

**21<sup>ST</sup> ASIA SECURITY SUMMIT**  
**THE SHANGRI-LA DIALOGUE**

SECOND PLENARY SESSION  
ENHANCING CRISIS MANAGEMENT AMID  
RISING COMPETITION  
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**SHIN WON-SIK,**  
MINISTER OF NATIONAL DEFENSE, REPUBLIC OF  
KOREA

**Shin Won-sik, Minister of National Defense, Republic of Korea**

Good morning. This is the Minister of National Defense of the Republic of Korea (ROK). First of all, I would like to extend my congratulations to the 21st anniversary of the Shangri-La Dialogue. It is my great pleasure to deliver my speech here at the internationally recognised Shangri-La Dialogue, the largest security conference in Asia. Allow me to offer my special congratulations and thanks to Executive Chairman Dr John Chipman, Chief Executive Bastian Giegerich and the staff of the IISS, as well as Senior Minister His Excellency Teo Chee Hean, Minister of Defence His Excellency Ng Eng Hen and government officials of the Republic of Singapore.

Distinguished guests, recently the international community is facing complex security crises. The sense of international security crisis is escalating as the war in Ukraine and the Israel– Hamas armed conflict become protracted. In addition, the unconventional security threats such as infectious disease, cyber terrorism and climate change are deepening the uncertainties. The Indo-Pacific region is no exception to these situations. The intensification of strategic competition and escalation of regional security concerns are strengthening the convergence within blocs and exacerbating conflict composition. Furthermore, conflicts and disputes stemming from historical and geopolitical factors are weakening the will and motivations of the countries in the region to cooperate with each other.

Ladies and gentlemen, unfortunately the situation on the Korean Peninsula is even graver. Despite the strong opposition from the international community, North Korea is continuing to advance its nuclear and missile capabilities. They are developing various missiles that can be used as nuclear delivery measures and have already had 12 missile launches this year alone. On top of that, they launched a rocket using ballistic-missile technology that violates UN Security Council (UNSC) resolutions, claiming that it was a reconnaissance satellite. North Korea's reckless development of nuclear and missile programme which can strike all the countries represented here poses an existential threat to us. And as such, it is a direct challenge against the peace in the Indo-Pacific region and the world.

Meanwhile, North Korea's development of nuclear and missile programme is aggravating the human-rights situation in North Korea. The Kim Jong-un regime, obsessed with the development of its nuclear and missile programme, is aggravating the lives of its people, who have long suffered from food shortage and economic crisis. The human-rights crisis and nuclear and missile issues in North Korea all arise from the same root of continued dictatorship, and they are in an inseparable relationship like two sides of a coin.

Distinguished guests, today we see more evidence that the weapons used by Russia to attack Ukraine were illegally imported from North Korea. As a permanent member of the UN Security Council, Russia should serve as a guardian of global peace, yet they are receiving weapons from a regime that violates numerous UNSC resolutions. It is an unimaginable, extreme self-contradiction and betrayal against the international community. Furthermore, North Korea is expected to accelerate the reinforcement of its military power with the money and technology it received in return for such arms trade. This reckless behaviour not only degrades the authority of international rules and norms but also exacerbates conflict and puts the entire region in danger. The arms trade between Russia and North Korea is a clear violation of the UN Security Council resolution and must stop immediately as this severely threatens the peace on the Korean Peninsula and in the international community.

Military cooperation between Russia and North Korea brought by the war in Ukraine is not only escalating tensions on the Korean Peninsula by advancing the nuclear and missile capabilities of North Korea but also affecting the battlefield in Europe. This means that the crisis on Korean Peninsula is no longer a problem limited to the Korean Peninsula but rather a problem for all of us. The complete denuclearisation of North Korea in accordance with the international non-proliferation regime is an essential measure to protect the stability not only on the Korean Peninsula but also the entire world.

All countries should condemn North Korea's illegal actions in one voice and faithfully implement UN Security Council resolutions agreed upon by the international community.

A few days ago, North Korea dispersed over 260 waste balloons into our territory under the pretext of responding to Republic of Korea civilian organisations' humanitarian-aid balloons to the North. It is an unimaginably petty and low-grade behaviour for a civilised nation. It constitutes inhumane behaviour as well as clear and significant violation of the Armistice Agreement. I take this opportunity to strongly condemn such an action and urge for its immediate cessation. I request the international community's empathy and proactive support in addressing the North Korean issues.

Distinguished guests, looking back, the international community has been on a journey since the end of World War II to prevent war caused by unilateral use of force and to protect peace and freedom. And at the heart of this journey was the establishment of the United Nations. The United Nations played a decisive role in founding a free democracy, the Republic of Korea, and in overcoming North Korean invasion, a crisis that was hanging by a thread. The first meaningful test the United Nations carried out for world peace was the approval of the Republic of Korea as a legitimate government and the establishment of the United Nations forces to defend its freedom. Thanks to such efforts from UN and the international community, the Republic of Korea became the one that was most successful among the countries that won independence after World War II in developing the economy and democracy. In this sense, the Republic of Korea today is an exemplary and living proof of cooperation and solidarity, which were the purpose of establishment of the United Nations.

Distinguished guests, in December 2022, the ROK government announced the Free, Open and Prosperous Indo-Pacific Strategy and expressed its will to actively promote rules-based international order. The rules-based international order must be protected from attempts to unilaterally change the status quo by force. It is a harmonious order which represents and respects each other's rights and pursues mutual interests. This order is the spirit that has been sought by UN since its establishment post-World War II, the one that has provided the basis of prosperity that mankind never experienced before. Unfortunately, the rules-based international order is under threat and is falling apart in many parts of the world. The principle of conflict resolution in accordance with international law and through peaceful mechanisms is losing its authority in the face of threat and the use of force.

The Republic of Korea will endeavour to protect the spirit of UN and the rules-based international order founded on that ground. We will cooperate with the international community to peacefully resolve North Korea's nuclear issues. Moreover, we will contribute to establishing Indo-Pacific region and furthermore the creation of a global community in which many countries can develop together through rules-based cooperation. Thank you for listening.

**Sir John Chipman, Executive Chairman, IISS**

Thank you very much, Minister, and we all noticed your remarks about the way in which the DPRK [Democratic People's Republic of Korea] was assisting Russia in its persecution of war in Europe. When we come back to the question-and-answer period, you might wish to reflect on this particular question, which is that we have heard many reports that the DPRK is actually now operating on Russian territory and it is actually launching some of its own artillery from Russian territory. So if you were able to confirm whether that is a fact, that will be very interesting.