

Statement issued March 1 by Korean Christians, which precipitated many arrests in Korea

Patriotic Declaration of Democracy

Today we celebrate the fifty-seventh anniversary of the March First Independence Movement. Compelled by the aspirations of our people that resounded throughout the world on that day in 1919 and moved by the patriotic spirit of our forefathers, we take this occasion to make a solemn and patriotic declaration, both at home and abroad, concerning democracy.

The division of Korea at the end of World War II shattered the hopes that had filled the hearts of our people at the time of Liberation from Japanese rule. This tragic division once more cast a dark shadow over the future of our nation. Yet to the end our people refused to give up their cherished hope. They rose up out of the ashes of the Korean War, they crushed the dictatorship of Syngman Rhee through the Righteous Uprising of April 19, and they reestablished in every heart the hope for realization of a free and democratic society.

But these dreams were short-lived. We have again been bound by the chains of dictatorship. The separation of power among the three branches of government is now but an empty appearance. As the days go by both the freedom of faith and the freedom of conscience wither away under the pretext of national security interests. Academic freedom and the freedom of speech have been crushed to death.

By concluding the treaty of normalization with Japan the present regime led our nation once again into enslavement whereby our industry and our labor are the victims of a new Japanese economic invasion.

The Republic of Korea has been turned into a pitiful orphan among the nations of the world. The claim that on the Korean Peninsula the Government of the Republic of Korea is the only government recognized by the United Nations as legitimate has become nothing more than a myth. The present regime neglects the nations of the Third World that have emerged as a new and decisive force in maintaining the balance of power between the Eastern and Western alliances. This regime places reliance only upon the Western powers, who even now are abandoning their commitment to our nation.

The present regime must take the responsibility for bringing our nation to this state of affairs. It must recognize that it has lost credibility among the democratic nations of the world precisely because it has suppressed the essential democratic forces within our country. Before the United Nations can be blamed for accommodating to the changes brought about by the emergence of the Third World powers, this regime must

hold itself responsible for its own inability to perceive the trends of history in a long-range perspective.

This is the time when we must unite and foster democratic forces inside and outside of our country toward the goal of national unification that is the aspiration of our people. Nevertheless, this nation is experiencing the ruthless suppression of human rights and the robbing of freedom under the one-man dictatorship.

Thus, our people are losing purposefulness, a sense of direction, commitment to democracy, and are moving step by step toward a complete breakdown. We cannot sit by and watch. We make this democratic and patriotic declaration, looking ahead for the future of this nation, transcending any consideration of political strategies and interests of either ruling or minority parties.

Democracy is the polity of the Republic of Korea. Democracy is the true tradition of our nation. Therefore there can be no excuses to suppress democracy. In a situation where we are in serious competition with the North Korean Communist regime we must foster the strength of democratic forces. Although we must strengthen our national security and economic power, without the backing of democratic forces they are like a building that is built upon sand. Then what is democracy? It is not any particular institution we find in other nations, but it is an attitude and conviction that will enable the creation of the best system under which the members of that society can participate in their affairs and by constantly reforming them to promote the rights, welfare, and happiness of all. Therefore, democracy means from the people rather than for the people. It means any judgment on what is the best for the nation and the people should come from the people themselves. Without listening to the people the considerations "for the people" can never become democracy. To think that democracy can be established by only being for the people is an illusion that democracy means command and obedience. This is something that can never be for the people. The people do not want obedience. They are demanding autonomous participation. The people must examine their government, and they cannot abandon their basic right to criticize their government, because it means that they are giving up on democracy.

Then how do we fulfill or realize a democracy "from the people"? The key is the basic right of the people called "freedom." The people must be guaranteed to have freedom to express freely without being threatened spiritually or physically.

Therefore, we demand that the emergency measures be rescinded that suppress the freedom of our people. We demand the release of all democratic people and students who are arrested and imprisoned because of their demand for democracy. We demand that the freedom of speech, assembly, and publications be returned to the people so they may express their will freely.

Second, we assert that parliamentary procedures must be restored from the present empty shell of the Yushin Constitution. The Assembly must reflect the will of the people, which is freely expressed in the process of making law, and the administration must reflect this.

Any regime that hesitates and hinders this process can only be the regime that is not willing to be for the people even as it says it is for the people.

Third, we demand that the judicial branch of the government be independent. Without this independence the people have no way to receive protection from violence of the strong. Therefore, the regime that uses the judiciary as its slave can only be said not to have any consideration for the people from the beginning.

We know very well that economic development is very important for the strength of this nation. Nevertheless, national strength is not necessarily economic strength. The present regime believes that economic strength is the national strength. Through this narrow thinking the present regime devoted all the energies of our people to economic development by sacrificing everything else. Now what is the result? The export industry, which has been the focus of economic development, incurred \$4 billion of trade deficits in the years of 1974 and 1975, and there is no hope this deficit is going to be reduced. By the end of 1975 a national debt of a total of \$5.78 billion was incurred. The companies established by foreign loans are continually bankrupt. Then who is going to pay this huge debt? The regime robbed the rights of workers to organize labor unions and to strike. The regime turned the workers and farmers for exploitation over to the companies that were established with foreign loans and foreign capital. From the beginning the planned economic order and development have never been for the people. It was a mistake not to develop the economy of the people upon which the export can be fostered. It was an illusion to achieve a huge modern industrialization upon the ruin of a rural agricultural economy. The economic system, which is dependent only upon foreign capital, contained from the beginning the factor of corruption. If this present state of affairs continues, the breakdown of economy of this country is a matter of time. It has been long that the present regime has lost any capacity to save this nation from economic bankruptcy. The economic ills and the corruption have their roots in the very center of the present power structures. When the situation has reached this point, the Park regime has no other way but to assume responsibilities and resign. It is our judgment that this change of regime is inevitable in order that the breakdown of the economy can be prevented in advance and that the credit not be completely lost in the international society, and that deferment of payments of loans can be requested from the lending nations and banks. If the President does not have the courage to resign, we call for a total reexamination of planning of economic development as though he were transplanting a new heart. He should not try to rationalize the economic bankruptcy, but frankly recognize it. He should change the expanded national budget, which does not give any consideration to the capacity of the people who cannot bear the burden of tax. There must be a forceful and courageous administration in the redistribution of wealth in order to foster the purchasing power of the people. Only by doing so can the situation where "the rich become richer and the poor become

poorer," which is the breeding ground for communism, be rectified, the people's trust for a free democracy be restored, along with our prerogative on the unification of the people over the North Korean Communist regime.

The tragic division of our land has provided excuses for dictatorships in the North and South for the past thirty years since Liberation, and has caused the drying up of spiritual and material resources of our people, which should have been mobilized for the prosperity of the nation, the happiness of the people, and creative historical development. It is impossible for the economic and productive capacity of our people alone to bear the burden of arming more than one million armed forces of the North and South with modern weapons and of maintaining them without any foreign military assistance. Moreover, it is indeed regrettable that the wisdom and creativity that should have been mobilized for cultural development are being misused.

Therefore, national unification is the supreme task that is upon the shoulder of our people. It is the wall that must be overthrown with the wisdom and strength of our fifty million people. If any one individual or group misuses or prevents national unification for his own political interest, he cannot escape the solemn judgment of history.

The opportunity for national unification can come or go away depending upon the attitudes of the political leaders of the North and South. If they really are for our people, they must have wisdom and courage to grasp the opportunity without losing it, inducing favorably the changing international environment for the unification. This is the very autonomous foreign policy we must pursue.

At the same time, there is the last line we must hold. That is, the unified nation must be established upon the Magna Carta of democracy, which means realization of the best institutional system and policy for the people, emerging out of the people's will.

Are we indeed fostering our democratic strength, looking toward that coming day or shrinking it? The way to win over communism and to unify our nation is to foster democratic strength.

It is indeed the task of our fifty million people to create a new history. It is indeed the task of lifting the torch in Asia once again, which has been burning since the March First Independence Movement and rekindled in the April 19 Revolution.

It is indeed to make the true face of democracy shine throughout the world, recollecting the experience of the suffering in the battle between democracy and communism. It is indeed the way for national unification, realization of justice, guarantee of human rights, and building of a peaceful nation so that our people can live proudly in the international society.

Long live Democracy!

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