

Congratulations on hosting the 2022 Summit for Peace on the Korean Peninsula

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February 11, 2022

World Summit 2022 Opening Ceremony -- Broadcast from Republic of Korea's National Assembly, National Diet of Japan and Jamsil Lotte Hotel

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Congratulations on hosting the 2022 Summit for Peace on the Korean Peninsula. I am honored to be able to explain my opinions on peace on the Korean Peninsula. As the attendees know through the media, etc., the current situation on the Korean Peninsula is complex and worrisome. In 2018, three inter-Korean summits and two U.S.-North Korea summits took place. I had high expectations that spring would come to the Korean Peninsula after a long wait.

However, in February 2019, the US–DPRK summit in Hanoi, Vietnam, ended without results. Afterward, North Korea turned to a hardline stance as it protested against the breakdown of the talks. And in 2020, with the outbreak of COVID-19 around the world, there was a huge barrier to communication between the countries. North Korea blocked their border with China and their border with Russia.

It has entered the world's strongest self-containment posture. These breakdowns in the US–DPRK negotiations, North Korea's backlash, and the Corona situation all came together. The situation on the Korean Peninsula is by no means optimistic as you can see today. In the new year, 2022, the first month of January in North Korea, there were seven missile launches, including medium- and long-range ballistic missiles. North Korea said that its successive armed protests were for the safety of their sovereign state. It is argued that it is a legitimate act in accordance with the five-year plan for strengthening and developing national defense capabilities.

In addition, North Korea insists that the international community, which takes issue with North Korea's defense strengthening activities, should abolish its double standards and hostile policy toward North Korea, threatening that if not, they will resume the nuclear activities that the international community is concerned about, such as nuclear tests and intercontinental ballistic missiles, which were suspended during inter-Korean and US-DPRK dialogues in 2018.

Under the circumstances, the United States is showing that it is keeping the door open for diplomacy and dialogue with North Korea without preconditions for the denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula, saying that the international community should come together to impose sanctions on North Korea's violations of UN Security Council resolutions.

China and Russia, which play an important role in resolving the Korean Peninsula issue, have not responded to the United Nations' Security-Council-level discussion on the issue of North Korea's successive missile launches. Rather, the conflict between the United States and China, such as a diplomatic boycott of the Beijing Olympics, and conflict between the US and Russia over the Ukraine crisis show no sign of resolution. It is regrettable that the North Korean issue is not a priority in the interests of the leaders of the United States, China and Russia.

What, realistically, can be done?

What we all have in common today at the 2022 Korean Peninsula Peace Summit, I believe, is a desire for peace and prosperity on the Korean Peninsula and ultimate peaceful reunification. The question is how to realistically achieve these common goals.

Since the division of the Korean Peninsula in August 1945, efforts have been made for peace, stability and peaceful reunification on the Korean Peninsula, both at the level of inter-Korean relations and at the international level, including with the United Nations. There are no voices arguing that war should break out on the Korean Peninsula or that we should live forever divided into North Korea and South Korea. In resolving these issues on the Korean Peninsula, I have an idea that we must all work together.

First of all, we are going to solve the Korean Peninsula problem through active involvement and

diplomatic means, not through the military force of war. Of course, diplomatic measures should include deterrence by force in preparation for North Korea's reckless provocation.

The second point is that the core of the Korean Peninsula problem is North Korea. The change of the South Korean government and the position of the US, 22 True Peace China and Russia may slow the resolution of the Korean Peninsula problem, but since they are not the main factors causing the Korean Peninsula problem, we should focus on North Korea and move forward; that is, to look at North Korea from the North's point of view, not ours, and pursue a consistent North Korea policy that is not affected by changes in the situation, such as internal regime change, so that North Korea can move in the direction we want. Just as West Germany had a consistent East German policy that led to a form of German unification, South Korea and the international community should have a consistent policy to bring about change in North Korea.

The third point is to strengthen the role of the private sector in changing North Korea. It is said that commercial transactions and humanitarian aid are carried out at the private level even during inter-state wars conducted by government authorities. When the role of the authorities in the diplomatic and military security dimension is added along with the role of the private sector to communicate with and have exchanges with North Korea through various materials at various levels, it will be possible to effectively bring about change in North Korea while stably managing the situation on the Korean Peninsula.

The people themselves have modernized

The center of North Korean society is shifting from the generation of anti-Japanese partisans before 1950 to the younger generation who prefer economic prosperity and convenience in life such as regarding information and communication. With over five hundred market stalls across North Korea, the distribution of more than five million cell phones, and the spread of Hallyu culture [Korean Wave], it is difficult for the North Korean authorities to recklessly suppress the desires of the civilian population. North Korea tried to weaken the power of donju [entrepreneurs, masters of money] in the market through currency reform in 2009, but when it did not work in the market, it changed to a relationship of coexistence with the market. North Korea's leadership is highly likely to accept the current trend that brings economic prosperity as long as it does not harm their position. Even Chairman Kim will not be able to let go of his economic prosperity enjoyed from his youthful experience studying abroad in Bern, Switzerland. In the early days of his administration, he promised to solve the problems of food and clothing for the North Korean people, and while firing missiles one after another, he hoped to build an economic powerhouse to improve people's living standards, such as the construction of a modernized socialist rural area and the construction of a modern general hospital in Pyongyang. An economic and social approach is worth trying. Some role of Southeast Asian countries in putting these three ideas into practice is expected.

North Korea will open its ears and listen to the voices of the ASEAN countries, which have strong solidarity with North Korea. As ASEAN countries can communicate with North Korea, it can make North Korea realize that the international community will not harm them and that their economic growth and system maintenance are possible through cooperation with the international community. If the changes in North Korea bring stability and prosperity to the Korean Peninsula, it will be beneficial to Southeast Asian countries as well.

In this respect, Cambodia and the Universal Peace Federation (UPF), which are establishing diplomatic ties with the two Koreas at the same time, plan to actively engage North Korea regarding peace on the Korean Peninsula. This is very meaningful and is expected to bear full fruit. Once again, I am honored to be able to participate in the meaningful 2022 Korean Peninsula Peace Summit and to give my opinions on the peaceful reunification of the Korean Peninsula based on my experiences at the Ministry of Unification, in the government of the Republic of Korea.