

Mr. Speaker, Members of the Assembly;

Sixteen years ago, an event occurred in Korea that changed the shape of Asia and the world.

On a June morning in 1950, we woke up to learn that a Communist army had smashed into the Republic of Korea without warning or provocation.

Many Americans at that time could not locate Korea on the map. We were concerned mainly with the communist threat to Europe and the rebuilding of that continent. Asia seemed remote and beyond the pale of our interest.

But President Truman acted quickly. American forces went to aid of our Korean friends.

The United Nations was called into emergency session and a majority resolved to meet the aggression.

There were those who condemned us for trying to play "worldpoliceman". We were told that there would be no successful outcome to a "dirty little war" in Asia.

Yet we stood firm behind the principle that the people of Korea—no less than the people of France or Italy—had a right to self-determination. We acted because the success of communist aggression in Asia would have been as harmful to world peace and to our own national interest as the success of communist aggression would be harmful in Europe.

And we acted because we knew that such aggression feeds on itself. We had watched one country after another fall in the 1930's to Nazi aggression in Europe and militarist imperialism in Asia. Force prevailed from Czechoslovakia to Poland, from Korea to the Java Sea. I have always believed that the communist strategists of the 50's were encouraged by the indifference, and the fear and the weakness that permitted the aggression of the 30's to move so far, so fast.

But in Korea in 1950—as in Vietnam today—we acted to stop the aggression.

Side by side we fought with you to protect your right to be sovereign and independent. We had total casualties of hundred and fifty seven thousand, thirty-three thousand killed in combat, more than twenty thousand killed in non-combat, our total deaths were 53 thousand 600 and twenty nine. While our total casualties were 157 thousand 530, the Korean people suffered civilian casualties of perhaps two million. Who will ever know how many children starved? How many refugees lie in unmarked graves along the roads South? There is hardly a Korean family which did not lose a loved one in the assault from the North.

This was the cost—the terrible cost—of protecting the Republic of Korea from communist aggression. As I meet with President Park and see your countryside and your people and then I look out into the faces of this assembly, I know that these men did not die in vain.

For here is one of the truly dramatic stories of our time—a nation transformed within a generation.

I hope that a great historian will soon record the story: of how an ancient nation has emerged from the shadows of its colonial past and from the tragedy of war to become one of the youngest and most vigorous constitutional democracies in the world.

I want him to tell how this nation—through no fault of its own—was divided, and almost destroyed.

I want him to record that, when the fighting stopped, Korea faced every conceivable difficulty: its cities in ashes; millions of refugees; transportation in ruins; factories idle; inflation rampant; and unemployment high.

I want him to tell of the men and women who guided this nation through those terrible years; of their greatness and their shortcoming; of their foresight and their errors.

I want him to describe the student uprising, the military revolt and then the achievement of constitutional government in the fall of 1963.

I want him to recall the sense of triumph and accomplishment—when the votes were cast and counted, and the people had made their choice of who would govern.

I want him to record how you have taken your stand with other nations that are helping South Vietnam to resist a new communist tactic, one that combines external aggression with internal terror. I want him to record that your contribution, in terms of population, matches the United States of America.

Finally, I want him to record the astonishing economic and social progress that you have made working together in unity here in Korea.

I have seen in Korea how real and how realistic are the four goals of freedom adopted in Manila.

You have fought and you are fighting now—so that Asia can be free from aggression.

You are moving rapidly in Korea to conquer hunger, illiteracy, and disease.

You have shown leadership in helping to build institutions that promise this region security and order and progress. Korea proposed, and was host to, the historic conference that created the Asian and Pacific Council. You became a charter member of the Asian Development Bank and you helped to initiate the Manila Conference.

You have sought reconciliation. The settlement with Japan will bring lasting benefits to both nations and bring strength to this part of the world. You aspire and are prepared to act—under the United Nations—to bring about the unity of the Korean nation. We support that aspiration and that position fully.

And you are now ready to play your part in bringing about an honorable peace in Vietnam.

It is right, therefore, that I should end my trip through Asia here in Korea, where the four goals of freedom adopted at Manila are on their way to achievement.

I have seen, listened, and learned much on this trip:

—from the proud island of Samoa, teaching its children by television, to the dignity and dynamism of Thailand;

—from the intention of New Zealand and Australia to enter helpfully into the life of Asia, to the vitality and determination of the Philippines;

—from the solid agreement we found among allies at the Manila Conference;

—from the understanding of that Conference that I found in Malaysia, to this thrilling climax here in Seoul.

Today the world has turned its eyes to Asia and begun to understand the goals and the problems, and the energy of this region where almost two-thirds of humanity lives.

A new, young generation of Asian leaders is determined that there shall be security and order and progress in their region. These are men who are prepared to stake their lives on that proposition.

The new Asia will remain loyal to its own traditions and cultures and values, even as it works constructively with the United States and other nations throughout the world.

I have seen the palaces and universities; ordinary homes and village schools; the new land

developments and the new strains of rice for Asia's millions. I have seen Cabinet Members and school children; farm experts and village leaders and our fighting men.

I have seen millions of faces-friendly and well-wishing. And I have been deeply encouraged. So, I leave today with a deep sense of confidence in the future of Asia and the Pacific.

The tasks of economic and social and political development are hard and long.

It will take time, persistence, and ingenuity to give permanence and stability to Asian regionalism.

Difficult days lie ahead of us in Vietnam, until the communists change their mind about fighting. We saw in Korea—as we saw in Europe and other parts of Asia—that they choose peace only when they know that military success is beyond their reach. We must, therefore, remain strong and resolute, until that day when those who started the fighting are ready and willing to end it.

That day will come, for peace is right and inevitable, and the free people of Asia and the Pacific deeply yearn and long for it.

My Korean friends, I thank you from the bottom of my heart for the warmth of your welcome.

I thank you for your courage and for your friendship—and for the testimony that you are giving to the promise of freedom in the world.

An effective Korean government—engaged in a democratic dialogue with a vigorous opposition—is transforming your country into a modern nation and into a democratic state.

A great and proud people is emerging on to the world scene from its historic isolation. Other nations have played a part in that achievement. But it is the intelligence, and the energy, and the hard work and the genius of the Korean people that are creating a new future for your country.

And we honor, and respect and salute you.

Now thank you and goodbye, Mrs. Johnson and I wish that good lord will give his blessing to your people and your land.