confident in democratic government as being necessary not only for the United States economy, but also for that of the Third World.

### III. Some Suggestions

Even though there is much criticism of the United States in the Third World, I do believe if the people in the Third World were asked whether they preferred the United States or the Soviet Union, an overwhelming majority would opt for the United States because people still admire the great ideals on which this American nation was founded. These people find the American domestic situation far more attractive than that of the Soviet Union. They need only a belief that the United States still stands strongly for their aspirations



for liberty.

As a sincere and worried friend of the United States, I would like to suggest a few things.

First, I think the restoration and promotion of moral leadership in the international arena is an urgent and basic issue for the United States. Moral leadership will be restored when the United States renews its support for majority rule as Professor Toynbee stated. It is essential to support majority rule with freedom of speech and fair elections. The United States must make clear to all leaders of the Third World that respect for these corner stones of democracy will be a fair indicator of whether support from the United States will continue or be forthcoming.

One key element in the U.S. stance must be more specific encouragement of movements in the Third World which seek to bring or restore democracy. While U.S. officials have often spoken in general terms about their support of democracy, all too frequently American comments have been disparaging and patronizing. An attitude of respect for democracy must include respect for those who struggle for its realization under adverse conditions in the Third World.

Second, I think "quiet diplomacy" is necessary in dealing with specific problems involving suppressive regimes in the Third World. However, "quiet diplomacy" alone is not enough. If the people of the Third World can not see the United States' clear support for democracy and human rights, there will be misinformed impressions of United States policy and serious misunderstanding. We see such a situation in South Africa today and also in Korea. I suggest that "open

diplomacy" and "quiet diplomacy" should be concurrently exercised.

I was encouraged by the State Department's open position revealed by its spokesman in which it was disclosed that the State Department did not view favorably Kim Young Sam's house arrest. The spokesman expressed strong hope that all politicians would be released from the political ban. This has apparently greatly impressed our people. This attitude is welcomed.

Third, while the United States can not intervene in the domestic affairs of Third World countries, it can use economic aid and favorable trade conditions as positive leverage to promote democracy. If any government in the Third World is willing to move toward democracy, the United States can increase aid and improve conditions of trade. Otherwise, such aid and favorable treatment can be reduced or withdrawn.

Fourth, the United States should be careful to criticize human rights abuses wherever they occur whether in communist or non-communist countries. In this regard, the State Department's annual human rights reports have been important.

The opposition in Korea has frequently been criticized as divisive and not unified. While competition is an ordinary part of politics and should be acknowledged as such, there are special conditions in Korea that allow government forces to exacerbate and manipulate political rivalry. Rather than worrying about rivalry, I would urge the United States to press for redress of conditions that allow the Korean government to manipulate its opposition. These conditions include the lack of a free press, lack of a meaningful role for the

National Assembly, and laws which restrict the freedom of assembly.

Finally, in Korea, the United States must take one specific responsibility. As we are well aware, the United States army commander in Korea has a right to control the troop movements of the entire 600,000 strong army of the Republic of Korea. Thus, the U.S. commander must assume the responsibility of preventing troop movements for the purpose of supporting a military coup. In 1960, when there was a student revolution against Syngman RHEE's regime, the U.S. commander discharged this responsibility well. He received the heartfelt gratitude of the Korean people. However, when General Chun Doo Hwan staged military coups in December of 1979 and May of 1980, the U.S. commander failed to exercise his responsibility. Instead, he, in effect, gave tacit support for Chun Doo Hwan's bloody rise to power. This has caused dissatisfaction with and criticism of the United States. Thus, we have seen such unfortunate incidents as arson at United States cultural centers and the burning of U.S. flags in Korea.

Military involvement in politics in Korea is seriously deteriorating our national security. A handful of politically motivated soldiers have taken power by military coup. Most others in the military have been faithful to their defense duties, but they must now obey this new military dictator. How can we expect Korean military commanders to remain true to their defense tasks and to the ideal of civilian government when the U.S. commander has so easily yielded his support to this group of military coup leaders? Because of the U.S. military role in leadership of the Korean army, it is largely an American responsibility to enforce a tough non-political stance throughout the chain of command.

In conclusion, genuine democracy in Korea which will encompass

political, economic and social improvement is what we are working for. The overwhelming majority of the Korean people fervently desire this end. I know that this is what you too desire, but this is not the problem. The problem is that the dictatorship in South Korea, the Soviets, and the communist regime in North Korea all work to prevent the people of Korea from knowing that the United States supports the cause of democracy. The United States must do everything possible to let the people know of its support and thus renew and promote strong ties of friendship between our two nations.

As I mentioned at the beginning of this talk, in a few days my wife and I will go back to participate with our people in their present struggle and to encourage them to be united, moderate, and non-violent in the movement to restore democracy. I expect I will meet many difficulties, but I am not alone in this. Many Koreans are encountering great hardship because of their devotion to democracy. On behalf of the Korean people, I sincerely ask you to support our struggle to realize our dream of democratic government.

In Korean, our word for "Good-bye" means "Stay in peace", and that is my parting wish for you and your country, "Anyonghi kaeshipshiyo".

Thank you again.