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The Lost Chapter in Korean History, Evolving Democracy, and an Opportunity for Peace and Security in the North Pacific

By Fred Martin

Korea – a long suffering battleground of the cold war and a powder keg of political instability – holds the key to peace and security in the Pacific Northwest. This window of opportunity for Korea to pull itself together opened with a summit between leaders in North and South Korea, direct negotiations between the United States and North Korea under the aegis of six-party talks and North Korea's shutting down its nuclear reactor.

Over half a century after the conclusion of the Korean War, the Korean peninsula either will stabilize or explode in conflict potentially greater than the Korean War. The last Stalinist state, North Korea, is militarized to a dangerous degree and isolated to an unprecedented extent. Resolving the Korean cauldron means more than assessing self-delusion and calculating self-interest in Pyongyang (the North Korean capital). It demands an understanding of the nature and evolution of South Korean governance in the formative decades following World War II and the Korean War.

South Korea is on a nationalist roll with democratic capitalism on the ascendancy. The North remains mired in political oppression and economic stagnation. What few in the West realize is the background of endemic corruption and political autocracy that characterized the first generation of post World War II governance in South Korea. This "lost chapter" of South Korean history cries out for review and reflection as all work to unfold a new and promising chapter of Korean history.

Koreans have been engaged in virtual laboratory-like evolution from brutal autocracy to democracy wrestling with the political issues of the 20th Century. Buffeted by imperialist designs of Chinese, Japanese and Russian neighbors, the twin isms of hate and communism, and the missteps of policy by the United States, Koreans have suffered the ravages of aggression from outside and war instigated within. The lessons have been harsh.

Powerful neighbors, including its one natural ally across the Pacific, the United States, mistakenly have viewed Korea as a colony, a satellite or a buffer. All espoused contrary goals. During military service in Korea in the mid 1950's, I saw Korean democracy sacrificed to Cold War concerns. I

witnessed up close the then largest U.S. aid program milked and distorted by a corrupt government, sanctioned and empowered by Washington.

Thousands of courageous G.I.'s, including a cousin by marriage, Captain John Burke, gave their lives to defend South Korea as Washington officialdom either failed to comprehend or to care about the abuses perpetrated by the South Korean political-military elite. The U.S. preoccupation with the Cold War overshadowed the democratic rights of the average South Korean, echoes of early 20th Century American statecraft.

Koreans North and South are apprehensive about "axis of evil" rhetoric and swashbuckling saber-rattling by the likes of John R. Bolton and his fellow neo-cons. These policies may be ideologically engaging to sectors of the American political spectrum but treat the Korean peoples as pawns.

Let's give perspective to U.S.-Korean relations. Koreans remember, even if American's don't, the 1904 acts of President Theodore Roosevelt. Fearing Japanese designs in the Philippines, he had Secretary of State Eli Root inform the Japanese that the U.S. would take a hands off attitude toward Korea if the Japanese would do the same in the Philippines. The Japanese invaded and conquered Korea, resulting in 40 years of brutal occupation that ended with the World War II Japanese surrender. President Roh recently lectured an American visitor on Korean resentment of this move.

Teddy Roosevelt had won the Nobel Peace Prize for mediating the Russo-Japanese War. He also reached a Gentleman's Agreement on a highly inflammatory immigration issue with Japan, and sent the Great White Fleet on a global goodwill tour. While unwilling to see the U.S. as a dumping ground for excess Asian labor, he urged those already here be allowed to vote and threatened to use the Army to protect them if need be.

Roosevelt's world view owed much to a family hero, Uncle James Bullock. Roosevelt's mother, a Bullock from Georgia, and her mother sent aid to the Confederates during the Civil War. Uncle Jimmy, as Teddy called him, left the shipping business and became an Admiral in the Confederate Navy. Roosevelt's father, a New Yorker, paid for a substitute so he would not serve in the Union Army, given division in the family. Teddy grew up within a family badly divided by the war and much conflicted on the moral issues. Teddy resented his father's lack of service.

Confederate Admiral James Bullock was able to commission and spirit out of Scotland the privateers Alabama and the Florida. These two warships all but destroyed the Union merchant marine during the Civil War, or forced the sale of maritime ships to the British. Another uncle, Irvine, served on Confederate warships Alabama, and, after it was sunk, the Shenandoah, which scourged Union Pacific whalers.

After the Korean War, the United States pushed Korea into closer cooperation with the Japanese, yet they remain leery. Koreans on both sides of the 38th Parallel want a security treaty to protect them against powerful neighbors. Proud and determined, Koreans have survived as a people and a nation in the cross hairs of invasion by neighbors. Archaeological evidence indicates that humans inhabited this land many millenniums ago. The first recorded inhabitants came from Central Asian tribes. They faced successive waves of invasion from Mongolians, Chinese and Japanese.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt at the Cairo Conference on 22 November 1943 gained agreement that “in due course Korea shall become free and independent.” Yet at the major powers’ summit in Potsdam, Germany, President Harry Truman agreed to establish a four-power trusteeship over Korea. On August 9, 1945, Soviet tanks entered northern Korea from Siberia. Japan surrendered 15 August 1945, and U.S. troops moved into southern Korea.

Koreans who had resisted the Japanese had the beginnings of governing organization. They expected to regain control of their land when World War II ended. On Sept. 29, 1945, Kim Il Sung and his guerrillas, who had been fighting the Japanese, arrived at Wonsan aboard the Soviet warship Pukachev from Siberia. Kim had waged anti-Japanese war in Manchuria from the 1930’s, and in 1941 he led the remnants of his army into Siberia to join the International Allied Forces (IAD) created by the Soviets in 1940. This was only the beginning of militarization in the North.

Koreans knew that Korean farmers in neighboring Russian-claimed Siberia had been brutally treated by Soviet Premiers Vladimir Lenin and Joseph Stalin. Stalin, in 1938, had emptied Siberia of Koreans, loading them in cattle cars and dumping them in Kazakhstan in Central Asia. Farms they had worked for generations were confiscated. Stalin also signed a friendship treaty with Japan on April 13, 1941. A prominent Korean general, who defended Korean farmers, died in a Soviet gulag.

To this day many Russians maintain an anti-Asian racial bias and fear the loss of resource-rich but population-shy Siberia. They fear the economic hegemony of Japan or, worse yet, social disorder from an unstoppable migration implosion from China. My wife and I heard this first hand from Russians on our recent visit there.

In December 1945, a conference convened in Moscow to discuss the future of Korea. A 5-year trusteeship was discussed, and a joint U.S.-Soviet commission established. It met intermittently in Seoul but deadlocked on a national government. With no solution in sight, in 1947, the United States submitted the Korean question to the United Nations General Assembly.

The United States established a military government in South Korea. Kim Il Sung, backed by the Russians, ruled North Korea. Kim was raised in a Protestant Christian family with strong ties to the church: his maternal grandfather was a Protestant minister, his father had gone to a missionary school, and both his parents were reportedly very active in the religious community. Kim, however, turned to communism.

Lacking plan or organization, U.S. officials first sought Japanese colonial officials and collaborators, which drew the wrath of Koreans. Next the U.S. called in the anti-communist Koreans from China and the United States, including Syngman Rhee. Rhee – a man I met in Korea – was at best an anti-communist crusader, but more realistically an undemocratic autocrat. He suppressed or eliminated those who opposed him, not only communists and leftists but moderates.

From 1925 to 1945, Rhee had passed himself off as the sole representative of Korea in the United States. The U.S. State Department, then, rejected Rhee's requests for money and political assistance. Officials wrote him off as "an old man out of touch and representing no one but himself in Korea." At one point, Rhee had traveled to Moscow in search of funds, but, when turned down, returned a virulent anti-communist.

Rhee preached Christian anti-communism for Korea. This struck a cord with the post World War II anti-communist climate in the U.S. Those who supported Rhee missed or ignored his clear autocratic and repressive politics. The result left Koreans with two like-minded dictators, Rhee in the South and Kim in the North. Both brutally suppressed their opposition.

As Rhee emerged as the Korea president, he wanted to march north and unify Korea, but the U.S. said no. Kim wanted to march south, but Stalin held him in check. In 1950, Secretary of State Dean Acheson, in a National Press Club speech, left South Korea outside the U.S. defense perimeter. Congress soon delayed action on a funding measure for South Korea. Kim viewed these actions as an open door and invaded.

The U.S. promptly reversed course. President Truman ordered General Douglas MacArthur to aid South Korea, and gained a United Nations mandate. Three U.S. divisions, undermanned and under equipped, landed in Korea. U.S. and South Korean troops were badly mauled and bottled up in the Pusan perimeter. Then MacArthur executed the brilliant Inchon landing and broke the back of the North Korean invasion.

As the North Koreans retreated, the Chinese intervened, and again U.N. troops fell back to the Pusan perimeter before fighting north to what now is the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). A truce was negotiated, and the DMZ divides North and South Korea under the terms.

During the bitter fighting, when either the North Koreans or South Koreans penetrated the territory of the other, they proceeded to slaughter and abuse their Korean enemies. This solidified the hatred and bitterness North and South, escalating distrust. Few beyond Korea comprehended this brutality and corruption in Korea in the north and south.

When the Korean War ended, rampant poverty prevailed. People resorted to cutting down trees, vital to prevent rice paddy dike erosion, and cracked the oil pipeline up the peninsula. While these were capital offenses, and those caught were executed, people were desperate as they slept on their ondol floors and needed to burn fuel in the oven-like hollow spaces beneath to ward off freezing temperatures. Koreans also stole brass brake shoes from rail cars to survive, which slowed the flow of needed supplies. They raided U.S. military installations.

Korea's strategic position was seen by U.S. policy makers in 1945 as a buffer between Russian and Japan. China and Russia feared the presence of U.S. military on their border and the intrusion of Koreans, especially into areas once populated by Koreans.

The Korean peninsula covers 85,049 square miles and is 600 miles long. It is populated by some 50 million South Koreans, and slightly more than 20 million in the North. Korea separates the Yellow Sea on the west from the Sea of Japan, called the East Sea by Koreans. On the South, the Korea Strait separates it from Japan. On the north, boundaries are shared with China (500 miles) and with Russia (11) miles. The northern land boundary is marked by the Yalu (Korean Amnok) and Tumen (Korean Duman or Tuman) rivers.

Upon graduation from the University of Denver I was commissioned a 2nd lieutenant in the Army, having been in R.O.T.C. I received orders to report to Basic Infantry Officers School at Ft. Benning, GA. At DU, I had worked nights as a reporter on The Denver Post. Because my own ancestors had volunteered, had fought, and a number had died, in every American war, I fully anticipated that I would serve when called.

Next, I was ordered to Korea. I was assigned to the 21st Regiment, 24th Division, commanding a recoilless rifle platoon on the DMZ astride the major invasion route the North Koreans would use if they came south again. My platoon, half U.S. military and half KATUSA (Korean Army Troops attached to the U.S. Army), introduced me to Koreans, whom I came to respect. Many U.S. soldiers called Koreans “gooks” and looked down upon them. Deep seated racial phobia, often on both sides, complicated relations.

Soon reassigned as a regimental liaison officer, my duties included public information and civilian personnel, overseeing several hundred attached Korean workers. From there, I moved to assistant division public information officer. Success in getting front-page coverage for the regiment and the division resulted in another call.

The State Department was short of personnel. Thus, I was loaned by the Department of the Army to State and reassigned through the U.S. Information Agency to the U.N. Office of Economic Coordinator. This agency, chiefly funded by the U.S., was the largest U.S. aid program at that time. The Economic Coordinator reported to the U.N. Commander, U.S. General Lyman L. Lemnitzer.

Scholars often have labeled this period of the 1950's the lost chapter of Korean history. U.S. policy focused on South Korea's massive army. It was viewed as a front-line imperative in U.S. strategic thinking during this phase

of the Cold War. In the name of anti-communism the U.S. supported the imperfect and misled us on just what they stood for. Standards on controls of aid were eroded; as war loosened values in the name of different ones – shades of Iraq.

Rhee had rammed through a constitutional change to permit him a third term. He barred many well-known correspondents, such as Keyes Beach and Gordon Walker, from Korea. Rhee feared intrusive U.S. style reporting on repression and autocratic means, but also on corruption. To report on any of this would have meant death or incarceration for Korean reporters.

In an extensive report on Korean newspapers, I found instances where news staffers on Korean papers were victims of attacks by pro-government hoodlums. It was particularly difficult for those who stood up to the ROK Office of Public Information. Hankook Ilbo – owner of the Korea Times – frequently and courageously condemned OPI attempts to interfere with freedom of the press and book censorship. The paper spoke out against police curbs on freedom of assembly, interference in politics and brutality.

“U.S.-Korean Relations from Liberation to Self Reliance, The Twenty-Year Record,” by Donald Stone MacDonald provided an interpretive summary of State Department archives from 1945 through 1965. The documents showed the intent and design of U.S. policy toward Korea, laying bare the goals, the short falls and the confusion stemming from interagency differences, especially between State and Defense, over Korea. The corruption and carnage in Korea at the time was not in the record.

I came to the U.N. Office of Economic Coordinator when William E. Warne, later California Water Resources chief, came in as the Economic Coordinator, replacing C. Tyler Woods. Warne, who had begun his career with the Associated Press, tapped me as an aide. I reported directly to Charles Edmondson, Public Affairs chief, who, after I had left Korea, resigned charging massive corruption, but exonerating Warne.

We were spending annually some \$400 million in military aid and another \$400 million in economic aide. The military aid, in effect, underwrote the Korean land army of more than 600,000 troops on this cold war frontier. The economic coordinator was tasked with rebuilding war torn Korea.

The aid program made a major contribution to the rebuilding of the Korean economy. During the post Korean War period economic aid dollars exceeded \$800 million. A major part included goods the Koreans needed for daily living. Accomplishments were chronicled in “America Aids Korea,” a United States Information Agency publication produced in 1956.

“Since 1953, OEC had provided hundreds of millions of dollars worth of wheat, cotton, barley, fertilizer, pesticides, oil, coal, lumber, cement and other raw materials to be used wherever needed,” it reported. “The United States and the United Nations have provided materials and technical advice to Korea in order to help South Korea rebuild.... There is every reason to feel confident that, with assistance, the Korean people can look forward to a new and better life.”

In addition to writing news releases and aid program publications, I was in and out of the Blue House (Korea’s White House equivalent) working with Rhee’s presidential staff and Cabinet members on aid program projects. Rhee would appear from time to time, but appeared less in touch with day-to-day events. I also came to know the military leaders, who frequented diplomatic circles and ran around in fancy jeeps. Among them were Park Chung Hee, Chun Doo Hwan and Roh Tae Woo, all future military dictators.

As the 1956 election approached, my secretary, Miss Kim came late one morning, and I asked why. She explained that police had come to each door the night before, ordering that at least one member from each household show up for a unanimous demonstration for the reelection of Rhee. She said she was the only one in her household who could go.

My perception of the aid program, Korean government and politics was turned upside down by this and subsequent events. I was dispatched south to check various aid program projects and report on the dedication of a newly opening power plant in Pusan. Traveling by jeep with a photographer, I drove to Taejon.

Approaching the city, I spotted an ultramodern complex and decided to visit. This was the Cheil Woolen Mill. Given the shape of the Korean economy at the time, it was unlikely that this mill could have been built without U.S. aid funds. Introducing myself to the manager, I explained my mission. He invited us to lunch and proposed a tour.

The manager explained that Cheil was part of the Samsung chaebol (conglomerate). He proudly showed us through the complex, which included dormitories for employees, mostly women; a cafeteria; and recreational facilities. The ultramodern machinery, all imported from West Germany, was spinning out high quality worsted yarn. Key plant personnel either had been sent to Germany for training or worked under the tutelage of German technicians at the mill.

When I ultimately returned to Seoul, a careful search of aid program records did not show a project grant to build a spinning mill. The records revealed that program fund allocations had been subverted. The resulting “reallocation” permitted Cheil to create a virtual monopoly on worsted yarn, even when official reports indicated that yarn production allocations were aimed at avoiding monopoly. Cheil had circumvented policy.

As I continued to dig, I learned that the owner, Yi (Lee when Anglicized) Pyong-Cho'l, had, because he was close to Rhee, been given highly favorable terms to purchase both Cheil Mokik (textiles) and Cheil Chedang (sugar), which were Japanese industries. Among Korean entrepreneurs, Yi was neither alone nor exclusive in his methods. As I learned more and reported more, reports of my work reached Mr. Yi (Lee). His evolving chaebol was named Samsung, which means three stars.

It turned out that Yi, who considered himself a “Japanese gentleman” with a Japanese wife, had made another very wise investment. He owned one of Seoul’s finest Kisaeng Houses (the Korean equivalent of a Japanese Geisha House), and, among other things, it was among the city’s best restaurants. Rumor had it that certain highly placed U.S. officials were entertained, and one by the madam herself. Soon I was invited to dinners and wined and dined by none other than Mr. Yi himself and two young assistants. I was plied with questions, and soon learned that Yi was familiar with my work.

Yi diplomatically sought information. As junior as I was, he was barking up the wrong tree but I was learning more from him and did not disabuse him of his notions. It was clear that highly placed sources and allies within the government (and maybe the aid program) would protect him.

Back to my travels, I continued south, first to Taegu, then to Pusan, over to Yosu and back by ferry boat. In Pusan the power plant was dedicated with great fan fare. Both Korean and aid program officials spoke to the

importance of the energy the newly built facility would provide. It was fueled by oil over the objections of Rhee who wanted power plants that would utilize Korean coal.

From Pusan, I drove to Taegu and arrived on the eve of the 1956 Korean presidential elections. Politics was in the air, as each of the candidates had loud speakers at various points proclaiming the candidate's merits. What were unusual were the crowds at the loud speakers for Democratic Party Candidate Shin Ik-Hi. Shin, Rhee's major opponent, had died 10 days before the election. Rhee and a third party candidate, ex-communist Cho Bong Am (whom Rhee had permitted to run but some years later had tried and executed) seemed unable to draw more than a hand full of people to their speakers. Shin's death, reported as due to a massive cerebral hemorrhage, was declared by natural causes in reports reviewed by MacDonald, but few in Korea that I talked with believed it.

In addition to my official duties, I had volunteered at the Korean Times, an independent English language paper, which competed with Rhee's captive Korean Republic. The valiant band of journalists at the paper struggled with their English, and so I was welcomed and became the de facto copy editor. They had to compete with Rhee's government financed Korean Republic, run by his imported U.S. public relations advisers.

As I reported at the time: "The American advisors are men experienced in journalism who advise President Rhee as well as assist on the Korean Republic. The three are William Glen, C. Wayne Semple and O.H.P. King." Glen, a former dean of the University Of Southern California School Of Journalism, supervised the makeup and edited the Korea Republic. A skilled writer, he also prepared speeches for Rhee when he traveled to the U.S.

The crew at the Korean Times had a very different view both on the election and on politics in Korea. Rhee, in their eyes, was a senile autocrat, who was a barrier to democracy. The publisher, Chang ki-yong, formerly was a vice president of the Bank of Korea and delegate to the ROK-Japan talks. Also from the Bank of Korea, Chang brought in Choi Byung-woo (B.W. Choi) as Korea Times Managing Editor. I worked with Choi and came to respect and admire him. We became friends.

In conversation, Choi explained: "You Americans don't realize that your Declaration of Independence is the most revolutionary document in the

world. You don't think much about it because you have the rights in it. We look at it; we don't have those rights and we are going to get them." On a reporting assignment in the China straits, Choi was drowned when his ship was sunk. Told he would have to swim, he explained he did not know how and as he entered the water reportedly said: "I'll try."

In Taegu, I ran into the U.S. Eight Army veterinarian, who was complaining because he had been flown to Rhee's compound. It seems that Rhee's pet turtle had become ill. It was feared the death of the turtle would be viewed as a bad omen. The veterinarian managed to prolong the life of the turtle.

My jeep was in bad shape, so I left it at the Taegu motor pool, and took the evening train to Seoul. Knowing all U.S. Army personnel were confined to quarters on Election Day, I went to the U.S. Embassy Compound, and bunked with friends. Next day, in borrowed civilian clothes, I linked up with AP Reporter Gene Kramer, a friend posted in Tokyo. Gene, the AP stringer and I visited polling stations, talked with voters and did exit polling.

It was obvious that Rhee would win, and equally obvious that this would result regardless of the vote count. The press focused on the vice presidency. Under Korean law, the death of Shin left a vacancy that could not be filled. Meanwhile ballot counting in Taegu, an opposition stronghold, was suspended. While this is not reflected in MacDonald's summary of U.S. reports, word in Korea was that General Park Chung Hee, the Korean Army commander in Taegu and future dictator, moved to ensure Rhee's reelection by recounting the votes.

With threats of violence in the air, the U.S. Charge (Carl W. M. Strom) approached the Democratic leaders and counseled moderation, which avoided threatened demonstrations. The result, Chang Myon, the Democratic candidate, won the vice presidency. Chang, a leading Roman Catholic layman, feared for his life with good reason.

When Rhee left the country after student protests in 1961 Chang served briefly as president until deposed by General Park in a military coup that resulted in almost 30 years of military dictatorship. Since ROK military were under the U.S. command, it was U.S. military acquiescence that resulted in a continued trade off of democratic government for military rule.

In Korea, prior to the end of my tour in late 1956, I developed more reports on aid projects, and flew to Manila to produce the major report on aid program accomplishments. It was necessary to go to Manila because that was the location of the U.S. Far East printing plant, which printed in Korean.

Given that as an officer I had to pay for my own food and also had a wife and two small children back in the States, I was on a tight budget. En route back from Manila I stopped in Hong Kong. A friend in Korea, Ted Conant, had given me a book of chits to use at the International Press Club. There I found a host of news hungry reporters barred from Korea. They fed me, and, to satisfy their appetite, I briefed them on Korea.

Back in Korea, I spent my evenings editing copy for the Korean Times. I received more invitations from Yi Pyong-Cho'l. This was a logical aftermath as new efforts were being made to push projects to completion and to stay within guidelines, preventing the subversion of grants. Rumors were rampant about the tie between Yi and President Rhee, and it was only some years later that I learned that Yi had given Rhee an estimated \$60 million in "election support."

During the 1956 presidential elections, some \$80 million was withdrawn from the aid program counterpart fund. This local currency fund came chiefly from the sale of imported commodities such as fertilizer sold to Korean farmers at the official 360 won to a dollar exchange rate. Proceeds were to fund local currency needs of aid program projects. The withdrawal allegedly supported Rhee's reelection campaign.

While in Korea, I developed a warm friendship with the Anglican bishop in Korea, John C. S. Daly, and accompanied him on visits to outlying parish churches. One of the English missionary priests, Richard Rutt, spoke Korean fluently. A recognized Korean scholar, we explored the countryside around Seoul and he taught me about Korean culture and history.

When my tour ended, I returned to San Francisco. One of my first calls was to Bob Eunson, whom I had met when he was Tokyo Bureau Chief for the Associated Press. Eunson, by then AP San Francisco Bureau Chief, invited me to a ball game, and afterwards, over cocktails at his house, hired me. Yet even back in the States Yi's lieutenants stayed in touch, asking me to dine with them and on occasion asking for advice and aid in developing business.

Following developments in Korea, I watched as Rhee's reign ended. I knew President Chang would not last. General Park soon purged the Democrats, including Chang, and took power. Park instituted central planning and industrial policy, looking toward Japan as his model. He nationalized banks and imposed strict foreign exchange controls. A super nationalist, neo Confucian and brutal dictator, Park made public spectacles of Chaebol chiefs and ridiculed profits.

Again, it was Yi, who cut a deal which resulted in major sovereign financial support from the Park government in return for a focus on exports and heavy industrial development. This resulted in the development of steel, automobile, shipbuilding and other industries located along an industrial belt extending north and west from Pusan. Taegu and Ulsan were linked to free trade zones of Masan and Ch'angwon. This is well chronicled in "Korea's Place in the Sun, A Modern History" by Korean scholar Bruce Cummings.

As the Asia Times reported, Park sought constitutional revisions in 1969 to run for a third term and defeated Kim Dae-jung. A year after the election, the Times said: "President Park imposed martial law, banned all political activities, and pushed the Yushin (revitalizing reform) Constitution, which gave the president power for life, through the National Assembly.

"Kim Dae-jung led campaigns against Park's regime in the US and Japan. In August 1973, KCIA agents abducted Kim from a Tokyo hotel. Strong reactions from the US and Japan resulted in his release in Seoul a week later, and he was immediately placed under house arrest. On March 1, 1976, Kim joined other democracy activists in issuing the 'Independence Day Declaration for Democratization'. Subsequently, he was sentenced to five years in prison, but was released and put under house arrest in 1978."

Park, a one time closet communist, attempted to initiate a nuclear program for South Korea, but was stopped by the United States. He contacted North Korea's Kim Il Sung, but the talks on reunion stopped abruptly. Park, working through his own KCIA, pushed an influence scheme known as the Koreagate scandal in the United States, which resulted in charges against members of the U.S. Congress, forcing resignations.

This 1976 political scandal involved South Koreans seeking influence with Congress. An immediate goal was to reverse President Richard Nixon's

Guam Doctrine, which proposed the withdrawal of all U.S. forces from the Asian Continent, including Korea. This policy was initially put forth by the late Senate Majority Leader, Mike Mansfield, in a San Francisco speech.

Senate Mansfield, a longtime family friend, came at my request to San Francisco to speak before the International Division of the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce. Mansfield had served in all three branches of the service and in China. He particularly wanted the U.S. out of Vietnam. Senator Mansfield, in his San Francisco speech later delivered again in the Senate, proposed the withdrawal of all U.S. forces from the Asian land mass and defined the U.S. as a Pacific power and not an Asian power.

The KCIA (now the National Intelligence Service) allegedly funneled bribes and favors through Tongsun Park. Park, a Korean businessman, owned the famed Georgetown Club and described himself as an "American success story." He came to the attention of the FBI in 1977, having given out thousands of dollars to prominent politicians in the influence peddling scheme known as "Koreagate."

Tongsun Park, before television cameras in a U.S. House of Representatives hearing, listed payments--mostly in cash--to some 30 members of Congress. He said he put the cash in little white envelopes. Speculation also focused on the role of the Rev. Sun Myung Moon, whose organization now controls the Washington Times.

In the end, only 10 members of Congress were seriously implicated. Most of those had decided to leave Congress; and the statute of limitations let three off free. The Ethics Committee recommended that Representatives Edward R. Roybal (D-CA) be censured and that Charles H. Wilson (D-CA) and John McFall (D-CA) be reprimanded. It did not prosecute Otto E. Passman (D-LA) due to illness. Representative Richard T. Hanna (D-CA) was convicted and sentenced to 6 to 30 months in prison.

In 1979, Park was shot by his Korean CIA chief, Kim Chae-gyu for a never explained reason, although efforts aimed at reunification with North Korea were rumored to be a factor. The year following Park's assassination was marked by political turmoil as the previously repressed opposition leaders all clamored to run for the presidential office. In 1980, General Chun Doo-hwan launched a coup d'etat against the transitional government of Choi Gyu Hwa, the former prime minister under Park and interim president. Chun's

coup triggered protests, asking for democratization, focused in Gwangju, South Cholla province.

Chun sent Special Forces to suppress protests. Many students and civilians – men, woman and children -- were killed brutally by military force in what came to be known as the Gwangju Massacre. In scale and scope it rivaled the 1989 military suppression at Tiananmen Square in Beijing, China. The difference was that in Korea the army was nominally under the UN command, and a U.S. general. U.S. officials declined to comment on the Gwangju Massacre, which made a mockery of the President Carter's human rights policy.

Chun, despite the massacre, visited the White House in 1981, riding on extensive contacts going back to his days as head of the Korean CIA. Chun said he would serve only a single term and allowed direct presidential elections in 1988, facing pressure from popular demonstrations. Seoul hosted the 1988 Summer Olympics and South Korea's economic development ballooned, due to the large, family owned businesses (chaebols) within the country.

Chun, nevertheless, viciously suppressed opposition and determined to pick his successor. The ruling party nominated Roh Tae Woo, a general handpicked by Chun. Fearing a collapse in Korea, the U.S. initiated counter pressure. Yet Chun had siphoned an estimated \$900 million war chest, and that coupled with the split between Kim Dae Jung and Kim Young Sam gave Roh Tae Woo victory.

Kim Young-sam unexpectedly merged his Peaceful Democracy Party with Roh's ruling Democratic Justice Party (DJP) using this alliance to defeat Kim Dae-jung in the 1992 presidential election. Kim served from 1993 until 1998. Kim pushed governmental and the economic reform, initiating an anticorruption campaign. He required government and military officials to publish their financial records.

Several high-ranking officers and cabinet members resigned and Chun and Roh were indicted and convicted on charges of corruption and treason. Kim granted amnesty to thousands of political prisoners, and removed the criminal convictions of pro-democracy protesters arrested during the Gwangju massacre (now called a mutiny) in the aftermath of the Dec. 12 coup.

Kim Dae Jung succeeded Kim Young-sam and served from 1998 to 2003. His election represented a maturation of the political process. Yet the family of Kim has been accused of certain conflicts which in an American context would seem as egregious, but in a Korean one are substantially less than his predecessors. Kim won the 2000 Nobel Peace Prize, the first Nobel laureate from Korea. A Roman Catholic, he has been called the "Nelson Mandela" of Asia for his long-standing opposition to authoritarian rule. The Nobel Committee announcement declared:

"With great moral strength, Kim Dae Jung has stood out in East Asia as a leading defender of universal human rights against attempts to limit the relevance of those rights in Asia. His commitment in favor of democracy in Burma and against repression in East Timor has been considerable. Through his 'sunshine policy', Kim Dae Jung has attempted to overcome more than fifty years of war and hostility between North and South Korea. His visit to North Korea gave impetus to a process which has reduced tension between the two countries. There may now be hope that the cold war will also come to an end in Korea. Kim Dae Jung has worked for South Korea's reconciliation with other neighboring countries, especially Japan."

The Korea Times reported: "He has been under house arrest 55 times, been in jail for six years and exiled twice. Furthermore, he has been a victim of both torture and attempted assassinations and twice been sentenced to death. During his whole life, Kim has devoted himself to promoting human rights, democracy, freedom and justice. He has never deviated from his commitment to the nation and love for the people."

My wife and I visited Korea after Kim was elected and saw the democratic and economic achievements. Seoul, a bombed out city when I first saw it, had evolved into an impressive modern metropolis. Seoul today has some 10 million people and the metropolitan area more than 20 million. Keep in mind also that South Korea today ranks as the fourth largest investor nation in China behind the United States, Japan and Taiwan. In China, we saw this first hand too.

Roh Moo-hyun took office as president in 2003 for a five-year term ending in 2008. Roh aimed to establish Korea as the hub of northeast Asia and push an engagement or Sunshine Policy towards North Korea initiated by Kim Dae-Jung. Roh strongly advocated the Free Trade Agreement with the United States. Roh's equally ambitious domestic policy sought to redefine

the security relationship with the United States, reform Korea's contentious politics through compromise, decentralize government, press chaebol reforms, enhance corporate transparency, reform the education and tax systems, and improve labor-management relations.

Much of Roh's program stalled due to continuing controversy that plagued Roh's government. He faced intense criticism both from supporters, who alleged that he was backing away from his principles, and from opponents, who opposed his policies from the outset. Roh refused to back down, labeling corruption charges subjective calculation by a hostile media. He did offer to step down if an investigation showed his campaign team had illicitly collected as much as one-tenth of the \$42 million found to have been illegally raised by his opposition.

Roh Moo-hyun initiated summit talks with North Korean leader Kim Jong-il. The Korea Times reported that these talks resulted when the South's Kim Man-bok, director of the National Intelligence Service (NIS), secretly twice visited North Korea where he met with Kim Yang-gon, director of the Workers' Party Unification Front, first to negotiate an agenda and, second, to agree on that agenda. Peace on the Korean Peninsula, national co-prosperity and reunification were established as the major agenda items, the Times reported. Roh's planned travel to North Korea on a reconnected cross-border road marks a milestone in North-South relations and even puts eventual unity on the table for discussion. But major obstacles remain, which require extensive negotiations.

The political difference between North and South is stark. The North Korean Constitution states that "the National Defense Commission is the highest military leadership body of State power.... the Chairman of the National Defense Commission of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea commands and directs all the armed forces and guides national defense as a whole." The National Defense Commission chair is the "highest office of state" and the "highest administrative authority" by decrees issued by the Supreme People's Assembly.

Kim Jong-il wields paramount power in North Korea as National Defense Commission chair and General Secretary of the WPK, thus controlling the key functions of government. The Executive branch consists of the Premier and government ministers. A lack of adequate food, economic shambles,

corruption, alleged counterfeiting of U.S. currency and drug dealing plague the nation.

This brings us to the six-party talks. The chief goal is a denuclearization agreement and a peace treaty. The periodic talks are held in Beijing among the People's Republic of China, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation and the United States.

Wu Dawei, vice minister of foreign affairs of the PRC, Kim Gye-gwan, vice minister of foreign affairs of the DPRK; Kenichiro Sasae, director-general for Asian and Oceanian affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan; Chun Yung-woo, special representative for Korean Peninsula peace and security affairs of the ROK Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade; Alexander Losyukov, deputy minister of foreign affairs of the Russian Federation; and Christopher Hill, assistant secretary for East Asian and Pacific affairs of the Department of State of the United States attended the talks as heads of their respective delegations. Vice Foreign Minister Wu Dawei chaired the talks.

North Korea's shutting down of its nuclear reactor, the South Korean shipment of oil to North Korea and a potential investment in a North Korea mark progress. Agreement to date also opened the door to renewed humanitarian aid to the North, specifically from South Korea, and summit meetings between the two governments.

U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill, after meeting with his North Korean counterpart, said he believed all are in the same ballpark now. Hill credited strong backing from China for results to date, and said this bodes well for U.S.-China cooperation in other areas as well. He reiterated the U.S. imperative – shared by South Korea – for a plan in place by year end which would result in disabling the North Korean nuclear program.

North Korea wanted the direct talks with the United State, which preferred negotiations in a six-party framework including South Korea, China, Russia and Japan, with China serving as host. This multi-party approach was designed to underscore the isolation of North Korea and the coordinated role other parties could play. It wasn't intended to negate the possibility of bilateral (side) discussions between the U.S. and North Korea in Beijing at the six-party talks or elsewhere. The U.S. stepped up to direct talks. Indeed, psychologically, leaders in Pyongyang clearly wanted not only issue signals

from Washington but the respect that a visit recently made by U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Christopher Hill implied.

The U.S. administration has been widely criticized for acting too unilaterally. For the moment it appears the North Koreans have been induced to close its Yongbyon nuclear reactor. North Korea, in exchange for verifiable neutralization of its nuclear arsenal, has the prospect of gaining both a security guarantee and an end to its economic isolation from the world. Agreement could open the door to talks on peace and security guarantees. The reaffirmation that the parties “will take positive steps to increase mutual trust, and will make joint efforts for lasting peace and stability in Northeast Asia” points the way.

The North Korean record demands that the other parties gain verifiable assurances that North Korea will dismantle its military rule, deactivate its nuclear capacity and focus on the well being of its people. Negotiations – coming after many years of war, truce, mistrust and hatred – are challenging. Success means overcoming this bitterness and for evolving an enforceable peace. Popular attitudes and prejudices and shifting domestic politics within each nation complicate the task of building trust that will stand the test of time.

North Koreans have good reason to fear the United States and to want a security guarantee. The U.S. threatened nuclear action against them, and they remember that we used the A-bomb on Japan. In the 1960's the U.S. had a major offshore nuclear arsenal in Korea. In their eyes, we are their major antagonist. On the other hand, the United States wants to ensure that North Koreans neither use their nuclear weapons nor allow them to get into the hands of terrorists. Only assurances, fully endorsed by all parties, can lead to a lasting peace treaty. Successful negotiations require irreducible standards of conduct and assured mutual exchange.

My personal experience shows me that building democracy is an internal work, which can be brought to fruition ultimately by a nation's citizens. The difficulty South Korea faced in building a democracy tells us that doing the same in North Korea, the last Stalinist state, will be difficult. The two Koreas, and the extremes to which they have been driven, provide worthy reflection for the world community and their powerful neighbors. Korea

works in the shadow of these powerful neighbors, each of which faces the challenges of evolving economic and political systems.

How all – the Koreans, China, Japan and Russia – evolve in the next generation will determine whether Asia is peaceful and increasingly prosperous. While there are grounds for both optimism and pessimism, it could be Korea which establishes a compelling model for progressive change. This requires all sides responsibly calculate opportunities and rationally assess risks associated with past actions. It also requires avoiding the pitfalls of human character weakness and political foolhardiness. The backdrop for all of this is a region where extraordinarily bright, hard working people have known fascist aggression, communist purges, gulags and an inane cultural revolution.

South Korean democracy has evolved in this environment and owes less to U.S. support than we think. Few comprehend the lack of democracy in South Korea in the post World War II era, or the consequences, and how long it took Koreans to build their democracy. A more enlightened United States policy could have supported democracy and strategic cold war military aims. U.S. goals and actions did not match, and perhaps the Korean use of aid monies – corruption and all – achieved a better result for their economy. Koreans eventually ended some forty years of dictatorship.

While North and South have reason to distrust the other, all would gain from an agreement. Make no mistake; dealing with the North Koreans is not easy, as each has equally sufficient reason to fear the other. Both parties have created the climate of distrust, which makes verification difficult, but crucial. While some have suggested Korea as a road map for Iraq, keep in mind that it took the Koreans from the end of the Japanese occupation in 1945 until 1987 to establish a democracy of their own.

Reconciling widely divergent political and economic systems mark a difficult and challenging road. Focusing on the “lost chapter” in Korea’s past, it is readily apparent that South Korea developed a strong economy and democracy, a model for North Korea. A fully workable plan is a prerequisite for a peace treaty growing out of successful six-party talks.

The goal, a stable, strong and self sustaining Korea could bring peace and prosperity in the North Pacific. If Korea could pull itself together, it could be the model of reconciliation and development for the region and the world.

If it cannot, it will remain a traumatizing tinder box of geo-political instability where one misjudgment could precipitate conflict of far greater consequence than what might then be called the first Korean War. If successful, Korea would serve as a model for war-torn nations around the world. The Korean multi-lateral negotiating tack also suggests a road map useful in other regional settings.

Let the advice of America's most famous president, Abraham Lincoln, who told us that a house divided against itself cannot stand, guide us. On his way to Washington, D.C., to take office as president he spoke at Independence Hall in Philadelphia where he said: "I have often inquired of myself, what principle or idea it was that kept this confederacy so long together. It was not the mere matter of the separation of the colonies from the mother lands; but something in that Declaration (of Independence) giving liberty, not alone to the people of this country, but hope to the world for all future time. It was that which gave promise that in due time the weights should be lifted from the shoulders of all men, and that all should have an equal chance." Korea's President Kim Dae Jung admired Abraham Lincoln.

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