

**Check Against Delivery**

**Farewell Dinner Speech**

**by**

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**at**

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**Cooperation and Its Lessons for NAPCI**

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Excellencies,

Distinguished Participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

ANN-YEONG-HASEYO (good evening)

I would like to express my gratitude to the Council for Security Cooperation in Asia Pacific, the CSCAP, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea for hosting today's very thought provoking, informative and useful roundtable conference where a great selection of participants exchanged their views and discussed issues very candidly. I am sure that it would be beneficial for the successful implementation of the Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperation Initiative or NAPCI, one of the key items on Korea's diplomatic agenda.

Just before joining you for dinner, I had the opportunity to call on His Excellency Yun Byung-se, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. We had a very good exchange of views on the strategic importance of North-East Asian and South-East

Asian cooperation, as well as the necessity of trust, understanding, and cooperation within each region.

Excellencies,

Distinguished Participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

There are indeed a number of regional, sub-regional, and multilateral organizations in the existing regional architecture that can reinforce and complement NAPCI.

I first want to mention the Asia Cooperation Dialogue or ACD. South Korea is a founding member since 2002 of the ACD. Now there are 33 members (including all ASEAN countries) from all sub regions of Asia.

The basic principles underlining the ACD is similar to that of NAPCI, namely, comfort level, functional cooperation, voluntarism to participate in any project, strength out of diversity, dialogue among members and leaving bilateral conflicts outside the ACD framework. The ACD is in itself a trust building mechanism, a trust building process through dialogue and cooperation.

I firmly believe that ACD members and the ACD process itself can complement the NAPCI process since the basic principles of NAPCI and ACD are almost identical and therefore can be mutually reinforcing.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As for ASEAN -- The Association of Southeast Asian Nations, I need not describe any more what ASEAN is doing and becoming by the end of this year. You have heard it all today.

The newly established ASEAN Community means that the single and liberalised ASEAN Community market will allow us to compete more competitively with the economic powers in Northeast Asia, China, Japan and South Korea. But a competition for a bigger share of the market, a competition to win economic rivalry, a competition to insert new economic power, and a competition to win a higher global economic ranking are not the aims and the objectives.

The prosperity and the wellbeing, a better and more equitable distribution of wealth and a higher standard of living for our people,

instead, must be our top priority and objective. To succeed, the ASEAN Community must be a people-centric community.

That is why I keep reiterating lest we forget that the ASEAN Community consists of 3 pillars. Apart from the Economic Community, we also have the Socio-Cultural Community and the Political-Security Community.

What binds our 620 million people together is not just about the money in our pockets. But such economic prosperity cannot be sustained without a strong political-security framework, and a robust socio-cultural underpinning.

I find the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community of great importance. It shall push for greater people-to-people linkages, as well as narrowing the human and social development divisions.

The ASEAN Socio-cultural Community is about getting the people of ASEAN to travel within and around Southeast Asia, absorb the diverse cultures, religions, languages, ethnicities of the region. Our youths need to cross borders. Our businesses have to be able to trade freely. We need to learn each other's languages. We need to

talk, trade and come together as one to break down old barriers and build trust.

Without the Socio-Cultural and Political-Security pillars, ASEAN too would fall into the “paradox” of Northeast Asia outlined by President Park Geun-hye, where China, Japan and South Korea enjoy tremendous and growing economic integration while historical, cultural and territorial disputes remain intractable. President Park’s aims to realign economic development with cultural solidarity and familiarity with a strong security framework are right.

Trust and familiarity can be built by picking the ‘low-hanging fruit’ together; focussing on measures to protect the environment, coordination on disaster management, counter-terrorism, food safety, or energy security and safety, but building people-to-people links and engaging in cultural exchanges is just as important.

The norms and rules established after WWII, and re-affirmed after the Cold War are being challenged. As countries in Asia rise again, they are likely to want to change the rules that facilitated their

very rise. Who will shape the regional order? What vision for the future of Asia will prevail?

This competition over who sets the new rules of the game in Northeast Asia is just as important as the battle for resources, and is exacerbated by old rivalries, old wounds and long memories.

Finding a consistent historical and normative narrative across Japan, the Koreas and China is impossible. But those in Northeast Asia can take solace, as Southeast Asia is not immune to these dangers either.

In Southeast Asia, old prejudices and misconceptions about our neighbours still swirl around our collective memories. Grudges held against neighbours for perceived wrongdoings 20, 100, 500 years ago still play a role in shaping many of our interactions.

These old biases breed distrust and in many ways still hold back Southeast Asia from becoming a true community and have led to territorial disputes.

ASEAN has found a way to work around these differences. The ASEAN Way, formalised in the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation, has been the centrepiece to ASEAN's survival for the past 48 years.

It stresses the respect for independence and sovereignty, the need for non-interference in neighbours' affairs, renunciation of the use of force, and most importantly effective cooperation and diplomatic solutions to disputes.

These rules and norms of ASEAN haven't been accepted across the region by design or because of a particular effort by ASEAN, but it is because they already complement the Asian values and oriental customs of our ancestors.

They stress the importance of keeping 'warm hands,' that is valuing relationships and maintaining regular contacts and engaging in informal and heart-to-heart discussions through quiet diplomacy. Oriental tradition is not one of 'winner-takes-all,' or blunt confrontations but rather to move towards win-win accommodation and consensus-based collective decisions for the greater common good.

It values prudence over recklessness, moderation over extremism, reason over folly, leading not to perpetual war, but towards peaceful co-existence.

This year is the 48<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ASEAN; the principle of non-interference has remained at its core since that time. It has forced us to compromise, improve our understanding, to take a moderate, prudent path rather than to quickly point the blame.

It has given us time to overcome misunderstandings or long-held grudges. Most importantly, it has given us the space to learn the importance of starting to build trust. Starting small with the ASEAN Way has also built the foundation which has finally driven a transformation in what ASEAN is and what it strives to achieve.

ASEAN, in comparison with some other regional organizations, may be regarded as a weak organization.

ASEAN lacks common foreign policy; it has no common security policy, nor common international economic policy. It does not possess any legal sanction mechanism when members fail to implement an agreement. These may be seen as weaknesses. But for ASEAN, given its history and the diversified political culture, these

are its strength, the strength that has united all members together and allowed the organization to evolve throughout its 48 years history.

Today, ASEAN is making a transition towards more of a rules-based Community under the ASEAN Charter rather than an association guided by the ASEAN Way. The ASEAN way has built the trust, cooperation and consultation required to start building up and uniting this community for 48 years, and the work required to maintain it is still significant. The transition to the rule-based community, however, will help strike a balance where the ASEAN way may have left inadequate.

For instance, the ASEAN way has also meant that reaching a consensus is often time-consuming, and on some issues not even attempted. Or sometimes consensus is reached with compromises to the lowest common denominator. These problems may become mitigated in the new rule-based ASEAN. The challenges for ASEAN is to move forward as a rule-based body while maintaining to benefit from its ASEAN way.

Turning to the Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperation Initiative, I believe the NAPCI can take solace from what Southeast Asia has

achieved. Southeast Asia has historical grievances. It has competition. It has suspicions and mistrust. But the Association of Southeast Asian Nations has outlined a blueprint through which those problems can be eventually set aside.

NAPCI and ASEAN also share one important Asian way. In Asia we value intermediaries, neutral coordinators, third parties which seek to reduce tensions, foster dialogue, facilitate agreements, and prevent potential conflict situations from getting out of control through quiet diplomacy.

It is here where NAPCI has the potential to play this essential role as a neutral party to build trust, engage participants and create a private space for negotiation and reconciliation to take place.

In this context, the Asian Peace and Reconciliation Council (APRC), of which I am currently Chairman, was founded in September 2012 on the premise that all differences are reconcilable through peaceful processes.

The APRC is a non-state actor, it is an international non-governmental organization where headquarters happens for the time being to be in Thailand.

In fact, the APRC is a track-one-and-a-half, which brings together former Heads of State, former Prime Ministers and Ministers from various regions of the world who are interested in and concerned with peace, stability and progress in Asia.

The APRC seeks to build on traditional Asian values, respect for the wisdom of elders, consensual decision-making, and quiet diplomacy in order to help lessen tensions in potential conflict areas which threaten the stability of the region, as well as to encourage resolution of humanitarian issues that have tremendous impacts at both macro and micro levels. Organisations like APRC and NAPCI have the ability to generate attention on particular issues, undertake factual and practical analysis, propose solutions, change mind-sets and muster resources.

Over the past two years, one issue we have paid particular attention to is the South China Sea. APRC Members have met policy

makers of both Claimant and Non-Claimant States, including opinion leaders, civil societies and academia to seek solutions to reduce tensions in the South China Sea.

Chinese statesman Deng Xiao-ping once advised that all parties should consider shelving their territorial claims and instead focus on cooperation for mutual benefits. To shelve the territorial claims is not to relinquish them.

Back in 1979, Thailand and Malaysia agreed to a Joint Development Area in the Gulf of Thailand for exploration and extraction of oil and gas in their overlapping maritime areas. Profit-sharing arrangements still function amicably, even without agreed maritime boundary delimitation. Thailand and Malaysia are akin to "Brothers drinking from the same well."

The sovereignty problem has been shelved to make use of the mutual economic benefits of the Joint Development Area. The two countries prefer to benefit on functional cooperation while leaving the territorial sovereignty issues to the legal experts till whenever to be settled.

There are many more examples of claimant states that prefer such a solution, including countries in Northeast Asia. Building on these precedents and the expertise of the region's elders, functional cooperation across East Asia's contested maritime borders can produce tangible benefits for the conflicting parties and reduce tensions in the region. Ongoing dialogues on all tracks, technical exchanges and informal consultations between all stakeholders can help foster trust and confidence. Discussing the tenets of a functional cooperation agreement is more conciliatory than claims on sovereignty. It is a confidence building process which will complement the atmosphere in the discussions on territorial boundary and on the Code of Conduct in the South China Sea.

The Founding Members of APRC aim to use their experiences to contribute to fostering a peaceful environment in Asia that would be conducive to its peace and prosperity.

For both APRC and NAPCI, and, for both Southeast Asia and Northeast Asia, not only can we learn lessons from each other, but we can work together to promote peace and prosperity in the region. As seen in the Asian and the ASEAN way, I suggest that we must

emphasize the cardinal principles which APRC has taken that are shared by our oriental ancestors – non-interference, silent or quiet diplomacy, and the consent and comfort level of all concerned parties.

We, the Asians, are enriched with our thousands of years old oriental wisdoms upon which we can learn to base our diplomacy and initiatives to move forward. Both ASEAN and NAPCI must be people-centric in their perception and implementation. When people-centric and based on our own oriental wisdoms, peace and cooperation will not be beyond our reach.

In the shadow of uncertainty, we must help to outline the contours of hope.

KUMSA-HAMNIDA (thank you)

Thank you.