

**『Sea Change in East Asia
and
New Direction of Korea- Australia Relations
in the 21st Century』**

**By
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of
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**At
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Mr. Allan Gyngell, Executive Director of the Lowy Institute,
Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted and honored to be here at the world renowned Lowy Institute. My deepest thanks go to Mr. Gyngell and other leaders of the Institute for inviting me. I am grateful for the opportunity to address this distinguished group of leaders and thinkers with influential voices in the shaping of Australia's place in the world.

It is always heart-warming for me to come to this beautiful, dynamic country. This time, in particular, the sense of "coming home" is even greater. During the World Cup soccer championship in June, Koreans stayed up late into the night to cheer up the Australian team as well as the Korean team. Guus Hiddink, as you know, was the link. But as we watched, we were wholly taken by the Socceroos, by their determination, spirit of fair play, and perseverance to the very end. With every fine play, they displayed what it means to be Australia and Australians.

(New Challenges in the 21st Century)

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Determination, perseverance, and playing by the rules are time-honored virtues not just in sports. They are also required of countries in keeping abreast of the post-Cold War sea change that has been transforming the world. With the ideological divide lifted, with globalization diminishing physical barriers, the world is faced with new threats and challenges as well as opportunities. In particular, the growing security challenges of terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), infectious diseases, and natural disasters do not recognize national boundaries. The latest terrorism plot at the Heathrow airport was a stark reminder. No single country, no matter how determined or resourceful, can tackle these challenges alone. Collective responses, global and regional, are called for.

East Asia is a region where such threats and challenges, old and new, are salient. In the region, there still persist wide economic gaps between and within societies, animosity carried over from decades of Cold War confrontation, longstanding historical and territorial strifes. The situation has been compounded as the region confronts new, transnational challenges. Rivalries between regional powers and the simultaneous rise of China and India, bring with them opportunities as well as uncertainties.

Closer to home in Northeast Asia, the North Korean nuclear issue has kept the region on the edge for many years. Our common efforts to address the challenge to peace and security in the region and beyond have been frustrated by North Korea's missile launches early last month.

My government has been an active player in the Six Party Talks aimed at a peaceful, negotiated resolution to the North Korean nuclear issue. North Korea's missile launches, with the Six Party Talks stalemated for many months, was a defiant act of provocation. It underscored the need for continued efforts in diplomacy to resolve the security challenges posed by North Korea. With the Security Council's adoption of resolution 1695, the international community has sent a clear and united message to warn North Korea against committing further acts of provocation. It has also urged North Korea to return promptly to the Six Party Talks without any conditions.

The Six Party Talks is an experiment in Northeast Asia where multilateral security dialogue has been lacking so far. It is sowing the seeds for a more permanent security arrangement in a region where multilateralism and regional integration remain elusive.

My government is deeply grateful to the Australian government for its support of the Six Party Talks as well as its forthright efforts to engage North Korea so that it may travel the road of reform and openness. In particular, I thank my dear friend and colleague, Minister Alexander Downer, for his active participation in the 10-nation meeting on the sidelines of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), convened to lend support for diplomacy in dealing with North Korea.

(Meeting the Challenges: Strengthening Existing Frameworks)

Distinguished guests,

Despite the daunting challenges facing East Asia, collective mechanisms to address them are barely in the making. Regionalism is not East Asia's strong suit. Indeed, compared to other regions, East Asia is lagging behind in this regard. And yet, more than in any other regions, greater regional cooperation is required for a more prosperous future.

Fortunately, a realization of this urgent need is sprouting across the region. Countries that had previously been divided on ideological grounds are normalizing relations. The spread of globalization has deepened regional interdependence. Active exchanges in people and culture are reaching new heights, fostering greater mutual understanding. A consensus is emerging that the better future for East Asia rests upon building a workable East Asian community. The Republic of Korea is fully on board.

In our efforts toward regional cooperation and integration, we must build upon the existing regional experiences. Frameworks such as the ASEAN+3 and the East Asia Summit (EAS) are invaluable fora for dialogue, understanding, and community building. And it is with great satisfaction to note that Australia has become a member of the EAS. The EAS is truly an important fora and an important step forward toward forming a "Greater East Asia" transcending a traditional geographical definition.

(Korea and Australia: A Regional Model of Cooperation)

Ladies and gentlemen,

Korea and Australia share many common values and interests. Deep commitments to democracy and human rights, to peace and security in the region remain hallmarks of our two societies. We have

maintained excellent cooperation on global agenda such as promotion of human rights, counter-terrorism, non-proliferation of WMDs and development as well as regional cooperation. As demonstrated by close cooperation with the JUSCANZ (acronym of Japan-US-Canada-Australia-New Zealand) on key issues at the UN, as well as at the APEC and the ARF, we share common positions on important political, social, economic and humanitarian issues. Our belief in multilateralism remains strong. We have faith that the UN should and can successfully address the daunting agenda of the 21st century. And through our participation in helping rebuild Timor-Leste and Iraq, Korea and Australia have forged a close partnership.

These common grounds have deepened our relations across the board in a span of just 50 years. In particular, Australia and Korea share a very strong trading relationship. Korea is Australia's fourth largest trading partner; and Australia Korea's eighth. Furthermore, the complementarity in economic structure is creating numerous mutually beneficial opportunities. Australia's strength in raw materials, agriculture, sophisticated manufacturing and services sectors complements Korea's strength in research and development, manufacturing and information technology. Trade cooperation can certainly yield the most visible benefits. But new direction of our cooperation requires a more strategic approach. The issue of energy and resources has recently come to the fore in international circles. It has also become increasingly important in our relations. For Korea, which is now the world's 10th largest energy consuming country with a 97% dependency on foreign sources of energy, the stable and sustainable supply of energy remains a high priority. In this context, Australia holds great investment potential as a stable source of natural resources for Korea. Korea can strengthen its cooperation with Australia through Korean companies' participation in investment projects to develop Australia's oil and gas fields and mines. Other notable areas for future cooperation are those of Information Technology (IT) and Bio-Technology (BT). Korea and Australia are both regarded as front runners in these areas. Linking IT and BT in both countries could create a synergy effect, maximizing the mutual benefits.

The growth in people to people exchanges has been particularly impressive. Last year, over two-hundred thousand Koreans visited Australia. Many Korean newlyweds start their first days together by visiting Australia.

Twenty six thousand Korean students are studying at Australia's institutions of higher learning. The deeper significance of these vigorous human exchanges between our two countries is that it will herald a new, more dynamic era of Korea-Australia cooperation down the road.

Korea and Australia are both strong voices for regional cooperation. Through our common efforts, the APEC has greatly contributed to economic development and trade liberalization in the Asia-Pacific. It has developed into a forum of choice to discuss measures against emerging threats such as the avian flu and terrorism. Korea successfully hosted the APEC leaders' meeting last year, and next year, Australia will showcase its hospitality. I have full confidence that the Australian government will breathe fresh vigor into the APEC process as it readies to embrace new challenges.

(In Everyone's Best Interest: A Strong, Efficient UN)

Distinguished guests and friends,

Korea and Australia are staunch believers in multilateral cooperation as the way forward in obtaining greater peace and prosperity in East Asia. But knowing the way is one thing; having the political will and courage to travel it is another. The demonstration of the will, I believe, begins at the UN, the global embodiment of the multilateral aspiration.

Many countries of East Asia, including the Republic of Korea, owe much to the UN for the peace and prosperity while they are enjoying now. In fact, the rise of East Asia would have been unlikely without strong support and engagement of the UN. In that sense, the countries of East Asia have a unique duty in the efforts to reform the UN into a more efficient and effective global body.

My country, the Republic of Korea, has long been a prime beneficiary and proponent of multilateralism, especially as embodied in the UN system. Indeed, Korea is a unique success story in the sixty years of UN efforts to promote peace and security, development and human rights around the world.

Having experienced war and managed stability for half a century, having achieved the transition from poverty to prosperity, from authoritarianism to democracy, Korea has undergone the full spectrum of challenges that is the prime agenda of the UN. In the process, we have learned, that security provides the key to development, and without development peace is not sustainable, and above all, full respect for human rights for all is a prerequisite to sustainable peace and prosperity. And we are earnest in hoping to further contribute to the work of the Organization with our experience.

It is in this context that I was nominated by my government as a candidate for the next Secretary-General of the UN. As Korea's foreign minister, but also as a citizen of East Asia, I am eager for the opportunity to apply East Asia's experience, particularly that of the Republic of Korea, to the good of the international community, including on-going reform process of the UN.

During the past months, I have promoted my candidacy with humility, presenting my thoughts and listening to the views of others on current challenges facing the UN and the international community. I have learned a great deal through meetings with counterparts and public audiences. I am sure that the exchange of views with the audience here today at the Lowy Institute will be another memorable experience.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Korea and Australia are the two countries and peoples "on the move", driven by the firm belief that our best days have yet to come. With the 'can do' spirit, our two countries proved that we could make a difference even under adversities. Now, we can bring out together full potential of both peoples in a march toward a common goal. Let us work together for a more peaceful, prosperous and enlightened East Asia that contributes to the common good of the global community. Thank you.