



Mr. Yeend

PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

1 MAY 1979

SPEECH OF WELCOME FOR KOREAN PRIME MINISTER

It gives me great pleasure to extend a warm welcome, on behalf of the Australian Government and people, to His Excellency, Mr. Choi Kyu-Hah, Prime Minister of the Republic of Korea, and his delegation.

Over the last 30 years there have been many difficulties in the Korean Peninsula and South East Asia. This has been an area of turmoil and difficulty, of never-ending challenge. Your people were put through the most difficult test of all -- invasion, and the danger of the loss of freedom. You fought, with your allies, for the most precious and most prized human possession, for freedom and liberty of spirit. You have worked hard to preserve that. It has often been difficult.

There have been alarms and dangers in the demilitarised zone and keeping the peace has not been easy. You need the secure support of your friends, particularly in the light of a massive arms build-up by North Korea. It is your own strength, the support friends and allies, your treaties with the United States, that are working to prevent war breaking out again. You have lived under challenge, you've lived under threat, and you've responded to it magnificently.

The Republic of Korea not only has a defence burden, you have the task of building the living standards of your own people. By your effort and energy, and despite few natural resources, your Gross Domestic Product has been rising by 10 percent a year. How many advanced countries would wish that they could achieve that?

You are an example of what a developing country can do when it allows market forces to operate in the development of trade and industry. You are an example of what a free people can do, spurred on by the need to work for survival. For all these reasons, Mr. Prime Minister, we are particularly glad to welcome you, your fellow Minister, Mr. Chang Yie Joon, and your delegation. It is not the first time you have visited Australia, but it is the first time as Prime Minister, and we are delighted that you are here.

The relationship between Australia and the Republic of Korea has strengthened since the Korean War. We share many points of common interest.

Our relationship began when, as a Member of the United Nations Control Commission, Australia played an active part in the establishment of the Republic of Korea after World War II. The relationship was strengthened when we, with other United Nations forces, supported the Republic of Korea during the Korean War. Since that time our relationship has developed into a rich political and economic partnership.

The most spectacular and easily identified area of growth in our relationship has been in trade. Since the early 1970's the value of trade between us has increased seven fold. The major reason for this growth has been the spectacular economic progress made by your country. I'm sure that as our respective economies grow, many more opportunities for trade will develop.

We recognise that much of Australia's trading future rests with the Republic of Korea, with Japan and China, with South East Asia, and with the Pacific countries generally. We particularly welcome the beginning of your investment - in partnership with Australian concerns - in the development of Australian resources, and we hope that your participation will continue and grow.

Our two countries are co-operating in other areas. We have initialled an agreement covering the Republic of Korea's fishing activities in the Australian 200 Nautical Mile Fishing Zone. We look forward to the conclusion of outstanding matters relating to that agreement.

During your visit a nuclear safeguards agreement between the Republic of Korea and Australia will be signed. We recognise your need for nuclear power for peaceful purposes. Up till now, the Republic of Korea has been about 60 percent dependent upon oil as an energy source. Is it any wonder that you seek to diversify more into coal and nuclear power?

Our trading relationship has been greatly helped by frequent discussions between our Ministers, our officials, and our businessmen. The Australian/Korea Business Cooperation Committee is doing much active work. Your country was the first with which we established regular Government to Government talks and your visit is a significant addition to those regular discussions. My colleague, The Minister for Trade and Resources, is planning to visit Seoul later this year.

Your country and mine share a commitment to peace and stability in our region and in the world. We welcome development that have contributed to that end, such as the normalisation of relations between China and the United States of America. We hope that ultimately through peaceful means, through consultation and negotiation, the solutions will be found to the problems that are causing continued tension in the Korean Peninsula.

We appreciate what your Government is doing to find a peaceful and lasting solution to these problems.

The last few years have seen increasing contacts between us in the economic and political spheres, in sports and cultural and academic exchanges and in scientific cooperation. An essential part of building international friendships is personal knowledge of each other amongst Government leaders and I warmly welcome your Government's invitation to visit your country. I am looking forward to the day when it will be possible to schedule that visit.

I have heard much about the beauty of your country and the warmth and hospitality of your people. I warmly welcome you and your delegation to Australia. I now propose a toast to the health of Prime Minister Choi Kyu-Hah.

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