

**Speech on the Establishment of  
the “MJ Chung Distinguished Chair in Security Studies”  
at the Johns Hopkins SAIS**

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Dr. MJ Chung  
Founder and Honorary Chairman  
The Asan Institute for Policy Studies

Good afternoon, distinguished guests, friends, ladies, and gentlemen.  
My name is MJ Chung. I am a graduate of SAIS.

I would like to thank Dean Steinberg, the faculty and students of the  
SAIS community for welcoming me to this wonderful campus today.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Today, I want to share my story with you. I hope it will help you  
understand why I am making this donation to the Johns Hopkins SAIS  
to establish the MJ Chung Distinguished Chair in Security Studies.

Let me start with a brief history of the Korean Peninsula.

During the long period of history, Korea tried to fend off Japanese,  
Chinese, and Mongolian invasions. According to a history book,  
Korea has been invaded over 900 times throughout its history.

Japanese ruler Toyotomi Hideyoshi invaded the Kingdom of Chosun twice in 1592 and 1597. During the seven years of war, 500,000 civilians were killed and another 400,000 civilians were abducted to Japan. Admiral Yi Soonshin led the fight against Japan. He built the world's first ironclad ship, Turtle Ship, which became the foundation of Korea's modern shipbuilding industry.

China also invaded Korea during the Qing Dynasty in 1627 and 1636. About 10,000 Koreans were killed in the invasion and 500,000 were taken as slaves to China. After these invasions, during the 17th to 19th centuries, the Chosun Dynasty chose isolation which made the kingdom 'the Hermit Kingdom.' But this isolation could not last when foreign powers were carving up Asia in the late 19th century.

From the late 19th century, the United States became the world's biggest economy. But American presidents were not yet prepared to assume the responsibilities of global leadership.

American Presidents such as Teddy Roosevelt and William Taft had little interest in Korea. Korea became the first victim of a rising empire of Japan. In 1905, the U.S. consented to Japan's annexation of Korea under the Taft-Katsura Agreement. In exchange, Japan acknowledged U.S. control of the Philippines. For the next half century, the Korean people endured a brutal occupation by Japan.

America won the First World War, but it retreated from the world from 1919. This opened the door to Japanese and German military

expansionism. Thanks to America's victory in 1945, the Japanese occupation of Korea ended. But very unfortunately, Korea was immediately divided at the 38th latitude line.

In November 1947, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution which recommended "the elections be held not later than March 1948," across the entire Korean Peninsula. North Korea rejected the UN resolution, then the United States proposed a resolution to hold a general election in South Korea only. In December 1948, the UN General Assembly declared, quote "there has been established a lawful government (the Government of the Republic of Korea) ... this is the only such Government in Korea," unquote.

Then, in January 1950, U.S. Secretary of State Dean Acheson made the mistake of excluding South Korea from the U.S. defense perimeter in the Far East. Six months later, with the Soviet Union's support, North Korea invaded South Korea. Within one month of the invasion, North Korea occupied most of South Korea, except the southern port city of Busan. I was born during the Korean War in 1951 in Busan.

Under the banner of the United Nations Command led by General Douglas MacArthur, sixteen countries sent combat forces and six countries contributed medical units to defend South Korea.

The U.S.-led UN forces fought back and turned the tide of war. Thanks to General MacArthur's successful Incheon Landing, the U.N forces could take back Seoul. The South Korean and UN forces continued to advance north toward the Chinese border.

In October 1950, China intervened with one million soldiers. The United Nations and South Korea fought hard to stop them at the current Military Demarcation Line.

One million South Korean civilians, 140,000 South Korean soldiers, 500,000 North Korean soldiers, 150,000 Chinese soldiers, and 36,574 American soldiers lost their lives. After three years of war, the Armistice Agreement was signed in 1953.

This was the price that we paid for freedom. As the Korean War memorial here in Washington, DC, writes, "Our nation honors her sons and daughters who answered the call to defend a country they never knew and a people they never met."

At the end of the Korean War, General MacArthur said, "It will take them 100 years to recover from the devastation." In 1951, during the Korean War, the British newspaper, The Times, wrote a very condescending editorial that "It would be more reasonable to expect to find roses growing on a garbage heap than a healthy democracy rising out of the ruins of Korea."

But both predictions were proven wrong.

South Korea's per capita income was about \$76 in 1953. Today it is one of the world's twenty biggest economies with per capita income of \$36,000.

North Korea's socialist economy collapsed, which caused devastating famines that killed more than million people in the mid-1990s. For North Korea, the very existence of a free and prosperous South Korea is a political threat. For the survival of its regime, North Korea thinks it needs the reunification of the Korean Peninsula under the communist flag.

If we look at the sheer magnitude of the geopolitics of the vast Eurasian continent with Russia and China, the fact that a small country like South Korea, located at the tip of the continent, remains a free democracy is a miracle, a miracle in progress.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I studied at Seoul National University and completed my military service as a ROTC lieutenant. I came to America for master's degree at the MIT Sloan School of Management.

In the United States, President Ronald Reagan was leading a national renewal with the campaign slogan 'It's morning again in America.' With the rise of Mikhail Gorbachev of Russia, the Cold War had entered a new phase. Deng Xiaoping's China had also begun the path to opening up.

In this environment, I wanted to know how the great powers might shape the fate of a country like Korea. I came to SAIS in 1985. The Dean of SAIS at the time was George Packard, a renowned American

scholar of Japan who had worked with Edwin O. Reischauer in shaping U.S. policy towards Asia.

After taking my qualifying exam for five full days, I wrote my dissertation under the supervision of Professor Isaiah Frank, Professor Edward J. Lincoln, Professor Charles Pearson, Professor James C. Riedel, and Professor Nathaniel B. Thayer.

Ladies and gentlemen,

My parents came from humble origins. My father was the son of a farmer in a rural village which is now North Korea. During the colonial era, he came to Seoul in search of a better life. Through sheer grit and determination, my father could build one of Korea's most successful businesses, the Hyundai group.

For his pen name, he chose 'Asan,' the small village where he had grown up. In order to contribute to the country's social welfare, my father established the Asan Foundation which became Korea's major philanthropic organization. He built hospitals, universities, and offered scholarships.

As Jim introduced me at the beginning, I have been fortunate to have worn many hats throughout my life. I worked at Hyundai Heavy Industries, the world's largest shipbuilder. I also served seven terms as a representative in the National Assembly. I also served as the head of Korean Football Association and co-hosted the 2002 FIFA World Cup with Japan.

The United States has around 50 treaty allies around the world, and South Korea is one of its great success stories. The United States learned the lessons of the Taft-Katsura Agreement, the Acheson Line, and the Carter administration's withdrawal of U.S. troops.

In 1991, Russian President Mikhail Gorbachev withdrew 10,000 tactical nuclear weapons from Europe, while U.S. President George H. W. Bush withdrew 1,200 tactical nuclear weapons from the Pacific, including a hundred from South Korea. Today, the United States maintains 100 tactical nuclear weapons in Germany, Belgium, and the Netherlands. The logic of deploying tactical nuclear weapons in Europe but not in the Korean Peninsula, where the security situation is more severe, is not convincing. Now, the redeployment of some of these weapons to the bases in South Korea needs to be considered.

Today, South Korea has become an icon of successful industrialization and democratization. It is an example of what American commitment can accomplish. The Korean people are very grateful to the American people for their sacrifice in defense of freedom. We see this today in the record high support for the Alliance among the South Korean and American publics, one of the few areas of unanimous bipartisan consensus.

Friends, ladies and gentlemen,

One day, a President of Mexico said, "Mexico is far from God but too close to the U.S. and it is a big problem." Later a Prime Minister of

Israel said, "Israel is very close to God but is too far from the U.S. and it is a big problem."

How about South Korea? South Korea is a very religious country with a large Christian population. So I can say that South Korea is close to God but too close to China, too close to Russia, and too far from the U.S. and it is a big problem.

Over the past decade, Beijing has used economic and diplomatic coercion against Tokyo, Manila, Canberra, and Ottawa. South Korea experienced its own crisis in 2016 for simply trying to deploy a missile defense system in response to North Korean nuclear and missile tests.

A growing number of experts and leaders recognize that we need to contemplate collective security measures for Asia. The United States and its allies and partners also need to show credible resolve to deter North Korean, Chinese, and Russian military adventurism. We need an Asian version of NATO. We may call it the Indo-Pacific Treaty Organization, (IPTO).

In our "hub-and-spokes" alliance system, the United States and its treaty allies, South Korea, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, the Philippines, and Thailand should strengthen the "spoke-to-spoke" cooperation. We should also increase cooperation with important partners like India, Indonesia, Singapore, and Vietnam.

Let me re-iterate that this is not about containment or regime change of a sovereign state. It is about ensuring that the sovereignty of all



countries in the Indo-Pacific is respected so that we can live free from coercion. It will ensure that we can continue to coexist, maintain economic relations, and avoid all-out war.

I am glad that President Trump has expressed an interest in cooperating with South Korea on shipbuilding. This will help keep the U.S. naval fleet stronger. South Korea has much to contribute to these collective efforts.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I remember the words of President John F. Kennedy that "America would pay any price, bear any burden ... to assure the survival and success of liberty."

These are the reasons that I came to establish the MJ Chung Distinguished Chair in Security Studies at SAIS.

The seeds of goodwill that the United States sowed on the frozen battlefields of Korea continue to bear good fruits.

Thank you very much.