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Facing Korea's Future with Kim Dae Jung

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Kim Dae Jung was an exemplary political leader for Korea as a democracy and an exemplary national leader for Korea as a nation. The breadth of his geopolitical, economic, social, cultural and ecological vision was unmatched either in Korea itself or across the continent of Asia. His judgment of the long term strategic predicament of the Republic of Korea was profoundly considered and impressively steady. Any democrat and any Korean can and should still learn both from his thinking and from the remarkable life which he lived.

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Kim Dae Jung as Political Leader

Kim Dae-Jung was a great democratic political leader – by far the greatest democratic leader, in my judgment, Korea has so far been fortunate enough to find. You can dispute, as many Korean citizens would, the relative magnitude of his contribution to Korea's achievements today when set against those of Park Chung Hee. Their periods in power were of very different lengths. The sense in which Park really was in power was far more drastic; and Park indisputably did far more to shape Korea's economic future than his warmest admirer could claim of President Kim. But it was Kim Dae Jung who decided once and for all that Korea's future was to be as a democracy, not a lightly veiled continuation of military bureaucratic rule. If you balance their respective contributions to Korea's strengths and limitations as a society and a political community today, no one could sanely blame many of its continuing limitations on President Kim, whilst it is hard to deny the damage to the prospects for public trust from the lingering shadow of so many years of military dictatorship under the aegis of the security state or the distortions that continue to issue from the tight alliance between the chaebols and the party governments of the right. Neither of these are weaknesses of Korea today which Kim Dae Jung contrived to remove; but he recognized them very clearly and made impressively few serious concessions to them.

When he assumed the Presidency he did so under tight constraints on his power to govern and without a firm majority in the legislature and he faced immediately a major regional economic crisis. When he left office four years later he left Korea stronger and more secure than he found it and the country less bitterly divided than it had been since the Republic gained its independence. He also left it for a time in a less immediately hazardous relation to its counterpart to the north, if scarcely with a clear pathway to perpetuating that improvement. It is easy to recognize the scale of his personal achievements, but far harder to judge the magnitude of what he left behind. Just what is his legacy to the Korea of today, and more importantly still to the Korea of tomorrow? That is the challenge that Professor Han Sang-Jin initially set me to try to answer in a strategic setting already in some ways sharply different from the time of his Presidency and still clearly quite volatile.

The gifts of any great political leader, democratic or otherwise, are necessarily personal. They die with them. The Congress Party of today may invoke Jawaharlal Nehru or even Mahatma Gandhi; but it carries none of

their personal qualities. The British Tory Party of Theresa May, for all its florid rhetoric, faces the grim gauntlet of Brexit with no trace of the gritty resolution of Winston Churchill's finest hour. The South Africa of Cyril Ramaphosa today may no longer be that of Jacob Zuma, but it is also all too clearly no longer the South Africa which Nelson Mandela led out of the prison of Apartheid. Kim Dae Jung's most obtrusive personal qualities – his extraordinary courage, fortitude and pertinacity, his stubborn refusal to give up in face of threats to life and limb and personal liberty, inspired some of his contemporaries; but they cannot make any Koreans braver or more persistent today. What can still carry illuminatingly and even in some ways directively to Koreans today is the way in which he saw what politics is and what it can and cannot achieve and the imaginative breadth of the horizon within which he saw Korea as situated. Both of these considerations are of central importance in the country's current political situation.

Like anyone who could hope to lead Korea politically Kim Dae Jung was a proudly unrepentant Korean patriot, but he was never just a Korean nationalist. For him Korea's future as a society did not in the long run depend merely on its succeeding in reuniting the peninsula under a single democratic government. It rested equally on equipping its reunited and resituated society to live in peaceful exchange and cooperation not just with its East Asian neighbours but within a global economy and a hesitantly emergent global society far beyond them. For him patriotism and cosmopolitanism blended effortlessly and completely across most of the world, as any consistent liberal statesman or woman must hope they can be made to. This affected and affected deeply the way in which he saw the challenges to Korea as a society over time. It determined the consistency with which he prioritised what he saw as the needs of its society over the potentially competing exigencies of either its state or its economy.

The Challenges of Leading Korea

The ferocity of Korea's civil war and its deep entanglement for so long in the global trauma of the Cold War have made it uniquely hard for any leader of the country to establish and sustain that priority. The Cold War legacy of an implacably hostile, provenly ruthless and disturbingly intimate neighbour state has thus far forced a degree of harsh realism on any Korean government and is in little danger of relaxing this pressure in the foreseeable future. North Korea's development of nuclear weapons and a potentially effective

intercontinental delivery system to carry them have ratcheted up the pressure and would have placed your country's present President in a deeply unenviable position even without the distinctive menace posed by America's current President and North Korea's current ruler. Kim Dae-Jung himself could not have foreseen the immediate dilemmas which face President Moon today, and there is no reason to believe that he would have seen how to escape them promptly or reliably. But the dilemmas which now face President Moon are an intensification of dilemmas which confronted Kim Dae-Jung himself throughout his political life and the global vision which he developed in face of them remains a far better basis for assessing and responding to Korea's continuing political needs than anyone else has yet contrived to offer.

Political Leadership Today

Some of those dilemmas are of course distinctive to Korea and formed the point and guiding basis of the Sunshine policy (Kim 1997). Others are intrinsic to the regime model of a constitutional representative democracy in a profoundly capitalist world (Dunn 2000; 2017). In the case of the Republic of Korea one central dilemma is now aggravated by its adoption of a single and relatively brief term of office for its President in understandable reaction to protracted military dictatorship, without any compensating augmentation of the relative power and responsibility of the legislature. Until very recently the experience of Korea's Presidents since Kim Dae-Jung had done nothing to encourage a reconsideration of this feature, which has rendered the state even more unbalanced than the United States has now become and ensures that any capacity it retains to act effectively over time depends on the continuing prowess of its public bureaucracy, a respect in which it does at least still have some conspicuous advantages when set besides the United States.

The dilemma in question is the capacity to plan and act effectively over lengthy periods of time. For a representative democracy in a profoundly capitalist world this is a fierce challenge under any circumstances. The erratic rhythms of the world market and the toxic antagonisms which these rhythms foment make it increasingly hard for any government to manage their domestic economy effectively in the interests of the citizenry as a whole, and quite hard for much of the time to manage it coherently at all. The best informed, most balanced, and most committed understanding of those interests cannot hope to prove transparently compelling to very many of

them, even in a highly educated and confident population with well-established representative agencies. At present none of Korea's political parties fully meets this bill and there is little sign of any moving towards doing so. Under these conditions it is unsurprising that the interests which have been most effectively pressed in South Korea over the last few decades have been those of large concentrations of capital with widely varying consequences for their own work forces and for other citizens. Samsung has had a chequered record as a political and social actor; but there can be few South Koreans by now who have not benefited greatly in some way or other from its remarkable prowess as a global company.

It is very hard, and of course far from obviously appropriate, to reconcile anybody of citizens to the un-emended outcomes of free market exchange on the basis of what must always be hugely unequal economic power; but it is also luminously obvious that it is simply quixotic, as well as self-evidently utterly inappropriate, to seek to reconcile them to the outcomes of markets which are also universally known to be grossly distorted by the corrupt exercise of state patronage. It is not of course the case that at any point any particular Korean citizen is necessarily aware of the particular instances of corruption which are currently in operation, let alone in a position to judge the scale or incidence of the economic harm which they are currently inflicting. What is definitely clear by now, though, is that it is permanently and grimly true that many such distortions are in very active operation. This impairs the legitimacy of the state over very many of its activities and removes any trace of legitimacy from the economy as currently organized.

This is an intensification of a deficit in legitimacy which to varying degrees afflicts every state and economy in the world (Dunn 2013). It stems ultimately from the absence of any rationally credible current model of a just society or a reliably effective economy (Dunn 1996, pp. 121-135), and from the inherent political precariousness of handling the challenges of government in a presumed common interest by mitigating the resultant anomalies, by inadvertent but honest disinformation, or through a fluctuatingly self-aware and more or less proficient exercise in deception or distraction. There can be very little intrinsic allure in this repertoire, so for it to prove effective at all requires a degree of seduction in the individual or grouping that deploys it. This is broadly what Max Weber had in mind when he identified the indispensable charismatic element in effective democratic leadership (though of course he had no concrete foresight of its current causal parameters) (Weber 1996, pp. 309-369). Charismatic authority is essentially a belief in a person, or at most in a very small group of persons, and the qualities

perceived to reside in them. In ancient monarchies, including I take it the Korean cases, it was seen to reside in a dynasty, and to pass via the succession rules of the dynasty, whatever ritual affirmations and enhancement it might receive along the way. The balm of an anointed King was not conceived as an alternative to legitimate inheritance: just as an element in enacting it. With surviving dynasties today, whether they be overt or tacit, and however repressively insistent the dynasty in question, the obscurity or blatant absence of succession rules is a conspicuous vulnerability. In my view President Kim Dae-Jung did for a time achieve a modicum of charismatic authority; but that was certainly not true of his two immediate predecessors and it has emphatically yet to be matched by any of his subsequent successors. I have no means of knowing how far the qualities which made him such a compelling figure to me overlapped with those which led so many Korean citizens to vote for him; and they plainly cannot have carried to the very many of those who voted persistently against him over the decades. What remains exemplary about him is not those purely personal qualities or the sheer force of his personality, but the set of goals which he sought power in order to pursue and the vision of the world within which he sought to pursue them. It also quite evidently remains the prominence of the role he gave to democracy as a principle of authorization in a political setting in which for most of his active political life, its opportunity or capacity to authorize were at best sporadic as well as permanently and intensely contested.

The Commitment to Democracy

As a principle, democracy asserts the priority of the people (or, if you will, of society) over both economy and state (Dunn 2018). It is hardest to do this, as has been the case for the Republic of Korea virtually since it regained its independence, when the state, which is the guarantor of the security of the population and its existing schedule of property rights, is itself acutely threatened. The imperative to lower that threat was intrinsic to the struggle to democratize Korea, as it very much remains. But of course to recognize that imperative does nothing by itself to help to lower the level of ambient threat, which requires not merely the will to do so but also an array of political skills, arguably along with an ample plenitude of sheer luck.

The polarity of progressive and conservative in Korean politics has organized itself over time largely over the primacy of state security over popular will, or the primacy of popular life chances over the assertion of state

prerogatives. There is a strong case for each pole of that polarity; but it is fatal to ignore the force of either. As Hobbes saw incomparably, the case for the primacy of state authority depends precisely and fundamentally on what it alone can do to protect and ensure the life chances of its citizens. Hobbes himself, notoriously, was no enthusiast for democracy as a mode of government (Hobbes 1983, 2010, 2012) and nothing that happened in his lifetime can have given him good reason to change his mind; but he lived in a very different society and economy from the Republic of Korea as it now is. It is a matter of sharp dispute today, between for example its current President and the current President of China, whether or not democracy as a mode of government in the sense in which the Republic of Korea is now governed by it is or is not a better protection over time for the life chances of citizens than an autocratic political structure which controls its own succession very tightly indeed over time. In that dispute Kim Dae Jung stands taller on one side than any other Korean has ever done; and its citizens and their descendants will have to continue to decide how far to stand with him and at what cost, if the power of China continues to grow and the political will of its current governing structure persists as it now is or hardens and becomes still more impatient and imperious.

The Chinese President's basis for favouring his present case for the path which he hopes that China will follow is franker about some of his presuppositions than it is about others. He confidently anticipates and fully intends that the People's Republic will project its power and grow its economy into the distant future under its present political structure and has just ensured that he is fully personally entitled to lead it in doing so for as long as he retains the health and will to do so. This is a remarkable personal political achievement in a fiercely competitive and personally hazardous political environment. Its legitimacy, however, even in China itself, very much depends even at this point, and will continue to depend throughout his own personal future, on how successfully it manages both projection and growth. It is at present widely (perhaps all but universally) shared within the higher ranks of the Communist Party structure. Even if it lacked any rational foundation it would be of immense political significance for Koreans; but it does of course have a quite rational foundation for those who are governing China at present. The case is put succinctly by China's new economic Tsar Liu He (FT, 24/3/18, p 9): "Political stability is a precondition for China's economic development. China cannot walk the path of western democracy." Anyone observing the current progress of the United States or the United Kingdom in trying to do so can well see what he means. Whatever can be

said of the path which has led each of them recently to where they now are, no one could think that it well calculated to favour the steady and reliable development of their economies. In the short term at least it requires little effort to make a Hobbesian case for China continuing to be governed very much as it is. No one could make a comparable case for transposing that structure to the government of the Republic of Korea. The legitimacy of its structure has come to depend on western democracy and done so to a very large degree through the political struggles in which Kim Dae Jung played such a heroic part. Its history as a state furthermore is bound up deeply with the repudiation of the model of legitimation which China now exemplifies. It became so very rapidly after Japan's colonial rule over the peninsula ended, and has been strongly reinforced for several decades, not merely by its strategic alliance with the United States and the remarkable dynamism of its own economic development, but also by the repulsion exerted by the very distinctive regime established to its immediate north: a grim parody of some aspects of China's initial Maoist dispensation with some clearly Korean characteristics, but without any obvious mitigating features.

The Price of that Commitment

Perhaps there could once have been a united Korean future under communism that turned out less grimly than it has in the DPRK; but there certainly cannot any longer be anything of the kind. This has very strong implications for the citizens of South Korea. It means that they will for the foreseeable future need to deal with a state which continues to threaten them gravely from their immediate north and which is now in a position to threaten them more drastically than it has ever been before. That threat moreover is one which can now only be lifted by a decisive shift in the political purposes controlling that state or by a convulsion so drastic and dangerous to the populations of both North and South that only someone utterly ruthless or very imperceptive could seriously contemplate choosing to initiate it. (Candidates for both qualifications, unfortunately are now prominently on stage.) This is a far more challenging context than Kim Dae Jung faced during his Presidency and many see it as clear evidence not merely that his Sunshine Policy has yet to succeed (as it indisputably is), but also that that policy was naïve and misconceived from the start. We can be wholly confident that he himself would have rejected that conclusion. I wish to argue, more contentiously, that he would have been quite right to do so.

The first judgment is just a judgment about him as a person, who rejected communism and anti-communist dictatorship with equal conviction and fought against both throughout his adult life to give his country a form of state which would protect it against each of them, secure the rights and nurture the prosperity of all its inhabitants, and equip it to live in peace and reasonable amity with all its neighbours, despite the shadows of their respective pasts and the varying allure of their current political regimes. Just why he made these choices I do not, of course, myself know. I met him for the first time when he had made each of them and lived on that basis for a very long time. I met him, in effect, as the formidable embodiment of those choices. I assume that he made them because of his deep Christian belief, his profound disinclination to submit to any form of power he felt to be wrong, the breadth of his international experience, his steady pride in Korea's ancient civilization, and his utter confidence in the future it could build for itself, if only it chose to and had the courage and stamina to go on trying to.

At this very dangerous and alarming time all those convictions would have stood him in good stead. They gave him a compass to steer by, though neither they nor anything else of course could show anyone just where to steer at the time. They gave him the destination he hoped to reach, though not the course he must steer to give him the best chance to reach it. What must matter for the citizens of the Republic today is not the personal sources of those convictions but the inherent prudence and value of that destination.

There is no need in the Republic of Korea today to defend the choice of that state form rather than switch briskly to a more civilised and sophisticated version of the Chinese model. That was a choice made in South Korea some time ago, and in no small degree a choice powered from Gwangju itself. On the evidence of its last President's humiliating fate and the actions which brought her to it, it is less in danger of being chosen now than it has ever been before. It is also not a choice which is costly for Korea at present because there is no immediate danger of its being snatched from its citizens by force, as it already effectively has been from the denizens of Hong Kong, and as the citizens of Taiwan must actively fear that it may be seized from them at any time too.

The Case for the Sunshine Policy

By its bitter close the war which split the Korean peninsula and its inhabitants so durably and wretchedly from each other had become predominantly a war

between the United States and the People's Republic of China. Both those formidable and far from disinterested powers are still strategically central to the fate of the peninsula. Both spilt a lot of their soldiers' blood to thwart the other's ambitions on it. All too obviously, the way they agreed to divide the peninsula has not made its inhabitants safe even two thirds of a century later. In many ways its citizens are in greater danger than they have been for a very long time. How can that danger be lifted and lifted durably? It could be so in my view in just one way: by a settlement which recognized the presence of all the powers with a stake in it and assured each of them that that stake will not be taken from them by force. That is not an outcome which any of the major political actors could yet welcome unequivocally. One aspect or other of it would be disconcerting for each of them. But it is the only basis on which they could each accept it lastingly; and only if they could all accept it, could it endure at all durably without poisoning the politics of the peninsula all over again.

This is scarcely a moment at which you could adduce the European Union as an effective model for the economics or politics of any strategic area of comparable size. But there is no longer good reason to believe that it is the strictly economic element in the strategic dilemmas of East Asia which is the real source of their present danger. There is every reason to suppose that each of the powers directly involved could benefit over time and protect the life chances of its citizens quite effectively if it conducted its economic policies reasonably within the structure of the World Trade Organisation. There is no better reason to see the latter under China's present President as an engine of Chinese imperialism than there was before the Trump Presidency to view it as an engine of American imperialism. If the Republic of Korea, Vietnam, the People's Republic of China, Japan and the Philippines can all grow their economies and enhance the life chances of increasing numbers of their citizens through it, there is no reason why any East Asian state could not learn how to do so, however disinclined the present rulers of the DPRK may be to acknowledge that. International trade will always have its vexations and its jealousies (Hont 2005); but it remains an altogether more promising and less vulnerable basis on which to try to live together on any scale than any whole-hearted version of autarky. In the end the rulers of the DPRK will have to recognise that and they will. Perhaps indeed they do in fact now recognise it already, after the Chinese government chose to turn its oil and coal supplies off for a few months, even if those who rule the DPRK still prefer not to say so too distinctly.

Kim Dae Jung was a powerful advocate of an international politics of

egalitarian mutual recognition, both at the level of states and at that of individual human beings. It is that aspect of his legacy which is hardest to carry through in the East Asian context, and perhaps especially so in the case of relations between its states. What stands in its way is not just the disparities in power and wealth of those individual states (which affect every continent and region and are just as obtrusive in the case of the present membership of the European Union as they are in East Asia). What does stand obdurately in its way is the weight of History.

That History weighs heavily in two quite different ways. It does so most prominently and consequentially, obviously, in the legacy of the war which divided the peninsula; and it is that legacy which now directly threatens the peace of the world as a whole. But even if that legacy can be and is eventually lifted by brave, clever and lucky state policy, it will leave virtually untouched for older elements in the region's history which make it very hard to establish a recognition between its states and peoples which is convincingly egalitarian. East Asia today, unlike Europe, has one huge and overwhelmingly powerful state which still sees itself as the heir to a very ancient state and to a civilisation which in its own eyes formed the political centre and the unchallengeable model for the entire region. It is as if the European Union today had not merely to build itself in the aftermath of the Second World War on the ruins of a continent (Judt 2010) but must do so still fully under the shadow of a reborn empire of Rome and one intent on asserting the fullest territorial extent its legions had ever conquered. That is why Taiwan both is and is not today an independent nation state. It is why Hong Kong will never be permitted to become a democracy in the western (and South Korean) sense, unless and until the People's Republic itself decides that that particular articulation of political power and life would suit it too. With their vivid pride in the historical depth and density of their own civilizational distinctiveness, there can be very few Koreans on either side of the 38th Parallel who would welcome reabsorption, however delicate, into the diplomatic protocols of the Central Kingdom. The rulers of any state might choose at a particular time to abase themselves (and therefore it) temporarily before those pretensions in return for immediate advantages. But it is hard to see how that could prove a stable and acceptable basis for conducting relations into an indefinite future and at least as difficult to imagine its being adopted by the rulers of the DPRK as by any President of the Republic of Korea.

It is attractive to contrast nationalism, an always incipiently aggressive projection of the value and interests of a state's members beyond its borders, most pathologically in the form of predation or territorial conquest, with

patriotism, a due valuing by those members of one another and a corresponding commitment to stand by, defend and nurture their common life against any pressures or threats from the world beyond their borders. But this ideologically serviceable and arguably illuminating normative contrast never corresponds to bright line distinctions in either perception or sentiment amongst a population at large. It is a banner to invoke or flourish, not a clear causal contrast in how the human world ever is. If you see the contrast that way, Kim Dae Jung was very firmly a liberal patriot and in no sense an atavistic nationalist. China's formidable current President, by contrast, while he can certainly speak the accents of a liberal nationalist when he travels to Davos and wishes to contrast himself with America's astonishing current President, often speaks very differently when he addresses China's citizens directly. Then he often does not merely insist on China's entitlement and intention to reassert imminently in practice the full territorial amplitude of the Central Kingdom at its Ch'ing apogee, but asserts to the right and intention to project China's economic power across the world, to extend the operational capacity of its armed forces and above all of its blue water navy to accompany and defend that projection on its way.

As far as I am aware, the People's Republic of China has never militarily threatened the Republic of Korea directly since the signing of the Armistice. But it has always had a large stake in the peace and stability of the peninsula simply because of the latter's location. That stake was recognized openly in China's participation in the 6 Party Talks and was evinced again in recent months by the decision of its government to cut off the coal and oil imports on which the economy of the DPRK relies every month. This may or may not have directly affected the progress of the latter's nuclear programme. It certainly prompted the North's current leader to alter his own immediate diplomatic posture quite abruptly.

For Kim Dae Jung the future of his country imperatively required the linking of four great collective goods. It required real security for every individual member of its population and for its citizens as a whole in living their own lives as they freely chose, and hence it also required they be able to keep themselves safe together in face of every threat from without. It required a reliable and carefully maintained structure for ensuring their common and individual prosperity within their own territorial setting and through the worldwide web of trading relations which has made them so much more prosperous. It required the continuation and deepening over time of a national cultural autonomy, now fully open and hence fully exposed to the cultural pressures and resources of the world as a whole, and the steady

defence within that collective autonomy of the cultural and social freedoms of each of its own citizens. Above, below and beyond this, it required a profound and belatedly effective capacity to conserve the ecological viability of the natural setting which human beings have now transformed radically enough to threaten their own continuing existence as a species. There are endless tensions between these relentlessly demanding goals in every society in the world (many of which, of course, actively pursue few, if any, of them) and arguably not a few straightforward contradictions between them in practice. Kim Dae Jung was too sober and reflective a politician ever to imagine that you can finesse those tensions away and resolve their contradictions wherever they arise. But, astoundingly for a man well stricken in years who had been a practising politician for most of his adult life, he was too brave and too deeply principled ever to consider simply setting any of them aside.

The historical incidence of communist rule and military dictatorship has long made the issue of cultural autonomy and personal freedom both urgent and divisive across the region. But the issue itself is intrinsic and in some ways rather simple. Neither security nor prosperity is intrinsic in the same way. Each, all too obviously, is both relative and judgment-dependent and both have been rendered far more vexed and interactively provocative by the history of the region over the last century.

The Ecological Challenge

The ecological issue by contrast is as intrinsic as any issue could be, but for all its desperate urgency it remains profoundly opaque and no society in the world has yet developed a cognitively adequate and politically convincing means of judging publicly what it requires. Over this at least Kim Dae Jung had a more synoptic vision, a greater depth of purpose, and steadier and sharper focus than any contemporary statesman or political leader with a remotely comparable place in the political life of their country. In that respect especially every serious aspirant to lead the people of Korea from now on has a peremptory duty to emulate him.

The ecological, however, is a dimension of insecurity which Koreans, like every other people, share with the entire human population of the world, along with the unimaginable billions of other species that are still contriving to survive. The starkest issue for the security of Koreans, north as well as south of the 38th Parallel, even now remains one of their very own. It is the

issue of whether their still incomplete civil war which began so many decades ago can at last come to a lasting end, and, if and when it can, whether it can do so on a basis which enables it to cease permanently and render the Korean peninsula no more dangerous a setting in which to live a human life throughout it from then on than any other comparably sized piece of the earth's surface. This is a huge project in detoxifying the legacy of history in itself. It is rendered far harder too by the dark shadows that History had already cast over the security of their homeland over the centuries which preceded that war's commencement. It is plainly rendered more obtrusive and acute by their current propinquity in the Republic of Korea itself to a regime which has cultivated in varying degrees of privacy a regime of flamboyant ruthlessness and carefully nurtured power to cause harm others on a vast scale. Thus far that bleak threat has often proved sufficient to concentrate the purposes of the Republic's political leaders on containing and minimizing that always terrifyingly urgent threat. Kim Dae Jung never, as far as I know, questioned either the immediacy or the scale of the threat; but he set himself to build a future in which that threat could at very long last fade away. That is still the right orientation for any Korean political leader and thus far its primacy has been altogether better and more steadily recognized on the left of the Republic's political spectrum than it has been by those on the right.

The Priority of Security and What Alone Could Provide It

The central governing challenge for any Korean leader, arguably to the North as much as to the South of the DMZ, is the challenge to see its primacy in the right terms: to see the long term peace of the peninsula as prior in weight to their own short term political advantage, but also to recognize that that priority cannot relax the primacy of their need to protect their people against the threat to their very lives in the unrelenting present. No Korean state can be a state for the welfare of its people in any ample and encouraging sense of that expansive term unless it is also as secure a guarantee as it can contrive to be for their safety in the very first instance. It was always wrong to sacrifice the goal of becoming an effective welfare state to that of maximizing in necessarily partial judgment the claim to provide security. It is devastatingly clear which of the two states did in fact choose to do exactly that, and pretty clear just how narrowly it conceived their state's security interests whilst it did so. In many respects the audible sense of the purposes of the DPRK has

become as dynastic and at least as unself-aware, as Louis XIV's legendary characterization of France's ancien regime:"*L'État, c'est moi.*" (Keohane 1980; Rowen 1980). Under no conceivable circumstances could it be right to equate the welfare of a people over time with the survival of a dynasty. In the world we live in now every surviving dynasty's legitimacy must be *de facto*, not *de jure*. What fact has given, fact can take away.

In the unrelenting present the task of handling the threat to the physical security of South Korea's citizens cannot rest principally in their own hands. That threat can be lightened and in due course lifted only over time and through the agreement of at least four other centres of power – self-evidently the People's Republic of China, the DPRK, the United States of America - but arguably through that of the Russian Republic and Japan too. Its dependence on all of those but the United States is in the longer run dictated by geography. None of these have given Koreans over time grounds for unalloyed gratitude or good reason for implicit trust in their intentions towards them. Japan invaded Korea unsuccessfully several centuries earlier, ruled it as a colony for many decades and surrendered it then only very much against its political will. The Chinese empire saw it over time very much as a subordinate province of its own, not as an independent people. The Russians did their best more surreptitiously to help the DPRK to win the civil war. Even the Americans who have in fact been the principal guarantee for their security now for two thirds of a century have always clearly had other interests which weighed more heavily in determining their choices. No Korean leader can afford to ignore the possibility that sooner or later those other interests will prompt it to withdraw the protection it has provided for so long. Whatever the eventual effect of President Trump's diplomatic agenda proves to be, his public pronouncements alone have served to highlight the reality of that risk.

But it is wrong to see the shadow of History as a permanent constraint on the security of any population. By 1945 the people of Europe had endured an experience of malignant chaos every bit as drastic as Korea's population had to face over the next eight years. Whatever the limitations of the European Union's efficacy as an economic and political framework for the continent it has shown unmistakably that you can recover quite completely from horrendous recent warfare in a common quest for security and prosperity (Judt 2005).

Korea could certainly do so too if its neighbours and the United States agreed to permit it to do so, and its two constituent states chose to try to together. That will never happen unless those two states relinquished the hope of crushing the other and recognized that they must leave the reforming

of its political life to those who live within it.

Within those constraints the politics of alliance and cooperation is always best pursued through the logic of worldly interest within a global trading system and under conditions of peace, and the shadow of History can only prove a distraction. For as long as the peninsula remains a site of acute danger for global security, as it has in fact been since at least 1950, it will remain a global common interest to lower and eliminate that danger. No one in 1913 could have readily recognized that the continent of Europe stood in acute danger because of anything that could happen in Sarajevo, but every competent political leader of a party to the Six Party Talks should have known that the peninsula under existing conditions posed an acute threat to the security of the globe. The dialogue between America's current President and the current leader of the DPRK has made that hypnotically clear to a truly global audience.

In my view the Sunshine Policy was not a sentimental, ingenuous and hopelessly parochial approach to ensuring the peninsula's security; rather, it was a clear vision of how that security could best be seen and provided for once the need for it was seen clearly and simultaneously not just from within the peninsula itself but across the globe.

The Sunshine Policy epitomized Kim Dae Jung's singular qualities as a political leader. Directly encountered, politics is always an endless series of short term exigencies, and just because it necessarily must be such (Weber 1994, pp. 309-369), it is in constant danger of inflicting fatal long term collective damage in quest of transitory personal advantage. Kim Dae Jung was a battle scarred political veteran who had had to handle short term exigencies for many decades to survive as a political leader by the time he finally won the Presidency. But he had shown throughout those decades a resolute focus on goals which reached far beyond his own lifetime. He was incomparably a political leader for the *longue durée*, who could bear the brutal strains of the short term. It is hard to think of any political leaders across the world in recent decades who so fully met that standard and met it for so long and in face of such formidable odds.[1]

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[1] Perhaps Nelson Mandela would be the most plausible rival and even his legacy looks increasingly frail.

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