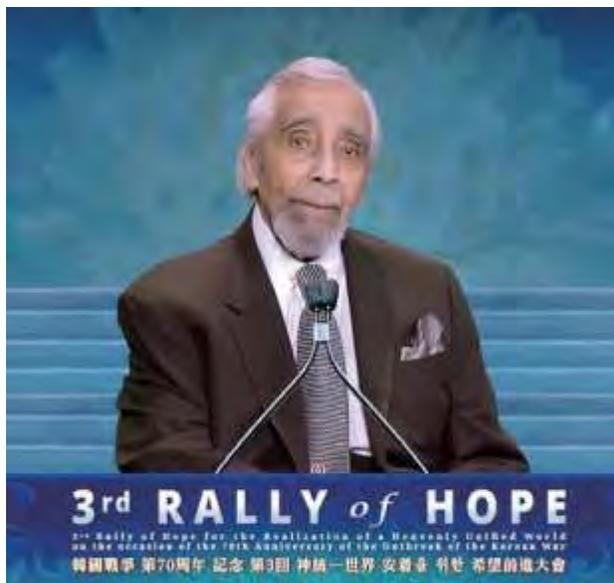


Third Rally of Hope Welcoming Address: Memories of the Korean War

Charles Rangel
November 22, 2020



I am Charlie Rangel, a former US congressman. I cannot tell you how honored and how humbled I am to be invited to participate in this great Rally of Hope and for peace. I want to especially thank Mother Moon for the sacrifices she has made to bring parliamentarians, religious leaders and world leaders together to pause, to pray and to work toward peace. I especially thank my dear friend Dan Burton, whom I served with in the United States House of Representatives.

But it is especially important not only for the world and the United States of America but for me personally, that you have selected this "war" in Korea, and I hesitate to say "war" because, in June of 1950, I served in the army with the Second Infantry Division, and we were advised by our Commander in Chief, President Harry Truman, that

the United Nations were going, not to war, but to engage in a police action to stop the invasion of the communists into South Korea.

Most of us had no idea as to what that meant. But I can tell you this: we went from Busan to the Nakdong River, advanced to the 38th parallel, passed Pyongyang, and stayed for a time on the borders of the Yalu River. To our complete surprise, we were surrounded by tens of thousands of Chinese forces. It was a massacre, and only a handful of the soldiers in my unit were able to survive it. Some were captured, others wounded, but many of us were just left for dead. Annually, we would communicate with each other, but as the years passed by, our numbers dwindled.

And so, this talk for peace is especially important to me because during Armistice Day, I had a chance to talk to the last member (he and I) that had served in Gunha-ri, on November 30, 1970, and that had escaped the massacre. Now, this rally is important because so many of you have come together, not to talk about war, but to lay down the swords, and to talk about peace.

Because, as I said, November 30 was the worst nightmare anybody had ever witnessed -- tens of thousands of enemy troops clashing with United Nations forces, hearing the moans, the sound of the bugles, seeing the sight of horses in the midst of the battle. Who can ever say that God made human beings in his likeness for them to continue to fight, and kill and destroy? I was wounded, left for dead, yet survived. And when I left Korea, I said to myself, I never, never, want to return to this situation that brought so much misery and pain to me.

But over the years, as I served in Congress and visited the great leaders in South Korea, I was able to see that the country that I left, that had been reduced to ashes, hopelessness and pain, grew out of those ashes to become a symbol of democracy, freedom, and economic expansion and an ally to the great United States of America. And so, being able to not talk about war today, but seventy years later, to talk about peace, is so deeply important. God did not create us -- no matter what religion we have, or no religion at all -- to destroy each other. And to think that all of you, over the years, under the leadership of Mother Moon, have come to see whether your voices can be heard through the insanity that we go through, with people destroying each other, has allowed me to believe that there is hope.

This is a Rally of Hope. And I do hope that as a result of our participation in this awesome assembly, the word will spread out to religious leaders and leaders in other fields all over the world that no matter what they may have considered to be their priority, no matter how they worship God, to know that nothing good comes out of war and that in order to enjoy all of the blessings that God has bestowed on us, our country and people all over the world must begin with peace. Congratulations for your great work. I look forward to supporting the aims and goals of your mission, and as the late John Lewis would say, never give up, never give out, and never give in. God bless all of you and thank you so much for this humbling opportunity.