

# **THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION**

## **Seoul-Washington Forum** **May 14-15, 2007**

Opening Remarks

Co-hosted by  
The Brookings Institution  
and  
The Sejong Institute

Sponsored by The Korea Foundation

*Seoul Plaza Hotel*  
*Seoul, Republic of Korea*

## **Seoul-Washington Forum Opening Remarks**

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CHAIRMAN LIM DONG-WON: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen.

Thank you for coming to the 2007 Seoul-Washington Forum. As the Chairman of the Forum, I'd like to welcome all of you to the conference, which will take place today and tomorrow.

The Seoul-Washington Forum had its inaugural conference in Washington, D.C. last May, and we now have the pleasure of holding the second conference here in Seoul in the same beautiful month of May. The Sejong Institute in Korea and the Brookings Institution in the United States co-host the Seoul-Washington Forum every year with Korea and the U.S. taking turns as the host country.

Let me take this opportunity to express my appreciation to the Brookings Institution and the Sejong Institute for their collaboration in making this Forum a success. And the Seoul-Washington Forum would not be possible without the generous support of the Korea Foundation. Thank you, Chairman Yim.

The Seoul-Washington Forum is a Track II dialogue channel between Korea and America. The forum aims to deepen our understanding and strengthen cooperation between our two countries, helping promote clear future visions of a more "balanced and healthy" Korea-U.S. relationship in the era of the post-cold war and globalization.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In this two-day conference, we will deal with various issues including Korea-U.S. relations, the North Korean nuclear issue, building a peace regime on the Korean Peninsula, and the KORUS FTA. A comprehensive discussion of these overriding issues will truly make our Forum a meeting place for the policy communities of Korea and America, which include former government officials, think tank experts, and academics.

One of the pivotal tasks we have these days is how to dismantle the Cold War structure at the earliest possible time and build a peace regime on the Korean Peninsula. The fundamental cause of the North Korean nuclear problem can be attributed to the existence of the armistice, in which the United States and North Korea are still at war and have deepened their distrust and intensified their confrontation. In a war, the single objective is to defeat one's enemy. The distrust and confrontation between the two countries reached another critical point when the neoconservatives and hardliners in Washington launched a policy of "regime change" toward North Korea and North Korea responded with a nuclear weapons program and the detonation of a nuclear device.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Without transforming the armistice into a peace arrangement on the peninsula, there's no room for a robust peace in Korea. Without officially ending the Korean War, without achieving the normalization of relations between the United States and North

Korea, and without building a peace regime in Korea, unfortunately, it does not appear that North Korea will abandon its nuclear ambition.

Therefore, we need to consciously begin a peacemaking process on the Korean Peninsula. Nobody will oppose making peace *per se*, but the transformation of the armistice into a peace arrangement in Korea should not be understood simply as normalizing relations between North Korea and the U.S. and between North Korea and Japan.

What is absolutely necessary for us is to get the United States and North Korea involved in this critical business of making peace in Korea and help them remove all the obstacles to peace once and for all.

Here, please allow me to emphasize the importance of making a peace that promotes Korean unification. What I straightforwardly reject is establishing a peace mechanism that sustains the *status quo* on the Korean Peninsula. This means that Koreans themselves should first come up with a peace regime of their own initiative. Once the two Koreas sign an appropriate agreement, then the United States and China must endorse it, and finally the United Nations Security Council should approve it.

Ladies and gentlemen,

A declaratory peace agreement alone cannot guarantee true peace, as well evidenced by the Vietnamese case. True peace must first be secured physically by arms control and economic cooperation, and legally and institutionally by concluding an appropriate agreement between the directly related countries and by promoting multilateral security and cooperation in Northeast Asia, to name a few avenues.

Therefore, what we can do in the near future is to encourage and enable the two Koreas to agree on arms control, build economic community, and achieve confederation. Peace has never been something we could take for granted. We have to consciously make peace with an understanding that building a peace regime on the Korean Peninsula is a process as well as a goal.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We have tried a few times to build a peace regime on the Korean Peninsula. We try to learn from past experience and are reasonably certain that a resolution to the North Korean nuclear issue will provide a golden opportunity to remove various obstacles in the way and build a peace regime on the Korean Peninsula.

To close my remarks, I would like to welcome you again, and I hope we'll have productive discussions today and tomorrow and help create policy recommendations for the Korean and American governments to deal with the outstanding problems we'll discuss in this Forum. Thank you very much.

DR. RICHARD BUSH: Thank you very much, Dr. Paik, Chairman Lim, President Park, President Lim, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Good morning. I am pleased and the Brookings Institution is pleased to collaborate with the prestigious Sejong Institute in organizing and convening of the Seoul-Washington Forum. Of course, I must also thank the Korea Foundation and President Yim Sung-joon for its sponsorship of this annual seminar.

In fact, a list of people that are required thanks for putting on an impressive event like this is nearly endless, so I will single out just one more person, Professor Lim Dong-won. The Seoul-Washington Forum indeed the relationship between Seoul and Washington has benefited greatly from Chairman Lim's efforts and his talents.

I must convey the apologies of my President, Strobe Talbott, for his absence here today. He has been sick for several weeks and is in the course of treatment and because he was in the middle of the treatment, it seemed to his doctors that it was not a good idea for him to travel half way around the world. But he really was very sorry to miss this event and miss being with so many old friends.

As you know, this is the second annual Seoul-Washington Forum. We convened the first one in Washington at this time last year. Our inaugural discussions consisted of a very well-informed, well thought out, well in presentations, and it was a well-intended event. We looked at all relationships from politics to economics to new coming threats. The forum received much attention in Washington. We enjoyed the active participation of senior officials in the U.S. government. I will say that some of the issues that we discussed, like the Six-party talks and KORUS FTA and war-time OPCON improved after our first Seoul-Washington Forum. So I think, Dr. Paik that we should take some credit for having brought about that improvement.

As you can see from your program, Brookings and Sejong have, for this occasion, assembled an excellent group of experts and current and former officials to add their own efforts and talents to these sessions of discussions. I am personally and deeply grateful that my esteemed colleagues on the American delegation could come all this way to participate. In four sections of these, in Seoul and Washington elsewhere, individuals from other countries, come together to thoughtfully discuss the future of the U.S.-ROK relationship.

This year, we look forward to building on the momentum that we started last year. And with the expertise assembled here, I am confident that this Seoul-Washington Forum will make an important contribution to our ongoing dialogue.

Our presenters and discussants over the next two days will talk about some of the basic issues. They will inform about our new future, political trust and adaptability, current and historical challenges from North Korea, and trade relationships.

The audience, I would say, also has an important duty and that is to participate actively in the event to help build the new future of the U.S.-ROK relationship. I expect that you will offer excellent questions and commentary throughout the discussions.

So thank you to all the people who have worked so hard to create this successful event. Thank you Chairman Lim, President Park, Paik Haksoon and staffs of the two organizations. And my thanks also go to President Lim of the Korea foundation. Thank you all for coming and helping fulfill our mission of an enabling person to person dialogue between our two countries.

Best wishes for successful conference.

DR. PARK KIE-DUCK: Good morning. Chairman Dong-won Lim of the Seoul-Washington Forum, President Strobe Talbott of the Brookings Institution, President Sung-joon Yim of the Korea Foundation, and distinguished guests.

First of all, I would like to express my congratulations on the opening of the second Seoul-Washington Forum. I am much honored to have this opportunity, to deliver these opening remarks.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Recently, the situation around the Korean peninsula has become highly volatile – for many reasons. Major global powers, which have strongly sought dependable allies in the past, are now in the process of forming new alliances.

Since the end of the Cold War era, the U.S.-Japan alliance has been strengthened, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) has been institutionalized, China and Russia continued cooperation in the political, military, and economic arenas, and the China-India economic cooperation agreement and U.S.-India nuclear cooperation agreement have been reached.

The new international order in the 21<sup>st</sup> century on the surface looks similar to that of the Cold War structure, but in reality, this is completely different. Apart from security issues, the major powers are trying to strengthen economic cooperation with not only those who have established relations with them in the past but also with those who never did.

Furthermore, the North Korean nuclear issue still shows no sign of a smooth resolution. To the great dismay of the international community, North Korea declared that it successfully conducted a nuclear test on October 9 last year. Even though it allegedly failed, North Korea's nuclear test confirms that it is very close to joining the world's nuclear club. This fact can have many vital implications for South Korea's security.

Considering these changes in the strategic environment around the Korean peninsula, we should ask ourselves which strategy best guarantees the common interests of countries in Northeast Asia. It is undeniably essential to maintain peace on the Korean peninsula by inducing stable changes, and provide a basis for peaceful unification by peacefully resolving the North Korean nuclear issue and finding ways to guide North Korea into the international community.

In order to do so, close cooperation between the ROK and the U.S. is necessary, more so than ever before. Cooperative ROK-U.S. relations should be firmly nurtured and strengthened throughout this process. This kind of comprehensive cooperation between the two nations will be effective not only for resolving the North Korean nuclear puzzle, but for enhancing regional stability in all of Northeast Asia.

Today, we gather to discuss the strategies needed to accomplish these goals. Today and tomorrow, through our four panels, participants will discuss the issues that need to be addressed toward achieving renewed trust and vitality in the ROK-U.S. partnership.

However, I believe that for the time being, the two nations should focus on resolving the North Korean nuclear issue. The United States has shown a positive attitude toward the September 19<sup>th</sup> Joint Declaration reached at the conclusion of the fourth round of the Six-Party Talks in 2005. The United States emphasized the importance of regional cooperation in achieving a peaceful and diplomatic resolution of the North Korean nuclear issue, and reminded the parties involved that they have to agree on ways to establish permanent peace on the Korean peninsula and to promote Northeast Asian security cooperation.

The February 13 Joint Statement was made possible against this backdrop. In the Initial Actions for the Implementation of the Joint Statement, the six nations agreed to take coordinated steps to implement the Joint Statement in a phased manner in line with the principle of “action for action.” The DPRK agreed to shut down the Yongbyon nuclear facility and invite back IAEA inspectors. The DPRK also pledged to discuss with other parties a list of all its nuclear programs.

In return, both the United States and Japan promised to start bilateral talks aimed at taking steps to normalize their relations with the DPRK. The Parties agreed to cooperate in economic, energy and humanitarian assistance to the DPRK, including the shipment of 50,000 tons of heavy fuel oil to the North. Finally, the Parties agreed to establish five Working Groups in order to carry out the initial actions and for the purpose of full implementation of the Joint Statement. All these initial actions were supposed to be implemented within 60 days.

I assume that we are all familiar with the story since then. The North Korean nuclear issue, however, remains bogged down against a rather unexpected hurdle—namely, the Banco Delta Asia issue. It is both unfortunate and disappointing to find such low expectations and slow progress toward implementing the earlier agreements.

However, I believe it is too early to give up hope. Almost everyone is aware that this problem cannot be resolved by just one agreement. Guaranteeing the security of the North Korean regime in return for a peaceful resolution of the North Korean nuclear issue is related to normalizing DPRK-U.S. relations and building a peace regime on the Korean Peninsula. In order to secure economic aid to North Korea, the normalization of DPRK-Japan relations and the establishment of regional and multilateral cooperation are essential.

I firmly believe that the ROK-U.S. alliance is still one of the best working bilateral alliance partnerships on earth. I would argue that the ROK and the United States should take efforts to reduce the differences in many issues of common interests. The two allies accomplished many difficult negotiations successfully. Such an accomplishment indicates that the two allies still have a sound communication structure.

However, efficient working-level coordination is not the only yardstick to measure the health of the ROK-U.S. alliance. It would be naive to regard the alliance as sound and untroubled merely on the grounds of successful working-level coordination. The two countries can solidify their alliance only when they share the same views on the goals and their roles in the partnership, as well as the fundamental philosophy and values.

Seoul and Washington surely must unavoidably undergo a massive readjustment in their half-century-old alliance in the coming years. During the process, both sides can adopt differing views and interests regarding the alliance. The important point is whether or not both sides can consult and adjust their views in an amicable and constructive way. Maintaining sound communication channels is almost unnecessary to mention.

If South Korea and the United States can succeed in improving mutual understanding of their existing differences by engaging in closer consultation at the government level and pursuing sincere and candid dialogue at the civilian level from a long-term perspective, their common interests may lead to a more mature and stable reciprocal alliance for the twenty-first century.

Finally, I would especially like to thank Dr. Richard Bush of the Brookings Institution and Dr. Haksoon Paik of the Sejong Institute for their efforts in organizing this outstanding forum. Furthermore, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to President Sung-joon Yim of the Korea Foundation for the Foundation's sponsoring of the Seoul-Washington Forum.

To conclude, might I say I am convinced that the Seoul-Washington Forum cannot succeed without your open-minded and enthusiastic participation. For this reason, I am truly looking forward to hearing your views and ideas, and to your active participation at the Seoul-Washington Forum. I sincerely hope that this Forum will bear fruitful results and prove both pleasant and rewarding to all of you. Thank you very much.



AMBASSADOR YIM SUNG-JOON: Chairman Lim Dong-won of the Seoul-Washington Forum, President Strobe Talbott of the Brookings Institution, President Park Kie-duck of the Sejong Institute, distinguished participants from the United States and Korea, ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the Korea Foundation, it is a great honor and privilege for me to deliver these congratulatory remarks to the participants in the second Seoul-Washington Forum, proudly sponsored by the Korea Foundation. I would first like to extend my sincere thanks to all of you for your dedicated contributions to help solidify the Korea-U.S. alliance and promote friendship between our two countries.

We consider this Seoul-Washington Forum as a highly valuable channel for dialogue and the highest intellectual exchange on various important issues and matters of mutual concern between our two countries.

On April 2, 2007, the world witnessed a dramatic conclusion to the marathon negotiations that resulted in a landmark free trade agreement between Korea and the United States. Still, there remain a few more steps to be taken before it comes into force, such as ratification by U.S.'s Congress and by Korea's National Assembly. If ratified, it will become the largest FTA ever for Korea, and the largest FTA for the United States, since the North American Free Trade Agreement among the United States, Canada and Mexico in the early 1990s.

I think that this comment I heard recently is most appropriate regarding the Korea-U.S. FTA: The accord is seen as an economic marriage between the two countries and the resulting "baby" should be named "Prosperity."

Therefore, I strongly believe that the agreement will usher in a new phase in the relations between Korea and the United States, and also benefit both countries in the long-term. In particular, the KORUS FTA will contribute to enhancing Korean competitiveness by advancing the overall national and social system while also paving the way for a new leap forward for the Korean economy.

As many of you will recall, the first Seoul-Washington Forum was held in May last year, in Washington, D.C. The event included in-depth discussions on such subjects as "Korea-U.S. Economic Cooperation." I am sure you will agree that these discussions contributed in some way to the recent signing of the Korea-U.S. Free Trade Agreement.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Although in recent years we have together been confronted by critical challenges, such as the North Korean nuclear problem and challenges to the future of the Korea-U.S. alliance, I hope that the February 13 Agreement will lay the necessary foundation for preventing the further production and testing of nuclear bombs by North Korea and further expedite a final resolution of the North Korean nuclear problem. Moreover, I

expect that it will open the door to a permanent peace regime on the Korean Peninsula and a new framework for a stable security in the Northeast Asian region.

I understand that you will have an opportunity to discuss “A Peace Process on the Korean Peninsula” during the Forum. I truly hope that you will suggest constructive ideas to make the peace process succeed, moving toward the establishment of a lasting peace regime on the Korean peninsula.

In closing, I would like to say that I'm confident that the second Seoul-Washington Forum will be a great success through active and frank exchanges of ideas and opinions among all participants. Thank you.