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Searching for New Visions for Korea-Japan Relations and North East Asian Cooperation

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Keynote Speech

**New Multilateralism and New Bilateral Relations:
Japan-Korea Partnership in Global Problem-Solving**

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It is indeed my great honor to participate in this important conference, and share with distinguished Korean colleagues some of my thoughts on our common future. I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the able leadership of organizers of this conference, and express my wholehearted gratitude to the trust and commitment shared by the organizers of both countries in pursuit of new visions for our bilateral relations. This is living example of a strong and foresighted partnership between Japan and ROK.

(Placing bilateral relations in a multilateral context)

I would like to start off by stating that in post-Cold War and post-9/11 international relations today Japan and Korea cannot afford to focus only on bilateral issues. We need to consolidate our capabilities to help provide relevant and focused solutions to regional and global issues. Our world today still suffers immensely from unstable regional and international security situations, and as well as from insufficient achievement in human security dimensions. The vast majority of humanity has never been free from fear or want, and while both of our countries have enjoyed high growth and a reduction in the risk of war, millions of people around the world still live in despair of poverty and violence. As Japan's ambassador on disarmament issues, I have encountered numerous instances whereby countries emerging from violent conflict revert to another conflict due to lack of resources to rebuild a peaceful economy, and due to the proliferation of means of violence such as small arms and light weapons in post-conflict situations.

It is my wish that in the next 40 years, Japan and Korea will not only prosper in peace but also seek ways and means to, together, tackle global and multilateral challenges. If experts of both countries come together to think together as we are doing this morning in Seoul, if entrepreneurs of both countries work together to enhance their corporate social responsibilities in the region, if law-makers and diplomats of both countries act together to improve international norms and rules, if NGOs and civil society of both countries strive together to help implement norm and goals of human society in regions deprived of hope, and if generations to come in both countries, together, develop mutual trust and faith in pursuit of a common future, we can make a sea change in our region and beyond. It is my hope that both Japan and Korea indicate to the rest of the international community a model of new bilateral relations by placing Japan-Korea bilateral relations in a multilateral context. And it is my hope that the accumulation of such proactive,

cooperative, and open-minded approaches to bilateral relations will help install new multilateralism as a counter-paradigm of neo-conservatism.

(Shared Bilateral Attributes)

There are many reasons to believe that we would be able to achieve these goals by consolidating our efforts, since we share so many common attributes. Both Japan and Korea have highly educated and well-trained populations, since both of our societies have placed a high priority on education, partly because both countries have scarce natural resources. Also, in overcoming the constraints posed by this scarcity of natural resources, we have strived to achieve export-led industrialization, which has enabled us to accomplish a rare success in economic development, now the basis of our national power.

Both Japan and Korea are resilient liberal democracies with political and economic openness. These are invaluable social values for both countries' citizens since both of us know what it is like to live with non-democratic and anti-democratic repressive regimes. We know about the difficulties of the transition to democracy, and moreover we know that we must always guard against setbacks, and that enhancing democratic institutions and culture is a never-ending mission. We know that there could be several variants of democratic systems according to different cultural constructions of society. Thus, both of us are in a position to help newly democratizing regions make the successful transition to democracy without sacrificing cherished indigenous ethnic values.

As for the security environment, we share a complex regional context and difficult strategic calculations. One of the tragedies of East Asia is that changes in international security dynamics usually first take place in the Atlantic community, and arrive East Asia

with a lag in time and with an accelerated gravity. The Cold War started in Europe with the iron curtain and so forth, but when it penetrated Asia, it exploded into tragic wars in Korea and Vietnam. I take this opportunity to pay tribute to all who suffered in these wars. Now what about the ending of the Cold War? The Cold War ended in Europe with the fall of the Berlin Wall and so forth, but East Asia today still suffers from variants and remnants of Cold War-style tensions. The most recent intensification of mutual antagonism between the US and the DPRK is but one indicative example. I should also add that Japan and Russia have not yet been able to resolve confrontations over the Northern Territory.

(Strong Joint Message)

In view of the new bilateral relations, Japan and Korea could maximize our effort to take common diplomatic positions where possible at multilateral negotiations, including the UN and various treaty bodies. We could also jointly design schemes and projects in development assistance, disarmament and non-proliferation, post-conflict reconstruction, democracy assistance, environmental protection, etc. We could co-sponsor proposals, resolutions, and recommendations to enhance the establishment and implementation of new international norms and rules at the frontier of global challenges.

However, the most important joint mission for Japan and Korea, in my view, is to have a common voice in order to mainstream East Asia's view in world politics. For example, one strong message we must convey to the international community is that East Asia cannot afford to have yet another war. We must never again allow a war option in East Asia, for we have suffered disproportionately. As a Japanese citizen, I also take this opportunity to express my deepest regrets, although I represent post-WWII generation, to

all who died and suffered during WWII due to Japan's aggression on this peninsula and continent. On our part, we suffered from nuclear devastations, which should never be repeated anywhere. It is my hope that Japan and Korea, the two most dynamic democracies in East Asia speak repeatedly and strongly to claim that war is not an option in East Asia in any foreseeable future. On 19 March, State Secretary of the US, Dr. Condoleeza Rice, visited Sophia University to deliver a major policy statement for the Asia Pacific region in the 2nd Bush Administration, and said "Ideas of freedom"- not raw power- will define 21st-Century Asia. "Not raw power" hopefully means no military option and no military threats. Japan and Korea must speak in one strong voice at all levels of negotiation and interaction to make sure that resorting to war will never be an option for East Asia.

(Six-party Talks and China)

Now, allow me a minute to comment on the DPRK's nuclear ambition. Proliferation of nuclear capabilities under the guise of the peaceful use of nuclear energy is a major security concern today. We must commend China's unfailing efforts to chair the difficult 6-party talks, and we must continue to encourage China to play the leadership role, including informal consultations, to bring the DPRK back into the 6-party talks. Here again, the ROK and Japan could together support China's efforts and talk to the US to rule out a war option. We could argue that if the DPRK were to dismantle its nuclear facilities in a transparent manner, we might keep the 6-party format as a kind of confidence-building diplomatic measure in East Asia. We have never had such a collective security framework in this part of the world .

It is very important at this particular moment, right after the failure of the NPT Review Conference, to make sure that the DPRK refrains itself from conducting nuclear tests. It was a few weeks after the collapse of the Preparatory Conference of the NPT in 1998 that India tested its nuclear power, as if to ridicule the lack of solidarity among State Parties to the Nonproliferation Treaty. This is the time to talk to the government of the DPRK about returning to the NPT. The NPT Review Conference has just ended in complete failure, failing to produce any formal pressure to persuade the DPRK to return to the family of the NPT. Here is a window of opportunity for the DPRK to return to the NPT on its own independent judgment, without being seen to have opted for pressure. The States Parties to the NPT are suffering from a sense of powerlessness. If the DPRK makes the bold decision to return to the NPT in the near future, the DPRK, ironically, may be able to make an unexpected and unprecedented impact on the NPT process and, in the process, restore confidence in international law.

(Towards New Multilateralism)

Now, allow me to go back to some theoretical perspectives, and discuss elements of New Multilateralism, which could become a new paradigm in international decision making and an alternative to New Conservatism.

One of the increasingly important features of our international relations today can be found in the rise of the power of knowledge that influences the decision making process of states. Particularly in multilateral diplomacy, where international norms and rules are negotiated, the power of knowledge and knowledge-based interactions have become key elements in exercising leadership and fostering consensus. This is because governments

today have come under increasing pressure to address and solve a wide range of complex global issues that cannot be solved simply by military interventions or by economic power alone. During the 19th Century, it was mostly coercive naval power that was used in external persuasion. During the 20th Century, economic power was often decisive in determining international rules. In the 21st Century, it will be the power of knowledge and knowledge-based interactions that will influence the process of creating international norms and rules.

This is why New Multilateralism will place greater emphasis on civil society involvement, including scholars, researchers, think-tanks, non-profit organizations or NGOs, and all interested citizens. The military power rests with states. The economic power belongs to states and economic sectors. But knowledge can belong only to each human existence. Thus governments, in order to be effective and powerful, will find greater incentive to reach out to civil society for appropriate knowledge, including local knowledge, that belongs to the people. In this context, it is important to invigorate the knowledge-base of civil society, and encourage the accumulation of professional expertise, as well as local knowledge, that includes the voice of those affected by the problem.

Another reason why governments will be driven to place increasingly more emphasis on partnerships with civil society is because implementation of norms and rules that governments negotiate in multilateral diplomacy today require intensive and extensive outreach. Thus, this cannot be achieved without the active involvement of civil society organizations worldwide. States will put in place legal measures to implement their negotiated international decisions, but many issues they negotiate today will not make a difference in the field if grass-roots monitoring and assistance is not implemented. No governments possess enough manpower or financial resources to fully implement their

negotiated results that affect the lives of millions of people, and thus the partnership with civil society is a matter of urgency and priority.

Here, allow me to look back on my own experience. During my tenure I also served as Chairperson of the United Nations first conference to implement the action plan to combat illicit trafficking of small arms such as AK47s and MANPADS. NGOs are decisively important partners in combating small arms that circulate globally and kill an estimated 500,000 people every year. At the UN conference, I introduced an NGO session in the midst of the plenary meeting of states. Initially, many states opposed this by saying that NGOs have no place in UN Meetings of States, but in the end they agreed by consensus that, without partnerships with NGOs, the norms and rules that states negotiate in New York headquarters will never reach the people in the field. In order to combat illicit small arms, we need more comprehensive trade laws and laws that control manufacturing, but at the same time we must, for example, collect illegal weapons in post-conflict societies, provide re-education opportunities for child soldiers, increase humanitarian relief to the victims and survivors, facilitate security sector reform, and monitor the demilitarization of illegal groups. No country should be alone in meeting these tremendous challenges, and thus we need to invigorate civil society partnership to make sure that what was said and agreed at the UN will make a real difference to each child soldier, each wounded woman, and to all villagers who used to live in terror and fear.

In the negotiation and implementation of norms and rules, endeavouring to foster an integrated process among States, International Organizations, and NGOs is essential. Also, in order to make a real difference, implementation at all four levels needs to be coordinated and streamlined, namely at global, regional, national, and local levels. Since no country alone can combat the challenges of growing global issues, partnership and

cooperation, based on the sense of ownership in global problem-solving by all players, including civil society, would be a priority. A tentative checklist of major elements of new multilateralism is as follows:

- 1) Power of knowledge
- 2) Ownership and inclusion
- 3) Partnership with civil society
- 4) International cooperation in implementation of norms and rules
- 5) Integrated process among global, regional, national, and local levels
- 6) Integrated process among States, International Organizations and NGOs
- 7) Priority on humanitarian progress
- 8) Priority on affected and survivors
- 9) Result-oriented mindset