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IIPS Lecture Series 2007

Cooperation towards a Future Oriented Relationship between Japan and the Republic of Korea

Lecture by His Excellency Yu Myung hwan,
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Korea to Japan

*ANA Inter Continental Hotel, Tokyo
25 September 2007*

On September 25, 2007, the Institute for International Policy Studies (IIPS), with the support of the Nippon Foundation, hosted a lecture entitled “Cooperation towards a Future-Oriented Relationship between Japan and the Republic of Korea,” delivered by His Excellency Yu Myung-hwan, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to Japan. The venue for this event was the ANA Inter-Continental Hotel in Tokyo.

Ambassador Yu commenced his lecture by stating that Japan and Korea are partners who share many values, such as those of democracy and the market economy, and that the two nations have played a crucial role in bringing peace and stability to East Asia. He then continued as follows.

Japan and Korea are making use of economic, cultural, and personal exchanges to steadily develop their relationship. As regards the stability of the Korean peninsula and of Northeast Asia (a vital concern in relation to the two nations’ security and prosperity), they are engaging in close cooperation towards a peaceful resolution of the North Korean nuclear issue that now confronts them.



Naturally, there are certain differences between the two nations over specific policy methodology in relation to North Korea; however, the two governments share the aims of resolving the North Korean nuclear issue and constructing peace and security in East Asia, and cooperation between the two nations is more vital than ever to progress in the six-party talks aimed at denuclearization of the North.

Given the current situation, building a future-oriented Japan-Korea relationship will require that the two nations do the following: (1) lay the foundations for future-oriented bilateral cooperation by overcoming the issue of historical awareness, (2) strengthen political trust by building channels for political

dialogue, (3) pursue economic collaboration (for example, by concluding an FTA) and strategic cooperation, (4) expand grassroots cooperation by increasing social and cultural exchange and promoting civic solidarity, and (5) use the six-party talks to build structures for resolution of the North Korean nuclear issue and for peace and security in Northeast Asia.

Realistically, it will naturally be impossible to reconcile the two nations' historical awareness in the short-term. Hence, they must consider splitting the process in two—on one level seeking a fundamental resolution in the mid-to-long term, and on another level dealing with the short-term issues that arise. In order to do this, it is probably necessary to construct various channels for dialogue between politicians in the two countries, such as regular forums attended by legislators from both nations.

As regards economic relations between the two nations, the Korean government recognizes that it must aim to achieve a high-standard Japan-Republic of Korea FTA that will serve as a model for East Asian economic integration, and it will also be necessary to further promote personal and material exchanges between the two countries.



leading role in diplomatic exchanges with Korea. Finally, the ambassador responded to questions from the floor on a wide range of subjects.



After making these comments, Ambassador Yu wound up his lecture by stating that 2007 is the 400th anniversary of diplomatic exchange between Japan and Korea, and that the two nations must devise a shared future vision and take the lead in building an overarching framework for peace and security in Northeast Asia and thus for shared prosperity, in keeping with the principle of neighborly exchange based on sincerity and trust, as advocated by Hoshu Amenomori, who played a