

The Donald, The Chairman and the Legacy of Peace

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Abstract

The meeting between The Chairman and The President should take place on Jeju Island instead of a place foreign to Korea? The DMZ is tainted still with the armistice and the conflict that preceded it. Jeju-Do is Korea's one "self-governing autonomous province". And on the "Sammu-Samda-do" (Island of three nothing kinds and many three kinds) is the most appropriate place for such a decisive summit should be Gangjeong village, with the closure of the unnecessary naval base preceding it and its conversion to a prosperous cruise ship hub in the centre of north Asia. These events together would produce a legacy for both the Chairman and the President, as well as historically noting Jeju's decisive role in Korea's history, divided or reunited.

Key words :

The Chairman, The President, Jeju Island , The DMZ, Sammu-Samda-do, Gangjeong village, Jeju's decisive role in Korea's history

Introduction

There is one topic the world over on which most liberals agree and that is that the election of Donald J Trump as President of the USA was a watershed moment: a disruption of political life and, for the most part, a disaster for democracy the world over.

One critic, former USA President, Jimmy Carter, even has declared that Trump is an “illegitimate President” and “was put into office by the Russians”, according to a news report of 29 June 2019¹.

The Donald, The Chairman and the Legacy of Peace

“The Donald” as he often jokingly is called, is mocked in political cartoons and by comedians, especially in the English speaking world. His family is denigrated as being naïve, even mentally light, and his “tweets” as a form of serious communication taken as examples of his perfidious superficiality.

And yet the former reality television star has ambitions to leave a legacy as part of his time in the USA presidency, although his wall with Mexico and other more difficult innovations have been blocked by his political opponents. Trump’s other attempts at foreign policy successes similarly have been stymied.

His attempted military hardware display for 4 July 2019 was taken as mere sabre rattling, and burlesqued in many news reports, in print and online.

Chairman Kim Jong-un, is the leader of the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, or DPRK, commonly referred to outside that country as “North Korea”. The Chairman is aware acutely also of his need to leave a legacy from his rule. His grandfather, Kim Il-sung was a hero in the resistance to Japan’s colonial domination of the Korean peninsula from 1910 to 1945, tracing his birth to Mangyongdae-guyok, his ancestral home being venerated. Whatever the controversies regarding Kim il-sung and his activities, he is responsible for the DPRK as it is today and after his death in 1994, his designation officially became “Eternal President”, in hierarchy

over his descendants and honoured in monuments both literary and in buildings of various kinds throughout the DPRK.

Kim Jong-un’s father, Kim Jong-il, claims to have been born on Mount Paektu, a Korean sacred place before that event. Following his father, Kim Jong-il continued the legacy of leadership. Throughout the DPRK, there are some 40,000 “Research Institutes” that laud the eponymous “Dear Leader” and keep his memory vivid in the educational system of the country.

For both Kim Il-sung and Kim Jong-il there are natural phenomena marking their lives that are re-told and affirmed. Kim Jong-il passed away in 2011.

Since then, Kim Jong-un’s DPRK has been known by the epithet “the hermit kingdom” or “North Korea” to most of the world, with occasional stories about monuments, massive public events and killings, such as the execution of his uncle Jang Sung-taek in 2013 and the assassination in Malaysia of his half brother, Kim Jong-nam, in 2017.

The DPRK is known in the world for its secrecy, the gargantuan displays glorifying its leadership and elaborate, expertly choreographed ceremonies, these elements hardly being of the same order as the accomplishments of Kim Jong-un’s father and grandfather.

A massive element in Korean history is that the “Korean War” has not yet ended: an armistice was signed on 27 July 1953, but that document only brought about the cessation of hostilities – the actual fighting – not an end to the war, leaving both sides, the Koreans and the Americans, as neither winners nor losers.

In both the north and the south parts of the Korean peninsula, there is a desire to unify the country. Split families, split enterprises and split political systems do not favour north or south and many have written passionate pleas to truly end the hostilities and reunite the country, both governments having official departments with regular activities to bring about this elusive, enduring event.

Core to this split and the subsequent war were the tragic events on Jeju Island, called in some places “the Jeju uprising” and in others as the “Jeju 4.3 Tragedy”. The outrageous treatment of the Islanders by American and Korean soldiers and police served

1) “Jimmy Carter: Donald Trump is an illegitimate President, put in office by the Russians”. Real Clear Politics (https://www.realclearpolitics.com/video/2019/06/28/jimmy_carter_donald_trump_is_an_illegitimate_president.html). Published online on 28 June 2019.

as a warning to those in the north, such as Kim Il-sung, that persecution and death awaited them and their followers in the post-World War II USA dominated Asia.

It is not an exaggeration to attribute at least in part the founding of the DPRK to the Jeju 4.3 Tragedy!

I have sketched a theory to explain why two unlikely leaders, Donald Trump and Kim Jong-un, should seem to be so interested in working out peace on the Korean peninsula: I argue that they both require a solid legacy to mark their respective places in history.

That solid legacy is the prospect of peace on the Korean peninsula, with eventual reunification.

Chairman Kim Jong-un and President Donald Trump have traded insults and threats in the past, but now seem to be determined to establish their mutual legacy, though formal meetings and, even, seemingly spontaneous gestures like their DMZ border crossings at Panmunjom on 30 June 2019.

Noting Jeju's decisive role in Korea's history

Perhaps the meeting between The Chairman and The President should take place on Jeju Island instead of a place foreign to Korea? The DMZ is tainted still with the armistice and the conflict that preceded it. Jeju-Do is Korea's one "self-governing autonomous province". And on the "Sammu-samda-do" (Island of three nothing kinds and many three kinds) is the most appropriate place for such a decisive summit should be Gangjeong village, with the closure of the unnecessary naval base preceding it and its conversion to a prosperous cruise ship hub in the centre of north Asia.

These events together would produce a legacy for both the Chairman and the President, as well as historically noting Jeju's decisive role in Korea's history, divided or reunited.

Along with the other threes could be added

Peace

Prosperity

Cooperation

With Jeju as the place for peace: truly Jeju Peace Island!

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