

ASIAN TOUR 1967

KOREA

ARRIVAL STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER, MR. HAROLD HOLT

6TH APRIL, 1967.

Mr. Prime Minister, Mrs. Chung, Distinguished Guests:

I thank you for the warm welcome you have given me, Mrs. Holt and my party on this our first visit to Korea. It is indeed the first visit ever made to your country by an Australian Prime Minister. I hope this fact alone will be some assurance to you of the interest my country has in Korea and its people, and will be accepted by you as an expression of our goodwill towards you. We look forward to learning over the next few days more about your country and your people.

Australia has followed your fortunes closely since 1950 when, without provocation or warning, you were invaded from your North. I was a member of the Australian Cabinet then, it decided promptly to send Australian forces to assist you in repelling that aggression. I believe we were the first country after the United States publicly to declare our intention of giving military assistance to Korea. Later we were glad to join in helping you to reconstruct your ravaged country.

Since these dark days great changes for the better have taken place. You now have a thriving economy with a high rate of growth. You have a Constitutional Democracy. You are highly respected throughout the free countries of the world. Yours is one of the success stories of our times. You have demonstrated what can be done by an energetic, educated people capably led and with efficient administration, once the disturbing influences of communist subversion and aggression have been brought under control.

The good example you provide has given you increasing influence amongst free nations of Asia and the Pacific. Australia applauded your initiative in calling the successful conference of ASPAC last year.

Your own experience undoubtedly affected you in your decision to give substantial military help to Vietnam in its efforts to resist communist aggression. We are proud to have Australians fighting alongside your own troops in Vietnam, as they did in Korea in those earlier years.

I was glad to collaborate with your distinguished President and other national leaders at the Summit Conference in Manila last year.

I am greatly looking forward to our meeting together again, and to the useful discussions we shall be able to have.

Mr. Prime Minister, thank you for this most friendly reception. Thank you also for affording to me and my party this welcome opportunity to develop better knowledge and understanding of the Korea of today.

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