

Session V

Role of International Society
for the Peace of the Korean
Peninsula

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Accomplishments at the inter-Korean Summit Meeting and Future Task

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□ Greetings

Ladies and gentlemen!

I am pleased to meet you today, and I welcome the Anglican Church leaders who traveled far to visit Korea.

I learned that you have finished a three-day tour to Mt. Geumgang.

Mt. Geumgang has a special meaning to the Korean people, and it is known as one of the great mountains in Korea.

It is also "a mountain of peace" in that today's inter-Korean relations began with the Mt Geumgang tourism project.

In the first year, the number of tourists was only ten thousand, but now, there are more than three hundred thousand tourists visiting the mountain each year.

Inter-Korean relations have also made much progress as the 30-fold expansion of the tourism project.

While you were in Mt. Geumgang, I attended the first Inter-Korean Prime Ministerial Talks held in Seoul.

It has been 15 years since the prime ministers from both Koreas met for the last time in 1992.

We put the highest priority of the talks on practically implementing the summit agreements and I believe that the talks have faithfully met those goals.

Now, the 2007 South-North Declaration has fully entered a phase of implementation.

Implementing agreements is much more difficult than reaching them.

There is a Korean saying which says to taste salt in food, one need to necessarily add it to the food.

At the talks, we tried to put salt into the dishes.

By successfully finishing the Prime Ministerial Talks, we took a first step in the right direction toward implementing the 2007 South-North Declaration.

We will speed up our efforts to open a new future of peace on the Korean peninsula.

□ Changes in Circumstances Surrounding the Korean Peninsula

In year 2007, a new horizon is opening on the Korean peninsula, the last island of the Cold War in the world.

Such change can be described as new development in history and is certainly a fundamental change holistically different from the past.

At the center of the change is the relations between the two Koreas.

For the past ten years, cross-visits between the two Koreas increased 216 times, the inter-Korean talks increased 8 times, social and cultural exchanges increased by 46 times and economic cooperation increase 35 times.

For 45 years since the end of the Korean War in 1953, only 2,980 people traveled between the two sides, but today, close to 2,000 people are traveling between the two sides on daily basis, by road alone.

Land, air and sea routes between the South and the North have opened to connect the two Koreas into one and the path across the military demarcation line which has been blocked for half a century has opened again.

With the opening of the path, the South and North Korean people have opened their minds as well. Leaving behind the past marked by confrontation and hostility, we are now forging a new future of co-existence, co-prosperity, reconciliation and cooperation.

Such advances in inter-Korean relations created today's opportunities to make changes in circumstances on the Korean peninsula.

Another change is improvement of Korea-China relations and Korea-Russia relations.

57 years ago, at the time of the Korean War, China and Russia were on the North Korean side and they fought against South Korea

42 years later, in 1992, China and Russia normalized their relations with South Korea.

The relations did not stop at merely opening embassies, but the two relations are developing substantially through exchanges and cooperation in various areas.

Since the normalization of Korea-China relations, the number of people traveling between the two nations increased by 37 times and the trade volume between the two nations is twice that of Korea and the US

Trade volume between Korea and Russia also increase by 50 times since normalization of relations, and next year, there is a schedule to launch a satellite rocket (KSLV-I) developed jointly by the two nations.

As the Six-Party Talks proceed smoothly, the North Korean nuclear issue, which has been haunting inter-Korean relations for the past 15 years, is being resolved, and this has also brought much change to the Korean peninsula.

With the September 19 Joint Statement, the February 13 Agreement and the October 3 Agreement in 2007, the North Korean nuclear issue has entered the phase of action for action reciprocity and has entered the disablement stage.

If the disablement is completed without much difficulties by the end of this year, we expect that we can enter the dismantlement process beginning next year.

□ Progress in North Korea-US Relations

Historically and geopolitically, the Korean peninsula issue is not confined to two Koreas alone.

This is a region where four great powers, the US, Japan, China and Russia all have stakes and interest.

The confrontational structure that surrounds the peninsula has a long history, and it

has defined dispute and conflict on the peninsula.

In order for peace to be established on the peninsula, there needs to be regional cooperation and a new order that can enable the countries of the region to overcome long-standing historical discord.

This is the reason for discussing peace in Northeast Asia, and one of the central issue is the North Korea-US relations.

The North Korean nuclear issue is actually an outcome of deterioration of bilateral ties between North Korea and the US.

In 1992, when the first North Korean nuclear crisis happened, North Korea and the US negotiated for two years and agreed on the Agreed Framework.

As a result of the Agreed Framework, a light-water reactor was being built in the North by KEDO (Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization).

But with the emergence of the HEU (highly enriched uranium) issue, KEDO had to shut down, the bilateral ties worsened and it eventually led to the nuclear testing by North Korea.

Following the Geneva agreement, there have been no efforts to restore the bilateral relations and this is the main reason for the shut-down of KEDO

The US designated North Korea as one of the state sponsors of terrorism in 1988 and it has maintained sanctions against North Korea under the Trading with the Enemy Act since 1950 when the Korean War broke out.

North Korea was afraid of the US mentioning a preemptive strike against it.

Under such circumstances, North Korea developed nuclear weapons and it has consistently pursued bilateral talks with the US to resolve the issue.

There have been arguments over which is the first between the dismantlement of nuclear weapons and normalization of relations. But without the resolution of the two issues, we have a long way to go to achieve peace on the Korean peninsula.

But recently, there are new developments for the two issues to be resolved together.

President Bush have mentioned declaration of an end to the war two times and working group meetings to normalize the relations between North Korea and the US are going well.

Nuclear facilities in Yongbyon were shut down in July this year and the disablement phase has begun since November 5.

These developments are bringing fundamental changes to the order of the Korean peninsula and shed new light of hope to the peninsula.

Future Tasks

Now, three tasks lie before us to be dealt with.

First of all, South and North Korea and the US should actively pursue a way forward to achieve peace on the Korean peninsula.

In light of this, it is very meaningful that President Bush mentioned an end the war in Hanoi last year.

Declaring an end to the war is the first step in the path toward ending the current state of semi-war, resolving the North Korean nuclear issue and ultimately establishing a peace regime on the peninsula.

North Korea have often expressed its firm determination for dismantling nuclear programs and denuclearization of the peninsula.

In the summit meetings last month, North Korea clearly expressed such position to President Roh Moo-hyun.

I hope that North Korea and the US would reach a consensus on the matter at a early date to facilitate ultimate resolution.

Secondly, the South and the North, the parties directly concerned in the issue of the Korean peninsula, should play a responsible role in advancing peace on the peninsula.

North agreed to take full responsibilities as parties directly concerned to establish a peace regime on the peninsula.

It means that two Koreas should take the initiative in removing the possibility of war and forging peace on the peninsula through joint efforts.

More specifically, the South and the North agreed to develop inter-Korean relations into those of mutual respect and trust transcending the differences in ideologies and systems.

Also, the two Koreas agreed to end military hostility and closely cooperate to guarantee reduction of tension and peace on the peninsula.

Of course, we will promote these processes in close cooperation with related countries.

Lastly, the South and the North should be committed to opening a new future.

With the 2007 South-North Korean Summit Meeting, the dark past marked by confrontation and hostility became foregone history.

Now we are entering a new era of peace and cooperation.

The future lies before us where permanent peace is established on the Korean peninsula and the two Koreas are working together for co-prosperity.

This is the era of peace and prosperity on the Korean peninsula and in Northeast Asia that this administration has been consistently calling out.

The new era calls for new values and strategies.

We need new values and strategies that can accommodate and promote greater trust and closer cooperation between the two Koreas.

What is essential is our bold determination for peace.

Now is the time for us to end the war and we should not be hesitant in ending the war.

The process of dismantling North Korea's nuclear programs and concluding a peace treaty will take long time to be completed and there may be complex procedures.

There can be unexpected obstacles, which, in turn, will delay the process over and over again.

What matters is that declaring an end to the war should facilitate the process of establishing peace on the Korean peninsula.

To that end, it is urgent that, whatever it is called, summit declaration of four parties put a milestone for peace on the peninsula.

The accomplishments so far were made possible by the strong desire of the Korean people who have supported our unification policy, coupled with the desire of the people of the world who hope for peaceful future.

Now is the time to gather our strengths anew for the future.

We need to pull our desire and ability together so that we can open a new future.

Peace is common desire of Koreans and people of the world alike.

I hope that this light of peace that we have on the Korean peninsula can shed light in Northeast Asia and beyond.

In closing, I would like to ask you all for your support for our efforts toward peace that we so desire. Thank you.