

DEBAT

Thierry de Montbrial, président et fondateur de la WPC

Mr Minister, during the whole of this day, we had a number of presentations, starting with the speech by Madame President. This convinced us that first, Korea has a great foreign policy, and second, that you can expect to be a game changer in the region. That being said, the Minister has agreed to take a few questions. Who would like to shoot first? If there is no candidate, I will give the floor to someone.

Fen Osler Hampson, directeur du programme de sécurité internationale et politique du CIGI ; co-directeur de la Commission mondiale sur la gouvernance d'internet ; professeur chancelier à l'université Carleton, Ottawa, Canada

Thank you very much for your remarks, Mr Minister. I was intrigued by your reference to MITKA, which for those who do not know refers to Mexico, Indonesia, Turkey, Korea and Australia. I am sorry to say that Canada is not a member, though maybe it will be one day. I would be interested if you could elaborate on what role you see MITKA playing going forward and whether it is just a meeting of foreign ministers or it in fact has an agenda.

Yun Byung Se, Ministre des Affaires étrangères de la République de Corée

As you can imagine, MITKA is a very unique group. Some months ago, one foreign policy magazine article said that BRICS is in decline and MITKA is on the rise. That is an exaggeration, because we are just starting. Actually, MITKA countries have many things in common. They share democratic values and market economies and they are very active in regional and global areas. In terms of per capita GDP, they are somewhere between G10 and G17.

Then in terms of our personal rapport, we are very friendly with each other and very close to each other at many regional and global meetings. We were able to form this group in September last year at the margin of the United Nations. As the Chairman of the MITKA group for this year, I have already hosted two meetings. In May next year, I will be hosting this MITKA ministry meeting in Korea and it will be in the form of a retreat.

We are trying to pull together our collective wisdom and experience to contribute to global agendas. There are many global agendas, such as the issues I have elaborated on so far. We are not belonging to any big power groups, so we are rather free and we are not bound by any specific interest. In a sense, we are in a very good position to bridge the differences between the developed and the developing countries. As you can see, Turkey is playing a very important role in that area, in the Middle East, and Mexico is doing the same in Latin America. Korea is doing more or less the same in this part of the world and Australia is also doing a very good job in their part of the world. Indonesia is also a very important member of non aligned countries, as it is a senior member of DIASIA. This will develop into an Asian community late next year.

This is a very good match and a very good line up. We are now working on many action plans and guidelines. We have already released input and joint statements on the Ebola outbreak, issues regarding weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and many others. In terms of mechanisms, we still continue using the format of foreign ministers. However already, some speakers at national assemblies are talking about the formation of a MITKA parliamentary speakers' group or something like that. It could expand to other areas as well, like trade or many other areas. However, we do not wish to be too ambitious, because we wish to consolidate our mechanisms for the time being, before we expand these mechanisms to other areas.

Thierry de Montbrial, président et fondateur de la WPC

Next is Mr Djelic, who is a partner of Lazard and former Deputy Prime Minister of Serbia.

Bozidar Djelic, associé, Lazard ; ancien vice-Premier ministre de Serbie

In her speech, Madame President mentioned a significant initiative in Korea in the direction of Eurasia. Interestingly, Korea did not introduce any sanctions against Russia. Can you elaborate a bit more about the content of the initiative? For example, would it include a free trade zone with the Eurasian customs union, to which Russia, Kazakhstan and other countries belong?

Yun Byung Se, Ministre des Affaires étrangères de la République de Corée

In any foreign policy, some policies are more short term, while others are medium and long term policies. Even though my Government has put forward this Eurasia initiative, it is more or less aimed at long term achievements. It takes a lot of time and years to achieve our main goals. This initiative is composed of two aspects and one is the economic aspect and the other is the security aspect. On the economic front, as you partly referred to, we are trying to connect the dots and enhance the connectivity between all these sub regions. These include the Korean Peninsula, Eastern Siberia, Eastern Russia, Central Asia, China and even the European continent.

Maybe we can start with the complex energy and transportation networks. These infrastructures present very tough challenges. Nevertheless, we have seen in this strategic cooperation made between North and South Korea and Russia just last week that we can make a difference. This is once we can put our wisdom and insights together. Just a few months ago, my President made a state visit to three Central European countries. There are already a lot of discussions on how to connect our regions together, through railways, by sea and by air. The prospects are very bright.

On the security front, all this economic cooperation we are envisaging is now aimed at promoting trust and peace. These are very reliable Confidence Building Measures (CBM), or you can call them Confidence and Security Building Measures (CSBM). Usually, North Korea was regarded as a missing link in this big Eurasia initiative, because it is like an isolated island. However, in case North Korea changes its direction and joins this trend, in the mainstream international community, the Korean peninsula can serve as a hub. This is for economic cooperation and regional harmonisation and reconciliation. As you achieved German unification in the Western part of the Eurasian continent, we may be able to achieve Korean unification in the Eastern part of Eurasia.

We wish to achieve these two important economic and security goals. There are many actors which will be fortunately placed to make big contributions. These include your country, the Central Asian countries, Russia, China, North and South Korea and even the United States and the European countries. We are open to any country which is ready and willing to contribute to this important exercise.

Thierry de Montbrial, président et fondateur de la WPC

Now I am giving the floor to Professor Joseph Nye. Joseph Nye, or Joe Nye, is very well known for having invented two concepts of soft and smart power, but let me say that he is much harder and smarter than that. Joe, you have the floor.

Joseph Nye, professeur émérite, Center for Public Leadership, Harvard Kennedy School

Thank you very much for your talk, Mr Minister. I wonder if I could ask you to expand it by saying a word about your neighbour, Japan. Japan and Korea both face a great danger to the North, which is the unpredictability of the regime in North Korea. This has proven to be very risk acceptant in its behaviour in the past. Yet Japan and Korea have wasted the last two years, fighting over history of 80 years ago rather than preparing a defence cooperation. This would help them deal with a very real and current danger of the 21st century. Can you say a word or two about what steps you are taking to improve the relationship with Japan, so that you can build this defence cooperation? In fact, the top leaders have not even been able to meet, and that has affected the ability of lower level leaders to coordinate along the lines that are necessary.

Yun Byung Se, Ministre des Affaires étrangères de la République de Corée

As a student of international relations, one of your masterpieces, entitled Power and Interdependence, was one of the most read books for many Korean students at the time. I really appreciated your masterpiece at the time. Many of our American friends are either interested in or concerned about current Korean and Japanese relations. Many questions boil down to how we can overcome these difficulties that we are undergoing now.

Between Tokyo and Seoul, we do not have any difficulty meeting North Korean danger. We do not have any disagreement on this strategic interest and we are working together already, bilaterally and trilaterally. We already had a meeting at the defence minister among three countries, which were the US, Japan and South Korea, in Singapore in May. We also met at the GCS chairman level in September. I myself have already met with John Kerry and Minister Kishida trilaterally several times, so dialogue is very active.

The only exception is the summit meeting. This is what many of our American friends do not fully understand. We have some pending historical issues on this, especially issues relating to comfort women. Many of you may have read the latest edition of The New York Times, which had a big editorial three days ago. Two days before that, there was the longest column I have ever seen, by Ms. Kotler of the Sumner Institute. Koreans here and many people overall are talking about these comfort women issues. In fact, this issue has been enforced as a matter of universal human rights since February.

You may consider that to be included within the historical issues, but since 1954, we have ladies who have suffered all these tragedies and hardships and who are still alive. We are not linking history to important security issues. Instead, we wish to solve these immediate humanitarian issues, before all these old ladies pass away, which may be in another four or five years. Unfortunately we do not see any concrete steps being taken by our counterparts in Asia, but we are working very hard on this. We are marking the 50th anniversary of the normalisation of relations between our two countries next year, so we are working very hard.

One good initiative on our part is that just last month, as you heard from my President, we proposed the convening and hosting of this trilateral summit involving Korea, Japan and China in the near future. I am now working very hard on the possibility of having a trilateral foreign ministers' meeting before that summit. Regarding our plan, there is a series of important steps to be taken in the coming weeks and months, in the political, economic and cultural area. There are a lot of very well specified roadmaps for next year, but we wish to see progress.

Yesterday, Ed Royce, who is the Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee made very important remarks. This was together with Faloma Berga, who is a retiring Congressman, on these comfort women issues. The politicians in Tokyo should be aware of these conscientious voices coming from the international committee on this issue, whether they are historical issues or not. I think I answered most of your questions, but in my Government, we are very keenly aware of the importance of cooperation and coordination regarding threats. This is among three countries, Korea, Japan and the United States. With that in mind, we are working very hard and we will work very hard in the future as well.

Thierry de Montbrial, président et fondateur de la WPC

I now give the floor to Mr Mohamed Laichoubi, a former Minister from Algeria.

Mohamed Laichoubi, ancien ministre du Travail et de la Protection sociale d'Algérie

Merci Monsieur le Ministre de votre disponibilité. Madame la Présidente est intervenue ce matin et nous a convaincus de ce que nous savions déjà. En l'occurrence, la Corée a un itinéraire extrêmement intéressant sur un certain nombre de décennies et elle peut servir d'exemple en ce qui concerne son développement économique et social et sa maîtrise des technologies. En même temps, vous êtes un pays qui avez payé un prix fort au regard de l'Histoire. Est-ce que ces deux éléments peuvent vous permettre d'avoir un regard différent sur la relation internationale, sur la façon de concevoir les partenariats ? C'est ma première question. Ma seconde question est : quel regard avez-vous sur l'Afrique, étant entendu que les formes de partenariats et de relations internationales n'ont pas toujours été claires de part et d'autre, c'est-à-dire entre les grands pays et les pays africains eux-mêmes ? Je vous remercie.

Yun Byung Se, Ministre des Affaires étrangères de la République de Corée

In my speech just now, I talked in passing about why South Korea is unique in its attitude towards the countries in the developing world. We have gone through colonisation, fratricidal war and extreme poverty. We are one of the very few countries which understand the plight of developing and poor countries, in Africa, in South Asia and in Latin America. When we say that we will be partners in development cooperation, that means that we will make some differences. We wish to buy hearts from our friends in the developing world.

Our development system, for example, our Official Development Assistance (ODA), is very much tailored to the local needs of the developing countries. It is not one way street assistance, because we wish to enable to learn how to fish, rather than simply giving them fish. This is the true spirit of what we call the Pusan Global Partnership. This is based on the premise of co stakeholdership, co ownership, partnership and transparency. This is different from the previous aid oriented development cooperation. We are now working to find more effective development cooperation. This is what we are now talking about with many of our friends in the lead up to this development summit next year at the United Nations.

One good example is our new village movement called the Samar movement. This is in more than 70 or 80 countries, especially Rwanda for example. Just two weeks ago, the President of Rwanda, Mr Kagame, visited Korea. He is very eager to benchmark our experience of developing our rural community. Now they are a most successful nation, which has been chosen for the OECD and the United Nations Development programme. In this way, we are trying to make more success stories in the developing world.

On Africa, as you have seen, as you have seen with our intention to send our medical team to Sierra Leone, we share the concerns of many countries about the problems faced by Africa. To the greatest extent possible, we are now also trying to work with our African partners, especially when they look to Korea's unique experience. In the same way as I mentioned, we are trying to develop their capacity, so that they could become another Korea or another success story in the future. Partnership is our key role.

Last year, many of our parliamentarians joined our campaign to help our African friends. 77 members of the Korean National Assembly now belong to what they call the Korea Africa Committee in the National Assembly. They say that Africa is our friend and that it is a blue ocean for Korea's diplomacy. I am planning to host a Korea Africa summit, which will be sometime next year. Two weeks from now, I am also visiting the Middle East to host the Korea Middle East Forum. In this way, we are trying to expand Korea's diplomatic horizon to many of our developing friends. Again, my key point is that we wish to be different from other advanced countries, because we suffered from all the problems that are being faced by developing countries now. We wish to buy hearts and establish heart to heart relations with you.

**Anatoly Torkunov, recteur de l'Institut d'Etat des relations internationales de Moscou (MGIMO)**

Thank you very much, Mr Minister for your excellent presentation and your frank and open answers to our questions. I just want to ask you to articulate your position and the position of the Republic of Korea regarding the resumption of six party talks. You know that recently, we hosted the special envoy from North Korea in Moscow. He once again confirmed the position of Pyong and its readiness to come back to the six party talks. Yesterday or the day before yesterday, you hosted the American special envoy, the new American special envoy to Korea, Sung Kim. He again confirmed his position and Washington's position on the six party talks, which should only be resumed with some pre conditions on the North Korean side. What is the position of Seoul on that issue?

Yun Byung Se, Ministre des Affaires étrangères de la République de Corée

Thank you for asking this very important question. Just three days ago, my Chief Negotiator, Ambassador Fong, visited your country, and spent quite some time addressing these important issues, including the resumption of six party talks. I also know that in the wake of the visit of Cheyung Heh, North Korea's special envoy, to Moscow, there is renewed interest in the resumption of these talks.

Since 2008, we do not have any dialogue on the main section of these six party talks, mainly because of North Korea's three nuclear tests and missile launches. Whatever you call it, whether it is conditions, atmosphere, pre tests tests or whatever, we wish to see a real indication of willingness on the part of North Korea. This is to give up their nuclear weapons programmes or at least to take some action to move towards that ultimate goal.

As you know, the United Nations Security Council adopted four important resolutions and the essence of these four resolutions is CVID, the complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantling of North Korean nuclear programmes. That is our goal, but how do we achieve that? There are two important approaches. One is what we are doing now, which is through sanctions on the part of the international community and individual countries. The other way is with dialogue, especially through six party talks. Russia is making a lot of efforts towards this goal.

I repeat that we wish to see some genuine indications on the part of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) to move towards that goal. After having conducted three nuclear tests and launched many medium and long range missiles, we cannot simply go back into business as usual mode. This is the stance of the Korean Government, but we always appreciate Russia's willingness to make progress in these efforts. We are very much in keeping with your Government and Mr Marulov is always very helpful and open minded about this. Again, I thank you for those efforts.

Landry Signé, président fondateur du Global Network for Africa's Prosperity

Thank you very much, Mr Minister, for your fantastic presentation. I am Landry Signé, from the Global Network for Africa's Prosperity and Stanford University. Would you mind elaborating more about your role in contributing to the post 2015 development agenda, especially in terms of financing? Secondly, would you also mind elaborating more about your foreign policy regarding Africa? Here, I speak about this. Some scholars explain foreign policy with the 4Ps, meaning Power, Peace, Prosperity and Principle. What are the key factors motivating your foreign policy regarding Africa.

Yun Byung Se, Ministre des Affaires étrangères de la République de Corée

I guess I partly answered those questions in my previous remarks. As regards the 2015 development agenda, we are trying to be helpful in facilitating the ongoing debates, which divide many groups, especially between the developed and developing nations. One important contribution we are going to make is through the Busan Global Partnership.

For many years, advanced countries have spent more time on giving aid. This is more or less unilateral and a one way street approach.

Now, through this Busan Global Partnership, we are trying to create a two way street of co ownership. Therefore, developing countries can benefit from this cooperation, through either ODA or many other joint projects. In the lead up to this development summit next year in the United Nations, Korea will focus on its unique experience and pull together our collective wisdom in that direction.

On Africa, unlike China or Japan, we do not have a big budget to offer financial support to Africa, but many African countries are very eager to benchmark Korean's experience. Korea has gone from being the axis of the world to currently being a prosperous nation. Now we are approaching many African leaders, policy makers, academics and even the younger generations. We are letting them know what the key element was in our success stories, as well as our trials and errors, so they cannot repeat our mistakes.

This again stems out of our genuine desire to lift them out of this current plight, including extreme poverty. For the sake of time, I would not like to enter into detail about our specific foreign policy on Africa. However, Africa is becoming a very important priority in general for Korea's diplomacy, especially for the current Government in Korea.

Thierry de Montbrial, président et fondateur de la WPC

The best things must come to an end, so I think we should not take more time from you, as you too need some rest. Let me just thank you again. I think we have learned a lot today about Korea and the foreign policy of Korea. We have also had glimpses into a number of other features of your country and you yourself contributed a lot to that. Thank you very much and thank you also for hosting this dinner, as I said before.