

10th CSCAP General Conference
Session 1: Challenges and Posture in the Asia Pacific
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Amb. Bold
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to thank Amb. Bold for the nice introduction and the ISS for the warm hospitality and meticulous preparation. I am deeply honored to have an opportunity to share my ideas on ways to promote peace and security in Northeast Asia.

As we mark the 70th anniversary of the end of the Second World War, the region as a whole is still troubled by what many experts call the “Asia Paradox” phenomenon, where political and security cooperation lags behind the high-degree of economic interdependence among the countries in the region. Indeed, Northeast Asia remains the only region in the world where a multilateral mechanism, to address various issues of common interest and to resolve conflicts, is yet to be established. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon once described the region as a ‘crucial missing link’ with no regional cooperation mechanism.

I don’t think we neglected efforts to enhance political cooperation among regional players. For example, today’s meeting provides a valuable opportunity for officials and experts to discuss political and security issues and challenges.

However, the absence of regional cooperation mechanism shows us the complexity of the political issues that we are facing. As we all know this region has historic and territorial issues where national interests compete and sometimes collide. There are also numerous traditional challenges such as the threat of weapons of mass destruction and the possibility of an arms race. In addition, non-traditional challenges like climate change, humanitarian crises and trans-boundary contagious diseases burden us, too.

My government’s Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperation Initiative (NAPCI) seeks to begin accumulating interactions on soft security such as environment, disaster relief and nuclear safety so that these interactions gradually develop into habits of cooperation. Eventually, these habits can be nurtured into the building of trust, which in due course of time, will help usher in peace and cooperation in Northeast Asia.

If I may focus on the situation on the Korean Peninsula, building habits of cooperation and mutual trust are essential elements of my government’s *Trustpolitik*. It is a concept that seeks to transform fragile peace into a more durable and genuine one through a gradual interactive process of building trust. While maintaining deterrence to safeguard

peace, in order to make peace, the *Trustpolitik* aims at a gradual build up of trust by starting with cooperation at the easiest level, such as providing humanitarian assistance and resuming the inter-Korean dialogue. I hope that the reunion of the separated families being held currently in Korea will serve as a building block in improving the inter-Korean relations.

Against this backdrop, now I would like to turn to the North Korean nuclear issue, which is one of the most challenging security issues of the region. In fact, I have spent quite a few years of my career dealing with this issue.

The efforts of the concerned parties to resolve the issue through dialogue and negotiation gave birth to the Six-Party Talk in 2003, comprising South and North Korea, the U.S., China, Russia and Japan.

Through extensive discussion, in 2005, the six parties agreed on the common goal of the Six-Party talks: the verifiable denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula in a peaceful manner.

What I learned during this process was that only through repeated dialogue and negotiation can we invite flexibility required for the progress of the matter in question. The Joint Statement of 2005 made room for a common denominator, reflecting the six parties' voluntary commitment in a comprehensive and balanced manner.

Last month marked the 10th anniversary of the adoption of the Joint Statement. At that time in 2005, we were much closer to a comprehensive conclusion of the issue than the Iranian nuclear negotiations. Now, the situation has been reversed.

Compared to the last session of the Six-Party Talks in 2008, it became more difficult to resume the Six-Party Talks because of the aggravated situation that you are all familiar with. Nevertheless, the resolve of the five parties to tackle this issue through negotiation is stronger than ever.

We have invited North Korea several times this year to 'exploratory talks' to deliver our view and listen to North Korea's thinking. For exploratory talks, there are no preconditions to fulfill or any formalities to meet.

Although North Korea has not been positively responding to our invitations, we will keep our doors open and will continue to exert efforts for dialogue.

Recently, North Korea is emphasizing the necessity of a peace treaty. The September 19 Joint Statement clearly states that a permanent peace regime can be negotiated at an appropriate separate forum by directly related parties. As the denuclearization progresses through the Six-Party process, the commitments in the Joint Statement will be realized.

North Korea also urges the international community to recognize it as a nuclear-weapon state. However, I would like to mention that it is rather North Korea who has to accept the reality that no country in the world would recognize North Korea as a nuclear-weapon state.

Last week, the Presidents of the ROK and the President of the U.S. made it clear through a Joint Statement that the ROK and the U.S. maintain no hostile policy towards North Korea and remain open to dialogue. The ROK and the US, along with the international community, stand ready to offer a brighter future to North Korea, if North Korea demonstrates a genuine willingness to abide by its international obligations and commitments. There could not be a more reliable assurance than this Joint Statement.

I hope that North Korea comes to the exploratory talks and then to meaningful Six-Party Talks,

to build a better and safer future for the people of the Korean Peninsula and the region.

Thank you very much. /End/