

## Excerpts from the Keynote Speech at the Opening Ceremony in Jeju Forum **Designing New Asia**

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History binds, but actions today see bonds grow or wither. At every turn we have jointly chosen to strengthen the ties between. We have nurtured our alliance with each other and the United States. We have a strong bilateral security architecture, with Australia and South Korea having annual 2+2 talks with the foreign and defence ministers.

As robust trading partners South Korea is our third largest export market and is our fourth largest trading partner, with two-way trade of approximately \$30 billion per year we have just concluded a landmark Free Trade Agreement that slashes tariffs and is expected to stimulate trade by \$5 billion more in the next 15 years. We have strong people-to-people ties, with over 16,000 Korean students in our universities.

In August 2012, I launched our comprehensive strategic document, the White Paper on Australia in the Asian Century. The White Paper said: “We [Australia] seek security in the broadest sense meaning the security of Australia from attack or coercion the collective economic and political security of this rapidly growing region security of supply for food and energy as the region grows the human security of individuals in the region ... and the security of the natural system as the globe enters a period of rising temperatures and new environmental challenges.” The White Paper also called for the development of a comprehensive country strategy for South Korea, in order to bring stronger cohesion and purpose to the relationship.

In a world of so many geo-political challenges, today I will focus on three: the threat posed by North Korea and the prospects for change, the consequences of China’s rise and the engagement of the

United States in our region and what it means for us as allies.

First, to North Korea, which continues to oppress its own people and cause international concern because of its unpredictability and ambition for nuclear weapons. The new leader, Kim Jong Un, comes across as both dangerous and erratic. We do not know the limits of what he is capable of doing, from brutalizing his own people, to murdering his opponents, to developing his nuclear weapons.

In facing such a regime, there is only one certain course: to stay vigilant and resolute. To be prepared to meet whatever emerges from Pyongyang. This means a continuation of the closest consultation, dialogue and coordination between us and our ally the United States. We do not know what he will do but we have to be prepared for every contingency, including the possibility of change within North Korea itself.

North Korea's younger people who grew up understanding the power of the market, because of North Korea's unofficial economic activity and increasing access to information through black market and non-government organisations. The human impulse for freedom should never be underestimated.

Should change happen, whether its source is the collapse of the current regime or it embarking on a different and better course, then the Republic of Korea would need to make decisions on reunification. While the entire world has a stake in this issue - China, the United States, Japan and Australia - it is, at the end of the day, one for the Korean people to decide. This is another contingency for which to prepare and one that is the subject of so much dreaming and dialogue here in the Republic of Korea.

There are no easy choices here. But every choice possible requires deep thinking about China's engagement and its ability to influence North Korea. This is but one dimension of the multiple strategic calculations our world needs to make about China. Its rise is a powerful force shaping the times in which we live.

In my view, China's new and growing status and prosperity is both remarkable and to be welcomed. In the Asian Century White Paper, our view of this transformation was stated clearly in the following terms: 'We welcome China's rise, not just because of the economic and social benefits it has brought China's people and the region (including Australia), but because it deepens and strengthens the entire international system...We accept that China's military growth is a natural, legitimate outcome of its growing economy and broadening interests. It is important that China and others in the region explain to their neighbours the pace and scope of their military modernisation, to build confidence and trust...'

China's hunger for resources as it grows has brought great economic benefits, including to my own

nation. But it has also brought tension. The recent anti-China riots in Vietnam are evidence of that tension at the street level. The anxiety in the many diplomatic engagements about the South China Sea demonstrates that tension at another level. But it is those diplomatic dialogues, bilaterally and through important multi-lateral forums like the East Asia Summit, that must be our focus.

We, Australia and Korea, along with our ally the United States, must be patient and perceptive investors in strengthening these exchanges and institutions so that they are robust enough to enable the resolution of the hardest of issues. Of course, the difficult issues are not confined to the South China Sea. Japanese nationalism and China's strength have collided in their territorial dispute over islands in the north.

In all of these issues, the deep engagement of the United States is vital. Fortunately our shared ally is bringing a sophisticated approach to that engagement. This was summarised in our Asian Century White Paper, in the following way: '...We are optimistic about the ability of China and the United States to manage strategic change in the region. But their relationship will inevitably have a competitive element, especially as China's global interests expand, it becomes more active on a broader range of international issues and its defence capabilities grow in areas dominated for more than half a century by the United States.'

As our region sees both the benefits of co-operation between the United States and China and the out workings of a natural competition, it is important that each of us is able to work collaboratively together, to the best of our ability, on our shared strategic outlook. Australia and Korea can do that seamlessly and well. But the continuing tensions between Korea and Japan are concerning to me. The enduring memories of Japan's occupation of Korea and the wrongs that were inflicted on the Korean people particularly Korean women are making that necessary collaboration more difficult.

The Korean people suffered. Korean women were treated terribly. From my country, Australian troops suffered grievously at the hands of the Japanese. The past must be acknowledged with honesty. The victims still alive today should have their suffering recognised. But one must live in the present, and embrace the opportunities at hand today precisely for our security tomorrow. The world would be grateful to see a movement forward for Korea and Japan.

The G20, APEC and the East Asia Summit, and our relationships with ASEAN are part of building the stronger architecture we need for cooperation and commerce. We need to be focused on developing an effective regionalism that will work to bring greater harmony on the geopolitical front as well as embrace food security and foreign investment, immigration and education, stock market structures and financial regulation, energy policy and environmental standards.

This is a vast landscape of change a landscape that can help build both prosperity and peaceful

engagement. The strength of integrated financial ties and trade, as well as people to people links, can do much to overwhelm any tensions

Finally, and more specifically: What can Australia and the Republic of Korea do together to advance these more positive dynamics? Although a Western nation, Australia has deep and growing ties across Asia. Australia is seen as a dependable friend, possessed of immense goodwill and a desire to engage with and learn from its neighbours.

The Republic of Korea is well integrated economically with the whole region. Korea has FTAs with the United States and Australia, and is advancing free trade agendas with ASEAN, China and Japan. It is a vibrant democracy sometimes, perhaps a little too vibrant on the floor of your Parliament. Your culture, which so respects education, is greatly admired. Your technological prowess, with broadband deployed to virtually every house, is the envy of the world.

Korea and Australia work together so well economically and politically: Let's keep building our capacity to do so in the interests of peace, stability and security in the region.

I agree with President Obama, that all the tensions in this region can be managed they can be successfully navigated. But they require constant attention and goodwill and not just to avoid the dangers of mistake and miscalculation, but to reduce the harm that will occur if they persist in the years ahead.

We can always do better, but there has to be a break not with history, or with memory but a break with paralysis over the legacy issues of the 20th century.

That is what we have to strive for. That is what holds the promise of a better tomorrow for ourselves and for our children.

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