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NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF KOREA

**“STRENGTHENING ROK-US AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION FOR
NORTHEAST ASIA PEACE AND SECURITY”**

Strengthening ROK-US and Int'l Cooperation for Northeast Asia Peace and Security

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Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen who are participating in the International Forum on ONE Korea!
Good afternoon. I am Chan-woo Park, a member of the Korean National Assembly.

I would like to thank you for your warm welcome. It is a great honor to have an opportunity to share my thoughts with you under the theme of “the Strengthening of ROK-US Cooperation for Peace and Security in Northeast Asia” at the ONE Korea Forum here in Washington D.C., which is the center of world politics.

I would like to extend my deepest gratitude to the Global Peace Foundation, Action of Korea United, EastWest Institute and ONE Korea Foundation who organized this Forum. Six members of both the ruling and opposition parties of the Korean National Assembly are participating in today’s Forum, together with about 40 representatives from Korean civic groups who are leading the peaceful unification movement. I believe that they are here today with the desire for the security of Northeast Asia and world peace, regardless of their political positions.

As you are well aware, back in the Korean War about 60 years ago, young people from 16 peace loving countries including the United States shed their valuable blood to protect the Republic of Korea. Thanks to their noble sacrifice and the cherished values of peace and freedom that they have protected, the Republic of Korea could move forward into a hopeful future, arising from the ashes of the war.

After the War, Korea has created miracles by achieving industrialization and democratization at the same time through the past growth unprecedented in the world history, while enjoying peace and prosperity backed by the Combined Defense System of the solid ROK-US alliance. We have now become the world’s 10th largest economy and serve as a responsible member of the global community for world peace and the co-prosperity of humanity.

However, the Korean Peninsula is now facing the most serious security crisis since the Korean War due to Kim Jong Un regime’s reckless nuclear provocation. North Korea is threatening both South Korea and the United States via its 6th nuclear test and intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM), while the ROK-US alliance is responding strongly to such provocation by saying that it is willing to even impose military options.

Military tensions, including the joint operations between the US and South Korea and between the US and Japan, on the rise, as the US nuclear-powered aircraft carrier fleet and nuclear-powered submarines of the largest scale in history were positioned around the Korean Peninsula.

Although the global community has put a lot of diplomatic effort into deterring North Korean nuclear development for the past 25 years, North Korea’s nuclear missile provocation deteriorating day by day drove the Korean Peninsula to sit on a powder keg.

If war broke out on the Korean Peninsula again, the Korean Peninsula would suffer tremendous devastation which even cannot be compared with the Korean War in the past, and it would inevitably cause military conflicts among neighboring powers such as the US, China, Japan and Russia, putting the whole of Northeast Asia into the spiral of war and resulting in the Third World War. Therefore, I believe we must prevent war on the Korean Peninsula.

Under these circumstances, the global community has been putting in diplomatic efforts to stop North Korea's nuclear development through the 6-party talks, while at the same time, strengthening pressures and sanctions through global cooperation.

Unfortunately, however, such efforts have been in vein, and due to such failure, the global community is now taking a stronger position than ever to strengthen the level of sanctions and pressures on the North through global cooperation. Experts believe that the success of the global sanctions and pressures on the North depends on the cooperation of China and Russia.

Despite the strong demand of the Trump administration, China, the ally of North Korea that regards the North as a buffer for the US and Japan, is not likely to block the oil pipe, the lifeline of the North. There are signs that the North Korean economy is getting harder as China is actively participating in the UN sanction resolution against North Korea. Considering the distinct characteristics of the North Korean regime, the passive attitude and hidden assistance of China, however, it is unlikely that North Korea would surrender in a short period of time.

North Korea's obsession and commitment to its nuclear program is far stronger than the global community thinks and its economy's dependence on foreign countries is so low, which enables North Korea to endure the international sanctions much better than expected.

The nuclear armament of North Korea is not a means for diplomatic negotiations or domestic politics, but a part of the long-term national strategy, including the consideration of unification under communism by war, and is a strong driving force to maintain the North Korean regime, all of which make it difficult to change the North's position.

Former North Korean Diplomatic Minister to the UK Thae Yong-ho rightly said, "the goal of chairman Kim Jong of the Korean Workers' Party is the withdrawal of the US forces from South Korea and the resultant collapse of the South Korean system."

The unification of the Korean Peninsula under communism via the nuclear missile development and anti-Americanism is the ruling ideology of the North and basis for the Kim Jong Un regime. Therefore, North Korea could not easily abandon its nuclear missile development and would think its abandonment of nuclear development under global pressures leads to the collapse of both Kim Jong Un and its regime.

The global community believes that if the North Korean economy is seriously hurt by strong global sanctions and pressures, it will eventually come to the table of dialogue. If China and Russia actively participate in international cooperation, the dialogue would begin finally, though it will take some time.

However, it is impossible for North Korea to abandon its nuclear program, the last resort of the North who cannot compete with South Korea in terms of the economy size and conventional military power.

North Korea will try to earn time to advance and deploy its nuclear missiles for actual war through the brinkmanship tactic leaning on the force of China and Russia as it did in the past 6-party talks, make a peace agreement with the US instead of freezing its nuclear missiles, abolish or minimize the ROK-US joint military drills, demand the withdrawal of the US military from South Korea, and be guaranteed the large-scale economic support by the global community.

Despite the US military pressures, North Korea seems to believe that the United States will not engage in war by even taking risks of confrontation with China and Russia. Based on such belief, North Korea will continue its provocation to raise tensions to achieve its goal. North Korea's brinkmanship tactic works because only North Korea has nuclear weapons.

The way to resolve North Korea's nuclear superiority is to deploy tactical nuclear weapons in South Korea to strike a balance of terror. Once the tactical nuclear weapons are deployed to strike a nuclear balance on the Korean Peninsula, North Korea has no choice but to come to the negotiation table. Then, if we facilitate the denuclearization both on the South and North at the same time via the 6-party talks, I believe this would be the most practical and effective way for now to ultimately denuclearize the Korean Peninsula.

The tactical nuclear weapon sharing program with the US has already been implemented in the Western European countries, including Germany, Netherlands, Belgium, Italy and Turkey, and is in line with the NPT spirit to prevent nuclear proliferation in the sense that the nuclear development of each country could be curbed. Now, North Korea is utilizing its nuclear superiority to put pressures on South Korea and the United States.

Although South Korea has economic power 40 times stronger than that of the North and has stronger conventional military power, we can do nothing for the North's nuclear provocation since we have no nuclear weapons. While the South Korean government still adheres to the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, the denuclearization has already been broken realistically and it is time for South Korea to seek measures to save itself for its part.

Depending on the situation of each country, positions to look at North Korea's nuclear program would be somewhat different, but every country opposes the nuclear proliferation to neighboring countries due to North Korea. If North Korea continues its nuclear development, however, we cannot unconditionally block the neighboring countries from developing nuclear weapons for the purpose of their defense. If the US and China do not want the nuclear armament of South Korea, Japan and other Northeast Asian countries, I believe we need to seriously consider the redeployment of US tactical nuclear weapons on the Korean Peninsula in order to prevent the nuclear domino effect in the Northeast Asian region.

The North Korean nuclear issue is not a problem only for the two Koreas. It is a matter of whether the Northeast Asian region is in a direction to peace or war and a matter of whether the humanity moves toward world peace and co-prosperity or war and annihilation.

In order to maintain the peace of the world as well as Northeast Asia, the cooperation of great powers around the Korean Peninsula and the global community are of utmost importance. I believe it is very meaningful that the global civil societies gather their forces to hold the International Forum on ONE Korea under the theme of peace and unification on the Korean Peninsula both in Washington and Seoul, under such a cruel situation.

Taking this opportunity, we should seek measures for co-security and peace on the Korean Peninsula and in the Northeast Asia region which will be hit hardest by the North Korean nuclear problem. We should also urge the cooperation of relevant countries and actions of the citizens of the global civil societies in order to cope with threats to all humanity caused by North Korea's nuclear provocation.

In addition, we should appeal to the global community that peace and unification on the Korean Peninsula is the one and only way to fundamentally resolve the North Korean nuclear problem, bring permanent peace to the world and benefit all humanity, and should create a global consensus.

I hope this forum could provide an opportunity for all members of the global community to recognize the importance of realizing peace and unification on the Korean Peninsula, and could mark a milestone for peace in Northeast Asia and in the world via global consensus.

I once again would like to express my deepest gratitude to the organizers and related officials of this forum for welcoming me and my colleagues with warm heart in Washington.

Thank you very much.