

KOREA

SPEECH GIVEN BY THE PRIME MINISTER, MR. HAROLD HOLT,  
ON THE OCCASION OF THE CONFERMENT OF HONORARY DOCTORATE OF LAWS,  
SEOUL UNIVERSITY

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Mr. President Choe, Mr. Dean, Mr. Prime Minister, distinguished members of the Faculty of Seoul National University, students of the National University and ladies and gentlemen.

This is a very proud moment in my life. The privilege which you have accorded me is a great honour. I regard it as a great honour because I know that in this National University of Seoul, Honorary Doctorates are not accorded lightly. It is a tribute which I accept not merely for myself but for my country and in the spirit of friendship which inspires it. It is more than 36 years ago that I gained my own degree, quite a modest degree of Bachelor of Laws, in the University of Melbourne. I have had to wait those 36 years to receive this very much higher distinction which I like to feel, although it may not have been gained in the academic sphere, has been accorded for service in the University of Life. We live together regardless of the country from which we come in one of the most interesting and exciting phases in human history, and nowhere is the process of turbulence and change a challenge more evident than in the region of Asia which we inhabit together.

It is an exciting era because although it is a period of restlessness and change, although it is full of challenge, it is also an era full of opportunity and hope to the better world for which we all aspire.

Mankind has learned through the processes of science, through education, through his relations one with the other, that the age-old enemies of man, illiteracy, disease, poverty, insecurity, economic instability, these enemies can be conquered.

There are some fortunate countries in the world in which they have been largely conquered and in other countries there is the expectation that these things can be accomplished.

When the leaders of the nations meeting at Manila last year were holding their discussions together, their thoughts were not merely on military matters even though they were, to a very significant degree, involved in military operations in relation to issues of far reaching consequences. Issues which went as deep as the challenge to the security and freedom of your own people and your own country back in those dark days of the 1950's.

But while we turned our thoughts to the problems of how security could be brought to this area we also had a vision of the better world to which we could all contribute.

This is a world in which these enemies are defeated and in which people could live in freedom, in social security with justice, liberty and freedom for individuals and for democratic institutions. Now in this era, we strive for these things.

This is an era in which man with his enterprise and irrepressible spirit is probing the mysteries of the universe, of the shores of outer space and the depths of the sea, and is seeing new developments in industry, agriculture, science and in education.

The young people, those who are coming through their process of education, have a tremendous contribution to make. There is evidence throughout the world, a phenomenon not restricted to any one country, that there is a sense of urgency on the part of young people to learn more about the world in which they live, to make a greater contribution to the betterment of their fellow men.

We who have the responsibility for Government must recognise these things, they create great responsibilities for Government and great problems. They create immediate and difficult complex problems for Ministers of Education and, indeed, speaking as a Minister of Finance for seven years, great difficulties for Ministers of Finance. But they are problems which we are meeting and which we must continue to meet to give a better world to the rising generation and those who aspire to freedom and a better world, in whatever country they are to be found.

The opportunities for making the most of these talents and resources; perhaps older men like myself can dream of a world in which these things have been at some point of time achieved. Perhaps it will be the good fortune of those young people I see in this audience today, to find them realised within their own lifetime.

That will be my fond hope and, by this ceremony today, you are expressing from a great institution of learning, a tribute to those who have the responsibility of making the laws which can fashion a better order for the world of the future.

I do prize the distinction which you have conferred upon me and, in so far as it lies within my power, I shall do what I can from my experience, my energies, my abilities to further those great goals we have set ourselves, and to work to the evolution of a world at peace that is progressing, that is prosperous and is secure, the liberty and the sense of security of all people who are of good will throughout the world.

I thank you Mr. President and your colleagues. I thank you, Mr. Prime Minister, for the generous things you have found yourself able to say to me. It is to me a pleasing thing that the researchers of the University have delved into some of my earlier performances.

I hope that my performances of the future will be worthy of the honour they have bestowed upon me.

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