



Democratic People's Republic of Korea

PERMANENT MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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Statement by H.E. RI Yong Ho, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea at the General Debate of the 73rd Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations

(29 September 2018, New York)

Madam President,

First of all, allow me to congratulate Your Excellency Maria Fernanda ESPINOSA GARCES on your election as the President of the 73rd session of the UN General Assembly.

I look forward to successful outcome of the UNGA under your able stewardship.

Madam President,

Peace and development is a common desire of our times and it constitutes the main objective of the UN defining all its activities. Many countries around the world concentrate their efforts on achieving peace and development but such efforts are still faced with serious challenges.

During the past 1 year we have been witnessing the overall international relations becoming tense with peace being threatened and development being deterred in many parts of the world due to the power-does-it-all attitude of unilateralism and such a situation requires even more enhanced role of the UN.

It is the Korean peninsula, where the most tangible trend of peace and development was newly created this year.

In April this year, Comrade **Kim Jong Un**, the chairman of the State Affairs Commission of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) put forward a new strategic line of concentrating all efforts on the socialist economic construction.

Since we have sufficiently consolidated national defense capabilities and war deterrence to cope with the nuclear threats against the DPRK that have been lasting over several decades, concentrating all efforts on economic construction has come up to us as a historic task.

The DPRK government's policy line of focusing on the economy requires peaceful environment above anything else.

Comrade Chairman **Kim Jong Un** conducted energetic summit-level diplomatic activities with a firm determination to turn the Korean peninsula into a land of peace free of both nuclear weapons and nuclear threats; and made an important breakthrough in improving the North-South relations and the DPRK-U.S. relations and in revitalizing the friendly and cooperative relations with neighboring countries and thus made a turning point for dramatic easing of tension in the Korean peninsula.

As much as we have achieved in easing of tension in the Korean peninsula and its region, the peace and security of the region will be consolidated and this will lead to the world peace and security, to the benefits of all the member states of the UN in other words.

The fact that representatives of numerous countries have been unanimous in supporting and welcoming the current direction of the developments in the Korean peninsula at this platform clearly shows that the DPRK government's strategic choice and its sincere efforts to pursue that choice fully concur with the common interest and desire of the international community.

Madam President,

The key to consolidating the peace and security in the Korean peninsula is to thoroughly implement the DPRK-U.S. Joint Statement adopted in June at the historic DPRK-U.S. summit in Singapore.

The DPRK-U.S. Joint Statement contains all principled issues regarding eventual solutions of the issues in the Korean peninsula such as terminating decades-long hostility between the two countries and establishing new DPRK-U.S. relations, building solid peace regime on the Korean Peninsula, realizing complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and humanitarian work between the two countries.

Once the DPRK-U.S. Joint Statement is implemented, the current trend towards detente will turn into durable peace and the complete denuclearization of the Korean peninsula will also be achieved and the Korean peninsula, the hottest spot in the globe, will become the cradle of peace and prosperity that contributes to security in Asia and the rest of the world.

The DPRK government's commitment to thorough implementation of the DPRK-U.S. Joint Statement is unwavering.

The primary task for effectively implementing the DPRK-U.S. Joint Statement should be bringing down the barrier of mistrust between the two countries which has existed for several decades; and to this end, the DPRK and the U.S. should spend many efforts to building trust above all.

All the past process for the implementation of previous agreements from various dialogues and negotiations between the DPRK and the U.S. ended in failure because the mistrust between the two was not sufficiently removed resulting in lack of confidence.

It is our position that the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula should also be realized along with building peace regime under the principle of simultaneous actions, step by step, starting with what we can do and giving priority to trust-building.

Out of the desire and resolute determination to successfully implement the DPRK-U.S. Joint Statement, the DPRK government gives particular attention to trust-building and is pouring primary efforts to this.

Even before the DPRK-U.S. summit, the DPRK government took significant good-will measures such as stopping nuclear and ICBM tests, dismantling the nuclear test site in a transparent manner and affirming not to transfer nuclear weapons and nuclear technology under any circumstances and it continues to put in efforts to trust-building.

However, we do not see any corresponding response from the U.S.

On the contrary, instead of addressing our concern for the absence of peace regime in the Korean peninsula, the U.S. insists on the “denuclearization-first” and increases the level of pressure by sanctions to achieve their purpose in a coercive manner, and even objecting the “declaration of the end of war”.

The perception that sanctions can bring us on our knees is a pipe-dream of the people who are ignorant about us. But the problem is that the continued sanctions are deepening our mistrust.

The reason behind the recent deadlock is because the U.S. relies on coercive methods which are lethal to trust-building.

The recent dramatic improvement of the North-South relations and the atmosphere of cooperation clearly show how decisive the role of trust-building can be.

In less than 5 months, the leaders of the North and the South met 3 times and through their meetings and talks they have been building trust in each other enough for solving the various issues in the North-South relations in a constructive manner and the tangible results are shown in reality.

As demonstrated by the “September Pyongyang Joint Declaration” that was jointly announced by the leaders of the North and the South on September 19, this year the dialogues between the North and South in many areas including the fields of politics, military, humanitarian work, sports, culture and economic cooperation are very active and atmosphere of reconciliation and cooperation has been high like never before and many noteworthy outcomes are being made one after another enjoying the support and welcome by the entire Korean nation and the international community.

If the party to this issue of denuclearization were south Korea and not the U.S., the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula would not have come to such a deadlock.

This is why we give great importance to building confidence between the DPRK and the U.S. for the implementation of the Joint Statement. Without any trust in the U.S. there will be no confidence in our national security and under such circumstances there is no way we will unilaterally disarm ourselves first.

The DPRK government's commitment to the denuclearization is solid and firm. However, it is only possible if the U.S. secures our sufficient trust towards the U.S.

Madam President,

There are pessimistic views towards the implementation of the DPRK-U.S. Joint Statement inside the U.S., and that is not because there is any flaw in the Joint Statement but because of the U.S. domestic politics.

Those in the political opposition in the U.S. make it their daily business to slander the DPRK claiming that we cannot be trusted with the sole purpose of attacking their political opponent and they are enforcing the administration to make unreasonable unilateral demand to our side thereby impeding the smooth progress of the dialogue and negotiations.

Creating mistrust towards the dialogue partner while only relying on coercive method is not helpful at all in building trust; on the contrary it only increases mistrust. Talking about reasons for distrusting each other, we have far more reasons to distrust the U.S.

The U.S. possessed nuclear weapons earlier than we did and the U.S. is the only country that actually used them in real war.

From the very first day of our Republic 70 years ago the U.S. has exercised hostile policy against our country and put complete economic blockade against our country making sure that the U.S. enterprises cannot even trade a single screw nail with our country.

We did not even throw a pebble stone at the U.S. soil but during the Korean War the U.S. threatened to drop tens of atomic bombs in our country, and even after that the U.S. kept bringing in strategic nuclear arsenals at our door steps. If the both countries harbor mistrust towards each other, being obsessed with the past, then the recent DPRK-U.S. Joint Statement cannot escape the same fate of failure as all the previous agreements between the two countries.

One part of the spirit of the DPRK-U.S. summit in Singapore is to free ourselves of old conventional way and trying a completely new way of solving the issues.

At this critical juncture, the U.S. should make a foresighted judgment that faithful fulfillment of the commitment it made in Singapore will, in the end, be in the best national interest of the U.S. and should maintain new method for solving the DPRK-U.S. relations. Only then there will be a positive prospect for the DPRK-U.S. Joint Statement.

If the DPRK-U.S. Joint Statement becomes a victim of the domestic politics of the U.S., then the greatest victim of the subsequent unpredictable consequences will be the U.S. itself as a whole.

Solving the DPRK-U.S. relations and issues in the Korean peninsula is the key topic in achieving theme of this session: "Making the United Nations relevant to all people: Global leadership and shared responsibilities for peaceful, equitable and sustainable societies".

Our new policy line of concentrating all efforts on the economic construction is the right political choice not only in improving our people's life but also in realizing the common desire of the people around the world aspiring after peace and development.

The international society should support and encourage our efforts to focus on the economic construction in response to the bold decisions and good-will measures we have taken for the easing of tension and maintaining durable peace in the Korean peninsula.

The implementation of the DPRK-U.S. Joint Statement is a shared responsibility of the DPRK and the U.S.; at the same time the UN also has a role to play in it. The UN Security Council that was once so eager to express "concern" to the tense situation in the Korean peninsula keeps silence even now about the precious momentum for peace in the Korean peninsula which has been achieved this year; this cannot be said as normal in any way.

The UNSC poured down on us numerous "sanctions resolutions" making issue of our nuclear tests and rocket test launches. But even today, when one whole year has passed since such tests have been stopped, even a word in those "resolutions" remains unchanged to say nothing about being totally removed or eased.

Worse still, the UNSC is taking very concerning stand by rejecting the proposal by some of its member states to issue presidential statement that welcomes the DPRK-U.S. summit and the Joint Statement.

The "UN Command" in south Korea even showed alarming signs of hindering the implementation of the Panmunjom Declaration between the north and south.

As for the "UN Command", it is merely a "command of allied forces" beyond the control of the UN that only obeys the orders of the U.S., but the problem is that it is still misusing the sacred name of the UN.

Based on the mission of the UN as defined in the UN Charter, the UN and especially the UNSC have the responsibility and duty to support and welcome the developments that are helpful in ensuring international peace and security.

The UN should really apply the theme of this session: "Making the United Nations relevant to all people: Global leadership and shared responsibilities" to its actual activities and hence get rid of the stigma that "UNSC equals U.S." as early as possible.

Thank you.