

North Korea - A Different Approach - Cambridge University Lecture, January 31st 2011.

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## 1. Don't Forget The Past.

From 1910 until 1945 Korea was forcibly annexed into the Japanese empire.

In this period, the Imperial Japanese Army discriminated against, tortured, plundered, raped, summary executed and mass murdered innocent Koreans. At times the Japanese mercilessly shot random people on the streets and regularly used torture. Major cultural genocides and war crimes committed by the Japanese include sex slavery and kidnapping of Korean females for the Japanese army, human experiments on live Koreans, burning down of Korean villages and historic and cultural centres, the banning of the Korean language and religions, complete censorship of the media, unfair confiscation of land, food and cultural assets, forced name changes and Imperial education, which led to a strong rise in anti-Japanese sentiment and Korean nationalism still persistent in our own times in both the north and south of the Korean peninsula.

The methods practiced by the Japanese became a role model for the emerging Communist leaders of the north; ruthless and bloody factionalism and systematic annihilation of all opposition became its hallmarks from the earliest days. Kim Il Sung, favoured by Moscow, triumphed over his adversaries and his objective became the total domination of the Korean Peninsula.

War broke out in 1950.

2010 was the 60th anniversary of the start of the Korean War and the genesis of today's problems lie in the unfinished business of a three year war which claimed between 2.5 million and 3.5 million lives, primarily Korean fatalities but including almost 38,000 American and U.N. soldiers, and 600,000 Chinese. 1,000 British servicemen died- more than in Afghanistan, Iraq and the Falklands combined. Since the 1953 armistice there have been endless intermittent spats and skirmishes

With the 1953 ceasefire, the country was severed along the 38th parallel and, technically, the principal combatants are still at war. There has never been a formal peace, merely a cease fire. The border bristles with mines, artillery and troops. Anyone who travels in North Korea sees a state whose massive arsenal and resources are overwhelmingly geared to the protection and the survival of

the regime.

Despite the nature of the North Korean regime, it is hard not to be captivated by Korean culture, dignity, and manners. They are a deeply civilized and hospitable people who have suffered grievously: tortured by half a century of degrading and cruel Japanese occupation followed by an ideological war which massacred millions, severed their homeland, and divided their people.

History on the Korean peninsula remains unhealed and a generation of embittered and embattled military and political leaders have presided over sporadic and half hearted attempts to allow their people to move on.

The human and emotional consequences for families estranged for over half a century are incalculable.

During my most recent visit - last October - the Government of North Korea confirmed that a new round of brief family reunions would take place but Vice Foreign Minister, Kung Sok Ung, told me that "as many as 20 million inter-related families, first, second and third generation Koreans, remain separated - which is why reunion of the peninsula remains our first priority."

If this unfinished business of 1953 continues to have huge security implications, there are also implications for humanitarian and human rights concerns as well. These three questions - which I will come to in more detail later - are inextricably linked and need to be tackled together.

Kim IL Sung's ideology was based on Marxism - with a sprinkling of dynastic, hierarchical elements of Confucianism and Nationalism thrown in. Two words have best described its approach - Juche - self reliance which has led to isolationism "Man is the master of everything and decides everything." and songun - meaning military first - leading to incredible power and influence for the armed forces

In the heart of Pyongyang, on the banks of the city's Taedong River, opposite Kim Il-sung Square, stands the Juche Tower. Completed in 1982, to celebrate Kim Il-Sung's 70th birthday, at 558 feet the tower stands marginally taller than the Washington Monument, on which it appears to be modelled.

In October, during my third visit to North Korea, I was taken to see the tower. Perhaps symbolizing both the condition of North Korea's economy, and its desperate need for more than self-reliance, my embarrassed guide explained that we could not ascend, as debris was falling from within, onto the elevator. The situation, he explained, was very dangerous - it seemed an appropriately graphic metaphor.

No nation wants to be in thrall to others, especially one that experienced half a century of Japanese occupation but isolation has not served North Korea well. Isolationism has led to the state linking itself to criminal activities, including the narcotics trade, to abductions, to the testing, according to BBC allegations, of chemical weapons on civilians and to alleged links with terrorism; and it has led to torture and execution

But beyond the sloganeering rhetoric and braggadocio is a nation that senses change in the air.

The Soviet model is discredited; the country's powerful neighbour, China, is in the throes of a liberalizing revolution; and North Koreans know that self-reliance will not be enough. Instead of Juche and Songun, during our recent visit, Baroness Cox and I heard two other phrases used describing the country's objectives to be reached by 2012 - and, intriguingly, they were prosperity and human dignity.

## 2. How Things Stand Today

In 2006 North Korea became the ninth country to possess nuclear weapons. Although its actions were described by China as "brazen", by Japan as "unpardonable" and by the United States as "provocative", the test did not just come out of the blue.

In 2003 North Korea pulled out of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty; in 2005 the six party talks were initiated; and in 2006 North Korea test fired seven missiles and launched a nuclear device.

When North Korea withdrew from the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, its intentions rapidly became clear. It also became clear that primarily China, through the control of electricity and oil, was in a position to temper the DPRK's military ambitions.

In September 2005, there was a brief glimmer of hope when, during the six-nation talks, North Korea agreed to give up nuclear activity, only to be followed by contradictory statements from Sean McCormack, the White House spokesman, and a retraction by the DPRK the following day. Then, in July 2006 North Korea test-fired its missiles, and in October it proceeded to test a nuclear device.

On 14 October 2006, the Security Council responded by unanimously voting to

impose weapons and financial sanctions. Resolution 1718 demanded that North Korea eliminate all its nuclear weapons, weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles. The resolution also called for Pyongyang to return "without precondition" to the stalled six-nation talks. Since, then accompanied by high level diplomacy by, North Korea has been vacillating between blackmail and agreement; and in the past year, in dangerously provocative military attacks.

In 1997 President Kim Dae-jung initiated the Sunshine Policy or rapprochement and engagement with North Korea - its abandonment, a decade later by President Lee Myung-bak, heralded a return to ever-more aggressive rhetoric.

This would be followed in March 2010 by the sinking of the Cheonan, with the loss of 46 south Korea sailors, and by the shelling, last, November, of the South Korean island, Yeonpyeong, when the North Korean military fired around 170 artillery shells, leading to the deaths of two marines. The replacement of the South Korean Defence Minister by a South Korean General, who has made clear the South's intentions to retaliate if there are further attacks, and the presence of the USS George Washington, America's largest aircraft carrier, during recent displays of military strength, have also significantly raised the stakes in this dangerous and lethal poker game.

The real danger is that through miscalculation or misperception - based on the premise that the other side will always back off and fail to retaliate - could lead to a lethal escalation. Both sides continue to raise the stakes - and both sides have powerful allies who would almost certainly be sucked in.

On a more positive move, North and South Korea have this month announced that they will hold military talks next month, and the South has said it hopes that these will lead to a resumption of the stalled six-party talks on denuclearisation. Last Friday the North Koreans issued a new communiqué which says that "it is important to keep alive the atmosphere of dialogue in order to avoid a vicious cycle of growing tension."

### 3. The Security Situation

I have set out the present stalemate over the development of a nuclear capability and the events of the past twelve months.

Although Resolution 1718 demanded that North Korea eliminate all its nuclear weapons, North Korea has not done so - believing that at the minimum their weapons constitute their one real stake in the poker game. Meanwhile, they retain a standing army of around 1 million men - the world's 4th largest standing army.

One third of North Korea's GDP is used on armaments while people starve - 30% of GDP is used on armaments and in developing nuclear weapons; 37% of 6-year-olds are chronically malnourished.

The security situation is full of dangers and the six-party talks aimed at resolving the nuclear question have become stalled non-talks. The current stale-mate reflects an appreciation on both sides of mutually assured destruction should a military conflagration occur.

#### 4. Human Rights

One of the most significant failures of international engagement with North Korea is that it has been overwhelmingly focused on security issues with little or no linkage to human rights questions.

An editorial in The Times on 27 September, 2010 entitled Slave State sums up the situation powerfully:

"The condition of the people of North Korea ranks among the great tragedies of the past century. The despotism that consigns them to that state is one of its greatest crimes."

My own interest in North Korea began through an encounter with an escapee, Yoo Sang-joon. A North Korean Christian who had escaped from the country and came to see me at Westminster. His story was harrowing and disturbing. He told me how he had seen his wife, and all but one of his children shot dead by Kim Jong-Il's militia. He subsequently escaped across the border to China with his one remaining son. The boy died en route.

He encouraged me to read the prison memoirs of Soon Ok Lee. In them she describes in detail the brutality and barbarism of the system in North Korea. *Eyes of the Tailless Animals* is Soon Ok Lee's account of the sham judicial system, the show trials, the starvation, the forced labour, the degradation, humiliation and rape of prisoners. Through her eyes we get a glimpse of this corrupt, paranoid and tyrannical regime.

Subsequently, I have attended and chaired several open hearings at Westminster and elsewhere where we have taken evidence and heard first hand accounts from North Koreans who have escaped.

Yoo Sang-joon himself became an Asian Raoul Wallenberg, bravely re-entering North Korea and helping people flee across the border. This led to his arrest by the Chinese, who as a result of international representations showed clemency and repatriated him to South Korea rather than the North as they had originally

intended.

Another defector and prison inmate who had earlier served as part of the presidential bodyguard, Lee Young-Kuk, graphically described the degrading situation in prison. This was his testimony:

"From the very first day, the guards with their rifles beat me. I was trampled on mercilessly until my legs became swollen, my eardrums were shattered, and my teeth were all broken. They wouldn't allow us to sleep from 4 am till 10 pm and once while I was sleeping, they poured water over my head. Since the conditions within the prison were poor, my head became frostbitten from the bitter cold. As I was trying to recuperate from the previous mistreatment, they ordered me to stick out my shackled feet through a hole on my cell door, and then tortured them in almost every possible way. Not a single day passed without receiving some form of torture and agonizing experience".

We were addressed by two diminutive North Korean women who, speaking through an interpreter, recounted their experiences in North Korean concentration camps. From time to time their stories were interrupted as the women wept.

Jeon Young-Ok is 40. When she was a little girl her mother took the family across the Tumen River to try and flee to China. They were caught and her father and brother imprisoned. Her mother died of a heart disease and left her three children alone. Years later, now married with three children of her own, Jeon managed to make furtive forays from North Korea into China to secure money and food for her children. Twice she was apprehended and jailed.

Movingly she told the parliamentary hearing: "I couldn't bear to die with my children in my arms. As long as I was alive I couldn't just watch them die." Many of her compatriots were starving and dying. Staggeringly during the 1990s an estimated 2 million North Koreans starved to death.

In China Mrs. Jeon remained at risk "nowhere was safe." If she was caught the Chinese would send her back. And this is exactly what happened to her. Caught in 1997 and again in 2001 - she was sent to Northern Pyeong -an Detention Camp.

"I was put in a camp where I saw and experienced unimaginable things. We were made to pull the beards from the faces of elderly people. Prison guards treated them like animals. The women were forced to strip. A group of us were thrown just one blanket and we were forced to pull it from one another as we tried to hide our shame. I felt like an animal, no better than a pig. I didn't want to live."

Jeon Young-Ok added: "They tortured the Christians the most. They were denied food and sleep. They were forced to stick out their tongues and iron was pushed into it."

Despite all this, she harbours no hatred for her country and shows extraordinary fortitude and equanimity: "The past is not important but these terrible things are still happening in North Korea. These camps should be abolished forever."

Mrs. Jeon's experiences were echoed by Jeong-ai Shin who was held in North Korea's Camp 15. Conditions were so perilous that 1 in 10 of the 200 inmates was dead within the year. She described a regime comprising of hard labour, starvation and infectious diseases. Like Mrs. Jeon she finally escaped and by a circuitous route made it to South Korea.

Shin Dong-Hyok, who is 25, spent the first 23 years of his life in North Korea's Political prison Camp 14, where he was born. As a child he described how he witnessed fellow child prisoners being killed through accidents and beatings. He told me that children and parents were required to watch and report on one another. He was forced to work from the age of 10 or 11.

His parents were sent to the camp in 1965 as political prisoners. Thirty years later, after family members tried to escape from the camp, Shin was interrogated in an underground torture chamber.

Following this failed escape attempt, he was forced, on April 6th 1996, to watch as his mother and brother were publicly executed.

Guards bound the hands and feet of the 13-year-old boy and roasted him over a fire. The burns still scar Shin's back; the memories have indelibly scarred his mind.

"Afterwards, me and my father could not mingle with other prisoners and we had to work even harder than the rest," he said.

It was then that Shin encountered an inmate who had not spent his entire life inside Camp 14. He had lived for a time in China, and must have been a highly placed official who had fallen foul of the regime. "During the time I spent with him, I learned so much about the outside world. I realised that this life in the camp was not the ordinary life," he said.

In 2005, having been tortured, mistreated and discriminated against as the son and brother of a declared traitor - and suffering from constant hunger - Shin and his newly acquired friend and mentor tried to escape. His compatriot died on the barbed wire - not realising that it carried a high electric current - but, although he

was badly burnt, Shin managed to evade the hunt and eventually made it to China. He literally climbed over the dead friend who had made his escape possible. For 25 days he then secretly travelled towards the Yalu River and over the border into China.

In Shanghai he found a way over the wall of the South Korean Consulate and, after 6 months there, he was allowed to travel to Seoul. Physically and emotionally Shin was deeply scarred by this shocking experience.

No-one who was born within a camp in what the regime call "the absolute control zone" has escaped to give testimony previously.

He was joined in the Moses Room of the House of Lords by Ahn Myeong-Cheol, aged 37, who worked as a prison guard at four political prison camps - also within the "absolute control zone" between 1987 and 1994.

He movingly described how his father killed himself when he realised that he had been heard criticising the regime; his mother and brothers were sent to prison camps; Ahn was re-educated and became a prison guard in the "absolute control zones."

He vividly and harrowingly described how he witness guard dogs imported from Russia tear three children to pieces and how the camp warden congratulated the guard who had trained the dogs; he said that even when prisoners died they are punished- their corpses and remains simply left to disintegrate and rot away on the open ground.

After he escaped in 1994 he published "They Are crying for Help" and in the Moses Room - where we sat under the great paintings of Moses receiving the Ten Commandments and a painting of the Judgement of Daniel - he repeated his plea to the international community not to look away from the human rights violations and crimes against humanity experienced by the North Korean people.

Professor Vitit Muntarbhorn, the previous United Nations Special Rapporteur on North Korea, told me that he estimates that 400,000 people have died in North Korea's prison camps in the last 30 years.

Vitit Muntarbhorn, who ended his term of office in 2010 and earlier in the year appeared before my Parliamentary Committee, has described North Korea's human rights record as "abysmal" due to "the repressive nature of the power base: at once cloistered, controlled and callous." The exploitation of ordinary people, he said, "has become the pernicious prerogative of the ruling elite". All eight of his reports to the UN have detailed a very grave situation, in which the abuses are "both systematic and pervasive" and "egregious and endemic", and

he has concluded that "it is incumbent upon the national authorities and the international community to address the impunity factor which has enabled such violations to exist and/or persist for a long time." He has further recommended that the UN consider "whether the issue of violations in \*the DPRK+ will be taken up at some stage at the pinnacle of the system, within the totality of the United Nations framework," and has called on the international community to "mobilise the totality of the United Nations to promote and protect human rights in the country; support processes which concretise responsibility and accountability for human rights violations, and an end to impunity." In his final report, the outgoing Special Rapporteur concluded:

"The human rights situation in this country can be described as sui generis ("in its own category") ... Simply put, there are many instances of human rights violations which are both harrowing and horrific.... It is thus essential to mobilise more comprehensively the international system, especially the United Nations and all its affiliates, to act in a more concerted manner."

Professor Muntarbhorn believes that some 300,000 people have fled the country, many of whom have died as they make the perilous journey into China across the Tumin River. Those who survive face the constant danger of repatriation. If returned to North Korea it leads to their incarceration and, if they are caught, it leads to unspeakable violations of human rights.

Sue Lloyd Roberts' brilliant BBC documentary "On the Border" is a harrowing account of their story. Mike Kim also documents many accounts in his book "Escaping North Korea." Without UNHCR access, and in breach of the 1951 convention, China continues to return many of the refugees who have fled there.

At Westminster I chaired the launch of a 142-page report commissioned by Vaclav Havel, Elie Wiesel, the Nobel peace prize laureate, and Kjell Magne Bondevik, the former Norwegian Prime Minister, entitled 'Failure to Protect: A Call for the UN Security Council to Act in North Korea.' It sets out the case for a more systematic approach in dealing with North Korea - one in which I am certain that the role of China will be crucial. Encouragingly, during talks in Beijing at the end of last year, it was made clear to me by senior Chinese officials that they fully realise the gravity of the situation and the damage which has been done to their own reputation by their neighbour.

The stories of many of the escapees are brilliantly recorded in Barbara Demick's book, "Nothing to Envy" - a testament of egregious Human Rights Violations - first-hand accounts of enforced disappearances, executions and arbitrary detentions. Here are the stories of religious persecution, the lack of freedom of movement, the lack of labour rights, the non-implementation of legal codes, the lack of a fair trial, the lack of judicial oversight of detention facilities and the

severe mistreatment of repatriated persons- mainly repatriated from China, which remains reluctant to give the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees access to the border areas.

The violence against women in detention facilities is appalling, and the accounts of life in prisons and labour camps are chilling. The individual stories bring home the enormity of the suffering that lies behind individual statistics. I have particularly raised the use of capital punishment:

\* And the situation has not been getting better: There have been 52 executions since the failed currency reforms of December 2009, including the Minister of Railways Kim Yong-sam and Vice Minister So Nam-sin.

During my most recent visit, I once again urged the authorities to address widespread concerns over public executions, torture, child labour, trafficking of women, and religious persecution. Their response, of course, was to deny the very existence of prison camps and the associated violations, but at least they heard the concerns and can have no doubt about international opinion. I left them copies of U.N. and Human Rights Watch reports, urged them to open their prisons to international monitors and to invite the new special rapporteur for human rights in North Korea, the former Indonesian Attorney General Marzuki Darusman, to visit the country.

They refused to cooperate with his predecessor; now they have an opportunity to start afresh.

In the context of human rights let me also mention religious liberties:

Without over exaggerating the outcomes, or slipping into a self congratulatory naivety, over the past seven years I have doggedly raised questions of political and religious freedom and human rights with the North Koreans.

And I have witnessed some modest developments - the building of a Russian Orthodox church, the opening of a Protestant seminary.

At the Bongsu Protestant Church, which was built in 1988, we were told that 20,000 Bibles and hymnals had been printed, and that there were 13,000 Protestants in North Korea. We were also told by the Korean Christian Federation that there are now 500 house churches in North Korea, although other sources question this and we were unable to verify these figures. We were encouraged to see the new seminary next to the church, with twelve students and ten teachers. The students pursue a five-year course and are then admitted to the Korean Christian Fellowship as pastors upon graduation.

But, in a year when there have been further reports of the execution of Christians in North Korea, we should not become complacent - and continue to work for the sort of change that brought the peaceful collapse of the Berlin Wall. At least 20 other Christians were arrested and sent to Camp No. 15 in Yodok.<sup>34</sup> We raised this case in several official meetings, but were told that these reports were "lies" and that the execution of Christians was "impossible"

On a happier note, I was amused that as we arrived in North Korea, aboard an Air China plane, the piped music which accompanied our landing was Isaac Watts' Christmas hymn, "Joy to the world! The Lord has come! Let earth receive her King." Along with the sight of Russian diplomats arriving to worship at the Russian Orthodox church, I couldn't help reflecting on twists in ideological and social history.

Simply tolerating and harnessing Christianity would provide an engine for positive social change; and we saw one example of this at a tuberculosis treatment centre which has been equipped through the efforts of Fr. Henry Hammond, a priest whose status is known to the authorities but who has been permitted to enter North Korea more than 43 times.

Christianity first came to Korea - the land of morning calm - when, in 1785, a young Korean, Yi Sughun, returned from a visit to China, where he embraced the Catholic faith, and began to baptise and set up a secret house church in Seoul. The first Korean martyr, Thomas Kim, would be followed by 10,000 more - including, in 1846, the first Korean priest, 25-year-old, St. Andrew Kim.

Presbyterian missionaries entered Korea in the mid nineteenth century and a Welshman, Dr. Robert Thomas, was martyred near Pyongyang in 1866 - the first of the Protestant martyrs.

Today's Catholic Church is denied a resident priest anywhere in North Korea and only one church - Jangchung - is permitted. Yet, during my recent visit I was permitted to speak to the assembled congregation and to present an icon and a copy of Pope Benedict's encyclical, *Deus Caritas Est*.

Outside Pyongyang, we went to Anju, 80 kilometres north of the capital. At Anju, we were moved to learn from Mrs Kim, the mayor, of a Catholic church destroyed half a century ago in the ruins of which believers have continued until this day to meet weekly.

In a hopeful move it is reported that five North Koreans have been selected by Cardinal Nicholas Chung Jin-Suk to study at Seoul's Incheon University and it would be a significant step forward if they are permitted to return to the North

once ordained. We know that such pastoral provision was "an unfulfilled dream" of the widely admired and revered late Cardinal Stephen Kim Sou-Hwan - the great champion of Korean freedom and democracy. It is an aspiration which we have raised with the officials who control religious belief during each of our visits. The North Koreans have now extended an official invitation to Dr. Rowan Williams to visit the country.

It is a remarkable paradox that despite having suffered phenomenal persecution over the preceding decades Korean Christians are in the vanguard of engagement.

## 5. Humanitarian Situation

Along with human rights depredations the humanitarian consequences of isolation have been equally catastrophic.

Two million people are estimated to have died during the 1990s famine and recently the World Food Programme warned the country is short of the 1.8 million tonnes of food needed if people are not to go hungry. The current food shortages are the worst in a decade - with 9 million people (one third of the population) in need of food. The WFP report rampant malnutrition and stunted growth in children. Two weeks ago the Korean Ambassador in London asked me to arrange meetings with agencies such as Christian Aid - and I have done so.

More than 37 per cent of six year-olds in North Korea are chronically malnourished. Stunted growth among the population has even led to the height requirement for the North Korean army being reduced from 4 foot 11 to 4 foot 3. Its people are paying the price. On average boys in North Korea are five inches shorter than their South Korean counterparts and weigh 25 lbs less.

Malnutrition and a weakened population make the people especially vulnerable to disease. T.B., Cholera, Scarlet Fever, Typhoid -all on the rise elderly and orphans at greatest risk.

The British Ambassador, Peter Hughes, recently voiced his concern at the continuing manifestation of chronic malnutrition; and, throughout my 2010 talks with officials, it was never long before the failure of this year's cabbage crop - which provides the kim-chi staple to Korean families during the impending and always harsh Korean winter, was mentioned.

The cabbage crisis has led to South Korea relaxing its high import tariffs on cabbage and white turnips (previously 27% and 30%) and cornering the market in China's vegetable growing areas. Scarcity had now led to the price of

vegetables in Seoul reaching a historic high of nearly £6 per item. In the North, no family would have access to such resources.

At Sariwon, 40 kilometres from Pyongyang, I visited a co-operative farm and saw agricultural workers bringing in the last of a meagre harvest. Around the fields were blandishments and loudspeakers urging the workers to redouble their efforts - but without improved technology, different methods of agriculture, enhanced yields of crops, and pooling resources with the South, it is hard to see what more the workers can reasonably be expected to do.

This is why a political settlement, ushering in a new era of peaceful progress and development, is so urgent.

Conditions are right for pandemics. A compromised water system, the break down of sewage and piping, little soap, poor hygiene and a scratchy public health and immunisation programme, are a toxic combination.

In one recent year 220 of every 100,000 people infected, died of TB and in 2006 half of all children's deaths were from diarrhoea and respiratory infections. Maternal deaths have increased substantially in the past decade. Poverty related diseases like cholera; scarlet fever and typhoid are all on the rise.

During a previous visit to North Korea I was told that following the famine "there are not many elderly people left in the DPRK".

I was told that in the north-east, on the border with China, orphaned children whose parents had died in the famine were living on the streets-"street swallows" as young as seven years old.

DPRK officials told us that their daily food target per person is just 600 grams of rice. They manage to provide a meagre 350-400 grams each day per person. Food should never be used as a weapon of war.

Professor Hazel Smith - who has huge experience of working in North Korea - says that "The under 20s have never seen anything other than hunger and if food doesn't go in there will be another famine soon."

## 6. Helsinki With A Korean Face

So, in breaking this deadlock, what might be a different approach? There are many lessons we can learn from the Helsinki Process - let's call it Helsinki with a Korean Face

In challenging the humanitarian catastrophe, the human rights tragedy, and

the security nightmare which characterises North Korea - what might we learn from previous experiences?

Throughout the Cold War we understood the importance of preserving a strong and united front, and a declared willingness to defend our values, with a commitment to the Helsinki Process - challenging ideologies and tyrannical systems.

Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan stood together in supporting the Helsinki Process. Throughout the Cold War, the West countered Soviet aggression with formidable defences. Simultaneously, the West elevated discourse on human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, known as the Helsinki Final Act, Helsinki Accords or Helsinki Declaration, was the final act of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe held in Helsinki, Finland, during July and August of 1975. Thirty-five states signed the declaration, which was an attempt to improve the relations between the Communist bloc and the West.

The civil rights portion of the agreement provided the basis for the work of the Moscow Helsinki Group an independent non-governmental organisation created to monitor compliance to the Helsinki Accords (which evolved into several regional committees, eventually forming the International Helsinki Federation and Human Rights Watch). While these provisions applied to all signatories, the focus of attention was on their application to the Soviet Union and its Warsaw Pact allies, including Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Poland and Romania.

According to the Cold War scholar John Lewis Gaddis in his book "The Cold War: A New History" (2005), "Leonid Brezhnev had looked forward, Dobrynin recalls, to the 'publicity he would gain... when the Soviet public learned of the final settlement of the post-war boundaries for which they had sacrificed so much'... '[Instead, the Helsinki Accords] gradually became a manifesto of the dissident and liberal movement'... What this meant was that the people who lived under these systems - at least the more courageous - could claim official permission to say what they thought."

As Eric Hobsbawm, the Marxist historian, has concluded, this was a time of appalling suffering - 175 million people died of secular ideologies, many of course, in the Soviet Gulags, documented brilliantly by Anne Applebaum, in her book of that name.

It was also a time of great suffering - perhaps personified by Alexander

Solzynitsyn, and who said this:

\* "Gradually it was disclosed to me that the line separating good and evil passes not through states, not between classes, not between political parties either, but right through every human heart, and through all human hearts. This line shifts. Inside us, it oscillates." -

\* The Helsinki activists were inspired by the increasing willingness of significant figures to openly express their dissent. I think principally of the academician, Andrei Sakharov, and the role of Jewish Refuseniks, like Vladimir Slepak, whom I met at the time with his wife, Martha, in their Moscow flat.

\* Gradually this gave courage to others. Alexander Ogorodnikov, for instance, became one of the first Russian Orthodox lay people to speak out and to create underground ways of spreading encouragement and dissent, not least through Samizdat publications. I travelled to Moscow with the first legally imported off set litho printing machine, which Alexander and I assembled in his offices.

The churches, across Eastern Europe, became a major player in the demand for change. In Ukraine I met Ivan Gel and Bishop Pavlo Vasylyk - who had spent 17 and 18 years respectively in Soviet prisons, mainly at Prem, the Camp of Death. I met the bishop's young chaplain, who had been sent to Chernobyl to clear radioactive waste - without any protective clothing - as a punishment for celebrating the liturgies in the open.

In Romania I met Cardinal Alexandru Todea - given a life sentence in 1951 as "an enemy of the state" - and who spent 14 years in Romanian prisons.

In Transylvania Pastor Lazlo Tokes became the inspiration for the Romanian revolution. Today he is a member of the European Parliament.

In Poland, the emergence of the Solidarity Movement, led by Lech Walesa, and inspired by John Paul II became the catalyst for the workers movement which spelt out the end of Soviet oppression:

John Paul said:

"Warsaw, Moscow, Budapest, Berlin, Prague, Sofia and Bucharest have become stages in a long pilgrimage toward liberty.

It is admirable that in these events, entire peoples spoke out - women, young people, men, overcoming fears, their irrepressible thirst for liberty speeded up developments, made walls tumble down and opened gates."

North Korea is not the same as any of these countries but there are parallels and lessons which we can draw. The key will be engagement, encouragement, travel, communication, and persistence: the use of soft power. Writing in "Peace While Advancing Rights: The Untried Approach to North Korea" the American analyst, David Hawk, also advocates this approach.

"For the last twenty years, the paradigm that has guided approaches to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK or North Korea) is that the pursuit of peace - either in the form of diplomatic discussions centering on North Korea's nuclear weapons and missile programs or in the form of extended social, economic, and political engagement aims at fostering improved relationships between the DPRK and other nation-states that intersect in Northeast Asia- requires that human rights concepts be kept off the table and that North Korea's potential partners in the pursuit of peace and reconciliation affect a deaf, dumb, blind and mute posture toward the systematic, severe, and widespread human rights violations in the DPRK. Over the last two decades.... there have been recurring cycles of provocation, confrontation, and crisis alternating with negotiations and engagement.

Throughout, these two contrasting approaches to North Korea- negotiations, reconciliation, and engagement in the pursuit of peace in ways that rebuff human rights considerations, or alternatively, the raising of human rights concerns about North Korea in the absence of an attempt to reconcile and engage the DPRK- have both failed. .... [There is] an alternative that would pursue peace, engagement, and reconciliation in association with the promotion and protection of human rights: a fundamentally new and untried approach."

In 2004, in the House of Lords, I said:

"I believe that hard-headed, Helsinki-style engagement is worthwhile. The Helsinki Final Act 1975 linked foreign policy to basic human rights principles. That measure recognised that increasing the pressure for human rights, in combination with a firm policy of military containment, could act as the catalyst for change. The history of the DPRK suggests that mere threats will be counter-productive, inducing paranoia, isolationism and the destabilisation of the region. ... However, the regime knows that the status quo is not an option. The DPRK now needs a face-saving exit strategy"

This approach is about healing history and creating a future.

North Korea has been caught in a time warp. This is the unfinished business of

1953. Change occurred in many parts of the Soviet Empire without a shot being fired. A Helsinki Process in North Korea, Helsinki with a Korean Face, represents the best hope for achieving a similar outcome.

Since 1977, North Korea has proposed Three Charters of National Reunification. In 1977, the first principles were set out, proposing a peaceful reunification on the basis of "Grand National Unity" , to be achieved by Koreans regardless of different political or religious beliefs and without foreign intervention. In 1980, North Korea proposed the establishment of a democratic federal republic of Koryo, built on the principle of "one country, two systems". This was developed in 1992 into a ten- point programme for "Grand National Unity", a detailed action plan to achieve independent, peaceful reunification. This emphasised the unique contribution to be made by all political forces, the reunion of separated families on a regular basis, the promotion of exchanges between the two sides across the border, and an end to political retaliation and "slandering" of each other. Broadly, South Korea has expressed agreement with these proposals, and the international community welcomed the concept of "one country, two systems" and a federal structure for reunification. We would do far better focusing on achieving this than on a one track security orientated approach.

Let me then conclude by saying something about how this theoretical approach is already being put into practice.

#### 7. 2010 Visit - "Better to Build Bridges than to Build Walls."

During my three visits to North Korea, with my colleague, Baroness (Caroline) Cox we have consistently urged its leaders to find a peaceful way forward whilst also documenting and raising examples of egregious violations of human rights - and urging economic, social, humanitarian and political reforms.

In 2003, at Panmunjom, on the 38th parallel which divides north from south, and where the 1953 Armistice was signed, I wrote in the visitors book that it is "better for men to build bridges than to build walls."

Since then we have both quietly persisted with constructive, critical engagement, mindful of the old Korean proverb that "to begin is to half complete the task."

In 2003 we published our report "Finding Ways Forward" and in 2009 in our report "Carpe Diem", we urged the incoming Obama Administration seize both the moment and the initiative. The White House missed the chance to announce the formal ending of the war and the creation of diplomatic presence in Pyongyang.

Throughout the Cold War, the U.S. had a comparable presence in Soviet Union and its satellites, and also in China - allowing it to pursue the Helsinki process of

human rights engagement and to see both economic liberalisation and political reform. But, like the Bourbons, we seem to have learnt nothing, failing to pursue a comparable approach with North Korea.

Britain, to its credit, has had an Ambassador and embassy in Pyongyang since 2000 - and this has enhanced our ability to engage the country's leadership and to influence its future. Ambassador Peter Hughes is widely admired for his thoughtful diplomacy and his refusal to give up on finding a peaceful way forward. This needs to be taken to its logical conclusion: a new Peace Conference, jointly convened by a neutral nation and by a combatant - Switzerland and the UK, perhaps - and held in Beijing, could enable the North and South to formally end the War, and to conclude a Peace Treaty.

This would transform the situation; and breathe new life into the six party talks on denuclearisation. It would also rightly acknowledge China's crucial, central role in finding a peaceful way forward. It is often forgotten how many Chinese lost their lives in the Korean War and that China knows that a failure to reform the North peacefully could result in War by accident at worst and sustained damage to China's reputation and disruption to its remarkable economic progress as best. A few days before my last visit to the DPRK, in Beijing I had the chance to meet General Jin Mao, a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the National People's Congress in China, Vice Chairman of the China-UK Friendship Group and a former admiral in the Chinese navy. General Jin said that ultimately the situation must be resolved by the governments of North and South Korea themselves, and a solution to the current impasse must be found by the Korean people. This was also strongly emphasised by DPRK officials. However, the international community can and should assist North and South Korea by facilitating talks, introducing confidence-building measures and helping to prepare a blue-print for a peace treaty.

Such a process should be held in parallel with, and complementary to, the Six-Party Talks between North Korea, South Korea, China, Japan, Russia and the United States. The Six-Party Talks relate specifically to denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula, and should resume as soon as possible. It must be recognised that the DPRK has energy security needs, and should be encouraged to find alternative sources of energy, entering into a denuclearisation process while developing hydro- power and other alternatives. In our report we suggest ways of engaging on social, welfare, cultural, health, education, judicial and human rights issues.

What is clear is that ignoring North Korea is not an option.

We need a variety of confidence building measures which painstakingly and patiently help North Korea to take its place as a welcome member of the world

community - and Pyongyang's University of Science and Technology (PUST), which I visited on the day before it officially opened for business, is a welcome harbinger of what that world might look like.

The story of its remarkable founder, James Kim, should not obscure the magnitude of the challenge or the unique difficulties of operating in a country which because of its oddities and enormities can all too easily become a copy writer's dream. But his is a story which inspires and encourages.

At the outbreak of the Korean War Dr.Kim was just 15 years-old. Never-the-less, he enlisted and fought against the communist north. Of 800 men in his unit he told me that just 17 survived.

One night on the battle- field James read the Gospel of St.John: "There and then I vowed to God to work with the Chinese and the North Koreans, then our enemies" - the very forces against which he had been bearing arms "If I survived the war I promised God that I would devote my life to their service, to peace and to reconciliation."

Without money, after the war, he travelled first to France, landing in Marseille, and then on to Switzerland and, in 1960, to Britain, where he studied at Bristol's Clifton Theological College. He later returned to Seoul and, in 1976, began a series of business enterprises in Florida. But he never forgot his vow and, in the 1980s he sold up, created a university college in South Korea and in 1992 was ready to export his model of education to China. Yanbian University of Science of Technology, in Yanji, north eastern China, was the result. This thriving institution, with 1700 students, places more than 90% of its students in jobs - cutting-edge roles in transforming China's huge agricultural sector and in its booming liberalised economy. Dr.Kim's dream was to provide the same opportunities for the North Korean students.

But, before that could happen, Dr.Kim was arrested. He had first made a series of intermittent visits to Pyongyang in 1987.

Initially, he was treated as a curiosity by the regime. After the death of Kim IL Sung the climate changed and, during a visit in 1998, Dr.Kim was thrown in jail, accused of being an American spy.

The situation appeared so bleak that he was told to write a will - and, in keeping with his vow to give everything back to his country - he even told his captors that once they had executed him they could have his body parts for medical research. James Kim told me that "The North Korean Government was moved and allowed me to return to my home in China." It was the first time someone was released after the death penalty was imposed. He made no public complaints about what

had occurred and "two years later they invited me back to North Korea and asked whether I would forget our differences and build a university for them like the one I had established in China."

Dr.Kim believes his experience is evidence that the regime "can be touched and messages can be communicated at some level. On a much grander scale we need to deepen the experience of reconciliation." Through education - which "has the power to transcend nationalistic boundaries and promote cross-cultural understanding and respect" - James Kim believes the situation can ultimately be transformed. The results will be durable and long lasting but will not happen overnight and "peace comes with a price."

Dr.Kim asserts that an approach based on patient love "is the only thing that can touch the heart of souls in North Korea. There is nothing that won't change or be inspired by it."

PUST's small corps of teachers, who are committed to ushering in North Korea's "information age", providing English language studies which will link its coming generation to global society, and who are now living in Pyongyang, are giving their services for little or no recompense. This is real service ministry - and they are looking for others to join them for a semester or for a full academic year.

Eventually, Dr.Kim wants to see an industrial park created around the PUST campus, providing a springboard for international companies. Ben Rosen, the American venture capitalist and founder of Compaq Computer corporation has visited the campus and believes that PUST will give its students "a window to the outside world and will create a new generation of technocrats with the potential to lead a post-Kim Jong Il government."

James Kim is under no illusions about what he has taken on: "Our work will be costly and sacrificial in many respects; and it will be time consuming and difficult. However, once that price has been paid it will, in turn, give us peace. We must pay the "price of peace" regardless of our discomfort" - a sentiment which sums up the remarkable story of a truly remarkable man; and a story and course of action with wider application.

The English language is the language which is used to teach at PUST - and they are looking for teachers willing to give up a year in return for hard work, accommodation and food to work with their undergraduates. English is now the country's second language and our team of four British Council teachers, teaching teachers, and the visits to the UK of students on short term language programmes, along with business and political delegations, will continue to change attitudes and bring reform and progress; so will the ability of North Koreans to access South Korean television and radio and to communicate with

the outside world. The hermit kingdom is no longer hermitically sealed.

To end:

North Korea needs to understand that the outside world wishes to help it, not destroy it; that, in this sixtieth anniversary year of the commencement of the Korean War, the international community wants to facilitate a formal peace treaty; that a denuclearised and unified Korean peninsula, supported by a Korean "Marshall Aid Programme" would be the outcome. Flowing from this would be prosperity, human dignity and fundamental freedoms. Mr. Ri Jong Hyok - Chairman of the DPRK's Committee for relations with the UK and EU - told us that the current level of economic co-operation between the DPRK and European countries was "pathetic." This would radically and dramatically change if the DPRK now follows China in ushering in an era of reform.

Whatever outside observers may think of the ideology or the system in North Korea, they should not confuse this with an unthinking hatred of North Korean people. They are a fine people who deserve much better. They deserve a liberalised economy, the implementation of the UN Conventions to which the DPRK has already committed itself, the development of an independent judiciary, a just penal system, an open society and freedom from fear. Above all, they deserve peace - and this I believe will only happen when we tenaciously pursue a robust and different strategy from that pursued hitherto.

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