



KOREA

SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER, MR. HAROLD HOLT
AT DINNER PARTY IN SEOUL

8TH APRIL, 1967

Prime Minister Chung, Mrs. Chung, Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen:

I am delighted to have this opportunity on behalf of the Australian Government and the Australian Embassy, my colleagues from Australia of the official party and of the press who are here with me tonight, to be able to repay in the least fractional measure the kindness and hospitality, Mr. Prime Minister, that we have received from your Government and your people. I am afraid this is only fractional in more senses than one. I am not able to offer you for example the delightful after-dinner entertainment with which you regaled us last night. Even if you were to come to Australia I question whether we could entertain you as delightfully as we were last evening. It will be a memory we will carry with us and treasure for many years to come.

We are now near the end not only of our visit to your own country but of the journey on which we set out some twelve days ago to visit four of the countries of this area, neighbouring countries, friendly countries - and it has been for all of us, I am sure, a most enthralling experience. I spoke last night on what already had occurred to inform and interest us in the course of our visit to you, and this has been built on today by our visit to the South of your country.

The weather in a sense was not timed, but I come from a very arid continent, and I have learned to welcome rain whenever it comes because rain means good fortune for somebody. At least I think you are assured of good crops as a result of the rain which we have encountered here today. I am only sad, and I pass my sympathy and that of my colleagues to you, that perhaps it was the result of the difficult conditions which we ourselves experienced in our own flying that you have suffered this tragic disaster from the air, which has caused the loss of so many lives. Please accept, Prime Minister, our sympathy in this tragic event.

Our first visit to the United Nations Cemetery at Pusan was a poignant reminder to us of our friendship. I had said yesterday that I understood there was a cemetery here, where one in every ten of the graves was an Australian grave, and I went there today. The Officer in charge of the Cemetery for the United Nations said it was one in six of the graves which was Australian, and that is a reminder to us of our comradeship in more difficult times, but a comradeship which laid the firm foundations of a friendship on which we have been able to build ever since that time.

Then, coming from a country which itself has enjoyed great industrial development over recent years, it was a stimulating thing to go to Ulsan and see there the tremendous industrial growth which, thanks to the imaginative vision and drive of your great President and of your own leadership and Government, you have created in a matter of a few years. You now have the beginnings of an industrial complex which will fortify the economic strength of your country. Already you have, as I understand it, perhaps the largest urea fertiliser plant in the world, a great refinery and other

industries with more to follow. As we drove there, despite the rain, we found friendly people wherever we went. We found the beautiful countryside which is a part of your great heritage in this wonderful country.

So all this adds together to build a memorable experience for us. As we come to the end of this journey in Korea my over-riding impression is first of the friendliness of your people, the warmth of which has greeted us wherever we have moved. My other impression is of the strength of your people, their determination to preserve their Korean identity, their determination to preserve the way of life they treasure. They have shown that they can and will resist those who would submerge that way of life in an oppressive communist dictatorship, and they have a determination not merely to maintain this country as a secure country and a free country, but to develop it and make it a better country for its citizens to live as a growing and strong member of the unity of free nations.

May I just add by way of a concluding comment - it may be of some interest to you because I think it is a happy augury for our future in this region of the world - that my journeys have taken me to four different countries as well as official encounters in Hong Kong and Singapore, and at no point have we found a hostile banner, a hostile voice, a hostile look.

I, as a representative of a country which has European tradition and origin but which is happy to find itself part of the geographical unity which is Asia, have seen warmth and friendliness wherever I have gone. Nowhere, Mr. Prime Minister, have we been received with more warmth and more friendliness than in this country of Korea, hitherto unexplored by an Australian Prime Minister. I thank you and your people Mr. Prime Minister for the hospitality which you have extended to us. I express the confident hope that these sound foundations of friendship will be built upon in the years ahead, and make for our two countries a continuing bond which will be built with strength for the area as a whole.

In that spirit I invite you all to join with me in honouring a toast to the President of your friendly country of Korea and Mrs. Chung, their colleagues in the Government, and the people of Korea whom we honour and with whom we live in peace. I give you that toast.
