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Remarks by President Moon Jae-in at Riksdag of Sweden

“Trust for Denuclearization and Peace on the Korean Peninsula”

June 14, 2019

His Majesty the King, Speaker Norlén, Riksdag members, and distinguished guests,

God morgon! (Good morning!)

Nobel Peace Prize Winner Alva Myrdal made her first entreaty for global disarmament right here. Former Korean President Kim Dae-jung also came here immediately after winning his Nobel Peace Prize to reclarify his vision for peace on the Korean Peninsula. That was nineteen years ago, and I reflect how much progress has been made with regard to peace on the Korean Peninsula.

It is an honor to deliver an address at this historic Parliament House. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the Swedish people, His Majesty the King and all the Riksdag members for your heartfelt welcome and the opportunity to speak here.

The Kingdom of Sweden is an old friend of the Republic of Korea. During the Korean War, you dispatched a field hospital unit that treated some 25,000 U.N. soldiers and POWs, and you helped us establish the National Medical Center. Swedish civilian medical personnel remained in Busan even after the War, treating and consoling the people with whose government had not established diplomatic ties then.

To us Koreans, Sweden has long been an ideal country. In 1968, when Korea was dreaming of democracy amidst the wound of war, a Korean poet named Shin Dong-yup wrote a verse depicting Sweden. I will read part of that poem now:

“In a region called Scandinavia or something, it is said, when coal miners return home from the mines, they carry in the back pockets of their work clothes oil-stained copies of books by Heidegger, Russell, Hemingway, and Zhuangzi;
- it is said, when the Prime Minister stands in line in front of the ticket window at a train station under the blazing sun to go on a holiday, the stationmaster merely casts a simple greeting, and peacefully opens the door to his office and goes in.
- it is said, the people may not know their president’s name, but they are familiar with the names of birds, flowers, orchestra conductors, and playwrights, in this politically neutral country.
- it is said, people do not allow deadly missiles or tank battalions into their vineyards.
- it is said, when the evening sun sets in a dark red glow, a gentleman with the title of ‘President’ rides his bicycle 30 *li* (12 km) down a country road, with a bottle of rice wine on the rear rack, to visit a poet’s house.”

While reading this verse, Koreans imagined a high level of democracy, peace, and social welfare.

Sweden is still beloved by Koreans. We Koreans gratefully acknowledge and rely on the role that Sweden is undertaking for the sake of peace on the Korean Peninsula. Sweden is the only country in the world running three official missions across the Korean Peninsula, respectively in Seoul, in Pyongyang and in Panmunjeom. North Korea also shows confidence in Sweden's neutrality and impartiality.

I want to take this opportunity to salute the Swedish people and leaders for your unwavering sincerity in the quest for peace on the Korean Peninsula over the past 70 years and to convey the Korean people's warm friendship.

Riksdag members and distinguished guests,

Although the Kingdom of Sweden and the Republic of Korea are geographically far from each other, situated at the opposite ends of the vast Eurasian continent, we share many things in common.

Located on the peninsulas where the Eurasian continent faces the sea, the two countries both have endured numerous wars and have struggled ceaselessly to maintain sovereignty. Both countries also have experience in struggling against poverty: Sweden suffered a century-long famine, starting in the 18th century, while Korea had to endure colonial rule and war in the 20th century.

However, the two countries are also similar particularly in that they have managed to overcome difficulties with the strength of their great people. The people endowed with diligence and tenacity turned desperately poor economies into prosperous ones making full use of the manufacturing sector. The well-educated young people did not hesitate to innovate and to take on challenges. The two governments aggressively support entrepreneurship and startup businesses, allowing the young to pursue their dreams.

Also impressive are the artistic accomplishments of the two culture-loving peoples. The culture and arts of our two nations are beloved by the people around the world. The world enjoys the music of ABBA and BTS. Astrid Lindgren's *Pippi Longstocking*, Stieg Larsson's *Millennium* trilogy, and Han Kang's *Vegetarian* are worldwide favorites.

What our two nations have most in common is our strong determination for peace.

What makes the Swedish people magnificent is that you are not simply interested in peace for your own country. Rather, you are involved in the peace process for other countries as well. Sweden has become a guardian of peace for the international community, protecting mankind against the threat of war.

The history of Sweden reaching out to people in distress has greatly inspired the people of the Republic of Korea, who dream of complete peace on the Korean Peninsula.

In April of last year, the eyes of the world were focused on Panmunjeom on a beautiful and balmy spring day, like a fine summer day here in Sweden.

Chairman Kim Jong Un stepped across the Military Demarcation Line for the first time in the history, to hold the first inter-Korean summit in a decade. The ardent desire of the Korean people not to repeat the tragedy of war instantly transformed Panmunjeom, a symbol of division, into a birthplace of peace.

Although the South and North faced difficulty in coming together to talk, the two sides had earnest dialogues, to promise to open a new path toward peace, prosperity, and coexistence. The Comprehensive Military Agreement was concluded, thus the two sides agreed to cease hostile activities, establish no-fly zones, withdraw guard posts and jointly recover war remains in the DMZ.

Due to the meeting on that day, the hiking trails were opened across the border of the South and North. Eleven such trails were created in the forestland of the DMZ, where no one had set foot since the Armistice Agreement was signed 65 years ago. Sooner or later, there will be numerous other paths through which people from both the South and North can come and go.

This year, the DMZ Peace Trail, which had not been accessible in the past unless one is military personnel, was opened to the public, allowing them to walk along the DMZ.

The Korean people are fully aware that these changes were possible thanks to international solidarity, support and assistance of peace-loving global citizens. I am especially grateful to Sweden, which played a crucial role to provide opportunities for the parties directly concerned in establishing peace on the Korean Peninsula to meet and communicate with one another.

We Koreans, encouraged by the Swedish people, have been able to further foster aspirations for peace on the Korean Peninsula. We will never forget the huge role that Sweden has assumed from the first inter-Korean summit in 2000 to the two historic summits between the United States and North Korea most recently.

Riksdag members and distinguished guests,

“Trust” is the strength that made today’s Sweden possible. You the Swedish people trust one another as well as your government and businesses. As demonstrated in the case of the historic Saltsjöbaden Agreement signed in 1938, the Swedish people have acquired the wisdom to allow labor and management to negotiate agreements and make decisions, and after decisions are handed down, they are accepted and implemented by all.

The heroic conducts of Raoul Wallenberg, referred to as Sweden's Oskar Schindler, and Count Folke Bernadotte, who saved concentration camp inmates during World War II with 'white buses,' instilled the belief that somebody will step up to help when others are in need.

You the Swedish people concur that every member of society should contribute to building a fine society, and practice this belief. The same is true for global peace. Every nation should contribute to the establishment of global peace.

Sweden decided not to possess nuclear weapons, even though you had the technology to develop them. It was truly a Swedish decision to propose and implement peaceful arms reduction, rather than resort to nuclear arms, to stand against new threats of war.

Sweden had the conviction that the mankind could shape a new future, and thus to become the first country to renounce nuclear arsenal. Their conviction was that the world would choose "prosperity through peace" in the end.

The government of Sweden now practices its people's belief by engaging in the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and worldwide renowned official development assistance. The rest of the world is now joining Sweden to nurture trust on one another. I respectfully applaud the Swedish people who are assuming a leading role in fostering love for humanity and peace across the world.

Riksdag members and distinguished guests,

I believe in the path that Sweden has taken so far. The Korean Peninsula must also establish peace through trust, and then build stronger trust through peace.

Today, I would like to take this opportunity to propose three kinds of trust between the two Koreas.

First, the trust between the peoples on both sides.

There is no difference between the South and North to pursue a better life in peace. Yet it is true that seven decades of separation and confrontation cannot be reversed in a single day. There might be days when the gaps between the two Koreas seem wider or the feelings of frustration seem deeper.

However, both Koreas are of the same people and share a common history that spans 5,000 years. If we open the window for dialogue and do not forsake communicating with each other, misunderstanding will subside and understanding will grow.

The inter-Korean dialogues including the three recent summits have already sparked a

number of changes. Hostile military activities were ceased along the Military Demarcation Line. Roads and railroads are being reconnected. Lighthouses nearby the border have been lighted on, enabling fishermen to catch fish in a safe manner. Small but concrete steps toward peace are being taken. Peace in everyday life is under way.

When such everyday peace builds up over time, hostility will dissipate and the people of the two sides will support the peace process. That will mark the beginning of permanent and complete peace.

Second, the trust in dialogue.

The world would like to have the two Koreas coexist in peace. No country wants a war between the two Koreas. If peace on the Korean Peninsula collapses, peace and stability for all of Northeast Asia will also collapse, and the entire world will suffer a tremendous disaster.

Humanity has learned that it has to pay higher price to carry out war of any kind than to maintain peace. Thus, to support peace on the Korean Peninsula is to benefit not only the two Koreas but the world as a whole.

Peace can come true only through peaceful means, which is dialogue. It is dialogue, not nuclear arms, that will keep North Korea secure. The same applies to the Republic of Korea as well. It is dialogue, not military forces, that secures peace between the two Koreas.

Each other's political system must be mutually respected and guaranteed. This is the foremost and immutable prerequisite for peace.

If North Korea takes the path of dialogue, no one would threaten the political system or safety of North Korea. North Korea must believe that every problem will be solved by dialogue and trust its dialogue partners.

Trust should be a mutual one. That is a prerequisite for dialogue. The people of the South must believe in dialogue with the North. Those who distrust in dialogue slow down the progress in peace. Every single person on both sides must believe that dialogue is the sole path to peace.

Third, the trust of the international society.

Over its long history of 5,000 years, Korea has never invaded other countries. In our sad history, we have only aimed firearms at ourselves. The rest of the world is still concerned about an accidental clash and nuclear armament on the Korean Peninsula. In order to mitigate sanctions of the international community, the concern must be dispelled.

North Korea must substantially show to the international community its commitment to

completely dismantling its nuclear weapons and to establishing a peace regime. Dialogues with the outside world, whether they may be bilateral or multilateral, must go on until North Korea earns the trust of the international community. In addition, North Korea must build peace from inside and prove it, by expediting exchanges and cooperative projects previously agreed to by the two Koreas.

The international society will immediately respond if North Korea puts forth sincere efforts. Sanctions will be lifted and the safety of the North will be secured internationally.

The Republic of Korea will stand by the North in its efforts to restore the trust of the international community. Moreover, we will enhance the international community's trust in peace on the Korean Peninsula by thoroughly implementing pledges our commitments enshrined in inter-Korean agreements.

Once the two Koreas work together to earn the trust of the international community, more possibilities will become reality. Once the two Koreas develop into a common economic community, with North Korea free from the international sanctions, the Korean Peninsula will facilitate further peace in Northeast Asia, and become a place where Asia's potential is realized. The South and North can prosper together.

The complete denuclearization and the establishment of peace on the Korean Peninsula will become a solid foundation for global non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and disarmament as well as an epitome of resolving international and military conflicts. The two Koreas will contribute to the world peace beyond the Peninsula.

His Majesty the King, Speaker Norlén, Riksdag members, and distinguished guests,

The Korean War, regarded as the first "hot war in the Cold War era," cost countless lives of not only the Korean people but also the foreign soldiers who fought in the War.

The armistice was reached three years after the war had broken out, yet this tragic war has not ended up to present. The two Koreas have been locked up in the Cold War structure along the Military Demarcation Line (MDL) for approximately 70 years.

Efforts toward peace and coexistence were overwhelmed by the Cold War order and repeatedly thwarted. It seemed winter would never leave the Korean Peninsula. However, we have always longed for peace. The peace process on the Korean Peninsula sprouted in the bitterly cold weather during the PyeongChang Winter Olympic Games, and spring days for the Peninsula are now on their way.

A verse by Tomas Gösta Tranströmer, a famous Swedish poet and winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature, seems to encourage us today.

"It's been a hard winter, but summer is here and the fields want us to walk upright."

As Tranströmer wrote, a warm season is now approaching the Korean Peninsula. We will stride straight toward peace on the Peninsula and thereby not lose the trust of the international community.

I look forward to the people of Sweden walking beside us as you have always been for the past seven decades.

Thank you for listening.

Tack så mycket. (Thank you very much.)