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Over the past 71 years, East Asia has made big stride in terms of economic progress winning over the wounds of the Korean War and the Vietnam War. Democracy and social justice also have marked big progress. But there are always sources of instability in East Asia for it to continue to leap forward.

1. Number one issue is how to relocate or reposition the power balance between the USA and the emerging super power China. Like everywhere, people turn their attention to what will be the policy course of the Trump government. US discontent with China may start with trade frictions and potentially with currency issues. One must see what will be their respective reaction on a potential new South China Sea friction

2. US government's alliance with South Korea and Japan will remain strong leaving the issue of burden sharing for joint defence. But I expect that these defence cost issues may well be settled without too much fuss in due course of time.

3. TPP launch failure will be a blow to Japan and to those countries who signed the agreement. However, it will be early to expect that China alone leads the road for freer trade through FTAAP or RCEP. A region wide trade and investment liberalization will take quite a bit of time before actual launch.

Rather, one can expect that bilateral FTAs may well be more actively pursued, including the China-Japan-Korea trilateral FTA, depending on Trump government's action in trade field.

4. China-Japan direct confrontation over the Sengaku(Daoidao) island may not add further intensity at this juncture, in part because of uncertainty over US President Trump's new orientation. I hope that the trilateral summit of Korea-China-Japan be held as expected in December and if this is held as scheduled, it would be good for mending Japan-China ties.

5. One should watch the new Russian endeavour to develop its Far Eastern area, using the annual Eastern Economic Forum and drawing investment from Japan, Korea and China, in addition to Russia's own investment. Korea and Russia were about to sign on the Najin-Hassan transport and logistics cooperation project in February this year but the 4th North Korean nuclear bomb test spoiled the project. So far, North Korea has blocked regional economic cooperation in Northeast Asia but we must find ways of promoting Eurasian cooperation as emphasized at the recent Vladivostok EEF gathering of the three leaders of Korea, Japan and Russia.

6. But the most and far most threat for the stability of the region is the North Korean nuclear adventure. North Korea might have some 8 to 10 nuclear warheads and it continues to develop long delivery missile carrying nuclear warheads and SLBMs. North Korea does not listen to any advice from others and if left unchecked, it may add up its nuclear stockpile of 100 warheads within 3-5 years. If North Korea becomes a de facto and de jure nuclear weapon state, the entire NPT regime will blow apart and nuclear proliferation will be a non-stoppable phenomenon. NPT and IAEA will be seriously challenged for its raison d'être. This is a serious threat to world peace.

It cause direct threat to South Korea and neighbouring states but also the entire world will suffer from this quagmire.



The UN, namely the permanent members of the Security Council should take stern measures to address this issue. The UN Security Council resolution 2270 should be rigorously implemented and the forthcoming resolution should be more powerful, powerful enough indeed.

7. The sinister human rights violation of North Korea needs constant condemnation and the recent UN General Assembly resolution finger points the responsibility of the North Korean leader himself referring to the potential impeachment at the ICC. Beyond that, the UN Security Council must pass a similar strong human rights resolution on North Korean situation. To prevent calamity of humanity, it is better now for UN Security Council Permanent Members to focus on settling the North Korean dilemma taking full responsibility and forgetting about so called real politics.

8. There will be two alternatives for us.

One is to continue to exert pressure on North Korea while leaving the door open for direct negotiation with it. If North Korea agrees to come back to conference table either the 6 party talks or other type of talks with a clear manifestation of its readiness for nuclear abandonment, we may start a long process of negotiation. If North Korea behaves correctly, in the course of the negotiation, the international community can draw audacious economic cooperation programs for compensating its abandonment of nuclear weapon programs. One must note that we developed concrete ideas and programs to help build the NK economy such as setting up of a Northeast Asia development Bank and realization of the Eurasian initiatives, as well as infrastructure development, linking of railway, providing electricity distribution networks and gas pipeline etc. The South Korea sponsored Northeast Asia Peace and cooperation mechanism, a regional security dialogue structure can properly serve to mitigate North Korean worry about the regime's survival.

However, even with our full endeavour to embrace North Korea for peaceful settlement of this crisis, North Korea will obstinately stick to nuclear illusion; If there is no change of NK position in a certain period of time of trial, there will be no other way for the international community but to seek enforcing regime change in the North to prevent human calamity of this century.

9. It will be wiser and necessary for the South Korean government to devise its own working plan and consult deeply with the new US administration for a joint and comprehensive strategy. They must talk deeply with China to set up a joint approach and together with Japan and Russia (and with the backing of the EU), a joint set of position will be ready and put forward to North Korea for it to take or leave it. Deeper communication and frank talks are most necessary among key partners. 6 party talks, 5 party talks, various trilateral talks such as US-Korea-Japan, US-Korea-China, Korea-China-Japan or even bilateral talks with North Korea must be tried to find a genuine breakthrough out of the current impasse.

10. It will be a long and difficult process. It also must go hand in hand with pushing a peaceful reunification of the peninsula. A true and complete solution of North Korean dilemma can only be found in promoting peaceful reunification of the Peninsula winning over the 71 year old division. I wish full support of the audience here present for this vision and endeavour.