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Sun Woo Park April 2, 2021

Exiled East: Kim Dae Jung at Emory

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Abstract

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Late 20th century South Korean history was one of the most turbulent episodes of Korean history. From 1950 to 1987, the South Korean people experience a civil war, three dictatorships, two revolutions and two military coups. The nation found itself at a crossroads, as the Korean military struggled against the pro-democracy movement for control of Korean politics, all while the United States, focused on both containing the spread of Communism and also promoting democracy, found itself unable to successfully stabilize Korea and also democratize it at the same time.

In the midst of the South Korean struggle between militarism and democracy and the global clash between Communism and Capitalism, a charismatic democracy activist by the name of Kim Dae Jung began to rise to prominence. As Kim climbed through the ranks of the democracy movement, another supporter of Korean democracy, James T. Laney, began to make public efforts in the United States to oppose dictatorship in Korea. Unexpectedly, these two men would forge an unlikely friendship dedicated to the promotion of democracy and human rights in Korea during the late Cold War.

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Acknowledgements

I dedicate this thesis to my mother, one of the many nameless and faceless South Koreans who braved tear gas and police batons so that their children may live free.

Table of Contents

Introduction

From Yun Chi Ho's attendance of Emory University as its first international student in 1893 to the establishment of the Korean language and culture program in 2007, Emory University and the Korean people have developed a deep, long-lasting relationship. Nearly ninety years after Yun Chi Ho arrived at Emory hoping to acquire knowledge that could be used to protect Korea from foreign powers, pro-democracy activist and future South Korean President Kim Dae Jung (1924-2009) was invited to Emory on behalf of President James Laney to speak about human rights and pro-democracy movements in South Korea. On March 30th, 1983, Kim Dae Jung gave his speech at Emory, "Christianity, Democracy and Human Rights in Korea" and subsequently was awarded a honorary degree from Emory.

Yet Kim's decision to give his speech at Emory was no mere coincidence; his visit was the result of decades of US involvement in South Korean politics and the fusion of Christianity and human rights activism during the late Cold War. Prominent Americans such as US President Jimmy Carter and Emory President James Laney played important roles in assisting Kim, roles that strongly influenced Kim's decision to come to Emory during his exile from Korea. My thesis, "Exiled East: Kim Dae Jung at Emory," sheds light on US-South Korea relations and provides a balanced take on the how the paths of two Christian advocates of democracy, Laney and Kim, crossed. Ultimately, this thesis attempts to understand how and why Laney and Kim were able to forge a close friendship and how their relationship represented their idealized image of US-South Korea relations.

Chapter One, "Meeting the Morning Calm: James T. Laney in Korea," begins in 1980, in the months following South Korean General Chun Doo Hwan's overthrow of the South Korean Fourth Republic. President Carter asked Laney to go to South Korea on a fact-finding mission, which led to Laney's encounter with Kim for the first time during

Kim's trial. This chapter primarily explores the background of James T. Laney, who initially was deployed to South Korea as a member of US counter-intelligence prior to the Korean War. Korea, traditionally known as the "Land of the Morning Calm," made such a profound impression on Laney that he decided to return to the peninsula as a Methodist missionary. Chapter One analyzes the development of Laney's political and religious beliefs, because during the 1960s Laney expressed conflicted views on South Korean General Park Chung Hee's coup d'état that overthrew the democratically elected Second Republic. In spite of the violent nature of this coup, Laney believed that there were positive effects of Park's rise to power. Overtime, however, he came to struggle with what democracy and freedom truly meant. By the 1970s, Laney's beliefs evolved from conflicted uncertainty to fervent advocacy for pro-democracy.

Chapter One also delves into the unique theological era that greatly influenced Laney's views. The rise of the Soviet Union and the emergence of the Cold War birthed a new theological and political movement known as "Christian human rights." This new philosophy advocated for the promotion of human rights as a weapon against the totalitarian left during the Cold War, and explains why many mainline Protestants dropped their hardline attitudes towards Catholics and Jews. The influence Christian human rights philosophically had on Laney explained his support for both pro-democracy Korean activists and Catholic politicians such as John F. Kennedy and Kim Dae Jung.

Chapter Two, "Fighting for Democracy against Militarism," shifts our attention towards Kim Dae Jung, a leading figure of the Korean pro-democracy movement in the 1970s and 1980s. Following the end of the Korean War, South Korea continued to face a turbulent and uncertain future, as the nation fell victim to numerous coups and dictators. Chapter Two explains who Kim Dae Jung was and how Kim's campaign against Park Chung

Hee in the 1971 presidential election catapulted him to national spotlight. Kim, inspired by his Christian faith and motivated by a desire to democratize South Korea, vigorously opposed military rule in South Korea. Because of his persistent activism, Kim became the target of numerous assassination attempts and kidnappings by Park's regime. The chapter also explores how South Korean General Chun Doo Hwan, who rose to power in 1980 following Park's assassination, attempted to execute Kim for allegedly inciting a pro-democracy uprising in Kwangju (commonly called the "Kwangju Uprising"). Chun's attempted execution of Kim became a source of great tension between the US and South Korea, with both Carter and Reagan threatening Chun with repercussions should Kim be killed. The first half of this chapter ends with Kim agreeing to go into exile under the condition that he never return to Korea and departing for an uncertain future in America.

The second half of Chapter Two explores why Kim decided to visit Emory University in 1983. Laney and Carter, both residents of Georgia, had actively worked to save Kim from Chun. While Carter appealed to Chun to not execute Kim, Laney worked to secure Kim's son Hong Up a student visa to enter the United States after South Korean officials tried to prevent Hong Up from leaving the country. Kim was deeply grateful for all the assistance these two men had provided to him and sought to repay the debt he owed by personally thanking them. Additionally, Kim admired Emory University's Methodist affiliation and desired to rally international support for his cause at Emory's Human Rights Symposium, which Laney invited Kim to attend. Kim's visit of Emory marked a pivotal moment in his lifelong friendship with Laney, as the two grew to respect each other for their mutually shared political goals and religious beliefs. Finally, Chapter Two ends with an analysis of Kim's acceptance speech for his honorary degree from Emory, titled "Christianity, Democracy and Human Rights in Korea." This speech reveals much about

Kim's own political and religious views on US-South Korea relations, as Kim discussed the complex relationship that the US, a supposed beacon of democracy, had with South Korea, its anti-Communist authoritarian ally.

Chapter Three, "Kim Dae Jung in America," follows the rest of Kim's exile in the United States after his speech at Emory. Initially, Kim's campaign in America to end US support towards Chun's military government showed great promise. He followed the footsteps of the Korean anti-colonial activists who, some eighty years prior to his time in the United States, campaigned in exile. Like the exiled Korean activists who campaigned against Japanese colonialism, Kim believed that US diplomatic support of the Korean people would prove decisive in the showdown between the military government and its pro-democracy opposition. Just like his predecessors, Kim repeatedly cited his Christian and democratic credentials to gain American sympathy, but ultimately his efforts did not bring about significant change. Although President Ronald Reagan's administration harbored ill will towards Chun, it continued to support Chun and avoided meeting Kim in order to ensure continued security in South Korea. Additionally, Chun adapted his strategies after failing to directly neutralize Kim's activism in the United States. Instead of trying to stop Kim's activism, Chun instead blocked South Korean press coverage of Kim's activism, which weakened Kim's standing in South Korea as a leader of the opposition.

"Kim Dae Jung in America" also analyzes how Kim's exile in the United States revealed much about his character and his beliefs as well as the delicate nature of US-South Korea relations during the Chun-Reagan era. Kim's time in America exposed both his duplicity and hypocrisy towards Chun and Reagan as well as his selflessness and moral courage to fight for the Korean democracy movement. For example, when he was incarcerated, he had agreed to end all forms of political activism in exchange for his release

into exile, but then immediately upon arrival in the United States he reneged on this promise. Additionally, he openly criticized Reagan and labeled him a supporter of dictatorship, despite Reagan's efforts to spare him from execution in 1980. However, Kim willingly publicized and supported his chief political rival and fellow pro-democracy activist Kim Young Sam when the latter went on a hunger strike. Furthermore, Kim Dae Jung decided to return to South Korea from exile in 1985 in spite of the potential danger that the Chun Government posed: Chun could either outright kill him or imprison him upon his return. Kim's time in exile revealed much about him as a person, as he showed some of both his best and worst characteristics during this time. Accounting for his time in exile humanizes Kim and allows readers to see beyond him as merely a future president of South Korea from 1998 to 2003.

Historiography

Although Kim Dae Jung is considered one of the key political figures of the late twentieth century South Korean pro-democracy movement, Kim Dae Jung's time both at Emory and America is a relatively unexplored history. There has been practically no scholarly engagement in either South Korea or the United States regarding Kim's visit to Emory in 1983. Due to the lack of scholarship on the Kim-Laney relationship in the context of US-South Korean relations, the research provided here is the first of its kind.

While the history of the Kim-Laney relationship is obscure, the existing historiographies on human rights' influence on foreign policy and US-South Korean relations are extensive. Gregg Brazinsky and Michael Robinson for example research the history of Korea throughout the late 20th century, and they rely heavily on a combination of documents from US State Department officials as well as the speeches and activities of Koreans during the late 20th century.

Brazinsky's *National Building in South Korea* (2009) focuses on the complexity of US-South Korean Relations during the Cold War, focusing on how Koreans fervently embraced aspects of American culture and influence while bitterly rejecting other elements. Brazinsky analyzes how Koreans reacted to the hypocritical duality of American influence in South Korea, as the US government supported an authoritarian military government while simultaneously fostering democracy in South Korea by protecting political dissidents.[1] Brazinsky explains how Korean responses to American influence and hegemony shaped South Korea's unique path that grew from a war-torn authoritarian nation to a prosperous democratic one. South Koreans. By doing so, Brazinsky provides a crucial foundation for the modern historiography of US-South Korean relations, albeit from an American perspective.

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[1] Brazinsky, Gregg. *Nation Building in South Korea : Koreans, Americans, and the Making of a Democracy*. University of North Carolina Press, 2009, 14.

While Brazinsky's accurately captures the Korean response to American influence, he does not explore how Americans reacted to their time on the peninsula. Men like James T. Laney, who served in South Korea as an intelligence officer before the Korean War, were greatly impressed with Korean culture and society. The purpose of Brazinsky's book is researching how US-South Korean relations affected South Korea. This thesis draws much from Brazinsky's writings. However, *Exiled East: Kim Dae Jung at Emory* differs in that it seeks to create a more balanced perspective of US-South Korean relations by exploring the perspective of an American like Laney.

Meanwhile, Robinson's *Korea's Twentieth Century Odyssey* explores South Korea's troubled history, such as the shaky foundations of Korean democracy that created constant instability and chaos which ultimately led to the rise of military dictator Park Chung Hee in 1961.[2] Robinson, in contrast to Brazinsky, writes with the purpose of analyzing how Korea's experiences in the twentieth centuries was in many ways both comparable with other countries but also unique. Robinson focuses far less on US-South Korean relations and more so on internal Korean politics and how South Korean intellectuals began to spilt between pro-US and anti-US factions. Robinson contribution to historiography is his research on how pro-US Koreans were fervently anti-Communist and were appreciative of US involvement in Korea, whereas Korean cultural nationalists became anti-American (Especially after the Kwangju Massacre) and sought to limit US influence on Korea. Robinson's work offers a fair and balanced portrayal of Korean history that acknowledges the role that US influenced played on Korea while not also over-emphasizing this aspect.

Brazinsky and Robinson's writings contrast with that of Chae Jin Lee, a historian of both Korean history and US-South Korean relations, who published a recent book *Reagan*

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[2] Michael Robinson. *Korea's Twentieth-Century Odyssey : A Short History*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2007, 34.

Faces Korea: Alliance Politics and Quiet Diplomacy in Nov 2019. Lee's work is a monograph that provides additional depth to US-South Korean relations, as he shines light on previously unexplored topics such as what Kim Dae Jung did in the United States when he was in exile. Lee also is one of the few historians to note the Kim-Laney relationship, although he dedicates less than a full page to Kim's time at Emory and his friendship with Laney.[3]

A significant portion of Lee's book is dedicated to explaining how Koreans during the 1980s actively opposed Korean General Chun Doo-Hwan's regime from abroad, and writes about how Kim Dae Jung's activism in exile greatly frustrated Chun Doo Hwan while also embarrassing US President Ronald Reagan.[4] This thesis borrows significantly from Lee's research on what Kim Dae Jung did in exile and how his relentless activism (which violated the terms of his release from prison) impacted US-South Korean relations. What this honors thesis provides however is a case-study of how Kim and Laney formed a friendship that both in many ways reflected the relationship of the two nations as well as affecting it on a political level.

Lee writes history from the Korean perspective and downplays the hegemonic status Americans had in the US-South Korean relationship. One could incorrectly infer from Lee's writings that the Americans had almost no control over their Korean allies. Many sections of from Lee's book that focuses on the 1980s often depict both pro-military and pro-democracy Koreans actively defying US threats and demands.[5] In truth, South Korea, while often times rebellious and defiant, was ultimately a US client state during the Cold War.

Finally amongst Korean American historians, Richard Kim's *The Quest for Statehood: Korean Immigrant Nationalism and U.S. Sovereignty 1905-1945* offers a historical perspective of

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[3] Lee, Chae-Jin, *Reagan Faces Korea: Alliance Politics and Quiet Diplomacy*. New York City: Springer International Publishing, 2019, 113.
[4] Ibid, 113-114.
[5] Ibid, 117.

US-South Korean Relations. Understanding the history of early US-South Korean relations leads to interesting parallels between Kim's activism in exile during the 1980s and those of Korean anti-colonial activists following the Japanese declaration of protectorate over Korea in 1905. While Kim's work focuses on events that took place decades before US intervention in Korea, and while it does not relate to Kim Dae Jung in any particular way, it provides critical historical explanation of how Koreans even during the colonial era sought American aid in their activism.

An important noteworthy point is how Korean independence activists sought American aid and argued both in moral terms of the US credibility as a leader of democracy in the early 20th century as well as its Christian duty to help other Christians in need.[6] This greatly parallels Kim Dae Jung's appeals to American in his speech at Emory University. He asked Americans to support the South Korean democracy movement on the grounds that Americans, as allies of the Korean people and as fellow Christians, should support Korea's struggle with moral encouragement. Kim's work explains the historical precedent to Kim's activities in the United States. It shows that what Kim Dae Jung did by going into exile and soliciting American support for his activism was in no way unique but rather a continuation of what generations of exiled Korean activists had done beforehand.

Historiography behind *Exiled East: Kim Dae Jung at Emory* is not limited to just scholarship on US-South Korean relations. There also exists the historiography on the rise of human rights activism and its subsequent political implications. For example, Sarah Snyder argues in her book *From Moscow to Selma: How Human Rights Transformed U.S. Foreign Policy* how important perception of human rights was to both the US public and US foreign policy officials. Snyder shows how human rights activism led to difficult and awkward

[6] Kim, Richard S. *The Quest for Statehood: Korean Immigrant Nationalism and U.S. Sovreignty, 1905-1945*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011, 52.

situations between America's pro-human rights oriented policy makers and their authoritarian allies in Greece, South Korea and South Africa.[7] Her contributions to the field of history are more on human rights activism in Korea during the 1960s and 1970s, a decade before the events of this thesis.

Snyder's book offers a window into an earlier time of US-South Korean relations. Additionally, her book shows the impact of human rights activism on foreign policy. In many ways, her book is a bridge between US-Korean relations historians such as Brazinsky, Kim, Lee and Robinson and human rights historians such as Samuel Moyn. Snyder examines South Korea as one of her many case studies, and focuses on how Presidents Kennedy, Nixon, Ford and Carter all each had to deal with increasing American public opposition to the South Korean military junta and how this affected the relationship of the two close allies. Snyder allows readers to understand that human rights activism, while prominent during the Carter-Reagan Era, had its roots traced back as early as the Kennedy Administration. Snyder challenges the mainstream notion that human rights activism impacted foreign policy only starting with the Carter Presidency, and by doing so allows for a more understanding of James T. Laney's own beliefs and actions in the context of the 1960s and 1970s.[8] Laney was not unusual for holding pro-democracy views on Korean politics, and Snyder's work reveals that in fact opinions like his were the norm for the era.

Meanwhile, Samuel Moyn explores the origins of Christian human rights and later the spread of human rights activism across the globe. Samuel Moyn's *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History* and *Christian Human Rights* define the importance of the relationship between

[7] Snyder, Sarah B, *From Selma to Moscow: How Human Rights Activists Transformed U.S. Foreign Policy*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2018.
[8] Ibid.

Christianity and anti-Communism.[9] Moyn's works give context to the Christian faith-based activism that fueled the actions of men like Kim and Laney. Although Laney's faith-driven human rights activism may seem peculiar in contemporary times, he was one of many prominent Americans driven by faith who encouraged a more human-rights-centric approach to foreign policy, especially towards America's Cold War allies. Moyn also reveals how Christianity's influence on human rights activism and liberalism was what enabled Christian solidarity between the different schools of Christianity. Despite the deep religious differences between Catholicism and Methodism, this intra-faith desire between liberals of the two Christian sects to promote human rights and combat Communism allowed for a unique form of solidarity that united the movement.

The works done by both US-Korean historians and human rights historians provide significant context to the Kim-Laney friendship. Korean historians such as Brazinsky and Robinson frame US-South Korean relations as a complex, difficult alliance between the two nations glued together by the mutual desire of both nations to defeat Communism all while the Koreans resisted American efforts to exert greater control over their society. Kim and Lee provide context into how Kim Dae Jung's journey to America was not in itself a unique experience, and in many ways shows how Kim grew to symbol to the American public the face of Korean activism abroad against tyranny. Finally, human rights historians such as Snyder and Moyn allow insight into the minds of many American Christians who utilized their Christian faith to advocate for human rights in foreign policy.

Yet, much of the historiography on US-South Korean relations distorts the relationship of the two nations. South Korea is inadvertently painted as a passive client of the United States. Meanwhile, the United States is shown as South Korea's controlling

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[9] Moyn, Samuel, *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History.* Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012.

patron. Additionally, much of the historiography on human rights activism focuses either on the macro-level of the impact of human rights on foreign policy or rather from a heavily American perspective that focuses rarely on the actual actions, deeds and activism of the non-American activists.

What *Exiled East: Kim Dae Jung at Emory* seeks to accomplish is provide a far more nuanced treatment of the history of US-South Korean relations from the views of Kim Dae Jung and James T. Laney. It will detail how the rise of human rights activism in US foreign policy, Christianity and Korean pro-democracy activism overlapped, resulting in the unexpected yet significant friendship between Kim and Laney. This honors thesis in many ways provides a case study on how these factors influenced individual actors and enabled them to in turn work together to advocate for their mutually aligned goals.

Meeting the Morning Calm: James T. Laney in Korea

In 1980, South Korean General Chun Doo Hwan launched the Coup d'état of December Twelfth 1979, overthrowing the South Korean Fourth Republic and ending the brief period of political liberalization that had occurred following South Korean President Park Chung Hee's assassination.[10] President Carter, observing the situation from the US, wanted first hand accounts about the ongoing political situation in South Korea. Wary of reports from Chun Doo Hwan's newly formed government and concerned about Chun's brutal suppression of the pro-democracy uprising at Kwangju, President Carter reached out to James T. Laney. Carter's aides told Laney, who had prepared for a trip to a missionary conference at Manila, that President Carter personally requested him to go to South Korea after his visit to Manila.[11] Carter had been familiar with Laney's previous history in South Korea, as he knew about his past involvement as both a soldier and a missionary, and hoped that Laney could provide a fair, insightful analysis of the ongoing situation in South Korea.[12]

Laney's subsequent memorandum, written after his return, painted a bleak picture of the situation in South Korea. He claimed "There is a heavy mood in Korea. The harshness of the Chun regime is evident everywhere. When talking with people they speak indirectly but in unmistakable tones of foreboding…"[13] Laney described how many Koreans felt "betrayed" by the United States, because while they understood that the United States could not have prevented the coup, General John Wickham's authorization of South Korean troops for use against the Kwangju uprising was interpreted as "tacit approval" by the

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[10] Michael Robinson. *Korea's Twentieth-Century Odyssey : A Short History*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2007, 139.
[11] Author's interview *with Laney James T*. 16 Oct. 2020.
[12] Ibid.
[13] Memorandum on the Republic of Korea, Emory President James T. Laney, U.S. President Jimmy Carter, et al, September 4, 1980, Office of the Staff Secretary, https://www.jimmycarterlibrary.gov/digital_library/sso/148878/176/SSO_148878_176_03.pdf, Accessed 21 Dec. 2020, 1.

Korean people.[14] Throughout his memorandum, Laney lambasted Wickham, as he pointed out how Wickham's actions during Kwangju played right into the hands of Chun's coup.[15] Furthermore, Wickham inflamed Korean opinion when he said, "Koreans are like field mice, they just follow whoever becomes their leader. Democracy is not an adequate system for Koreans."[16] According to Laney, Koreans interpreted Wickham's statement as having racist overtones, which worsened South Korean opinion of the US.[17] Laney urged President Carter to remove Wickham from South Korea and reassign him elsewhere, as he noted that Wickham had "overstepped his role in making public policy statements and wittingly or not tolerated the abuse of military authority on the part of General Chun and his cohorts."[18]

It was during this time that Laney first saw Kim. In his memorandum, Laney mentioned how he had read about the government's charges against Kim Dae Jung, which he said, were "inferences, projections or assumptions of [Kim's] intentions" that had no basis.[19] Chun Doo-Hwan had ordered a public trial of Kim Dae Jung, who was accused by the military government of having incited the Kwangju Uprising.[20] After he read the charges from Korean newspapers, Laney's curiosity about Kim grew. Laney traveled to the courthouse, where he sat alongside the rest of the audience to witness Kim's trial.

It was here he first saw Kim, who was led in wearing white prison clothes and his hands physically restrained.[21] Laney recalled seeing Kim's mistreatment during the trial as

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[14] Ibid, 1.
[15] Ibid, 2.
[16] Lee, Samsung. "Kwangju and America in Perspective." *Asian Perspective* 12, no. 2 (1988): 118.
[17] Memorandum on the Republic of Korea, Emory President James T. Laney, U.S. President Jimmy Carter, et al, September 4, 1980, Office of the Staff Secretary, https://www.jimmycarterlibrary.gov/digital_library/sso/148878/176/SSO_148878_176_03.pdf, Accessed 21 Dec. 2020, 2.
[18] Ibid, 3.
[19] Ibid, 2.
[20] Brazinsky, Gregg, *Nation Building in South Korea: Koreans, Americans, and the Making of a Democracy*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009, 240.
[21] Author's interview with *Laney James T.* 16 Oct. 2020.

very "moving and powerful."[22] Laney was greatly dismayed by what he saw during the trial, he called the whole ordeal a "humiliating" process that degraded Kim's dignity.[23] In the memorandum itself, he called Chun's persecution of Kim a "sorry spectacle".[24] One of his recommendations to President Carter asked for a "modicum of justice for all the populace, and that includes justice for Kim Dae Jung" and noted that since Chun needed US approval to rule, Carter should exploit Chun's desires in order to obtain Kim's release and exile.[25] Although he did not know it, Laney had just made a fateful decision. His moral outrage towards the shameful conduct of the trial as well as his sympathy for Kim would lead to his actions to help free Kim in 1982.

Yet, none of this was mere coincidence. President Carter's request to Laney was a calculated decision, as Carter was well aware of Laney's previous involvement in South Korea. Laney initially began his involvement in Korea following the end of the Second World War, when Korea south of the 38th parallel was occupied by the United States.[26] Laney, deployed in 1947, claimed in his interview that his deployment to South Korea was an eye-opening experience.[27] During his deployment, he met with several influential South Korean politicians and also investigated the assassination of South Korean politicians Yo Un Hyung and Chang Deok Soo, who were indirectly murdered on South Korean President

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[22] Ibid.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Memorandum on the Republic of Korea, Emory President James T. Laney, U.S. President Jimmy Carter, et al, September 4, 1980, Office of the Staff Secretary, https://www.jimmycarterlibrary.gov/digital_library/sso/148878/176/SSO_148878_176_03.pdf, Accessed 21 Dec. 2020, 2.
[25] Ibid, 3.
[26] Brazinsky, Gregg, *Nation Building in South Korea: Koreans, Americans, and the Making of a Democracy*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009, 1.
[27] Author's interview *with Laney James T*. 16 Oct. 2020.

Rhee Syngman's orders.[28] The longer Laney stayed, the more he grew to understand and appreciate Korean culture, religion, history and society.[29]

For most Americans, South Korea was an abstract concept that represented the ongoing stalemate that had developed throughout the Cold War. For Laney however, this was not the case. Humorously enough, one of Laney's commanding officers, Major Jack B. Reed, may have unwittingly predicted just how consequential Laney's deployment would be. Major Reed replied to a letter written by James Laney's concerned mother, Mary H. Laney, who was worried about her son's time in the military. Reed replied that her son was "taking part in one of the most history-making events in the world today" and claimed that James Laney's time in South Korea would give him "an experience he will never forget."[30]

Laney indeed did not forget about his time in South Korea. Although Laney's deployment in South Korea ended shortly before the outbreak of the Korean War, his experience convinced him to come back to the Korean Peninsula. Laney recalled how "The people that I worked with and be friends with made me appreciate what Korea had been through under the Japanese. I became very attracted to the marvelous, indomitable spirit of Korea…Of course, I found some Korean Christian friends…All those things all touched a deep cord in my heart, it was not just professional but emotional."[31] After he graduated from Yale University's Divinity School and served for several years in the Methodist Ministry, Laney and his family traveled to Korea, where he and his wife worked as Methodist missionaries.[32]

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[28] Ibid.
[29] Ibid.
[30] Major Jack Reed's Letter to Mrs. Laney, July 26th, 1947, Box 67, Folder 16, James T. Laney Papers, 2.
[31] Author's interview *with Laney James T.* 16 Oct. 2020.
[32] Ibid.

During his time as a missionary, Laney developed a critical view of the South Korean military government, as both his personal notes and sermons revealed a deep mistrust towards the Korean military government that ruled the nation. One of his earliest writings on South Korean politics was during his employment as a Professor at Yonsei University. In his essay titled "Korea," Laney wrote about the turbulent political situation in South Korea and criticized Korean General Park Chung Hee. He claimed Park, who had promised to hold free elections and return control of government back to the civilians, had made disingenuous statements. Laney wrote how members of the South Korean military regime "were merely doffing their uniforms to continue control in civilian clothes" after they made shallow promises to transition from military to civilian rule.[33] He also noted how Park reversed his promise to hold general elections two years after his coup. After the Korean Central Intelligence Agency's claimed that they had uncovered a plot to overthrow the government, Park went about "declaring that four more years of military rule would be required before there could be democratic government in Korea" and "forbid further political activity until a referendum should decide on his proposed extension of junta rule."[34]

Laney's overall assessments of South Korea in his writings were bleak and grim. He noted the significant opposition Park faced from both the Korean press and opposition politicians after he publicly announced extending military rule.[35] Laney also remarked on how "for the first time in memory an American was arrested by the government" for harboring a South Korean general accused of the alleged counter-coup.[36] He added how the military regime, which was dissatisfied by the articles correspondent Charles Smith wrote,

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[33] Korea, 1963, Box 2, Folder 3, James T. Laney Papers, 1-2.
[34] Ibid, 2.
[35] Ibid, 3.
[36] Ibid, 3.

expelled him from the country.[37] Laney, adept at reading his environment, recognized that overt opposition to the military regime would not be tolerated, even if the opposition came from American citizens.

While Laney was critical of the South Korean military regime, he believed that Park's claims of the Korean government's incompetence, corruption, and instability were valid. He wrote extensively in the days after the May 16th Coup that brought Park to power in 1961. According to Laney, the South Korean military claimed that the coup was necessary because "of the former democratic administration's utter inability to effectively deal with the growing communist sentiment, curb increasing hoodlumism and bring about needed economic reforms."[38] He conceded that many of these charges were true and wrote that the military government set about to correct these problems while they stripped Koreans of their constitutional and legal rights.[39] He reported on the mixed feelings many Koreans felt about the coup, as the coup and the mass arrests conducted by the regime had cowed many Koreans into submission, while others were grateful of the military's efforts to clear the streets of lawlessness and homelessness.[40]

Throughout Laney's early writings on South Korea, two clear and consistent patterns emerge. Laney constantly questioned the concepts of freedom and democracy. In one of his reflections he wrote, "What does democracy mean? What does freedom mean?" and asked the relationship between democracy, freedom and equality.[41] He asked similar questions in his initial writings on Park's coup, as he stated how "there is no question but what order has

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[37] Ibid, 3.
[38] Miscellaneous notes and drafts, undated, Box 2, Folder 4, James T. Laney Papers.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Ibid.
[41] Ibid.

been restored. And it was sorely needed. The question is at what price?"[42] Laney repeatedly grappled with this dilemma, as he argued, "inefficient and weak government can undermine stability and incite unrest" and allow the rise of Communism but then he questioned what justification there was for "opposing the totalitarian left with an equally totalitarian right."[43] He noted the irony of the coup, because Park had seized power in the name of defending South Korean freedom. He asked, "What freedom are we then defending, when freedoms have all been usurped in the name of necessity."[44] Laney concluded that while he was unsure of the answers to these questions, he felt privileged that his Korean friends included him in these discussions.[45]

The other pattern that emerged was Laney's consistent belief that the Christian Church could positively contribute to the situation in South Korea. Laney first acknowledged in one of his essays, "The Church and Social Revolution in Korea," that South Korea's instability was a result of the nation "experiencing within the span of only a few generations what the West had five centuries to absorb. It is as though the Reformation, the Renaissance, the Industrial Revolution and Political Awakening were all telescoped into much less than a century…"[46] Laney also stressed how the confusion and social chaos was not surprising given how a century ago, Korea was "placed within a stagnant feudal economic system with an inflexible social scheme" which Laney attributed to the sexist and classist traits of Confucianism, which had been the predominant state ideology of Korea before Japanese colonization.[47] He argued that the Church was capable of becoming "an instrument to social revolution," as he believed that the Church was a revolutionary concept

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[42] Ibid.
[43] Ibid
[44] Ibid
[45] Ibid.
[46] The Church and Social Revolution in Korea, September 8th, 1964, Box 48, Folder 25, James T. Laney Papers, 1.
[47] Ibid, 2.

in itself because it would create a community with "regard only to surrender and faith" and argued that it "brings together into one fellowship within the church both sexes and all classes…"[48] According to Laney, the Christian Church erased the borders of sex, class and ethnicity by unifying all peoples through a shared faith in God and Jesus.

While the Christian Church could and should be a revolutionary instrument, Laney maintained that in modern times it had ironically become "curiously immobile" in the face of revolution.[49] Laney believed that the Church had fallen victim to its own institutional foundations within traditionalism, and that much of its resistance to change was a result of its defensive attitude towards protecting its own power while it struggled to comprehend the changes that society had underwent.[50] Laney however insisted that regardless of how change occurred, the Church had "the task of mediating the gospel to reality, and this mediatorial task becomes all the more urgent in times of change."[51]

For Laney, South Korea was a country where the Church must step up to perform its role as an instrument of social change. He claimed that the Church "can and should seek to lead [young Koreans] in more responsible participation and thoughtful activity…and recognize and affirm the legitimate aspirations of the people."[52] Laney reasoned that for too long, the Christian Church had defined Christian life as "restrictive, narrowly moralistic terms, hardly tapping the eager response of youth, attempting instead to mold them into sterile patterns of careful behavior."[53] Laney stated, "in terms of justice, equality and democratic ideals, the church had more to offer than any secular movement of traditional religion" and that this was perfect for the Korean youth, who Laney asserted lacked "a

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[48] Ibid, 2.
[49] Ibid, 3.
[50] Ibid, 3-4.
[51] Ibid, 4.
[52] Ibid, 5
[53] Ibid, 5.

compelling cause, a sense of commitment."[54] While he believed that "a new sense of history had awakened a feeling of outrage…and growing awareness of the progress of the world" amongst young South Koreans, there was also a "feeling of inferiority bordering on shame" that haunted them as well.[55]

According to Laney, the panacea for these self-defeating beliefs and cynicism was the Christian Church. He believed that the Church could also learn from greater involvement in South Korea just as he hoped the Korean people would learn more about Christianity. He hoped that the Church may "be forced to adopt new forms and re-examine cherished assumptions which are proving too costly to maintain" by engaging in further activism in places like South Korea.[56] He concluded that the Church, which maintained a defensive posture and acted overwhelmed by the monumental changes of the modern era, should recognize the need to perform the task God has given the Church by adapting to the modern era and embracing change.[57]

Records of Laney's activities in Korea as a missionary indicated that he took his own beliefs on Christianity's role in social revolution very seriously. Many of his sermons in South Korea disseminated anti-authoritarian messages, such as his Bible study on Romans 12:1-5, which he often used to voice his anti-authoritarian and anti-Marxist beliefs. Laney argued that in many ways, the Christian understanding of suffering was far more realistic than Marxist interpretations. Laney stated Christians understand how "men continuously seek to avoid facing the trouble in themselves" which he argued was one of the root causes of human suffering.[58]

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[54] Ibid, 5.
[55] Ibid, 5-6.
[56] Ibid, 6.
[57] Ibid, 7.
[58] Bible study for mission in Korea, Romans 12:1-5, 1960s, Box 48, Folder 19, James T. Laney Papers, 2.

He contrasted how revolutionaries, through their failure to understand this, became disillusioned following their revolutions. He explained how "It is expected that the revolution, which changes the structure of government and institutions, will solve all the problems…when this is found not to be the case, people think that the revolution has been betrayed."[59] This was why Laney argued many South Koreans following the April Revolution felt disillusioned, and further pointed out how when "men have no commitment higher than themselves, they may participate in a revolution and once in power betray its ideals. Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin, and Castro come in mind in this regard."[60] He claimed that only Christians who "place themselves in the hands of God will suffice for the task of "serving as salt and light for a dark an decaying world."[61]

While his Bible study never directly addressed the South Korean leadership, he made strong condemnations of authoritarian leaders from both the right (Hitler, Mussolini) and the left (Stalin, Castro) and believed that their lack of faith in a higher power, God, was why the revolutions they helped spearhead became corrupted. Laney believed that the best form of revolution came from a spiritual one, in which Christians sought to serve the higher calling God gave them to change the world according to God's will rather than the will of human leaders. According to Laney, the most worthy goal and purpose for people would be to serve God's will.

Laney often wrote about the need for purpose in society, as evidenced by his letter to President John F. Kennedy in 1960. In it, Laney praised then-Democratic nominee Kennedy's proposal of establishing the Peace Corps as a method to promote democracy and

[59] Ibid, 2.
[60] Ibid, 2.
[61] Ibid, 2.

humanitarianism abroad.[62] Laney admiringly wrote that he was "convinced that we in America have been languishing for lack of clearly enunciated purpose, and as a result, many of the neutralist nations have lost faith in our leadership."[63] He then mentioned the restless, revolutionary nature of students across the world and believed that the youth's disillusionment with traditionalism had ignited violence and protests globally.[64]

Laney believed that this ideological vacuum and lack of purpose amongst students could be solved with Kennedy's solution, and offered to assist Kennedy's efforts, citing his educational background at the Yale Divinity School and his experience as a chaplain.[65] It is clear that Laney believed his background in Christianity qualified him as an ideal candidate for Kennedy's Peace Corps, which reflected his beliefs on the importance of Christianity in leadership. Laney thought that Christianity could give youth across the world a sense of purpose and that faith in God offered the best path forward to better the world. Laney was firmly convinced during his time in South Korea that Christianity was the best, if not only, option to cure the unrest that affected the world during the 1960s.

Christian Human Rights, Revolution and the Cold War

Understanding Laney's deep-rooted belief in the importance of Christianity in politics requires understanding the context of his upbringing and youth. Laney's political beliefs were the legacy of the fusion of Christianity and human rights activism. Prior to the outbreak of the Second World War, Christians across the Europe and the United States grew ever fearful of totalitarian ideologies such as Fascism and Communism. The origins of Christian human rights activism within America can be found before and during the Second

[62] Miscellaneous notes and drafts, November 3rd, 1960, Box 2, Folder 4, James T. Laney Papers.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Ibid.
[65] Ibid.

World War, when the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America (FCC) proclaimed that America had a responsibility to secure a moral order in the world.[66] When the FCC released its declaration labeled *Six Pillars of Peace*, the last pillar advocated for an "international bill of rights…which must prioritize freedom of religion."[67] Many anti-totalitarian conservatives began to see the defense of rights as "a formidable antidote to a new syndrome of state hypertrophy inimical to religious values."[68]

Christian philosophers such as Catholic Jacques Maritain seized upon this idea, as they challenged Marxist assertions that rights and democracy were "elements of a hypocritical sham" and instead claimed that these "bourgeois liberties" would provide the legal carapace of the Christian state."[69] By doing so, Maritain broke with mainstream Catholic political thought in order to protect Catholicism from secularism.[70] Although traditionally Christians associated perceived rights as a product of the secular French Revolution, they were now Christianity's best chance to defeat Communism.[71]

During the Second World War, Catholic followers of Maritain's vision had cited the "right of the human person…to be the main bulwark against Hiterian racism"[72] Although Fascism was discredited following its defeat in the Second World War, the Soviet Union's "atheistic Communism" seized the mantle of "secularism and revolution" and grew stronger after the war.[73] Christian human rights activism arose as a response to this, as Cold War

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[66] Moyn, Samuel, *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012, 53.
[67] Ibid, 53.
[68] Moyn, Samuel, *Christian Human Rights (Intellectual History of the Modern Age)*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015, 10-11.
[69] Ibid, 86.
[70] Moyn, Samuel, *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012, 54.
[71] Ibid, 24.
[72] Ibid, 87.
[73] Ibid, 24.

human rights activism fused Christian values and interests to challenge Communism across the globe.[74]

The birth of Christian human rights also birthed an alliance between the Catholic and Protestant Churches and created a brief but necessary Christian solidarity. Bitterness between German Christianity and Anglo-American Christianity existed due to the Second World War, but Christian human rights proponents helped heal this rift because they implied that the Germans "had to make peace with old enemies to oppose the greater foe of un-Christian secularism."[75] Both Catholics and Anglo-American Protestants were convinced in the aftermath of the Second World War that there was a "need for these new alliances and a need for Christian unity and worldly engagement against the Soviet Union, the common enemy of common values."[76] The desire to contain and defeat the spread of Soviet-inspired Communism led to a federation of Protestants, which united "to put aside their once bitterly divisive differences in the name of common geopolitical interests."[77]

Meanwhile American Protestants, traditionally hostile to Catholics and Jews, "brooked the admission of Catholics and Jews to the national project in the creation of a Judeo-Christian America" and "relaxed confessional disputes and especially their anti-Catholicism" all in preparation for the struggle against the Soviet Union.[78] While resentment and distrust between Protestants and Catholics continued and tensions remained high, the two faiths begrudgingly worked together. For potentially the first time since the Reformation, Western Christendom put aside centuries-old theological disputes and grievances for the sole purpose of defeating Communism.

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[74] Ibid, 24.
[75] Ibid, 121.
[76] Ibid, 120-121.
[77] Ibid, 149.
[78] Ibid, 150-151.

Laney, who attended Divinity School and served as a missionary during the early years of Christian human rights, was greatly influenced by this radical change in Christian thought. It was evident that Laney was opposed to Marxist ideology, opposing it militarily as a member of US counter-intelligence in Korea and fighting it philosophically in notes and sermons. During his time in counter-intelligence, Laney described how he suspected that Communists might "attack American bases" because "infiltration of the security services [in Korea] was widespread."[79] He also helped apprehend two Korean Communist conspirators during his service.[80]

Philosophically, Laney challenged Marxism in his writings. For example, he wrote in his Bible study how "The Marxist (communist) fallacy is that property (and class distinctions based upon property) is the root problem [of mankind]."[81] Laney claimed Marxism did not truly address mankind's problems because the "trouble lies within men and not outside them…[Communism and liberalism] fail to deal with [mankind's] nature itself."[82] It should also be noted here that Laney's criticism of secular liberalism alongside Communism reflected how he fit in with the typical background of the many advocates of Christian human rights activism. While Laney himself could be politically categorized as an "American liberal," his criticism of secular liberalism reflected the conservative and religious nature of his own beliefs and background. Christian human rights activism was attractive to politically liberal yet religious activists, as it allowed them to attack the moral failings of secularism while still opposing Communism by promoting human rights across the globe.[83]

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[79] The Ambassador as Soldier, July 1996, Box 96, Folder 14, James T. Laney Papers, 3.
[80] Ibid, 3-4.
[81] Bible study for mission in Korea, Romans 12:1-5, 1960s, Box 48, Folder 19, James T. Laney Papers, 2.
[82] Ibid, 2.
[83] Moyn, Samuel, *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012, 74-75.

Laney's criticism of Eastern "mystical" religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism and Taoism reflect his conservative Christian view on religion. He claimed that Eastern religions have a "just-because-of" attitude towards both suffering and joy, with karma ensuring that balance will be achieved regardless of mankind's actions.[84] This he claimed stabilized society but created a sense of apathy.[85] This inevitably leads to a realization which "accepts everything indiscriminately, even social and historic evil…"[86] He believed that because Eastern religions lacked a sense of divine justice, they were much more susceptible to "allow the invasion of Communism" and faulted "the distorted form of Oriental religions" which enabled the growth of Communist infiltration in China and Asia.[87] Laney's criticism of Eastern religions and their susceptibility to Communism reflected his anti-Communist Cold War attitudes and how his own religious views were very much a product of the era.

While Laney constantly attacked Marxism in many of his writings, he also showed that he was not blinded by anti-Communist dogma. In one of his essays, "Human Rights and the Meaning of Revolution," Laney claimed Karl Marx had shown how Christianity had "failed to realize its own charter by becoming subservient to propertied interests until it had neither voice nor slight for the poor."[88] While Laney fervently opposed Marxism, he believed it provided important lessons to Christians and that Marxism should be studied to better Christianity. He stated how Marx made it clear to see "how easy it is to identify religion with one's own interests" and how Marx's criticisms showed Christians of "the responsibility the Church has before God for the disprivileged in society."[89]

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[84] Untitled manuscript on Buddhism, Spring 1969, Box 2, Folder 10, James T. Laney Papers.
[85] Ibid.
[86] Ibid.
[87] Ibid.
[88] Human Rights and the Meaning of Revolution, 1960s, Box 7, Folder 17, James T. Laney Papers, 9.
[89] Ibid, 10.

Laney believed that the Church was duty-bound by God to assist the poor and oppressed rather than the rich and powerful, and that the Church must work actively to not be "dominated by cultural and class interests" and instead work towards the "extension and expansion of human values and human rights as the expressed intention of God in history today…"[90] Laney strongly believed that his support for human rights both within America and abroad allowed him to carry out the work of God.

Laney's attitudes and actions towards Catholics meanwhile reflected the relaxation of anti-Catholic sentiments amongst Protestants during the Cold War as well as their growing open-mindedness towards other sects of Christianity. In the 1960 US Presidential Election, Kennedy's Catholic faith was a source of controversy for a significant portion of the American electorate. Anti-Catholic sentiment was significant enough that Kennedy reminded the American public that he was "not the Catholic candidate for president" and emphasized that he would not let the Pope influence his Presidency.[91] Laney however enthusiastically had supported President Kennedy's cause despite their religious differences, which indicated that Laney was not distrustful of Catholics.[92] Furthermore, his future decision to assist and befriend Kim Dae Jung, a Catholic, reinforced how he did not view religious differences as significant enough to hinder assisting a fellow Christian.

Breaking the Ominous Silence

Laney, influenced by his Christian human rights beliefs, helped promote human rights activism in Korea even after he had left. When he returned to South Korea in the late 1970s, he was surprised by how significantly the nation had economically developed. In his

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[90] Ibid, 19.
[91] Roos, David. "How John F. Kennedy Overcame Anti-Catholic Bias to Win the Presidency." History Channel, https://www.history.com/news/jfk-catholic-president. Accessed 29 Dec. 2020.
[92] Miscellaneous notes and drafts, November 3rd, 1960, Box 2, Folder 4, James T. Laney Papers.

essay "An Ominous Silence in South Korea," he wrote "Returning to South Korea after more than a decade, one is amazed at its economic development…Gone are the obvious evidences of poverty: beggars, shacks, unkept public places, apologetic attitudes towards foreigners. Instead there is pride; to be Korean, whether as product or as people."[93] He was greatly impressed by how quickly South Korea has transformed.

Yet he conveyed, "Beneath the din of commerce and shrill government propaganda there is a strange silence" and expressed that he was struck by how quiet Korea had become, given its peoples' vociferous nature.[94] He indicated President Park's steadily erosion freedom of expression in Korea and his subsequent decision to ban all criticisms of the government had created this strange silence.[95] He with a special emphasis noted how Christian Churches had been subject to "intimidation and surveillance" and decried how pastors and church professors were often arrested for remarks made during worship services.[96] Laney described an atmosphere of tension, fear and paranoia in South Korea. Even in events that the government does not interfere with, such as the church meetings he went to, Korean participants were always aware of potential retribution from the government.[97]

Laney also strongly criticized South Korean Christianity, as he bemoaned how "A sad note is that few Christians in Korea identify with those concerned for human rights."[98] While South Korean Christianity's growth and "evangelical piety" have impressed the world, Laney lamented how there was a widespread lack of understanding and concern with human

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[93] "An Ominous Silence in South Korea," 1970s, Box 48, Folder 42, James T. Laney Papers, 1.
[94] Ibid, 1-2.
[95] Ibid, 2.
[96] Ibid, 3.
[97] Ibid, 4.
[98] Ibid,4.

rights activism amongst most Korean Christians and further criticized how Korean Churches are rife with factionalism.[99]

This is a particularly interesting assertion as Laney's far more relentless criticisms of the South Korean government and Korean Christianity marked an evolution from his earlier views in the 1960s. As previously mentioned, in Laney's writings such as "Korea" and his untitled notes, he indicated that he viewed the democratic Second Republic of Korea as inefficient and weak. However, Laney was not sure if authoritarianism was the solution either. Laney credited Park for ending the political chaos and uplifting the Korean economy, but correctly feared that Park would never willingly concede power.

A decade later, Laney became far more critical of Park and firmly believed that only a restoration of democracy and human rights fueled by Christian activism could alleviate the ominous silence Park created through his heavy-handed tactics.[100] While Laney in the early 1960s questioned the concepts of freedom and democracy, his beliefs solidified to such an extent that he asked in his essay instead "How do [we Americans], who revel in our right to speak our mind, raise our voices in behalf of [the valiant Korean people]?"[101]

Laney suggested that the American Christian organizations and churches could clarify to Koreans that American interests in South Korea were not solely based off of political strategic considerations and economic investments but also a commitment to "a fundamental stake in [ensuring] the free voice of all people."[102] Laney also added onto this, as he said that the Christian Church had a heavy burden to carry, for it must undertake "voicing of the American conscience" in South Korea and account for the "moral

[99] Ibid, 4.
[100] Ibid.
[101] Ibid, 5.
[102] Ibid, 6.

sensibilities of the American people."[103] Laney concluded that while the task would be challenging, he believed it was the church's mission to follow God's desire to assist the mistreated and oppressed, and claimed that the only way to break the ominous silence in Korea was with God's word.[104]

Analyzing Laney's "An Ominous Silence in South Korea" shows just how much Laney's beliefs had evolved since his departure from Korea. While Laney had always believed in a proactive approach towards advocating human rights, his writings in the 1970s revealed how his beliefs in democracy and human rights activism had solidified and he adopted a much more critical attitude towards Korean Christians who were apathetic to the struggle their pro-democracy brethren had undertaken against the Park regime. The Laney who wrote "An Ominous Silence in South Korea" displayed much more conviction in his beliefs as well as a fervent faith that Christians were not only duty-bound to oppose tyranny in God's name but also the harbingers of change in Korean society.

Another important point to recognize is that Laney did not exaggerate the exacerbation of the situation in Korea. Initially, the United States put pressure on the Korean military regime, such as when President Kennedy asked President Park to restore South Korea's democratic constitution.[105] Kennedy threatened to withhold economic aid to South Korea, which forced Park to draft a democratic constitution to appease the Americans.[106] Park then subsequently ran for President three times (1963, 1967, 1971), winning each election.[107] By the time Laney wrote "Ominous Silence," Park had heavily militarized South Korea and tightened his grip on all elements of South Korean society. His

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[103] Ibid, 6.
[104] Ibid, 6.
[105] Im, Hyug Baeg. "The US Role in Korean Democracy and Security since Cold War Era." *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* 6, no. 2 (2006): 163.
[106] Ibid, 163-164.
[107] Ibid, 164.

military regime had indoctrinated the population with anti-Communist propaganda, conscripted students by establishing the Student Corps for National Defense and declared a State of Emergency (seven months after he defeated Kim Dae Jung in 1971) to grant Park dictatorial powers.[108]

After he met with South Korean Methodist Bishops committed to promoting human rights, Laney threw himself into furthering the human rights cause in South Korea. As a member of the Board of Global Ministries, Laney helped draft a resolution on the human rights situation in Korea. The resolution itself encouraged members to "develop strategies to pressure the US government to review its relationships to the Republic of Korea" and also "express their solidarity with Korean Christians struggling for human rights."[109]

While the resolution itself merely offered moral support towards Korean Christians promoting democracy, its drafters also attached a worksheet on suggestions that its readers could follow. These included organizing prayer groups for Koreans, adopting a political prisoner, writing to representatives in Congress to inquire about Korean political prisoners and writing to President Ford & Democratic nominee Carter about enforcement of human rights laws.[110] It is clear from both the resolution and the suggestions added onto it that Laney and his peers took the human rights situation very seriously in South Korea and desired greater awareness abroad in assisting the Korean pro-democracy movement.

Indeed, Laney's work in America indicated that he continuously supported Korean human rights activism. It is likely around this time that Laney began to hear about Kim Dae Jung, who had been capitulated as one of the major pro-democracy figures in South Korea following his failed 1971 Presidential run. Some of the pamphlets that the Board of Global

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[108] Ibid, 164-165.
[109] Report and Recommendation, 1976, Box 21, Folder 9, James T. Laney Papers.
[110] Ibid.

Ministries' task force published, such as "For the Restoration of Democracy and the Recovery of Human Rights in South Korea" referenced Kim Dae Jung.[111] In one pamphlet, published in October 1976, Kim was the first on the list of Korean Christian leaders who were "in jail for resisting the repressive government of South Korea."[112] He was referenced primarily as the 1971 runner up for the South Korean Presidential Election and also as a "devout Roman Catholic layman" who suffered from arthritis.[113] Laney's pro-democracy activism in the 1970s was slowly but steadily laying the foundations for his meeting with Kim at Emory.

It should be emphasized that Laney's pro-democracy activism was not without precedent. Laney's anti-authoritarian Bible study sessions and support for the Korean pro-democracy movement from abroad were merely a continuation of a long trend of Christian missionary activity in Korea. When Korea was a colony of Imperial Japan, Christian missionaries often played a key role in providing both moral and public support for Korean independence activists. During the March First Uprising millions of Koreans peacefully protested for the end of Japanese Imperial rule. Japanese colonial officials utilized excessive brutality to put down the Korean protests.[114] American Protestant missionaries, horrified by the savage killing of Korean civilians, took steps to assist their plight and publicize their suffering.[115] Protestant missionaries began "an extensive campaign to document and disclose Japanese acts of violence and cruelty in Korea" and believed that because the Japanese government was sensitive to international publicity, they could use "the court of world

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111 For the Restoration of Democracy and the Recovery of Human Rights in South Korea, 1976, Box 21, Folder 9, James T. Laney Papers, 1.
112 Ibid, 1.
113 Ibid, 1.
114 Kim, Richard S. *The Quest for Statehood: Korean Immigrant Nationalism and U.S. Sovereignty, 1905-1945*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011, 61.
115 Ibid, 61-62.

opinion to bring pressure on Japan to alter its policies."[116] The Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, the most influential voice of American Protestantism in the early 20th century, published a 125-page report to "mobilize public interest in the hope that every possible influence may be brought to bear in ceasing the brutality, torture, inhuman treatment, religious persecutions and massacres in Korea."[117]

Laney's work for the Board of Global Ministries was in many ways remarkably similar to the work his missionary predecessors had engaged in, as he never overtly opposed the ruling regime when he preached in Korea. However he wrote reports about the situation and criticized government violence from abroad. Doing so often allowed missionaries to portray themselves as relatively objective observers within Korea while they raised awareness about injustice in Korea to create sympathetic audiences in America. During the early 20th century, American missionaries were often viewed as objective experts on East Asian affairs, and during the Wilson presidency American missionaries often played prominent roles in US foreign policy towards East Asia.[118] President Carter's request to Laney to analyze the situation in Korea in 1980 was also the continuation of another historical trend.

Laney's activity was not unusual for his era either. By the 1970s, human rights activism had become increasingly prominent in US foreign policy circles and South Korea became a focal point of this new ideological movement's struggle against *Realpolitik*, a school of international thought that advocated for a pragmatic, rather than moral, foreign policy. Americans since the 1960s had become increasingly concerned about human rights abuses, especially those committed by their Cold War allies. In many ways, the rise of human rights was a backlash against the dominance of *Realpolitik* thought, as Americans became

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[116] Ibid, 62.
[117] Ibid, 62.
[118] Ibid, 62-63.

increasingly horrified by how their policymakers had routinely ignored ethical concerns and aligned the United States with repressive, authoritarian governments that betrayed American ideals of liberty and justice.[119] This in turn prompted non-state actors such as NGOs (Non-Government Organizations), universities and religious organizations to play an increasingly important role in challenging mainstream foreign policy during the 1960s and 1970s.[120]

Americans had become "motivated by transnational connections or other personal, political, moral and religious motivations" and became "political entrepreneurs for [the human rights movement]."[121] The concept of sovereign inviolability, the idea that a government could do as it pleased without repercussion from its neighbors, was challenged starting from the mid-1960s.[122] Human rights activists began to oppose the authoritarian actions of US foreign allies and many began to exert pressure on the US Government "through letter writing, testifying before Congress and participating in demonstrations" which often prompted further investigations into human rights abuses.[123]

Although American journalists had formerly labeled South Korea as "loyal, anti-communist ally," by 1973, the media began to describe Park Chung Hee as a "dictator" and "authoritarian."[124] By 1975, the United States Congress had regularly conducted hearings on human rights abuses in South Korea, which impacted the American public's opinion of Park's government. Polls surveyed in 1975 indicated the number of Americans willing to defend South Korea declined in light of the numerous atrocities Park's regime had

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[119] Sargeant, Daniel J, A *Superpower Transformed*: The Remaking of American Foreign Relations in the 1970s. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015, 98-99.
[120] Snyder, Sarah B. *From Selma to Moscow: How Human Rights Activists Transformed U.S. Foreign Policy*. New York; Chichester, West Sussex: Columbia University Press, 2018, 14.
[121] Ibid, 15.
[122] Sargeant, Daniel J, A *Superpower Transformed*: The Remaking of American Foreign Relations in the 1970s. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015, 94.
[123] Snyder, Sarah B. *From Selma to Moscow: How Human Rights Activists Transformed U.S. Foreign Policy*. New York; Chichester, West Sussex: Columbia University Press, 2018, 15
[124] Ibid, 103.

committed against the Korean people.[125] As the American public became aware of the crimes committed by Park's government, they became sympathetic to the plight of political dissidents such as Kim Dae Jung. This helped laid the groundwork for Laney's decision as Emory University President to assist Kim Dae Jung's exile to the United States.

Laney's background in Korea had built the groundwork for his fateful meeting with Kim while the political climate in America help set the stage for Laney's support for Kim in exile. The unprecedented fusion of Cold War politics, Christianity, human rights activism and Korea during the mid 20th century placed James T. Laney in an incredibly unique situation when President Carter requested Laney go to Korea in 1980. Laney's previous military service and sermons indicated his opposition to Communism, which ensured that he was not a political liability in Cold War America. His Christian human rights activism indicated his sympathy and knowledge of the Korean pro-democracy movement. Finally, Laney had extensive connections as a missionary in Korea and was well versed in Korean language and culture. For President Carter, Laney was the perfect political, religious, linguistic and historical candidate to send to Korea. What makes Carter's decision all the more remarkable was that by choosing Laney to go to Korea on a fact-finding mission, he had propelled Laney towards a lifelong friendship with the future President of South Korea, Kim Dae Jung.

[125] Ibid, 109-110.

Fighting for Democracy against Militarism

Just as understanding Laney's political and religious beliefs requires understanding the history of Christian human rights, Kim Dae Jung's leadership of the human rights and democracy movement in South Korea can only be explained by understanding Korea's turbulent history during the twentieth century. Korea's entrance into the twentieth century was arguably one of the most violent and chaotic episodes in Korean history. In 1910, after decades of Japanese intervention in Korean politics, Japanese General Terauchi Masatake forced Korean King Sunjong to sign the treaty of annexation, which made the Korean Joseon Dynasty a part of the Japanese Empire.[126] From 1910 to 1945, Korea was a colony of Japan, until Japan surrendered to the Allied Powers on August 15th, 1945 following the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.[127] From 1945 to 1948, the victorious Allied Powers partitioned Korea by dividing the country in half, with the 38th parallel as the border of the two Koreas. The Soviet-backed northern half named itself the Democratic Peoples' Republic of Korea and was led by Kim Il Sung, while the United States supported the Republic of Korea in the south, led by Rhee Syngman.[128]

In 1950, North Korean armies crossed the 38th parallel in an effort to reunify the peninsula, an action that led to the Korean War.[129] After three years of fighting, the war ended in a stalemate. Although South Korea survived the conflict, the country's civilian and military leadership were greatly scarred by the conflict and developed a deep sense of paranoia and fear of Communist insurrection and activity. In 1960, pro-Democracy activists overthrew the despotic reign of President Rhee Syngman during the April Revolution and

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[126] Michael Robinson. *Korea's Twentieth-Century Odyssey: A Short History*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2007, 34.
[127] Ibid, 100.
[128] Ibid, 104-110.
[129] Ibid, 115.

established the Second Republic.[130] A year later, a cadre of South Korean military officers led by Major General Park Chung Hee overthrew the democratic government on May 16th, 1961 and proclaimed the Third Republic.[131] According to the notes of President Carter's National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinsk, who met with Blue House Secretary General Kim Kyong Won, Park justified the coup by arguing that the democratic government was incompetent and that Communist agitators were on the brink of overthrowing the Second Republic. Assuming the Presidency after the coup, Park would rule Korea with an iron fist until his assassination in 1979.[132]

Kim Dae Jung's story began with his fervent opposition to the Third Republic, which as Laney noted was a military regime under the façade of civilian rule. Kim entered politics in 1959, near the end of Rhee Syngman's government, serving as a Spokesperson of the National Coalition for the Protection of Civil Rights.[133] He later served as the Spokesperson of the Democratic Party, the Minjung Party and the New Democratic Party, all of which were opposition parties during the Third Republic.[134] Throughout the 1960s, Kim advocated for the end of military rule and opposed the human rights abuses of Park's government. Kim entered the national spotlight in 1971, when the opposition parties coalesced around him and chose him to be their candidate against Park for the Korean presidential election. Kim's presidential platform included "smashing the conspiracy for permanent one-man rule by Park Chung Hee and political neutrality of the military,"[135] clear

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130 Ibid, 125-126.
131 Ibid, 127.
132 Memorandum of Conversation, National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski, Blue House Secretary General Kim Kyong Won, et al, November 18, 1980, National Security Archive, https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu//dc.html?doc=3696543-Document-16-Memorandum-of-Conversation-National, Accessed 13 Dec. 2019.
133 Kim Dae Jung's Resume, Box 4, Folder 16, Rethinking Human Rights Symposium Records, 1981-1984, Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University, Atlanta, GA.
134 Ibid.
135 Ibid.

signs of his desire to end authoritarianism and militarism in South Korean politics. Young and energetic, Kim vigorously campaigned throughout South Korea to spread his message of ending military involvement in politics. Despite Park's vast financial resources and plethora of pro-government organizations at his disposal, Kim nearly pulled off an upset by winning 45% of the popular vote.[136] The electoral results of this election greatly alarmed Park; he had assumed his popularity for improving the South Korean economy as well near total-control of the South Korean government would have granted him a larger margin of victory. Disturbed by the closeness of the election, Park proved Kim's warnings against one-man rule correct when after his victory he declared martial law, banned political parties, dissolved the National Assembly and closed the country's universities.[137] Because Kim had exceeded expectations by winning so many votes in an unfair election, Kim became a prominent opposition leader and an enemy of the state.

The decade after Kim's presidential campaign would become his hardest years. Park, fearful of Kim's popularity, smeared him as a radical leftist whose allegiance laid with North Korea and Communism. South Korea's Central Intelligence Agency, the KCIA, began surveillance of Kim Dae Jung and his family. According to Kim Jong Dae, the grandson of Kim Dae Jung, Kim's sons struggled to find employment or even form romantic relationships due to their blacklisting by the government.[138] Kim's family was socially stigmatized and became outcasts due to Kim's continued opposition to military rule.

In these trying times, Kim and his family found solace within Korea's churches. Kim was not born Christian, he converted to Catholicism in 1961 due to his interactions with Dr.

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[136] Brazinsky, Gregg. *Nation Building in South Korea: Koreans, Americans, and the Making of a Democracy*. University of North Carolina Press, 2009, 159-160.
[137] Ibid, 160.
[138] Author's interview *with Kim Jong Dae*. 25 Nov. 2019.

Chang Myeon, who served as Prime Minister of South Korea from 1960 to 1961.[139] Before he met Chang, Kim struggled with faith and questioned the existence of God. Kim had attended church before, but did not feel particularly inspired by Christianity. However, Chang served as a role model due to his character and his fine, upstanding, democratic attitude.[140] Although he was a non-practicing Catholic before meeting Chang, Kim's encounter made him become a devoutly religious man, described by Jong Dae as someone who in his later years sang hymns with his wife before going to sleep.[141] Another aspect that should be noted was that Kim saw the Catholic Church of the later 20th century as a force of justice and reform. The Catholic Church was very supportive of human rights and the restoration of democracy in South Korea. It had constantly criticized the authoritarian nature of the South Korean government and protested its human rights abuses.[142] Throughout his trials, Kim continued to be driven by his religious nature and was supported by the Church.

Despite support from the church, it could not protect him from multiple assassination attempts by the South Korean government. In 1971, Kim was injured in an assassination attempt that was faked to appear as a motor accident. Kim sustained significant injuries that would leave him with a permanent limp whenever he walked.[143] Kim was targeted again in 1973, when Park Chung Hee declared martial law and rounded up South Korean opposition leaders. Kim happened to be in Japan receiving medical treatment from the assassination attempt in 1971 and refused to return to Korea.[144] In order to capture Kim, the KCIA decided to violate international law and kidnapped Kim from his hotel room in

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[139] Kim, Dae Jung. *A New Beginning: A Collection of Essays*. Gimm-Young Publishers, 1996, 137.
[140] Ibid, 137.
[141] Author's interview *with Kim Jong Dae*. 25 Nov. 2019.
[142] Lankov, Andrei. "Why Is Catholicism Important in South Korea?" https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2014/08/why-catholicism-important-korea-201481717037383818.html. Accessed 14 Dec. 2019.
[143] *Kim Dae-Jung*. 18 Aug. 2009. *www.telegraph.co.uk*, https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/obituaries/politics-obituaries/6050968/Kim-Dae-jung.html.
[144] Ibid.

Tokyo in August 1973.[145] Kim was taken abroad a boat and had weights attached to his feet, with the KCIA agents intending to throw him overboard. As the KCIA boat entered the sea, American and Japanese officials had received word about the assassination attempt and pressured the South Korean government to abort the operation.[146] Before the KCIA agents could throw Kim overboard, an American helicopter began following the KCIA boat, which saved Kim from death.[147] Afterwards, Kim was arrested twice, once in 1975 and once in 1976 for criticizing the government and calling for the restoration of democracy.[148] Although his five-year sentence was suspended in 1978, he was put under house arrested until 1980. Following Park Chung Hee's assassination in 1979, Park's successor Prime Minister Choi Kyu Hah freed Kim alongside 700 other former political prisoners.[149]

Neither Kim's freedom nor Korean democracy would last however, as Choi's government was overthrown by Generals Chun Doo Hwan and Roh Tae Woo in the Coup d'état of December Twelfth 1979.[150] Chun's coup as well as accumulation of power triggered significant protests across the country. In response to growing unrest to his rule, Chun declared martial law on May 16th, 1980, and dissolved the National Assembly, closed colleges, banned labor strikes and prohibited political discussion and activity.[151] The South Korean government arrested Kim Dae Jung again, this time under charges of "sedition, sympathy with North Korea, Marxist connections and incitement to insurrection."[152] The

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145 Snyder, Sarah B. *From Selma to Moscow: How Human Rights Activists Transformed U.S. Foreign Policy*. New York; Chichester, West Sussex: Columbia University Press, 2018, 95.
146 Ibid, 96.
147 Brazinsky, Gregg. *Nation Building in South Korea: Koreans, Americans, and the Making of a Democracy*. University of North Carolina Press, 2009, 227-228.
148 *Kim Dae-Jung*. 18 Aug. 2009. *www.telegraph.co.uk*, https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/obituaries/politics-obituaries/6050968/Kim-Dae-jung.html.
149 Robinson, Michael. *Korea's Twentieth-Century Odyssey: A Short History*. University of Hawaii Press, 2007, 139.
150 Ibid, 140.
151 Ibid, 140.
152 *Kim Dae-Jung*. 18 Aug. 2009. *www.telegraph.co.uk*, https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/obituaries/politics-obituaries/6050968/Kim-Dae-jung.html.

arrest of Kim further inflamed protests, especially in in Kim's home province of Jeolla. The citizens of South Jeolla province's capital city, Kwangju, rose up in a full-scale rebellion and drove police and local military units from the city. The Kwangju Uprising was only put down when Chun deployed the South Korean military under the pretense of defeating the "Communist" insurrection and killed hundreds of students and citizens.[153] After Chun crushed the Kwangju Uprising, he had Kim prosecuted him for allegedly inciting the Kwangju Uprising in front of a kangaroo court and planned on having him executed.[154]

Although Chun and his colleagues in the military desired to have Kim executed due to his open opposition to Chun's regime, then incumbent US President Jimmy Carter pressured Chun to not execute Kim. Memorandums and notes from the Carter Administration's State Department captured how seriously Carter took Chun's plans to execute Kim.[155] Although Kim's trial occurred in the final months of the Carter Presidency, when President Carter was rendered a lame-duck President due to his defeat in the 1980 US presidential election, Carter still worked to pressure the South Korean government to not execute Kim. Memorandums noted how Carter and his advisor Gleysteen threatened Chun, as they stated how executing Kim would lead to a severe disruption in the US-Korea relationship and that the US would stop economic and military aid to South Korea.[156] Carter had taken a keen interest in the human rights situation in South Korea during the 1976 US presidential election. He criticized President Ford's policy towards South Korea; he had

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[153] Robinson, Michael. *Korea's Twentieth-Century Odyssey: A Short History*. University of Hawaii Press, 2007, 140.
[154] Kim, Dae Jung. *Prison Writings*. University of California Press, 1987, vii.
[155] Memorandum of Conversation, National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski, Blue House Secretary General Kim Kyong Won, et al, November 18, 1980, National Security Archive, https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu//dc.html?doc=3696543-Document-16-Memorandum-of-Conversation-National, Accessed 26 Nov. 2019.
[156] Memorandum to the Acting Secretary from EA, Acting Secretary Michael Armacost, November 18, 1980, National Security Archive, https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu//dc.html?doc=3696543-Document-17-Memorandum-of-Conversation-National, Accessed 15 Dec. 2019.

framed Ford's foreign policy as immoral because it had traded human rights for security.[157] While Carter could not exert as much political pressure as he would have preferred due to his lame-duck presidency, his statements were supported by the actions of the incoming Reagan Administration.

Fortunately for Kim, Chun's Government miscalculated the Reagan Administration's stance on Kim's execution. Chun and his colleagues believed Reagan's anti-Communist rhetoric would allow them to execute Kim, but one of Reagan's key advisors, Richard Allen, warned South Korean officials that the American reaction to Kim Dae Jung's execution would be comparable to "a lighting bolt from heaven striking them."[158] The Reagan Administration firmly told Chun that if Kim Dae Jung was executed, "no American politician would cooperate with South Korea, and support for South Korean security would drastically decrease."[159] Meanwhile US Ambassador to South Korea William Gleysteen implied Kim's execution might create "an opening towards Pyongyang" and lead to a reevaluation of the United States' traditionally hostile stance towards North Korea, something that Chun greatly feared.[160]

As a result of Carter's and subsequently Reagan's efforts, Chun decided to commute Kim's sentence from death to life imprisonment.[161] However, Chun went through with his commutation Kim's sentence with a specific condition. He asked US officials to be allowed to attend President Reagan's inauguration in 1981.[162] Chun, who had overthrown the

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[157] Snyder, Sarah B. *From Selma to Moscow: How Human Rights Activists Transformed U.S. Foreign Policy*. New York; Chichester, West Sussex: Columbia University Press, 2018, 114.
[158] Brazinsky, Gregg. *Nation Building in South Korea: Koreans, Americans, and the Making of a Democracy*. University of North Carolina Press, 2009, 241.
[159] Lee, Chae-Jin, *Reagan Faces Korea: Alliance Politics and Quiet Diplomacy*. New York City: Springer International Publishing, 2019, 22.
[160] Ibid, 23.
[161] Ibid, 25.
[162] Brazinsky, Gregg. *Nation Building in South Korea: Koreans, Americans, and the Making of a Democracy*. University of North Carolina Press, 2009, 241

previous government, needed to legitimize his rule. If he attended Reagan's inauguration and then met the US President, it would allow him to present to the Korean public that the US approved of his rule.[163] The Reagan Administration ultimately agreed to Chun's condition, but changed the deal so that Chun would be the second foreign leader that President Reagan would meet after his inauguration and also ensured that Chun would only arrive in the United States ten days after the inauguration for a low-key summit.[164]

Although Chun spared Kim, the Reagan Administration continued to pressure Chun to release Kim, something that Chun had likely not expected. This was because President Reagan's foreign policy was paving a middle path between the policies of his predecessors Nixon and Carter.[165] Nixon had adopted a hands off approach to South Korea, as he ignored the excesses of Park Chung Hee's regime in exchange for continued security and stability in South Korea. Reagan believed that President Nixon's realistic approach of "benign neglect" was morally corrupt because it refused to acknowledge Park Chung Hee's human rights abuses.[166] Meanwhile Carter had adopted a more vocal approach, as he consistently attacked America's authoritarian allies and pushed for their democratization. However, Reagan also believed President Carter's approach, known as "public voice," was not the right approach either, as it was both geopolitically harmful to American interests and also overly idealistic to the point that Carter could not carry out his threats to punish America's authoritarian allies.[167] Reagan believed in a "quiet diplomacy," which would allow him a balanced approach of pressuring the military regime to gradually lift restrictions on speech and free

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163 Lee, Chae-Jin, *Reagan Faces Korea: Alliance Politics and Quiet Diplomacy*. New York City: Springer International Publishing, 2019, 24.
164 Ibid, 24.
165 Ibid, 5.
166 Ibid, 4.
167 Ibid, 4.

political prisoners while also not weakening American geopolitical interests such as the stability of American authoritarian allies.[168]

Reagan continued his approach of quiet diplomacy when he sent his Vice President George H.W. Bush to Korea in April 1982. When Bush arrived in South Korea, he "gently but firmly presented a plea to President Chun that Kim be released from prison and allowed to travel to the United States for medical reasons."[169] One of the conditions Chun made towards Kim was that he would allow him political asylum if Kim agreed to not return to Korea.[170] Kim Dae Jung agreed to the ultimatum given to him.[171] Afterwards, Senator Ted Kennedy, who had been following the situation in Korea, supported Kim by helping him seek asylum in the United States.[172] On December 23rd, 1982, Kim Dae Jung was exiled east, as he boarded a plane at Kimpo International Airport headed for the United States with the knowledge that he may never return to his homeland. After decades of opposition to military rule in Korea, Kim now found himself in exile.

Why Here? Examining Emory's relationship with Kim

Kim's fervent opposition to both Park Chung Hee's military government and that of his successor Chun Do Hwan had not gone unnoticed amongst the American public. His efforts had earned him the respect and admiration of many prominent Americans, including the then President of Emory University, James T. Laney. On Dec. 1982, Kim Dae Jung and his wife Lee Hee Ho began exchanging correspondence with President Laney after they were

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168 Ibid, 5.
169 Ibid, 106.
170 *Kim Dae-Jung*. 18 Aug. 2009. *www.telegraph.co.uk*, https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/obituaries/politics-obituaries/6050968/Kim-Dae-jung.html.
171 Kim, Dae Jung. *A New Beginning: A Collection of Essays*. Gimm-Young Publishers, 1996, 35.
172 Dahl, Tracy, and Washington Post Foreign Service; Washington Post Special Correspondent Young H. Lee in Seoul contributed to this story. "S. Korea Frees Kim Dae Jung." *Washington Post*, 24 Dec. 1982. *www.washingtonpost.com*, https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1982/12/24/s-korea-frees-kim-dae-jung/dd290d34-a586-49c9-b897-2160e2cb3e73/.

exiled to the United State. On January 10th, 1983, Laney invited Kim and Lee to come to Emory University as a speaker for Emory's Human Rights Year alongside other prominent human rights activists and supporters.[173]

While Laney and Kim had been in contact with each other through mail and Laney had observed Kim Dae Jung's trial for his alleged role in the Kwangju Uprising, they had never formally met each other. Through his letters, Laney expressed his admiration for Kim's tenacity and determination to continue fighting for democracy and human rights in South Korea. Laney called Kim "an embodiment of courage and the vigorous championing of rights."[174] Laney even personally intervened to help end Kim's persecution by Chun Doo Hwan's government when he worked to ensure that Kim's second son, Hong Up, could enter the United States as a student[175] and also offered to cover the expenses that the trip would entail for Kim and Lee.[176]

Laney's efforts to help secure Hong Up's student visa was of great importance for Kim. In his private letter from prison to Hong Up in 1980, Kim apologized to his son and blamed himself for his son's woes. He wrote, "I feel a heavy weight as I think of you…a feeling of guilt…because of your father your hopes for marriage have twice been destroyed and you have not been able to find a job in the business world."[177] Kim clearly felt great responsibility and shame for just how much his family had suffered even as he remained imprisoned, which revealed his empathy and acknowledgement of the struggle of others even as he suffered himself.

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[173] James T. Laney to Kim Dae Jung, January 10, 1983, Box 4, Folder 16, Rethinking Human Rights Symposium Records, 1981-1984, Stuart A. Rose Manuscript, Archives, and Rare Book Library, Emory University, Atlanta, GA.
[174] Ibid.
[175] Kim Dae Jung to James T. Laney, January 19, 1983, Box 4, Folder 16, Rethinking Human Rights Symposium Records.
[176] James T. Laney to Kim Dae Jung, January 27, 1983, Box 4, Folder 16, Rethinking Human Rights Symposium Records.
[177] Kim, Dae Jung. *Prison Writings*. University of California Press, 1987, 4.

In 1982, American and South Korean officials worked to negotiate Kim's release from prison. However, Kim's family was nearly separated during this process when Hong Up's passport to enter the United States was denied. This was because the South Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs had refused to issue passports to Hong Up, who had been admitted to McKendree College in Illinois.[178] US State Department officials believed Hong Up's passport denial was a "petty political vendetta" against Kim Dae Jung.[179] Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs internal documents confirm this, which stated that Hong Up's passport was denied because they feared Hong Up would join his maternal uncle, Lee Sung Ho, and organize a campaign in America for Kim Dae Jung's release from prison, as Kim's release had not yet been secured.[180] Kim described his feelings as both "sad" and "violent" as he had not expected Hong's passport to be turned down, with his other letters capturing how powerless and angry he felt. [181] Laney's intervention helped Hong Up secure a student visa, which allowed him to follow his family to America. Although Kim's letters to Laney do not capture how emotionally distressed he was over the prospect of family separation, it is clear from analyzing his prison letters that Kim must have felt great relief after Laney assisted Hong Up in entering America.

While Kim had always believed in the righteousness in his struggle for democratizing Korea, a belief driven by his Christian values, he cared deeply for his family and recognized the hardships he had placed on them due to his activism. He would recount in his autobiography that his son would ask him, sobbing, "Why do you have to live such a hard

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[178] Lee, Chae-Jin, *Reagan Faces Korea: Alliance Politics and Quiet Diplomacy*. New York City: Springer International Publishing, 2019, 46.
[179] Ibid, 47.
[180] Ibid, 47.
[181] Ibid, 248-251.

life, Dad?"[182] Additionally, Jong Dae recalled how guilty his grandfather felt about the hardships that he had to put his family through to secure the democratization of Korea; Kim felt responsible for the KCIA surveillance and social stigmatization that his family, especially his children, had to endure due to his pro-democracy activism.[183] Hong Up's initial passport rejection greatly added to Kim's woes, so Kim felt indebted to Laney for he resolved this issue and allowed Hong Up to join his family in the United States. Kim felt gratitude for Laney's assistance and Kim reciprocated Laney's admiration towards him by accepting the offer to come to Emory and personally thank Laney for all the support he had provided to not only Kim but also to his family.[184]

While it is clear from their correspondence that Laney and Kim mutually respected each other and had genuine affection, both also sought to utilize their friendship to further their respective human rights agendas. In his response back to Laney's invitation, Kim Dae Jung graciously accepted the offer to speak at Emory but also requested to have a chance to meet with President Carter, another one of the speakers of the human rights symposium.[185] While this appeared innocuously at the end of his letter to Laney, it is clear that Kim saw how his speech at Emory would enable him to further the cause of democratization of South Korea while at the same time he would repay both Laney and Carter for their invaluable support to him. Kim Jong Dae stated how Kim wanted to personally thank President Carter for helping save his life and for being a strong advocate of pressuring the Korean military Government to support human rights.[186]

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[182] Kim, Dae Jung. *A New Beginning: A Collection of Essays*. Gimm-Young Publishers, 1996, 35.
[183] Author's interview *with Kim Jong Dae*. 25 Nov. 2019.
[184] Ibid.
[185] *Kim Dae Jung Visit, 2/23/1983-2/24/1983*.
https://findingaids.library.emory.edu/documents/eua0059humanrights/series1/. Rose Library. Accessed 25 Nov. 2019.
[186] Author's interview *with Kim Jong Dae* . 25 Nov. 2019.

At the start of Chun's military regime, President Carter pressured the Korean Government to not kill Kim Dae Jung and show clemency to him and his fellow human rights activists.[187] During his presidency, Carter attempted to abide by and govern through his Christian morals, a philosophy that had strongly guided his foreign policy. Carter repeatedly urged Park to exercise restraint against pro-democracy activists as well as engage in Détente with North Korea. Clearly, Kim felt indebted to President Carter for helping save his life and sought to thank him for his contributions to the Korean democracy movement and human rights activism. Jong Dae, reinforced this, as he stated that one of his grandfather's primary reasons for traveling to Atlanta was to meet and thank Carter.[188] Kim was also a strong supporter of President Carter and had been upset when Ronald Reagan defeated Carter in the 1980 US presidential election.[189]

Repaying personal debt was not the only motivating factor, because for Kim, the struggle would not be over until Korea became democratized. The Human Rights Symposium, "Rethinking Human Rights" had been in planning since September 1981, as Emory University put meticulous effort put into the execution of the event. By 1983, Rethinking Human Rights featured not only President Carter and Kim, but also many other prominent human rights activists from across the globe such as poet Czeslaw Milocz and editor Stephen Graubard.[190] Laney envisioned Kim's presence as a great addition to the Human Rights Symposium, which would boast Emory's prestige. Given the publicity involved with the event as well as the presence of many important dignitaries and activists,

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[187] Memorandum of Conversation, National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski, Blue House Secretary General Kim Kyong Won, et al, November 18, 1980, National Security Archive, https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu//dc.html?doc=3696543-Document-16-Memorandum-of-Conversation-National, Accessed 26 Nov. 2019.
[188] Author's interview *with Kim Jong Dae*, 25 Nov. 2019.
[189] Ibid.
[190] *Kim Dae Jung Visit, 2/23/1983-2/24/1983*. https://findingaids.library.emory.edu/documents/eua0059humanrights/series1/. Rose Library. Accessed 25 Nov. 2019.

Kim saw the symposium as a great opportunity to raise further awareness of tyranny in South Korea and turn global opinion to become sympathetic with his cause. Even though he was in exile, Kim refused to give up on democratizing his homeland, Korea.

These personal motivations do not detract from the genuine desire both Laney and Kim to alleviate human right abuses in South Korea and restore democracy. Rather, they showcase how the personal motivations and relationships that Kim and Laney fostered enabled them to build a strong, working relationship that would help lead to the eventual democratization of South Korea. In fact, Laney and Kim would continue to remain great friends many decades after their meeting at Emory in 1983. Mutually aligned interests and goals merely helped create their friendship and would be ultimately superseded by their shared Christian faiths and political beliefs.

Kim's personal connection with Laney was not the only reason he likely chose Emory of all alternative institutions to give his speech on. Shared Christian faith was one of the primary reasons why Kim decided to go to Emory University. Here it should be noted once again that the Roman Catholic Church played a significant role in the democratization of South Korea, as Pope Paul had supported Kim by asking the Park military regime to spare Kim from execution on the basis that he was a Catholic.[191] In 1987, the Catholic Priests Association for Justice would reveal the South Korean government cover-up of the torture and murder of student activist Park Jong-Chol, an act that triggered the June Struggle, which would bring the downfall of the Chun Government.[192]

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[191] Flynn, JD. "Thomas More Kim Dae-Jung, First Catholic President of South Korea, Dies at 85." Catholic News Agency, http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/thomas_more_kim_daejung_first_catholic_president_of_south_korea_dies_at_85/. Accessed 26 Nov. 2019.

[192] Lankov, Andrei. "Why Is Catholicism Important in South Korea?." Al Jazeera. 18 August 2014. https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2014/08/why-catholicism-important-korea-201481717037383818.html. Accessed 14 Dec. 2019.

Kim was a devout Catholic greatly driven by his faith, but this did not limit his appreciation of Christianity to just Catholicism. When Kim prepared to visit Emory, the Christian Council of Metropolitan Atlanta organized with Emory University to attend his lecture.[193] The Christian Council of Metropolitan Atlanta strongly believed in the role of organized religion in supporting human rights, which revealed the strong religious connection many within the human rights symposium saw with the South Korean democracy movement. In his autobiography, Kim claimed, "Catholicism and Protestantism are not different religions. They are the same religion dedicated to the worship of the same God and His Son Our Lord Jesus Christ."[194] Kim was someone who appreciated Christians regardless of denomination as seen by his statements as well as his respect for non-Catholic Christians such as President Carter and James T. Laney.

Kim grew increasingly religious as he became more prominent within the Korean democracy movement. His autobiographies suggest his imprisonment in the 1980s lead to his true spiritual awakening. It could even be argued that Kim admired Carter not only because he was a pro-democracy supporter but also because he was as Kim saw it a Christian democrat. Kim saw Emory as one of few remaining American educational institutions that continued to openly associate with religious institutions and likely was drawn to Emory's Methodist background as well as the commitment to advocate human rights through the guidelines espoused by Methodism founder John Wesley.

Although many other universities matched or surpassed Emory's academic caliber and prestige, there was no other academic institution that Kim felt as connected with as

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[193] *Kim Dae Jung Visit, 2/23/1983-2/24/1983*.
https://findingaids.library.emory.edu/documents/eua0059humanrights/series1/. Rose Library. Accessed 25 Nov. 2019.
[194] Kim, Dae Jung. *A New Beginning: A Collection of Essays*. Gimm-Young Publishers, 1996, 138.

Emory. Not only was it a "well known" institution as Kim claimed in one of his letters to Laney, but it was also a Christian affiliated university that was home to many supporters of the South Korean democracy movement including Emory President James Laney and former US President Jimmy Carter, both men whom Kim felt personally indebted to for their respective roles in alleviating Kim's suffering and saving him from execution. All these circumstances would lead to Kim's decision to travel to Emory University in 1983.

Christianity, Democracy and Human Rights in Korea

After Kim attended the Human Rights Symposium and lectured at Cannon Chapel on Feb. 24, it appeared as though Kim's time at Emory had come to an end. Kim had met with both President Carter and President Laney and formed friendships with the two men that would last a lifetime. However, Kim had so greatly impressed the Emory faculty that on March 17th, the Committee of Honorary Degrees decided to nominate Kim for an honorary degree from Emory University.[195] Kim prepared to accept the honorary degree and wrote his keynote speech at Emory, titled "Christianity, Human Rights and Democracy in Korea," which he would deliver on March 30th, 1983.

Kim commenced his speech by recalling how Yun Chi Ho, Emory's first international student, began Emory and Korea's relationship when he attended and graduated from the institution in the late 19th century.[196] He continued to emphasize the Emory connection with Korea, as he cited how Emory's Methodist missionaries came to Korea to spread Christianity throughout the 20th century. After he praised Laney and Carter for their efforts to promote human rights in Korea, Kim claimed that Laney and Carter's

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[195] Waits Jim L. to Theodore Weber, March 17, 1983, Box 4, Folder 16, Rethinking Human Rights Symposium Records.

[196] Christianity, Human Rights and Democracy in Korea, March 30, 1983, Box 4, Folder 16, Rethinking Human Rights Symposium Records, 1.

affiliations with Emory "solidifies its reputation as a mecca of human rights."[197] It is clear from Kim's opening paragraphs of his speech just how much he respected Emory and its community, as he held the institution to an incredibly high standard and boasted the longevity of Korea's relationship with the institution.

After he praised the institution, Kim gave a brief, grim analysis of Korea's political background as well as the deteriorating situation for the Korean democracy movement. He claimed "Human rights have never been so violated in Korea as they are today" and that Chun's current regime was in no way comparable to that of Rhee Syngman, Korea's first President.[198] According to Kim, Rhee was a power-hungry and dictatorial, but credited Rhee by stating that basic civil rights and liberties were respected as long as they didn't threaten Rhee's hold on power.[199] He goes further, as he stated that even Park Chung Hee was less authoritarian than Chun Doo Hwan. While Park regulated the media and labor unions and worked to establish a totalitarian state, Kim claimed that even Park had more respect for human rights than Chun ever had.[200]

Chun, according to Kim, had forced more than 700 South Korean journalists into retirement for demanding freedom of press and had doubled the number of political prisoners in South Korea as he enforced draconian measures to keep the peace.[201] Kim cited studies by the Reagan Administration, Amnesty International and the World Council of Churches to argue that the Chun's military regime had forcefully cracked down on dissent

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[197] Ibid, 1.
[198] Ibid, 1.
[199] Ibid, 1.
[200] Ibid, 1.
[201] Ibid, 2.

when it destroyed labor unions, imprisoned regime opponents and enforced state surveillance of the Korean people.[202]

What makes the first segment of Kim's speech interesting is how Kim portrayed the current human rights situation in South Korea with what it was like under the predecessors of Chun. Kim had opposed both Rhee's civilian dictatorship and Park's military dictatorship, yet is far more critical of Chun and painted Chun as a petty despot. What might be even more confusing is that Park was far more active in his efforts to kill and persecute Kim. As noted previously, Park went as far as to break international law when his agents kidnapped Kim from Tokyo just to kill him whereas Chun tried to find a legal excuse to execute Kim and also allowed Kim to leave for America in exchange for not coming back to South Korea.

There were three explanations as to why Kim was far more critical of Chun's regime than that of either Rhee or Park. First and foremost, part of Kim's Christian philosophy was forgiveness. As he explained in his autobiography, forgiveness was an incredibly important aspect of Christian faith.[203] Despite suffering much persecution from the KCIA and Park, Kim ultimately forgave them for the wrongs they did to him. Second, statistically Chun's government was committing far more abuses than either Rhee or Park had during their reign of power. Chun lacked the prestige that Rhee acquired as Korea's first President and the popularity that Park acquired through successful economic reform. Chun Doo Hwan's presidency was further tainted by how he brutally quashed the Kwangju Uprising. He had to compensate for these deficiencies and so relied heavily on brute force to rule South Korea. While both Rhee and Park were dictators, neither of them ruled as harshly as Chun, who ruled with an iron fist. Finally, during his exile Kim attempted to acquire American support

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[202] Ibid, 2.
[203] Kim, Dae Jung. *A New Beginning: A Collection of Essays*. Gimm-Young Publishers, 1996, 54-56.

to democratize South Korea, and so emphasized how severe the situation was to secure more foreign support for the Korean democracy movement.

After he reviewed the current status of human rights in South Korea, Kim proceeded to explain why the Korean democracy movement had failed to succeed despite trying for more than thirty years to democratize the nation. Kim claimed there were five reasons why the movement has failed, starting with American influence on Korean history since 1945. While Kim was not overtly critical of the United States, he noted how Korea did not achieve independence from Japanese colonialism by itself.[204] The United States had defeated Japan in 1945 and occupied South Korea. America had forged a government in its own image and placed institutions that were foreign to Koreans. This was unfortunately damaging to Korean democracy and dignity, because Kim claimed "Human rights and democracy, after all, must be won; they cannot simply be handed over."[205]

Second, Kim criticized Rhee when he said how Rhee had a "historic mission of laying the foundation for democracy. But, blinded by lust for power, he betrayed his mission" and also criticized Rhee for setting the precedent of using anti-Communism and national security concerns as excuses for imprisoning political opponents.[206] Then he emphasized the importance of the balance of power, as he argued that the legislature, the judiciary and the news media must work together to protect human rights and democracy. Under Park and Chun however, he said they had become powerless and in extreme cases even served the dictatorships.[207]

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[204] Christianity, Human Rights and Democracy in Korea, March 30, 1983, Box 4, Folder 16, Rethinking Human Rights Symposium Records, 3.
[205] Ibid, 3.
[206] Ibid, 3.
[207] Ibid, 3.

His fourth reason is that South Korea suffered from economic inequality, as he claimed that Korean society was unstable due to the discontent that rose from poverty. He noted how ten South Korean corporations produced 42% of the Korean GNP in 1981 and that inherently unequal societies would always be prone to discontent and instability.[208] Finally, Kim argued that militarism in Korean society had been harmful, as he stated that while most Korean soldiers were dedicated to national defense, some such as Park and Chun were "immersed in political game-playing" and that these soldiers had compromised both the political integrity of the nation and its national defense.[209]

Here, Kim subtly critiqued the United States for its complicity in the failure of the Korean democracy movement. South Korea's first president was essentially put in power by the United States, whom the United States reluctantly backed due to his strong anti-leftist tendencies.[210] The United States had multiple misgivings about Rhee Syngman's authoritarian attitudes, such as when in 1952, he used South Korean Army units to enforce martial law and quashed efforts by the Korean National Assembly to pass constitutional revisions.[211] The US was wary of his antics and heavy-handed tactics and drew up plans to overthrow him should he attempt to use the South Korean army outside of UN authority to enforce martial law, but decided against this as his anti-Communist attitudes and willingness to appease the US proved palpable enough to the Americans.[212] The United States had been South Korea's benefactor, as it molded its political institutions, but left the country in a fragile state in the hands of an autocrat who would proceed to abuse human rights and democracy in the name of national security. Because of American negligence, Koreans were

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[208] Ibid, 3.
[209] Ibid, 3.
[210] Brazinsky, Gregg. *Nation Building in South Korea : Koreans, Americans, and the Making of a Democracy*. University of North Carolina Press, 2009, 14.
[211] Cha, Victor. *Powerplay: The Origins of the American Alliance System in Asia*. Princeton University Press. 2016, 100.
[212] Ibid, 106.

unable to live up to the democratic principles the United States tried to instill. The South Korean executive branch assumed near total power in South Korean politics while militarism and economic inequality ran rampant in the country.

However, Kim insisted that despite these problems, the Korean democracy movement would struggle on for five differing reasons. First, Kim argued that Korea was the "only nation in East Asia which, despite thousands of years of Chinese domination and influence, had retained its self-identity" and cited how the Mongols and Manchus had been assimilated into Chinese culture whereas the Koreans had not.[213] According to Kim, Koreans had preserved their national identity, which was important because "democracy requires self-assurance" and Korean self-assurance demonstrated democratic potential.

Kim then made three more arguments that indicated Korean exceptionalism. He cited how Korean history was filled with examples of democratic movements such as the Tonghak Peasant Uprising that highlighted desires amongst Koreans for freedom, justice and human dignity.[214] Kim then declared that Koreans were resilient, as he stressed how Koreans had been fighting for democracy for decades and they would refuse to surrender their resolve and would "never quit the march towards [democracy]."[215] Meanwhile Korean cultural emphasis on promoting education would inevitably, in Kim's opinion, help push for democratic restoration in South Korea. Kim's one non-Korean exceptionalist argument stemmed from Christianity, which Kim maintained would provide spiritual leadership for Korea as it drove towards modernization and democracy.[216] Kim reasoned that the

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[213] Christianity, Human Rights and Democracy in Korea, March 30, 1983, Box 4, Folder 16, Rethinking Human Rights Symposium Records, 4.
[214] Ibid, 4.
[215] Ibid, 4.
[216] Ibid, 4.

movement would continue to be trampled on and suffer more defeats in the future, but that in the end their victory would be inevitable.

In stark contrast with his reasons why South Korea had failed to become a democracy, all of Kim's arguments for why South Korea would become a democracy in the future rested on Korean nationalism and Christianity. Here, Kim's perspective on Korean democracy showcased how Kim believed that in the end, only the Korean people could and would restore democracy to South Korea. Whereas the problems that arose in the early Korean republics were in part the fault of the Americans, Kim believed Korean resolve and Christianity would resolve these problems.

Kim then introduced the relationship between human rights and Christianity for the next part of his speech. According to Kim, while democratic sprit and principles had been long inherent in Korean culture, history and tradition, it was Christianity that "provided them with concrete expression,"[217] and used the introduction of Catholic ideas such as marriage equality in the 1800s as an example. Somewhat surprisingly, Kim argued though that the "greatest influence on the Korean peoples' desire for human rights and democracy has been the Protestant Church,"[218] as he stated that it helped defend the principle of human dignity against Communist theory.

During the Park and Chun administration, the Christian Church was a bulwark of the human rights struggle in Korea. Kim cited how it "opposed the 1972 declaration of the Yushin dictatorship of Park Chung Hee. It has since supported the advocates of human rights under persecution and, through prayer meetings, helped boost their morale."[219] Kim goes further when he insisted that Christians had bared the brunt of the struggle to protect

[217] Ibid, 4.
[218] Ibid, 5.
[219] Ibid, 5.

workers' rights and those Christian organizations were the nucleus of the student democratic protest movement.[220] He noted that over 100 clergymen and women had been imprisoned as a result of their social activism.[221]

Later in his speech, Kim asserted that it was "impossible to discuss human rights and democratic movements in Korea without fully appreciating the role of Christianity"[222] and then contended that Christianity taught its adherent to support the dignity of all mankind by following Christ's teachings to help the poor, the downtrodden and the oppressed. Kim then goes deeper into Christian theology when he asserted that Christianity "rejects subsuming the individual to the collective. The idea that God is present in each individual not only supports social concepts of equality, it enshrines each individual with importance…It is because of Christianity's dual emphasis on the collective and the individual that Korean Christians have chosen to fight on behalf of the oppressed and the underprivileged."[223] Finally, Christianity's nature of martyrs gave great strength to Christians who were fighting for human rights and democracy and Kim claimed that it would be the blood of the heroic martyrs who would form the seeds of not only the South Korean church but also that of a secular society.

Christianity's potential as an instrument for social justice is thoroughly explored in this part of the speech. Kim saw Christianity as a force that not only gave language to Korean democratic traditions but also served as a beacon of hope for pro-democracy activists to rally around. The church, Kim attested, supported social justice for Koreans because Christians should follow the lifestyle of Christ, who identified God with even the lowliest of men, the downtrodden. Christianity built empathy and social equality by

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[220] Ibid, 5.
[221] Ibid, 5.
[222] Ibid, 5.
[223] Ibid, 5.

promoting the concept that "God is in every individual," which "enshrines each individual with importance." Kim's argument reveals just how much his left wing, human rights oriented political views originated from his interpretation of Christianity and social justice. However, he also proved his opponents who label him a Communist sympathizer wrong when he argued "Christianity has helped the Korean people transcend the collective emphasis of Marxism"[224] and made the case that Christianity balanced out collectivism and individualism, an important balance needed to not only support the marginalized in Korean society but also promote democratic principles and values.

Kim's final topic was where the United States belonged regarding human rights and democracy in Korea. He began by celebrating the passing of the centennial of Korean-American relations and praised the United States, as he stated how Koreans "have been impressed by your democratic system, moved by your religious faith, and gratified by your liberation of Korea from Japanese rule and your sacrifice during the Korean war."[225] He made it clear that the United States remains a role model that South Korea attempted to emulate and was thankful for all the positive contributions the United States had made on Korean history and society.

Yet Kim was also critical of America; he testified that the trust and gratitude of the Korean people had been shaken by contradictions in America's democratic principles and its foreign policy. For example, he noted how "in return for Park Chung Hee's agreeing to send Korea troops to Vietnam…The United States…allowed Park to run for a third term"[226] and lambasted the US for choosing to look the other way when Park introduced the Yushin system in 1972. Park hoped that Korean support for South Vietnam would not only make

[224] Ibid, 5.
[225] Ibid, 6.
[226] Ibid, 6.

the United States recognized Korea's important as a geopolitical ally, but also ensure South Korea's status as a "indispensable partner of the United States in its military campaign [and] deter the patron-state from meddling in South Korean domestic politics on the side of the opposition."[227] By maintaining a significant South Korean contingent to support South Vietnam, Park ensured American acquiescence for his regime. Kim Dae Jung blasted the willingness of the United States to trade its support for democracy and human rights in South Korea in exchange for military and political support against Communism. He then condemned the United States for cautiously supporting democracy in South Korea after Park was assassinated and reversing course when Chun overthrew the government.[228] Finally, he claimed that President Reagan erred when he invited Chun to be one of his first state guests in 1981.[229]

Despite his strong criticism of American hypocrisy, Kim denounced anti-Americanism in South Korea, as he claimed that he did not support the "burning of the American Culture Centers in Pusan and Kwangju and the American flag on at least two college campuses."[230] However, he understood their sense of betrayal by the United States and implored Americans to understand that this hatred stemmed not from Anti-Americanism but rather from America's support of Chun Doo Hwan. Kim attacked the reasoning behind US support for Chun, as he argued that it is wrong to enable dictatorship in exchange for stability. Kim advocated ending US support for Chun by stating that South Korea would be more stable when its government "honors human rights, freedom of the

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[227] Kim, Byung-Kook. *The Park Chung Hee Era: The Transformation of South Korea*. Harvard University Press, 2011, 406.
[228] Christianity, Human Rights and Democracy in Korea, March 30, 1983, Box 4, Folder 16, Rethinking Human Rights Symposium Records, 6.
[229] Ibid, 6.
[230] Ibid, 6.

press, and basic political rights,"[231] as he quoted British General Bernard Montgomery to make the point that South Koreans needed a motivation to defend themselves from the threat of Communism and that there was no better motivator than the peoples' defense of civil and political rights.

In his final remarks, Kim made it clear that the United States does not need to save Korea. In Kim's own words, he said, "We are not asking the United States to fight in our stead or directly to interfere with the Chun Doo Hwan dictatorship. We only want the United States to provide us moral support as a democratic ally."[232] He highlighted the similarity of American and Korean traditions, as said that both were based on respect for human dignity and that the best way for the United States to build stability and security in the region was to end their experiment of "security without human rights and democracy as it is a political alchemy that has never worked."[233] He implored Americans to make this contribution to the struggle for human rights and democracy in South Korea, and asserted that Koreans would do the rest.

Exploring US-Korean relations is the most politically contentious yet fascinating aspect of Kim's entire speech. Kim described the deteriorating human rights situation in Korea and praised Christianity's role in the democracy movement. He also explored American contributions and hindrances to the growth of Korean democracy in the final pages of his speech. Kim navigated and investigated the complexity of US-Korean relations, as he noted how America served as both an inspiring role model to Korea through its introduction of Christianity and democracy and a complacent accomplice to totalitarianism and militarism in Korean politics. Kim was grateful for American support against Japanese

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[231] Ibid, 6.
[232] Ibid, 7.
[233] Ibid, 7.

imperialism and Communism expansionism, but decried how hypocritical and self-serving the United States government had been by looking the other way during the reign of the military regimes. He surprisingly even criticized Reagan for inviting Chun to his inauguration, an act that benefited Kim as it saved him from more time in prison, on the basis that while it personally benefited Kim, it did so at the expense of the Korean democracy movement as Reagan's invitation signaled American acceptance of Chun's legitimacy in South Korea.

However, labeling Kim Dae Jung as an anti-American would be an incorrect assertion, as Kim made it clear that while he understood anti-American sentiment in Korea, he did not condone it. He instead implored Americans to understand anti-American sentiments and acknowledge that this was how Koreans vented their frustrations towards the Chun regime and that Koreans were infuriated not at the American people but rather at how the US government continued to support Chun against the wishes of the Korean people. Kim understood better than most at the time just how significantly damaging American failure to oppose Chun's coup was to US-Korean relations, as South Korean allegations of US approval of the Kwangju Massacre laid the groundwork for anti-American sentiment in modern day South Korea.[234]

Kim then addressed the security dilemma that US foreign policy makers had found themselves in since the end of the Korean War in 1953. America's anti-Communist containment strategy emphasized on stopping the expansion of Communism, but this came at the expense of the growth of human rights and democracy in countries such as South Korea. Kim challenged the mainstream US foreign policy assertion that a dictatorship provided more stability than a democracy against communism by arguing that soldiers and

[234] Lee, Samsung. "Kwangju and America in Perspective." *Asian Perspective* 12, no. 2 (1988): 99.

citizens can only be motivated to fight against the tyranny of Communism if they were inspired to fight and protect their sacred human rights and democracy. As Kim ended his speech, he asked Americans not to directly intervene in South Korean affairs but rather to show their moral support for democracy and end their tacit approval of authoritarianism to prevent the spread of Communism.

The Paradox of Emory

Surprisingly, Kim's speech at Emory would fade away into relative obscurity in both US and Korean narratives despite Kim's eventual rise to the Presidency in 1997. However, "Christianity, Democracy and Human Rights in Korea" offers an insightful analysis of the paradox of US-Korea relations as well as the role of Christianity and Korean traditions in South Korea's democracy movement. Kim explored the role of how Korea's cultural traits enabled democratic potential by advocating for respect of human dignity and fairness, potential that Kim believed Christianity unlocked by allowing Koreans an instrument to express hidden democratic traits while balancing out collectivism and individualism in Korean society. Kim believed that America's introduction of Christianity helped enable the advancement of social justice in Korea and prevented Marxism from overrunning the entire Korean peninsula.

However, Kim also encouraged the United States to rethink its relationship with South Korea. He pointed out the paradox of America as a beacon of democracy when it gave the power-hungry Rhee Syngman control of the infant Korean republic. He attacked the hypocrisy of the United States for trying to serve as a role model of South Korea for freedom and human rights when it turned a blind eye to the excesses of the Park and Chun military regimes. Kim noted the paradoxical policies of a country that saved him from

execution but allowed Chun to slaughter hundreds at Kwangju. Kim in his speech spoke to his audience, as he asked them to end American support of the South Korean military government and challenged them to live up to the ideals espoused in American traditions. Ultimately, Kim's speech at Emory is fascinating not only because it explores the relationship of South Korea, America and Emory from a Korean perspective, but also because it is applicable, even today, to the complex relationship America has with many of its authoritarian allies.

Kim Dae Jung in America

Kim's visit to Emory and his subsequent speech "Christianity, Democracy and Human Rights in Korea" was a resounding success. What Kim had intended to be a cordial visit to thank Laney and Carter had turned into one of his greatest triumphs during his exile. Within the span of a month, he had started a lifelong friendship with Laney, strengthened his relationship with President Carter and cemented his standing internationally as a leader of the Korean pro-democracy movement. Afterwards, Kim followed up his efforts to end authoritarianism in South Korea. From 1983 to 1985, Kim relentlessly rallied his American sympathizers, gave speeches on human rights in Korea and wrote letters to prominent American political leaders that asked for the US to stop its support of military rule in South Korea. He would find each of his attacks against Chun's government blocked and parried by the Reagan Administration and by agents of Chun's regime. Despite a promising start, Kim's activism in America failed to influence a change in US foreign policy towards South Korea.

Kim Dae Jung's belief that activism abroad would achieve change in Korea was not without historical precedent. While the concept of an exiled Korean activist lobbying American politicians may seem puzzling to modern audiences, Kim Dae Jung's actions were a mere continuation of what his Korean predecessors had done nearly 80 years before his arrival. During the late Joseon Dynasty, Koreans found themselves increasingly at the mercy of their neighbors. Korean independence activists, unable to defeat imperialism at home, fled abroad. Many arrived in America, where they were inspired by Wilsonian ideas of democracy and self-determination and actively sought American aid in achieving Korean independence.[235] Much of the rhetoric espoused by Korean Independence activists during their time in the United States tried to connect the common ideals of the Korean

[235] Kim, Richard S. *The Quest for Statehood: Korean Immigrant Nationalism and U.S. Sovereignty, 1905-1945*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011, 52.

government-in-exile and those of the American Revolutionaries during the American War of Independence in a bid to garner American sympathy.[236] Some such as Rhee Syngman, who resided in the United States during this time, claimed that the aims and aspirations of the Korean people were identical to those of the American nation."[237]

Korean activists in America understood that international support, especially from America, would be crucial in securing Korean independence.[238] One of their primary efforts focused on influencing American public opinion on topics such as Japanese brutality towards the Korean people and the need for Korean independence.[239] Korean activists often emphasized how Americans were "champions of justice and liberty" and that the American people had a "moral obligation to aid Korea in its emergent role as a global leader."[240] There was a tendency amongst Korean activists to glorify American values and they focused heavily on cherished American values such as democracy and Christianity. For example, the Korean Congress at Philadelphia wrote "An Appeal to America," which requested American support and sympathy for Korean independence because Koreans knew "[Americans] love justice; you also fought for liberty and democracy, and you stand for Christianity and humanity. Our cause is a just one before the laws of God and man."[241]

There were many other significant parallels between the Korean independence movement in exile and the Korean pro-democracy movement in exile. Just as Christians such as Kim Dae Jung often spearheaded the Korean pro-democracy movement, Korean Christians were disproportionately represented in the Korean independence movement. One such example can be found in the March First Movement. Statistically, "Sixteen of the 33

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[236] Ibid, 54.
[237] Ibid, 54.
[238] Ibid, 56.
[239] Ibid, 57.
[240] Ibid, 56.
[241] Ibid, 56.

signers of the Korean Declaration of Independence were Christians, many of them Protestant pastors…a disproportionately large number of Korean Christians were arrested in the Japanese suppression of the protests…more than 17 percent of those arrested were Korean Protestants, though they comprised only 1 percent of the total Korean population in 1919."[242]

Democratic and Christian parallels were not the only similarities between the two exile movements in America. Their methods to achieve their aims were surprisingly similar as well. Korean independence activists in Manchuria, Siberia and China waged an insurgency against the Japanese military; they utilized guerilla tactics and tried to oust the Japanese militarily from Korea.[243] In stark contrast, the Korean exile movements in America relied heavily on diplomacy. One pro-independence organization, the "League of the Friends of Korea," proclaimed its goals to be "To inform American public of the true conditions in the Far East, to extend sympathy and encouragement to the oppressed people of Korea, to use its moral influence to prevent the recurrence of cruel treatment to which Koreans had been subjected, to secure religious liberty for Korean Christians."[244] Korean activists and their sympathetic allies routinely documented cases of Japanese brutality towards Koreans and sought to galvanize American opinion to support their cause.[245]

Korean independence activists in America often considered their time in America as temporary, as the "colonization of Korea left Koreans abroad without a state or nation."[246] While Kim Dae Jung was not in as severe of a predicament as his predecessors in America, he too was in a sense unable to truly call South Korea his home due to significant

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[242] Ibid, 57.
[243] Ibid, 10.
[244] Ibid, 60.
[245] Ibid, 61.
[246] Ibid, 7.

government persecution. Kim likely assumed like those who came before him that by lobbying American politicians and waging a publicity campaign against Chun's reputation in America, he would convince the United States to pursue the national interests of South Korea and "liberate" Korea from tyranny.[247] He came to America with the hopes that his stay was temporary, and that once his homeland was liberated he could return home a hero.

Unfortunately for Kim, he like those who came before him had grossly underestimated how difficult it would be to channel American sympathy towards South Koreans into actual change in government policy. While Kim had access to far more resources, publicity and sympathetic connections than the Korean independence movement in America ever did, the Korean American community was sharply divided on whether to support or oppose the pro-democracy movement. Prior to the 1970s, there was no exile movement within Korean America. However Park Chung Hee's implementation of the repressive and authoritarian Yushin Constitution sparked greater dissident abroad as Korean Americans began to rally against the military junta.[248]

In response to the growth of the Korean pro-democracy exile movement in the United States, the military government began to actively harass and intimidate the Korean American community. During the 1970s, KCIA Agents often "directly or indirectly threatened Koreans or Korean-Americans using family relations, business ties and manipulation of their travel documents."[249] By the 1980s, Chun's government had adopted more covert tactics, as they often utilized South Korean consular officials to prevent Korean

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[247] Ibid, 9.
[248] Lee, Shin-Bom. "South Korea: Dissent from Abroad." *Third World Quartlery, Vol 9, no. 1 (1987): 140.*
[249] Ibid, 140.

businesses from placing ads on anti-Chun newspapers, which financially crippled Korean media outlets that refused to support the South Korean military regime.[250]

Despite the decade of experience KCIA agents had in suppressing dissidents, they were unprepared for Kim Dae Jung. Kim's arrival and subsequent activities in the United States energized the Korean American community to support the pro-democracy movement. More importantly, Kim's overt anti-Chun activism and his willingness to disregard all the conditions that Chun, Reagan and Kim had agreed to secure his exile in America greatly damaged Chun and Reagan's relationship. While Kim likely had no idea just how difficult Chun's relationship with Reagan was, he certainly knew that when he violated the terms of his release, he would greatly disrupt US-South Korean relations.

When Kim Dae Jung was released, he had agreed to several key conditions, all of which he blatantly violated. Kim agreed that once he arrived in America, he would not get involved in politics again. Kim made it clear to South Korean and US officials that he would "neither engage in political matters at home or abroad and that he would not take any action harmful to the state's national security and political stability."[251] Chun and Reagan had negotiated to release Kim on the assumption that Kim's release with benefit both of them and cause either of them very little trouble.

Once Kim would be released, Chun would portray himself as a benevolent ruler who took humanitarian concerns of dissidents seriously, which strengthened his public image as even US critics such as Senator Ted Kennedy thanked him for releasing Kim.[252] Chun desperately required international support and so aligned himself with Reagan on the assumption that this would legitimize his rule in the eyes of South Koreans. This may seem

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[250] Ibid, 141.
[251] Lee, Chae-Jin, *Reagan Faces Korea: Alliance Politics and Quiet Diplomacy*. New York City: Springer International Publishing, 2019, 106-107.
[252] Ibid, 107-109.

puzzling, given the fact that US-South Korean relations reached a nadir during the early 1980s. It cannot be denied that public image of the United States in Korea had greatly suffered from American inaction during the Kwangju Massacre, which laid the foundations of mainstream anti-Americanism in South Korea, as many Koreans had "expected the US would and should actively intervene to stop the armed confrontation."[253] Instead, American forces in Korea did not hinder the South Korean military despite having nominal control over them.[254] Many South Koreans, especially the activist youth of the 1980s, were disillusioned by American inaction and suspected the US propped up authoritarian governments for its own selfish interests.[255]

Although anti-Americanism was slowly and steadily rising in America, the vast majority of South Koreans still viewed the Americans positively. A 1982 poll by *Tonga ilbo* showed that the "country most liked by Koreans was the United States (61.6%) and that 58.1% rated South Korea-US relations as satisfactory."[256] The poll indicated that despite widespread despair over American inaction at Kwangju in 1980, South Koreans still viewed America as a friendly nation. Most South Koreans had a "genuine feeling of warmth towards the US for supporting South Korea with the sacrifice of thousands of young men and millions of dollars of aid" and many South Koreans viewed the United States not only as just a friend but also as a "savior of their nation, first from Japanese colonial rule and then from communist aggression."[257] This both explained why Chun crucially needed Reagan to legitimize his rule and why Kim actively campaigned in America, as almost all South Koreans

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[253] Shin, Gi-Wook. "South Korean Anti-Americanism: A Comparative Perspective." *Asian Survey* 36, no. 8 (1996): 793.
[254] Lee, Dong Sun. "Democratization and the US—South Korean Alliance." *Journal of East Asian Studies* 7, no. 3 (2007): 477.
[255] Ibid, 477.
[256] Shin, Gi-Wook. "South Korean Anti-Americanism: A Comparative Perspective." *Asian Survey* 36, no. 8 (1996): 793.
[257] Ibid, 793.

universally viewed the United States as their nation's greatest ally. Whoever the US publicly supported in the conflict between the military government and the democracy movement would gain the upper hand in the struggle.

For Reagan, the release of Kim Dae Jung meant a coup in domestic perceptions of his foreign policy. He wanted to show how his quiet diplomacy, a balance of Nixon's *realpolitik* pragmatism and Carter's vocal moralism, was the middle path that should guide American foreign policy. He would take away the heartless elements of Nixon's foreign policy and the inaction of Carter's, which would strengthen his own standing as a strong and compassionate leader. Reagan was praised for his role in Kim's release, with both conservative papers such as the *Wall Street Journal* and liberal papers such as the *New York Times* acknowledging his efforts.[258]

Despite Kim's claims that he would honor his commitment to not get engaged in politics again, Kim disregarded the terms of his release almost immediately after he landed in America.[259] The same day that Kim arrived in America, he gave his arrival speech, which thanked President Reagan and Senator Kennedy for their efforts to secure his release and then proceeded to demand the release of "all democratic patriots in prison" in South Korea.[260] The day after his arrival, he held interviews with media agencies such as the *New York Times, USA Today,* Cable News Network and several others, in which he claimed to them that most South Koreans felt betrayed by the United States and then stated, "America has helped dictatorial regimes in the name of anti-communism, security and economic rehabilitation."[261]

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[258] Lee, Chae-Jin, *Reagan Faces Korea: Alliance Politics and Quiet Diplomacy*. New York City: Springer International Publishing, 2019, 108.
[259] Ibid, 109.
[260] Ibid, 108.
[261] Ibid, 109.

Chun had released Kim on the assumption that the Reagan administration would restrain Kim from any potential engagement in political activism. The South Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs lodged a protest against Kim's overt political activism, as they cited to the Reagan Administration how Kim had reneged on his written commitment not to be politically active. Additionally, they complained that Kim had turned the main reason for his stay in America, medical treatment, into political activism.[262] However, because Kim was in America, Reagan was both unwilling and unable to silence Kim and violate his right to free speech, which in turn weakened the trust that Chun had for Reagan and disrupted their overall fragile relationship.[263]

Even before the first summit Reagan-Chun, many members of the Reagan administration expressed disdain and distrust towards the South Korean President. Some such as Reagan's Secretary of State Alexander Haig, viewed Chun positively, as he called him someone who was "prepared to consider American advice when it was offered privately" and thought that he enjoyed enough support from the South Korean military, bureaucracy and business community to rule effectively.[264] However, it is important to note that Haig was a veteran of both the Korean and Vietnam Wars.[265] It is likely he was influenced by his anti-Communist views as well as the fact that Chun had served in Vietnam as well.[266]

Other members of the Reagan Administration however were not as happy with Chun. Many junior officials of the Reagan Administration had shared Ambassador Gleysteen's reservations about Chun. Staff member of the National Security Council Donald Gregg recalled how "The White House, for its part, had a low opinion of the draconian

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[262] Ibid, 110.
[263] Ibid, 110.
[264] Ibid, 27.
[265] Ibid, 33.
[266] Ibid, 27.

Chun. Had he not held Kim's life in his hands, he would not have been invited to the White House. I was thus involved in an effort to downplay Chun's visit in every way possible. Chun's staff sought a state dinner and was given only a lunch. Chun's time in Washington was limited, as were the number of high-ranking officials with whom he met officially."[267] Because of the White House's negative attitudes towards Chun, it is likely that they looked the other way and deliberately did not make any significant efforts to impede Kim.

Because of the Reagan Administration's inability and unwillingness to silence Kim, Chun's government kept an active eye as Kim Dae Jung began his tours around the United States to rally support from the Korean American community. Eventually, they even began to actively hinder his efforts. For example, in 1984, Kim Dae Jung gave a speech at Los Angeles' Koreatown. He attracted 4,000 people, which at that time was the largest gathering in LA Koreatown's history.[268] However, South Korean government officials exerted enough pressure on Korean American newspapers that the papers did not print Kim's photograph and did not report his speech on the front pages of their newspapers.[269] Despite their efforts to suppress Kim's activities, Kim's ability to draw massive crowds reflected the popular support he achieved from the Korean American community.

Additionally, Chun kept a constant eye on Kim and recognized the magnitude of the threat he posed to the military government. The South Korean Ministry of Foreign Affairs began to "compile data on every minute detail of Kim's activities and speeches and paid close attention to Kim's contacts with members of the Reagan Administration."[270] Chun made repeated efforts to stop Kim's campaign in America, as he invested more resources

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[267] Ibid, 34-35.
[268] Lee, Shin-Bom. "South Korea: Dissent from Abroad." *Third World Quartlery, Vol 9, no. 1 (1987):* 141.
[269] Ibid, 141.
[270] Lee, Chae-Jin, *Reagan Faces Korea: Alliance Politics and Quiet Diplomacy*. New York City: Springer International Publishing, 2019, 114.

and manpower to hinder Kim with no success.[271] Kim successfully mobilized the Korean American community and his stay encouraged Korean Americans to raise funds for his cause and lobby Congress.[272] There is no doubt that Chun saw Kim as a significant threat to the stability of the military government.

To counter Kim's campaign, Chun began to change his tactics to deal with dissident from abroad. Kim began to find himself constantly outmaneuvered by Chun, as his actions in America ceased to have almost any significant consequences against the military government. The military government began to actively censor his activities. South Korean officials worked to ensure that South Korean press reported none of Kim's efforts and attempted to bar South Korean correspondents from interviewing him.[273] Chun's media blackout struck Kim's Achilles heel, as Kim Dae Jung's greatest strength was his ability to harness publicity. For example, his 1971 Presidential campaign united the South Korean opposition parties and catapulted him as a national hero, while his imprisonment in 1980 helped spark the Kwangju Uprising against Chun's coup. Even his kidnapping in 1973 was more influential than his time campaigning in America, because word of his kidnapping spread and generated massive sympathy for him both within Korea and abroad.

This is not to downplay the energy that Kim created in America, as his work during his two years in exile brought greater American attention to Korea's plight. Besides Emory, Kim also gave speeches in a dozen other universities in 1983. He attended religious, academic and civic gatherings and spoke about both the Korean pro-democracy movement and the US's role in South Korea.[274] Kim established the Asia-Pacific Peace Foundation and

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[271] Lee, Shin-Bom. "South Korea: Dissent from Abroad." *Third World Quartlery, Vol 9, no. 1 (1987):* 143.
[272] Ibid, 143.
[273] Lee, Chae-Jin, *Reagan Faces Korea: Alliance Politics and Quiet Diplomacy*. New York City: Springer International Publishing, 2019, 117-118.
[274] Ibid, 112-113.

the Korean Institute for Human Rights to organize pro-democracy support across the United States and associated himself with numerous other existing organizations that promoted the democratization of South Korea.[275] He raised funds for these organizations, held auctions to sell 160 pieces of his and his wife's calligraphy in New York and Los Angeles, collected fees from his college speeches and public appearances and brought more attention to the democracy movement in Korea.[276]

Kim also staged repeated demonstrations against Chun. When future Korean President Kim Young Sam began a 23-day hunger strike in May 1983 with demands that Chun protect human rights and civil liberties, Kim Dae Jung came to his aid.[277] This is surprising because the two Kims were rivals and contenders for the leadership of the pro-democracy movement. While they both supported each other against Chun whom they viewed as a common foe, they both desired the presidency. The rivalry of the two had gone back as far as 1971, when the more left-leaning Kim Dae Jung defeated the opposition's establishment backed Kim Young Sam to become the 1971 presidential candidate of the pro-democracy camp.[278] Although some argued that Kim Dae Jung shouldn't help his rival, he overruled them and supported his rival's strike, setting up a special committee for solidarity with Kim Young Sam in America.[279] On June 4th, Kim hung a large placard stating "Restart Democracy in S. Korea" around his neck and marched to the South Korean Embassy, the Department of State and the White House.[280] On June 9th, he wrote an op-ed in the *New York Times*, in which he claimed that Kim Young Sam was in a state of

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[275] Ibid, 114.
[276] Ibid, 114.
[277] Ibid, 115.
[278] Kim, Dae Jung, *Conscience in Action: The Autobiography of Kim Dae Jung*. Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, 119-121.
[279] Lee, Chae-Jin, *Reagan Faces Korea: Alliance Politics and Quiet Diplomacy*. New York City: Springer International Publishing, 2019, 115.
[280] Ibid, 115.

unconsciousness and on the verge of death.[281] He then proceeded to lambast "quiet diplomacy" and asked for overt American statements on the restoration of democracy in Korea.[282] In his article, Kim repeated similar arguments that he made in his speech at Emory. Kim asked the United States to "make clear its support for the restoration of democracy in South Korea" and repeated how democracy offered more stability than dictatorship, because "without democracy there is neither lasting security nor stability."[283]

However, despite the significant publicity Kim had raised for his cause, he ultimately failed to change the Reagan Administration's policy on South Korea. This was not surprising, as American policymakers throughout the Cold War repeatedly showed their willingness to trade democracy in South Korea in exchange for security.[284] Even Ambassador Gleysteen, who had strongly advocated for Kim's life in 1980, warned about the dangers of "trying to dump Chun" as he feared it would further destabilize the fragile situation in South Korea in the days after Chun's coup.[285] While both the White House and State Department valued human rights in South Korea and would push South Korean dictators for leniency towards dissidents, they were unwilling to risk their security interests in South Korea.[286] Furthermore, America in 1980 was still reeling from its humiliating loss of face during the Iran Hostage Crisis. The United States was insecure about its position as a superpower and had not yet realized its growing technological, economic and military superiority over its

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[281] Kim, Dae Jung, "Kim's Hunger Strike. " *The New York Times*, 9 June. 1983, https://www.nytimes.com/1983/06/09/opinion/kim-s-hunger-strike.html
[282] Ibid.
[283] Ibid.
[284] Lee, Dong Sun. "Democratization and the US—South Korean Alliance." *Journal of East Asian Studies* 7, no. 3 (2007): 477.
[285] Yeo, Andrew. "Signaling Democracy: Patron-Client Relations and Democratization in South Korea and Poland." *Journal of East Asian Studies* 6, no. 2 (2006): 269.
[286] Ibid, 269.

rival, the Soviet Union.[287] All these factors encouraged both the Carter and later Reagan Administrations to maintain their support for Chun albeit begrudgingly.

Reagan carefully avoided meeting Kim, as he did not want to offend Chun, who was anxious about Kim's efforts to contact Reagan. Kim had reached out to Reagan as early as January 3rd, 1983, a mere ten days after Kim had arrived in America. In his letter to President Reagan, Kim thanked him, as he claimed "your expeditious and effective efforts even before your inauguration played a crucial role in rescuing me from death" and also noted Reagan's efforts to release him.[288] Kim proposed that Reagan and Kim meet each other to exchange their views on Korea, but was told that Reagan was too busy to meet Kim.[289]

Despite Reagan's attempts to distance himself from Kim, he did allow sub-cabinet level officials to contact Kim and meet with him in a low-profile fashion.[290] Numerous White House and State Department officials such as Thomas Shoesmith, Elliot Abrams and David Lambertson met with Kim, with the last of the three so impressed by Kim that he felt it was a mistake for his superiors to avoid Kim and called Kim a "man of great dignity and gravitas" in his recollections.[291] This was exactly what Chun was afraid of, as he feared that if Kim met with Reagan, Kim would criticize Chun's leadership and undermine his relationship with President Reagan.[292] Chun's Foreign Minister Lee Bum Suk went as far as to protest Kim's open meetings with Shoesmith and Abrams to US Ambassador to Korea Richard Walker.[293]

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[287] Ibid, 274.
[288] Lee, Chae-Jin, *Reagan Faces Korea: Alliance Politics and Quiet Diplomacy*. New York City: Springer International Publishing, 2019, 110.
[289] Ibid, 110.
[290] Ibid, 117.
[291] Ibid, 117.
[292] Ibid, 118.
[293] Ibid, 118.

Unfortunately for Kim, part of why he was incapable of achieving any significant foreign policy change was because the vast majority of his political connections in America were with members of the Democratic Party. Kim's strongest allies in America included President Carter, former Secretary of State Edmund Muskie and Senator Ted Kennedy, all of who were Democrats.[294] Kim had made numerous appeals, both publicly and privately, to President Reagan for a meeting. Kim's accusations that Reagan did not care about human rights in South Korea allowed the Democratic Party to take advantage of Kim's activism in America to argue that the Reagan Administration supported dictatorships.[295] While the Reagan Administration expressed great patience with Kim's accusations, he had become a political liability, as almost all of Kim's allies from the US Congress were members of the Democratic Party.[296] Kim's associations with the Democratic Party ensured that President Reagan would never abandon Chun or meet with Kim. The primary political purpose for Kim's exile in America, mainly to convince President Reagan to support democracy in South Korea and stop supporting Chun's dictatorship, was simply not accomplishable.

Furthermore, Chun's media blackout on Kim's activities had finally accomplished what Park Chung Hee could not. Chun could not defeat Kim in America, as Kim had greatly harmed Chun's public image and painted him as a despot in the eyes of many Americans. Chun's government was greatly irritated by Kim's activism as it greatly damaged the government's international reputation. Realizing this, Chun adopted a defensive strategy and initiated damage control. Chun had his agents actively monitor Kim so that he would never meet high-ranking officials of the Reagan Administration. Furthermore, he prevented South Koreans from hearing about his activism in Korea. When Chun released Kim, he had

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[294] Ibid, 110-111.
[295] Ibid, 118.
[296] Ibid, 117-118.

assumed that Kim would accept the terms of the release, but when Kim had broken those terms, Chun masterfully initiated damage control and finally checked Kim's efforts.

Kim himself realized the futility of his exile in America. Although he continued to taint Chun's image, he had not garnered enough momentum to achieve any significant political changes. More importantly for Kim, he was steadily losing ground to his rival Kim Young Sam, who in Kim Dae Jung's absence had become the de facto leader of the Korean opposition.[297] Kim Dae Jung struggled to lead his supporters from abroad and Chun's censorship of his activities made the South Korean public largely unaware of what he had accomplished for the movement.[298] Kim assumed that if he returned, he would be imprisoned again. However, he believed that in addition to reinvigorating his own prestige and status amongst the movement, his return would encourage Koreans and "augment [their] courage. They will fight for my release."[299]

Kim finalized his decision around the autumn of 1984, as he met with US State Department officials and expressed his desire to return back to South Korea. He wrote to Secretary of State George Shultz that he felt "a moral obligation to rejoin my people in their struggle for these goals. The time has come, I believe, for me to share with them the hardship and suffering of the battle for the restoration of democracy."[300] Additionally, South Korea's 1985 Legislative Elections were nearing, and Kim likely assumed that his support could help boast Kim Young Sam, with whom he led one of South Korea's main opposition parties, the New Korea and Democratic Party. Kim had hoped to time his return to coincide with the campaign season.

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297 Ibid, 123.
298 Ibid, 123.
299 Ungar, Sanford J. "A Korean Exile's Long Journey Home. " *The New York Times*, 23 Dec. 1984, https://www.nytimes.com/1984/12/23/magazine/a-korean-exile-s-long-journey-home.html.
300 Lee, Chae-Jin, *Reagan Faces Korea: Alliance Politics and Quiet Diplomacy*. New York City: Springer International Publishing, 2019, 119.

Although Kim had optimistically assumed that he could return home and lead the pro-democracy movement, Chun's government hinted its intention to jail Kim should he return to South Korea because he had violated the agreement of his release to not get engaged in politics abroad.[301] Meanwhile, the United States Government told Kim that while the US supported Korea transitioning towards democracy, it was not in a position to guarantee or protect his safe return to South Korea.[302]

While this prospect did not discourage Kim, there was widespread concern amongst Kim's supporters and allies in America that he would be harmed when he tried to return home. Many within the United States compared his planned return with that of Beigno Aquino's. Aquino was another human rights activist and opposition politician from the Philippines who like Kim was exiled to the United States for medical reasons.[303] Kim and Beigno had met once previously, on March 10th, 1983, when they both exchanged strategies and stories of their political activism.[304] They never met again, because on August 21st, 1983, Aquino returned home and was immediately assassinated after he stepped off his plane.[305]

Aquino's assassination was certainly on Kim's mind. He publicly said that he "hoped not be another Aquino case" and did not want a fate similar to his.[306] Kim did not assume that he would be killed however, as he believed that the South Korean government "would [not] be so stupid" as to publicly murder him.[307] He made his decision to return more than a year after Aquino had been assassinated, and was resolved to go back home regardless of his

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[301] Ibid, 120.
[302] Ibid, 121.
[303] Ungar, Sanford J. "A Korean Exile's Long Journey Home. " *The New York Times*, 23 Dec. 1984, https://www.nytimes.com/1984/12/23/magazine/a-korean-exile-s-long-journey-home.html.
[304] Ibid.
[305] Ibid.
[306] McMillan, Penelope. "Leading S. Korea Dissident Discloses Plan to End Exile: Kim Dae Jung Gets Support of Sen. Cranston." *Los Angeles Times*, 19 Jan. 1985, https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1985-01-19-me-8112-story.html.
[307] Ibid.

fate. In his own autobiography, Kim stressed how he did not know what would happen to him, but went back home under the conviction that "Democracy is the only way to save our country" and how he did not want to "act cowardly" by refusing to return.[308]

In preparation for his return home, Kim and his allies garnered political support to ensure that he would not be killed. More than 70 US Congressmen and Senators asked the South Korean government to ensure Kim's safety as Kim prepared to return home.[309] Meanwhile, Kim himself brought thousands of attendees to his farewell rallies. The most significant of these was the December 2nd, 1984 Farewell at Madison Square Garden, which was organized by the Ad Hoc Committee for the Safe Return of Kim Dae Jung and included speakers such as James T. Laney.[310] Laney recalled how Kim had invited him to the ceremony, and only during Kim's rally did he hear Kim speak Korean for the first time.[311] He was greatly impressed by Kim's charismatic leadership, calling him animated and energetic.[312] Laney reflected how looking back it was clear why Chun and Park had gone such significant lengths to harass Kim.[313] Laney happily recalled how the Farewell at Madison Garden was a "marvelous sendoff."[314]

With his farewells complete, Kim finished his business in the United States and boarded a plane on February 6th, 1985 at the National Airport in Washington to return home.[315] His flight generated significant concern amongst Chun and Reagan, who both

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308 Kim, Dae Jung, *Conscience in Action: The Autobiography of Kim Dae Jung*. Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, 312-313.
309 McMillan, Penelope. "Leading S. Korea Dissident Discloses Plan to End Exile: Kim Dae Jung Gets Support of Sen. Cranston." *Los Angeles Times*, 19 Jan. 1985, https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1985-01-19-me-8112-story.html.
310 Lee, Chae-Jin, *Reagan Faces Korea: Alliance Politics and Quiet Diplomacy*. New York City: Springer International Publishing, 2019, 123.
311 Author's interview *with Laney James T*. 16 Oct. 2020.
312 Ibid.
313 Ibid.
314 Ibid.
315 Lee, Chae-Jin, *Reagan Faces Korea: Alliance Politics and Quiet Diplomacy*. New York City: Springer International Publishing, 2019, 131.

agreed that if Kim were harmed in any way, both governments would be blamed for the ensuing public relations crisis.[316] Two US Congressmen, Representatives Feighan and Foglietta, traveled with Kim to act as delegates from the US government while another 35 other escorts traveled with Kim to protect him from suffering Benigno Aquino's fate.[317]

Kim landed on February 8th, 1985 at 11:40 AM, returning to the homeland he had yearned for.[318] Unfortunately for Kim, what was intended to be a peaceful, relatively quiet arrival almost immediately fell apart. Kim was in theory suppose to greet his supporters and meet with pro-democracy activists such as Kim Young Sam.[319] Unbeknownst to Kim Dae Jung, what was suppose to be a relatively uneventful return turned into an international scandal. Kim Young Sam was put under house arrest, while South Korean security services reengaged on the deal Chun had made with Reagan and immediately moved in to seize the opposition leader.[320] Kim's sizable security detail surrounded him and his wife, forming a human shield to protect them, but was unable to stop South Korean security services from violently dragging them away from their escorts.[321] Several American escorts, including the US Congressmen who accompanied Kim, were beaten by South Korean police officers during the fight.[322] Kim and his wife were forcefully taken to their homes and placed under house arrest, while the crowds present to welcome Kim began to demonstrate and fought against riot police once they became aware that Kim had been forcefully abducted.[323]

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316 Ibid, 131.
317 Ibid, 131-132.
318 Kim, Dae Jung, *Conscience in Action: The Autobiography of Kim Dae Jung*. Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, 313.
319 Ibid, 314.
320 Ibid, 313-314.
321 Ibid, 313.
322 Lee, Chae-Jin, *Reagan Faces Korea: Alliance Politics and Quiet Diplomacy*. New York City: Springer International Publishing, 2019, 132.
323 Ibid, 314.

The Implications of Exile: The Importance on Kim's time in America

The dramatic fashion in which Kim was treated during his return home sent shockwaves across South Korea and the world. Within South Korea, this incident propelled the New Korea and Democratic Party (NKDP) in the 1985 South Korean Legislative Elections to become the largest opposition party in the Korean National Assembly.[324] The brutish way in which Kim had been abducted and placed under house arrest energized support for the NKDP. In many ways, the NKDP's victory in the 1985 elections showed how Kim's return from exile arguably generated more political capital for the pro-democracy movement than the two years Kim spent abroad in America.

However, as noted earlier, Kim still achieved some minor yet significant victories during his time in exile. While neither Reagan nor Chun personally disliked each other, Kim's campaign in America and the crude nature of how Chun handled Kim's return made the Chun-Reagan relationship incredibly awkward. Reagan was always cordial during his visits with Chun, as he praised the importance of the US-South Korean alliance during Chun's 1981 visit and emphasized the continued American commitment to US-South Korean relations.[325] However, Reagan made deliberate efforts to avoid Chun. Reagan actively worked with his staff to prevent Chun from legitimizing his rule to avoid making it appear as if the American President acquiesced to Chun's continued rule.[326]

What made Kim's exile in the United States significant was just how much it revealed about US-South Korean relations as well as Kim's own character, beliefs and motivations. The debacle over Kim's return emphasized just how fragile Chun's relationship with Reagan

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[324] Kim, Dae Jung, *Conscience in Action: The Autobiography of Kim Dae Jung*. Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, 317.
[325] Lee, Chae-Jin, *Reagan Faces Korea: Alliance Politics and Quiet Diplomacy*. New York City: Springer International Publishing, 2019, 31.
[326] Ibid, 147.

was, as American officials immediately tried to place blame on Chun and the South Korean military regime over Kim's abduction and the beating of Kim's American escorts.[327] The willingness of the Reagan Administration to turn on Chun to avoid a public relations disaster showed how much the Chun-Reagan relationship was an alliance of convenience, as both needed each other for differing political reasons.

Reagan needed Chun in power to avoid political destabilization in South Korea, while Chun needed Reagan to legitimize his authoritarian rule. While it may be tempting to paint Reagan's attitude towards Chun similar to Nixon's attitudes Park, it would be more accurate to describe Reagan's Quiet Diplomacy to tilt more towards Carter's foreign policy towards South Korea than Nixon's. Whereas Nixon was willing to overlook Park's human rights abuses, Reagan only put up with Chun out of necessity. The Reagan Administration's unwillingness to punish Kim in exile for actively breaking the terms of Kim's release despite Chun's protests shows how US policymakers did not appreciate Chun seriously enough to force Kim to uphold his side of the deal. Meanwhile, the Reagan Administration blamed Chun for Kim's abduction almost immediately after it occurred. This showed how opportunistic Reagan's foreign policy was towards South Korea. It is not surprise that there would not be much sympathy for Chun when in 1987, the Korean opposition forced Chun to concede to free and fair elections.[328] Both Kim's imprisonment and activism abroad reinforced an already disdainful view many within the Reagan administration held towards Chun, which contributed to American unwillingness to support Chun when he desired to utilize violence against the protestors in 1987.

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[327] Ibid, 133.
[328] Brazinsky, Gregg, *Nation Building in South Korea: Koreans, Americans, and the Making of a Democracy*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009, 249.

Kim's activism abroad also shows much insight into Kim Dae Jung as both a leader and as a person. Laney's awe towards Kim's animated, energetic and charismatic nature during the Farewell at Madison Garden underscores how Kim was a political force of nature capable of rallying a massive movement.[329] This is further reinforced by the numerous rallies Kim held across the United States, which reflected his ability to garner support from the Korean American community despite the constant intimidation by Chun's agents. Kim was able to garner significant attention from both the American public and its leadership through constant activism abroad.

Kim failure to change US foreign policy also showed both his limits as a leader as well as his motivations. While Kim had significantly tarnished Chun's reputation abroad, it was not enough to initiate any significant policy changes and he returned home because of this. However, Kim's actions during his time spoke magnitudes about his character. For example, his endless activism and repeated efforts to oppose Chun abroad signified his commitment to defeating authoritarianism. However, his blatant willingness to break the terms of his release immediately after he landed in America also showed that he was willing to engage in duplicity to serve his goals.[330] Kim also repeatedly attacked President Reagan's "Quiet Diplomacy" despite Reagan's efforts playing a major role in his survival in the 1980s. Kim aligned himself with Carter and the Democratic Party and became a major headache for Reagan. Kim constantly attacked Reagan him for support towards Chun while he made numerous attempts to meet with Reagan to change his views.[331] Finally, when Kim realized that his activism in America was not initiating the change he desired, he decided to go back to South Korea. However, it cannot be denied that his fear of losing ground to his main rival

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[329] Author's interview *with Laney James T*. 16 Oct. 2020.
[330] Lee, Chae-Jin, *Reagan Faces Korea: Alliance Politics and Quiet Diplomacy*. New York City: Springer International Publishing, 2019, 109.
[331] Ibid, 110.

of the pro-democracy movement, Kim Young Sam, greatly influenced his decision to return to Korea.[332]

While his return from exile was motivated by a desire to defend his leadership position within the pro-democracy movement from Kim Young Sam, he also showed a strong willingness to assist his rival to support their mutual cause. Kim Dae Jung ignored calls from his friends and allies who suggested he not publicize and promote Kim Young Sam's hunger strike against Chun in 1983.[333] He would go as far as to march up to the South Korean embassy during Kim Young Sam's hunger strike to express his solidarity for the cause, which showed that while Kim Dae Jung wanted to maintain his influence and prestige within the movement, his greatest interests lay not within himself but within democracy.[334]

It must also be emphasized that his decision to return to his homeland despite the dangers cements evidence of both his commitment to the democratic cause as well as his willingness to put himself at risk for the sake of said cause. Both Park and Chun considered Kim as the most dangerous of the opposition leaders due to both his charisma as well as his left-leaning political beliefs. Kim had witnessed what had happened to his Filipino counterpart Benigno Aquino, who was assassinated moments after returning from exile. While Kim took precautions and heavily publicized his return, his safety was never assured. Despite this, he considered refusal to return as cowardly, and chose to go back to his homeland to fight for its freedom.[335]

Kim's politicking, hypocrisy and duplicity during his time in America do not detract from his beliefs and his leadership qualities. Rather, understanding them reveals a much

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[332] Ibid, 123.
[333] Ibid, 115.
[334] Ibid, 115.
[335] Kim, Dae Jung, *Conscience in Action: The Autobiography of Kim Dae Jung.* Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, 312-313.

more complex and human image of him. He was both an inspirational leader who drew massive crowds with appeals to support human rights and democracy and an exile incapable of persuading the US Government to end its support for authoritarianism. Kim sought to protect his influence within the Korean democracy movement, yet was not afraid to help his rival Kim Young Sam because he was prioritized the cause over his own interests. Kim's time in exile reveals how he was a flawed yet charismatic leader who ultimately sought to do the right thing for his country, even if doing so required questionable actions.

When Dawn Comes: Kim and Laney after America

Kim Dae Jung and James T. Laney formed an unlikely friendship during Kim's time in America, forged by their shared faith in God and their commitment to fight for Korean democracy. Although Laney and Kim both found the Korea of their youths as swallowed by the darkness of poverty and tyranny, they lived to see the dawn of a new era. In 1987, Seoul National University student Park Jong Cheol was arrested and tortured by South Korean Police for engaging in democracy activism.[336] The government's subsequent attempted cover up of Park's death inflamed public opinion and triggered the June Struggle, during which the Korean pro-democracy opposition rallied to topple Chun's regime. On June 10th, at the start of the 1987 Korean pro-democracy protests, an estimated 300,000 were demonstrating in the streets.[337] By June 25th, the number had risen to over 1.8 million.[338] Overwhelmed by the scale of the opposition towards his regime, Chun considered deploying the military to put down the protests, but the Reagan administration's threat to punish South Korea for using military force as well as the unprecedented size of the protests forced Chun to back down.[339] After more than 24 years of military rule, pro-democracy activists had successfully forced the South Korean military government to concede to democratic elections and reforms.

For Kim Dae Jung, 1987 was likely the most bittersweet year of his life. Chun Doo Hwan's successor, Roh Tae Woo, was nominated by the Democratic Justice Party, which served as the de facto representation of the military party for the 1987 South Korean presidential election. Roh made a series of concessions to the Korean opposition, one of

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336 Kim, Dae Jung, *Conscience in Action: The Autobiography of Kim Dae Jung*. Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, 333.
337 Ibid, 336.
338 Ibid, 338.
339 Michael Robinson. *Korea's Twentieth-Century Odyssey : A Short History*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2007, 144-145.

which was releasing Kim Dae Jung from house arrest.[340] By October 27th, 93% of the Korean public voted via national referendum to amend the Republic of Korea's Constitution to limit the powers of the President so that they could not longer dissolve the National Assembly during an emergency and also ensure the President would only serve a single-term.[341] Victory for the opposition seemed imminent.

However, the hopes of finally besting the military regime in a fair democratic election would not come. Kim Dae Jung and Kim Young Sam, the two iconic faces of the Korean democracy movement, immediately began to fight for control of the opposition movement. Kim Dae Jung had promised to not run for President the previous year, while Kim Young Sam had promised to support Kim Dae Jung if he was pardoned and released.[342] The military regime had planned for this, deliberately removing the Office of the Vice President from the new South Korean Constitution to ensure that the two Kims would not form a joint ticket.[343] Neither of the two Kims were willing to let the other run as the sole leader of a unified opposition. As a result, Roh Tae Woo soundly won the 1987 South Korean presidential election with 36.6% of the vote, while Kim Young Sam garnered 28% and Kim Dae Jung 27.1%.[344]

In his autobiography, *Conscience in Action*, Kim Dae Jung confessed that he felt a deep sense of shame over his actions, as he and Kim Young Sam had focused on their own self-interests rather than on the interests of the Korean people.[345] He lamented how the Korean democracy movement "lost in the election acquired only after so many democratization

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340 Kim, Dae Jung, *Conscience in Action: The Autobiography of Kim Dae Jung*. Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, 333.
341 Michael Robinson. *Korea's Twentieth-Century Odyssey : A Short History*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2007, 168-169.
342 Kim, Dae Jung, *Conscience in Action: The Autobiography of Kim Dae Jung*. Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, 340.
343 Ibid, 340.
344 Ibid, 348.
345 Ibid, 349.

movement activists' sacrifices."[346] Kim regretted how he had failed to unify the opposition party candidates and admitted that he should have yielded the candidacy, stating how "it was clearly wrong for us (himself and Kim Young Sam) to be divided in the face of our people."[347] 1987 was a Pyrrhic victory for Kim Dae Jung, as General Roh Tae Woo shockingly defeated the movement Kim had helped cultivate for decades in the first fair election in Korean history.

The birth of true Korean democracy ensured that Kim Dae Jung would never again have to live in fear of repression, but the decade following the 1987 presidential election brought forth new difficulties for him. The pro-democracy movement he and Kim Young Sam created splintered into two separate parties, with Kim Dae Jung the leader of the Pyeongmin Party while Kim Young Sam emerged as the leader of the Democratic Party.[348] Not all hope was lost for Kim's career, as his party became the largest opposition party in the Korean National Assembly following the 1988 legislative elections.[349] However, Kim Young Sam decided in 1990 to merge the Democratic Party with Roh's Democratic Justice Party.[350] Roh and Kim Young Sam combined their forces, which contributed to Kim Dae Jung's defeat against Kim Young Sam in the 1992 Korean Presidential election. Following another bitter loss, Kim Dae Jung became disillusioned with his political career and publicly announced after his defeat that he would retire from politics.[351]

While Kim Dae Jung sought to find his place in Korea's new democracy in the aftermath of his third electoral defeat, James T. Laney found himself coming back to Korea. Laney, who served as President of Emory University from 1977 to 1993, had been

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[346] Ibid, 349.
[347] Ibid, 349.
[348] Ibid, 350.
[349] Ibid, 354.
[350] Ibid, 374.
[351] Ibid, 399-400.

nominated around this time by then President Bill Clinton to serve as United States Ambassador to the Republic of Korea in mid-June 1993.[352] Laney resigned from his position as President of Emory University soon afterwards. He stated in his explanation letter to the Emory community that as ambassador he hoped to use his acknowledge of Korea to tackle issues such as North Korean nuclear capabilities and Korean unification.[353] Laney was sworn in as United States Ambassador to the Republic of Korea on October 15th, 1993.[354]

Although Laney and Kim had taken different paths following their initial meeting in 1983 at Emory, they had still maintained correspondence. Kim had invited Laney and his wife over to his home at Donggyo-Dong for dinner in 1987, taking time out of his campaigning during the presidential election to host him.[355] In 1990, Kim again invited Laney to dine with him at his home and later in 1992 dined with him at a hotel in Seoul.[356] While their friendship initially began as a fusion of mutual interests and shared beliefs and goals, it was clear that by the 1990s that they had established a close friendship. It was during his ambassadorship that Laney began to see Kim more frequently, as their close proximity no longer required either of them to travel long distances to visit the other. Records indicate that Laney and Kim met at least 19 times following Kim's return to Korea in 1985, 8 of which were during Laney's Ambassadorship to Korea.[357] Laney himself remarked in his interview that his close friendship with Kim Dae Jung, who had officially retired, caused Kim Young Sam a certain degree of jealously.[358]

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[352] Statement Regarding Emory University President James T. Laney and the Ambassadorship to South Korea, June 23rd, 1993, Box 8, Folder 7, James T. Laney Papers
[353] Letter to the EmoryCommunity, June 23rd, 1993, Box 14, Folder 2, James T. Laney Papers
[354] Swearing-In Ceremony of Ambassador Laney, October 15th, 1993, Box 14, Folder 10, James T. Laney Papers
[355] Kim, Jong Dae. *Chronology of Kim Dae-jung with James T. Laney*. 2009, 1.
[356] Ibid, 1.
[357] Ibid, 1-2.
[358] Author's interview *with Laney James T.* 16 Oct. 2020.

Ambassador Laney in his interview expressed regret that Kim Dae Jung did not win the 1992 presidential election, which showed not his antagonism towards Kim Young Sam but rather his disappointment that he could not have been ambassador during his good friend's presidency. Although this did not occur, they continued their robust relationship even after Laney retired and returned to the United States in 1996.[359] Shortly afterwards, Kim Dae Jung, who had returned to politics in 1995, was finally elected President of the Republic of Korea in the 1997 presidential election.[360] When Kim was elected, he invited Laney as one of his special guests from the American delegation to attend his inauguration.[361] While it appears easy to dismiss Laney's status as he appears near the bottom of the delegation list, it should be noted that he was an anomaly on the list. Every other delegate was either a currently serving US official or an American with Korean ancestry. Laney was the only former US official and American without Korean ancestry Kim Dae Jung requested to be on the list of members for the US Delegation to his inauguration.[362] Laney's placement as the only person on the delegation without either trait defines just how much Kim valued Laney as a friend and how much respect he had for him even after Laney had retired from active political life.

Despite neither of them serving as official representatives of their respective nations during the pinnacle of the each other's careers, Kim and Laney both frequently sought each other for advice on topics such as US-Korea relations and how to deescalate tensions between North and South Korea.[363] Laney served as an ambassador during a turbulent period of both US-Korea relations and Korean stability, as the 1994 North Korean famine,

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359 Resignation Letter, 1996, Box 16, Folder 6, James T. Laney Papers
360 Kim, Dae Jung, *Conscience in Action: The Autobiography of Kim Dae Jung.* Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, 883.
361 United States Presidential Delegation to the Inauguration of His Excellency Kim Dae Jung President of The Republic of Korea, February 23rd-26th, 1998, Box 97, Folder 1, James T. Laney Papers, 2.
362 Ibid, 1-2.
363 Kim, Jong Dae. *Chronology of Kim Dae-jung with James T. Laney*. 2009, 2.

the threat of nuclear armed North Korea and the murder of a Korean bar employee by US military personnel in South Korea all occurred during his ambassadorship. Kim and Laney likely sought each other's advice as both South Korea and the United States struggled to adapt to a post-Cold War world.

Not all of Laney and Kim's activities were so formal and serious however, as Kim repaid Laney back for all the support he had provided Kim in 1982-1983. For instance, Laney was awarded the Human Rights Award by the Kim Dae Jung Peace Foundation in 1998 for his contributions to Korean human rights.[364] The Foundation introduced Laney by emphasizing Laney had served as a missionary in Korea promoting human rights and democracy as well as his support for Kim during his exile in the United States.[365] Additionally, Kim invited Laney to Korea to watch the 2002 FIFA World Cup, and ate lunch with him at the Chong Hwa Dae (South Korean Presidential Palace).[366] Even after both of them formally retired from politics and government service, they continued invite each other for dinners and talk about the need for peaceful relations and dialogue with North Korea.[367] Even as elder statesmen, the two continued their old friendship and committed themselves to long-term peace in Northeast Asia.

Unfortunately for the two, Kim had been known to suffer from medical problems due to repeated assassination attempts on his life as well as the poor conditions he endured during his imprisonment. Given his circumstances, Kim Dae Jung lived a surprisingly long life. However on July 13th, 2009, Kim Dae Jung fell ill and was hospitalized for pneumonic

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364 Kim Dae Jung Peace Foundation-USA, October 3rd, 1998, Box 96, Folder 15, James T. Laney Papers.
365 Introduction of the recipient of Human-rights award James T. Laney, October 13th-14th, 1998, Box 96, Folder 17, James T. Laney Papers.
366 Letter to President Kim Dae Jung, June 5th, 2002, Box 94, Folder 5, James T. Laney Papers.
367 Kim, Jong Dae. *Chronology of Kim Dae-jung with James T. Laney*. 2009, 2-3.

symptoms at Severance Hospital of Yonsei University.[368] He was hospitalized for over a month and his health continued to deteriorate. On August 11th, Laney sent Kim an email saying "you are a symbol of hope, champion of democracy, and of noble character. I am earnestly praying for your recovery with citizens of Korea and the world."[369] Despite his prayers, Kim Dae Jung passed away a week later on August 18th, at age 85.[370] Laney attended Kim's funeral as a member of the US Presidential Delegation to Kim's funeral, which was held on August 23rd, 2009.[371] Laney revealed in his interview that after Kim's funeral, he never returned back to Korea, closing his decades long life chapter in South Korea after attending the funeral of one of his closest Korean friends.[372]

One of the most crucial, fascinating questions that emerges from the telling of Kim and Laney's friendship is "Why did these two figures form an unlikely yet close bond?" Neither of the two figures would meet each other until well into their fifties, when Laney invited Kim over to Emory in 1983. While their shared commitment to promoting democracy in Korea as well as their faith in the Christianity explains their initial friendship, it may be puzzling why their relationship did not fizzle out following the democracy movement's victory in the June Struggle. It is clear that their friendship was more than just convenience, because after Kim returned from exile, they maintained communication and dined with each other whenever they could meet in person. Laney reached the pinnacle of prestige for an American in Korea by serving as U.S. Ambassador to Korea, yet he continued to invite the then retired Kim, who had been defeated in three presidential elections, over for lunch to talk with his friend. On the other side, Kim continued to invite

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368 Kim, Dae Jung, *Conscience in Action: The Autobiography of Kim Dae Jung.* Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, 886.
369 Kim, Jong Dae. *Chronology of Kim Dae-jung with James T. Laney*. 2009, 3.
370 Kim, Dae Jung, *Conscience in Action: The Autobiography of Kim Dae Jung.* Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, 886.
371 Presidential Delegation to Pres. Kim Dae Jung's funeral 2009 August, August 22nd, 2009, Box 105, Folder 7.
372 Author's interview *with Laney James T.* 16 Oct. 2020.

Laney over for dinners and not only helped award him the Korean Human Rights Award but sought his advice at forums and invited him to the 2002 FIFA World Cup in South Korea.

The true reason for their robust friendship is that they saw each other as an ideal representative of their respective nations. Laney claimed in his interview that Kim possessed courage, "physical, personal and political," that most South Korean Presidents did not manifest or possess.[373] For Laney, Kim Dae Jung represented the heart of the Korean pro-democracy that he had long supported. Laney described Kim as someone who possessed "courage, vision and determination to break out of the status quo," which explains why Laney saw Kim as an inspirational figure.[374] Not only was Kim Dae Jung a pro-democracy activist whose vision of society was deeply shaped by his religious beliefs, but he was also someone who was willing to risk his life for the cause and choose to live his life in accordance with his beliefs and values. Laney greatly respected Kim for his willingness to fight for his beliefs, his refusal to submit to tyranny and his tenacity to never give up on the goals he sought to accomplish.

For Kim, the answer is far more difficult to answer given his passing more than a decade ago. Kim's 1983 speech delivered at Emory, "Christianity, Democracy and Human Rights in Korea," provides us with a window to understand why Kim respected and valued Laney. Kim asked his Americans support the Korean struggle for democracy, as he claimed, "We are not asking the United States to fight in our stead or directly interfere with the Chun Doo Hwan dictatorship. We only want the United States to provide us moral support as a democratic ally…Your moral support should encourage our efforts to realize immediately

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[373] Ibid.
[374] Ibid.

our fundamental rights."[375] Laney did exactly what Kim asked of the United States. Laney supported pro-democracy activists in Korea and valued supporting democracy in South Korea over security. Kim's respect for Laney only grew over the years as Laney continued to take an interest in Korea and devote his time and efforts to not only improving Korea's situation but also treating his Korean colleagues as equals.

Laney recalled in his interview of an instance when President Kim visited the White House in 2001 to meet with President George W. Bush to discuss North Korea. Bush having likely forgotten Kim Dae Jung's name, referred to Kim in English as "that man" to his Korean translator.[376] Kim, who could speak and understand English, met with Laney later that same day. President Bush's inability to recognize Kim or even remember his name upset Kim, with Laney describing him as appearing "deeply shaken" by the incident. [377] Kim's interaction with President Bush underlines just how much Kim as the South Korean President wanted his nation to be treated as an equal partner with the United States. Kim, who constantly referred to himself as a pro-American in his speeches, desired an equal relationship with his American colleagues.

Laney's repeatedly showed his commitment to treat Koreans as equals. When he was deployed in Korea before the Korean War, he described how he was fascinated by its people and felt that he learned much from them.[378] When Laney returned as a missionary after the war, he saw Koreans as people who were grappling with the dilemma of choosing either security or democracy. As referenced earlier, he expressed how privileged he was that Koreans included him in their conversations because he felt that he could learn so much

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[375] Christianity, Human Rights and Democracy in Korea, March 30, 1983, Box 4, Folder 16, Rethinking Human Rights Symposium Records.
[376] Author's interview *with Laney James T.* 16 Oct. 2020.
[377] Ibid.
[378] Ibid.

from them.[379] He did not see Koreans as uncivilized natives who needed to be evangelized and ruled with an iron fist, but as a people who could teach him greater understanding and appreciation for democracy and with whom he could share the Gospel with as he believed Christianity to be a tool for democracy. Finally, it should be noted that while Kim thanked Laney for helping his family, Laney never boasted about his role in helping Kim. Laney represented to Kim an American who did not look down on Koreans as subordinates but rather as friends and someone who was willing to provide the moral support to encourage Koreans rather than directly intervening, which would have greatly harmed Korean dignity and make them lose face.

Understanding Kim and Laney reveals much not only about the two men who forged an unlikely friendship but also about the two men's views of each other that represented the deeper desires of both Koreans and Americans. Like Kim, many South Koreans saw the United States in the 1960s and 1970s as a friendly power that saved their nation from Communism and shed its own blood to help protect Korea. However, they eventually became disillusioned with the United States and saw it as a selfish nation that only cared about security in the Korean peninsula rather than the desires of the Korean people. Many Americans initially saw Korea as a land that had to be protected to stop the spread of Communism and thus prioritized security over all else, attempting to treat Koreans as a subordinate, junior partner in their relationship. However, a new generation of Americans led by men like James T. Laney saw South Korea as the battleground between human rights and authoritarianism.

Many South Koreans and Americans grew increasingly disillusioned with each other during the late Cold War, as they saw each other's nation betraying the supposed values that

[379] Miscellaneous notes and drafts, undated, Box 2, Folder 4, James T. Laney Papers

they represented. Laney and Kim in this sea of disenchantment found each other and both saw someone who reminded them of what the US-Korean relationship should be. Kim represented to Laney the ideal Korean, a courageous leader who was willing to fight for human rights even in the face of repression. Laney represented to Kim a true American, a leader who morally supported the Korean democracy movement and treated Koreans as equals rather than subordinates. Ultimately, their shared visions of each other reveal the deeper mentalities that dominated the mindsets of Koreans and Americans during this era and why their friendship strengthened rather than faltered after the democracy movement's victory in 1987.

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