

Excerpts from Jeju Forum 2017 Keynote Speech  
**Sharing a Common Vision for  
Asia's Future**

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To have a common vision for the future, we need a common understanding of our past, at least the history of last hundred years. The first half of the twentieth century was the last part of the age of imperialism and the rise of totalitarianism as well as militarism. Korea had experienced more than its share of suffering as a colony of Japan(1910-1945) and a division of nation by the Allied Powers(1945-present) which led to a devastating war (1950-1953) as a part of the cold war.

From the early stage of the independence movement, Koreans sought not only a restoration of an independent nationhood but also a regional or Asian peace as its necessary condition. It perhaps reflected an instinctive perspective based on the peculiarity of a geopolitical setting around the Korean peninsula. Three immediate neighbours - China, Russia and Japan-are major powers. So is the more recent neighbor, the United States whose presence in the region has sharply increased since the second World War. Two Korean states(ROK and DPRK) find themselves today as small or medium sized states surrounded by the four major powers. To discuss the prospect of war and peace in this setting, it is necessary to examine relations among the following three dimensions. First, the domestic political dynamics in the two Korean states. Second, the relations and tensions between South Korea and North Korea. Third, power relations among the four major powers and their impact on the two Korean states.

We might briefly look at the developmental dynamics operating in the Korean Peninsula, particularly in South Korea. From the general election supervised by the United Nations Commission and

subsequent inauguration of the Republic of Korean government in 1948, South Korea pursued its national development in accordance with the international norms and main trends. Korean democracy had experienced its ups and downs including military led authoritarian era which achieved a remarkable economic development.

In 1987, joining the wave of democratization coming from the Southern Europe (Portugal, Spain, Greece), South Korea succeeded in a peaceful transition to democracy from the authoritarian era. Newly elected President and national Assembly had not only successfully hosted the 1988 Seoul Olympics, but also formalized a new Unification Formula which recognized the existence of the two Korean states. According to the new formula the North and South should jointly preserve peace and move towards the unification.

Encouraged by the ending of the cold war and the German unification in 1990, the North and South Korea had a series of high level meetings and produced three achievements in 1991. First, the two sides signed the Formal Agreement for Reconciliations, Nonaggression, Exchange and Cooperation. Second, two Koreas formally became the members of the United Nations. Third, North and South made the Joint Declaration to keep the Korean Peninsula Nuclear free. In the meantime, between 1990 and 1992, South Korea established diplomatic relations with Russia, Hungary, Mongolia and China.

The euphoria we experienced was short indeed. From 1993, North Korea resumed the nuclear weapon development program and the subsequent history of this venture has been closely followed by all the concerned parties, particularly all the media. In fact, it has become one of the regular topics for Jeju Forum including this year. We could offer two suggestions for useful discussions.

Since the inauguration of President Trump of the United States last January, there has been a quick rise of expectation for a possibility of military showdown to resolve the North Korean nuclear/missile threat. At the same time, there has been various signs coming out of Washington and Beijing that some sort of dialogue or negotiation with North Korean is imminent. If a peaceful resolution of the North Korea nuclear crisis come to a negotiation table, we believe that the solution North Korea and South Korea reached in 1991 would be the most likely bases of any future agreement. This time, however, on top of the bilateral agreements between the two Korean governments, an international agreement to guarantee its effective implementation should be added. This could be a significant test for both major powers and directly involved regional parties to resolve the current conflict and to build bases for a regional and global peace.

As for the North Korean nuclear project, perhaps one of the most important item to consider by all the parties, particularly major powers, should be the following: In East Asia, should China remain the sole nuclear armed state, or should there be two nuclear states, China and North Korea? More

than a half-century ago, the Cuban Missile Crisis was resolved through a direct communication between Kennedy and Khrushchev. The North Korean case today is quite different from the Cuban case; however, it shows the power and role of major powers in resolving strategic crisis which endangered the peace regionally and globally. This could be an opportune time to see if there is any lesson to be learned from the previous crisis.

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