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JEONG KYONG-DOO

MINISTER OF NATIONAL DEFENSE, REPUBLIC OF
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The second plenary session is on Korean Security: The Next Steps. And as we were reminded of in the first plenary address by Acting Secretary of Defense Patrick Shanahan, the question of Korean security has been one of the biggest issues in Asia-Pacific relations and one on which the United States and others have called on friends, partners and allies to support a diplomatic solution to that challenge.

We are delighted in this second plenary to be hearing, in order, Jeong Kyeong-Doo, the Minister of National Defense of the Republic of Korea, who is attending his first Shangri-La Dialogue; and then Takeshi Iwaya, the Minister of Defense of Japan. Since the first IISS dialogue in 2002, the Japanese defence ministers have had a perfect record of attendance, 18 addresses by Japanese defence ministers at 18 Shangri-La dialogues – and I thank you, Iwaya-san, for continuing that excellent record. And we are delighted to welcome again to the IISS Shangri-La Dialogue Federica Mogherini, the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, and also importantly Vice President of the European Commission. She came to address the Shangri-La Dialogue in her first year as vice president and this is her concluding year as vice president of the European Commission. So the Shangri-La Dialogue has served as a bookend for her distinguished career representing European foreign policy internationally.

So with that preface, may I invite the Minister of National Defense of Korea to take the podium and address the Shangri-La Dialogue on Korean Security: The Next Steps. Thank you, sir.

Jeong Kyeong-Doo, Minister of National Defense, Republic of Korea

It is nice to meet you all. I am Minister Jeong from the Republic of Korea. First of all, I would like to extend my words of gratitude to Dr Chipman and the IISS for scheduling a plenary session on the Korean Peninsula at the world-renowned Shangri-La Dialogue. In the previous session, Secretary Shanahan gave remarks on the important topic of peace, stability and prosperity in the Pacific region. Thank you.

I would like to ask for your full cooperation of experiences in the civil sector for the peace and prosperity of Asia-Pacific Region. Furthermore, it is an honour for me to have this opportunity to speak about the Korean Peninsula and its next steps with your excellencies and accomplished security experts from all around the world.

With the three inter-Korean summits and two US-North Korean summits serving as a turning point, the security situation of the Korean Peninsula is undergoing dynamic changes towards solving the North Korean nuclear threat, boosting confidence and easing tensions between the two Koreas.

Today, I would like to explain the efforts to achieve denuclearisation and the establishment of permanent peace on the Korean Peninsula pursued by the Republic of Korea government within the ongoing changes of the security environment around the peninsula and to introduce a new Korean Peninsula regime to be heralded by these efforts.

Next year marks the 70th year since the beginning of the Korean War, which left the deepest scar in the modern history of the Republic of Korea. Even after signing the armistice agreement in 1953, tension, conflict and confrontation continue on the Korean Peninsula. In particular, North Korea's

nuclear pursuits have been a serious challenge and threat to the peace and stability of not only the Korean Peninsula, but also the international community.

Since the Moon administration set sail, however, the Republic of Korea has been able to find a ray of hope within the seemingly insurmountable clouds of war by improving inter-Korean relations and pursuing diplomatic solutions aimed at solving the nuclear threat.

Now the Republic of Korea is facing a watershed point that will echo throughout our 5,000-year-long history. Our grand journey, while laden with difficulties for the establishment of permanent peace on the Korean Peninsula, has begun.

During the 2018 Panmunjom Declaration and the Pyongyang Joint Declaration, President Moon and Chairman Kim have agreed on complete denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula and the establishment of a permanent peace regime, alleviation of military tensions and practical mitigation of the risk of war and a broad and ground-breaking development of inter-Korean relations.

In fact, the US-North Korea summit that took place right here in Singapore a year ago was a historical meeting where President Trump and Chairman Kim agreed on a complete denuclearisation of the peninsula and the improvement of bilateral relations, as well as mutual cooperation for the peace of the Korean Peninsula and the world.

While it is regrettable that the second US-North Korea summit held in Hanoi last February with the high hopes from the international community has stopped short of an agreement, I find much meaning in the fact that the two leaders were able to reaffirm their resolve for denuclearisation, have open and candid discussions with regards to their interests, and agreed to continue dialogue.

In this perspective, the current denuclearisation dialogue between the US and North Korea is clearly different from the past denuclearisation talks of the last 30 years that had missed their mark. While there may be more difficulties like the present into the future, these difficulties will surely be overcome as a part of an important step towards denuclearisation.

In order to hold on to this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for denuclearisation, it is important to continue maintaining the momentum of dialogue generated through the summit talks. A variety of measures must also be considered to provide North Korea with the assurance of a bright future of peace and prosperity.

The said measures would proceed within a framework agreed upon by the international community, like the UNSC resolutions. The Republic of Korea government will collaborate closely with the international community to achieve complete denuclearisation and the establishment of permanent peace in the Korean Peninsula, and it will make every effort for North Korea to take brave steps toward a new future of peace and prosperity.

As the Minister of National Defense, in charge of the security of our nation, I will actively support diplomatic efforts for denuclearisation while maintaining a seamless combined defence posture. Permanent peace on the Korean Peninsula, together with denuclearisation, is only achievable when the 70-year long fear and anxiety of war between South and North Korea is overcome and when military tension is alleviated and confidence is built.

Last September, the agreement of the implementation of the historic Panmunjom Declaration in the military domain, also known as the Comprehensive Military Agreement (CMA), was signed by the Minister of National Defense of the Republic of Korea and the Minister of the People's Armed Forces of North Korea in Pyongyang, serving us the first steps toward the establishment of permanent peace. The foundation of this agreement is comprised of the basic spirit of the 1953 armistice agreement in preventing armed confrontations in the peninsula, as well as the contents of previous inter-Korean agreements in the military domain. It includes practical matters to comprehensively halt acts of aggression toward each other.

On the post-war Korean Peninsula, the 155-mile-long military demarcation line was stretched coast-to-coast and the demilitarised zone enveloped the MDL as a buffer two kilometres north and south – 4km total – of the line.

The two Koreas have ceased military aggression in all domains including land, air and sea since last November. The DMZ is also undergoing actual demilitarisation, transforming into a zone of peace. An agreement was reached to withdraw all guarded posts installed at key points within the DMZ. The two sides withdrew on initial drill 11 GPs each last year and completed joint verification.

In addition, the two Koreas have completed demilitarisation measures, such as removing all firearms installed in joint guard posts in the Panmunjom Joint Security Area, an area known for its symbolic representation of the division of the peninsula. When free movement across the JSA commences, Panmunjom will be reborn as a symbol of peace and harmony.

Furthermore, in areas within the DMZ that includes territory from both Koreas, recovery of war remains has commenced for the first time since the division. This area has seen the deaths of countless young men and women in fierce battles between the two Koreas and many other participating nations, while access was restricted for all ever since the armistice agreement was signed in 1953. An inter-Korean agreement to jointly pursue recovery has brought newfound attention.

In support of the joint remains recovery, the two Koreas have de-mined the area and laid roads connecting to each other within the DMZ. The Republic of Korea has begun recovery efforts first as a means of preparing for joint recovery, leading to the identification of approximately 400 remains. Recently, items of various nationalities surviving their owners – such as the identification tag of a French soldier who fell during battle, US body armour and a Chinese gas mask – have been found.

I hope that the two Koreas can soon jointly undertake the noble task of returning all of our heroes that were left behind for the last 70 years to their homelands and families and expand this project across the entire DMZ.

Furthermore, the Republic of Korea government has not stopped at just implementing the CMA, but also constructed open DMZ peace trails in the vicinity of the DMZ, creating opportunities to experience peace at the heart of the division. The reason that the CMA is set apart from past agreements is that, rather than limiting ourselves to a declarative purpose, it makes tangible contributions for the alleviation of military tensions and confidence-building between the two Koreas. This has allowed for a more stable management of inter-Korean military relations than ever before. Efforts will continue for a complete denuclearisation and establishment of permanent peace on the

Korean Peninsula through the meticulous implementation of the CMA, making sure that the heightened military tensions, crises and friction of the past will not be repeated.

The Korean Peninsula will push on towards an era of peace and prosperity, taking persistent strides to transcend this history of division and preparation of reunification. This year marks the 100th anniversary of the establishment of the Provisional Government of the Republic of Korea, which was a declaration of our independence through the establishment of a provisional government in faraway lands.

The Republic of Korea government has named a new order of peace and coexistence and also of cooperation and prosperity, to be generated through the complete denuclearisation and establishment of the permanent peace in the peninsula, the new Korean Peninsula regime. The new Korean Peninsula regime seeks to be a peace-cooperating community, moving from war and conflict to peace and coexistence, and an economic cooperation community moving away from ideological camps to economic prosperity.

Firstly, for the establishment of the peace cooperation community, the two Koreas will eliminate the risk of war by easing military tensions, building confidence and constructing a foundation for the establishment of the permanent peace on the peninsula. In the near future, when the complete denuclearisation and normalisation of US-North Korea relations are achieved, the corridor regime on the Korean Peninsula will fall and give way to a new regime of peace. Denuclearisation and the establishment of the peace regime on the peninsula will conclude the longstanding division and conflict between the two Koreas and become stepping-stones for peace, coexistence and common prosperity.

Furthermore, peace on the peninsula is going to facilitate an atmosphere of peace and security cooperation in Northeast Asia and contribute to the establishment of a multilateral peace regime in East Asia.

The second pillar of the new Korean Peninsula regime, the economic cooperation community, is founded on a peace community. The peace economy refers to a positive cycle of peace in the economy where peace generates a newfound drive for economic growth and economic cooperation in turn generates peace. Peace on the Korean Peninsula and the activation of an inter-currency economy exchange will drive new economic growth not only on the Korean Peninsula, but also in East Asia and Eurasia as a whole.

The common economic body of the two Koreas will be the centre of an economic cooperation network that connects the Korean Peninsula to Eurasia, the Pacific to the Indian Ocean. The future is a collection of fulfilled present days. The Republic of Korea Ministry of National Defense will do our best to heed today's calling to realise the new Korean Peninsula regime, the future vision of security on the Korean Peninsula. In addition, the ministry will strengthen national defence cooperation with nations in the Asia-Pacific region and actively work to establish common and cooperative peace in East Asia.

Distinguished guests, there can sometimes be challenges and difficulties on the road to a peninsula of peace and prosperity. However, this is not a cause to gloss over or to evade obstacles. Looking back on the past trajectory of inter-Korean relations, complete denuclearisation and the establishment of

permanent peace has never been an easy task. Military confrontations and tensions of 70 years will be difficult to transform into complete peace in just 1.5 years. Regardless, this is the road that we must take. While progress can be slow, it still must be made continuously and incrementally. We cannot relapse into confrontation and tension.

North Korea has fired a short-range missile in May and is threatening to derail itself from denuclearisation talks to return to the past. On the other hand, North Korea continues to implement the CMA and makes efforts to maintain the frame of dialogue. The most important task now is to recover mutual confidence. We will not stop at our current achievements and continue making improvements to establish denuclearisation and peace through thorough implementation of the CMA, mitigation of inter-Korean military tensions and building mutual trust.

What is undeniable is that the establishment of peace on the Korean Peninsula is a goal sought after by all and, more than that, one which we cannot relinquish at any given moment. Also, the fact that we hold the last chance this very moment to achieve denuclearisation and establish peace on the Korean Peninsula gives us a sense of urgency. What we need right now is the wholehearted support and optimism of the Korean and international community.

The international community needs to assure North Korea that the decision to denuclearise is indeed the right decision and gather our strength so that North Korea may stay on the path of permanent and steadfast peace. No matter how long or challenging the journey may be, the Republic of Korea government seeks to walk this path with you all. We dream of a peaceful peninsula, one without conflict and the fear of war, and an Asia-Pacific that prospers together. I ask all members of the international community to provide support and cooperation so that this dream may be realised. Thank you for your attention.

Dr John Chipman, Director-General and Chief Executive, IISS

Thank you, Minister, very much for your vision of a future Korean Peninsula peace and also your reminder that there are still significant challenges to achieve the complete and verifiable nuclear disarmament that is a condition for that.