

## THE PRESIDENT EXTENDS A HELPING HAND

*The following is the abbreviated text of an address which was given by President Kim Young Sam of the Republic of Korea in commemoration of the 51st National Liberation Day.*

**W**e are gathered here today, on the 51st anniversary of national liberation, in order to renew our pledge to realize the unification of our country and the glory of our people. My fellow Koreans who are watching this occasion right now can still feel the deep emotion of 51 years ago when people, freed at last from the oppression of colonialism, reached down to touch the soil with their hands to confirm that it was now their own, and when even the sea danced in jubilation.

This place is also filled with pride over the progress we have made in the past half century, during which we have created something out of nothing with only our blood and sweat.

The torch that symbolizes our hopes and courage is burning bright allowing us to forge the approaching 21st century into an age of the Korean people.

We feel acutely the importance of "nation" on this day every year. We are able to advance into the world and the future, singing the joys of progress, only because we have a nation.

First of all, I would like to humbly express my profound respect for our patriotic forefathers who sacrificed their lives to lay the foundation for our independence. I would also like to express my deep gratitude to the great people of this country who have played the main role in developing our country into a land of freedom and prosperity.

**F**or the past half century, we have worked hard to build this nation, overcoming the yoke of national division and the devastation of war. Although harsh and adverse circumstances have blocked our progress along the path, we have, with an indomitable will, succeeded in making our nation into what it is today.

The Republic of Korea which had its start as one of the poorest nations in the world now has become the world's 11th largest economy with a per capita income of US\$10,000. The democracy that we have achieved together has turned the people into the true master of this country and the Republic into a nation that can stand tall in the world. We have righted the wrongs of the past and established a truly democratic Government, raising the level of our pride in the nation. We are satisfied that our country which used to receive assistance from others has become a nation that provides others with assistance.

At the Atlanta Olympic Games 10 days ago, we were able once again to confirm the power and energy of our people.

The status of our nation in international community has never been higher. This means that the dreams of our patriotic forefathers who ardently pursued a free and prosperous independent nation are being realized. You, the people, have created the Korean miracle in the past half century.

**T**oday, when the second half century since national liberation has begun to unfold, we have to resolve to make a new start to complete a century of independence.

We have an ardent wish. It is to complete our incomplete state of independence. It is a wish to create a great age of the Korean people and a nation that can stand tall at the center of the world, a nation that leads the world in democracy and prosperity, a cultured nation in which spiritual values and morality are respected and a unified nation that could contribute to the peace and prosperity of the world. These are the stuff our dreams are made of.

And we can do it. With the power and strength that

have achieved the Korean miracle, we can surely realize the glory of the Korean people.

**T**he greatest task facing our people is to achieve peaceful unification. This is a must, if we are to be completely and truly independent.

The first step toward peaceful unification is to recognize that all 70 million Korean people are one. We always have to think about our compatriots not only in the South, but also in the North as well as in other parts of the world.

The fact that we sent an enormous amount of free rice, worth 190 billion won to North Korea without any condition last year was aimed at relieving the compatriots in the North of their difficulties. Although, regretfully, our good intention has not resulted in reconciliation and cooperation between the South and North, it nevertheless is highly significant if it is seen from a long-term perspective and in the context of the history of our people.

The cardinal factors for improving inter-Korean relations and achieving peaceful unification are peace and cooperation. Only peace and cooperation can help us overcome the pain of national division. They will be the key that opens the path toward unification and prosperity.

In this respect, I will enunciate our position in support of peace on the Korean Peninsula and inter-Korean cooperation.

First, we want stability in North Korea. We do not want the difficulties North Korea is experiencing now to develop to the point where they would affect stability there.

Second, we do not want North Korea to be isolated. We hope that North Korea will become a sound member of the international community so that, together with us, it can enhance the capability of our people and make contributions to the world.

Third, we do not pursue unification that is imposed by one side on the other. The Korean question should be resolved in a peaceful and practical way in accordance with agreements between the South and North.

As the parties directly concerned with the Korean question, South and North Korea, through the basic inter-Korean agreement, have already promised to the world

and their people that they will work to settle peace on the Peninsula and promote exchanges and cooperation. This promise should not be delayed any longer.

Based on this fundamental spirit, I intend to take the lead in solving inter-Korean problems.

**I**t was in the spirit of peace and cooperation that President Bill Clinton of the United States and I proposed a four-party meeting on Korea last April. A wide-range of problems related to the relaxation of tension and the settlement of peace on the Korean Peninsula could be discussed at the four-party meeting. Above all, the problem of establishing a peace structure would be discussed there. The question of building trust between the militaries of the two side would also be discussed. Furthermore, from the standpoint of the relaxation in tension, inter-Korean economic cooperation could be discussed.

I would like to take this opportunity to express our thinking on the problem of economic cooperation that would be taken up at the four-party meeting.

First is the problem of food. North Korea is now experiencing a serious food shortage. Especially, the flood damage caused by last month's torrential rains is adding to the pain felt by the North Koreans. As part of the same people, we could not but feel truly sorry for them.

We have helped the North Korea with brotherly love in the past and will exert efforts to encourage international support for North Korea in the future. However, North Korea's food shortages could never be solved through temporary outside assistance. We are prepared to help North Korea find a fundamental solution to its food problem.

First of all, we can help increase North Korea's agricultural productivity through various ways. We could also assist North Korea in its recovery efforts from the devastating floods by providing it with machinery and equipment. Moreover, we are also willing to supply the necessary goods and materials by expanding inter-Korean trade and investing in the Najin-Sonbong free trade zone. We would also allow South Korean tourists to visit North Korea.

Economic exchanges such as these would be carried out mainly by private businesses.

Prior to these exchanges, however, the Government authorities of the South and North will have to work out agreements to guarantee the safety of people, materials to be exchanged and profits resulting from investment. I hope that Government authorities of the two sides will push further meaningful and practical economic cooperation through dialogue under the basic principles of mutual benefit and relaxation of tension.

North Korea's economic problems can be resolved only through genuine consultation and cooperation with the South. More than anyone else, we have a strong desire and the capabilities to assist North Korea.

Therefore, I believe that when the four-party meeting is held, North Korea will be able to benefit from political stability, military security and economic profits.

The reason that other nations of the world support the four-party meeting is because it is the best way to attain stability and prosperity not only on the Korean Peninsula but in all of Northeast Asia.

I urge North Korean leaders once again to attend the four-party meeting not only for themselves but also for the future of the Korean people and of Northeast Asia.

The peaceful unification of our country has now become a real task for us. The fate of our people depends entirely on ourselves. We have to realistically prepare for unification. As our desire for unification heats up, our pace toward unification should be deliberate and cautious. Sentimentalism or the idea that one side should do a favor to the other in order to realize unification at any cost do not help solve inter-Korean problems.

I will firmly deal with any group that tries to overthrow our Government or any political system that challenges democracy on which the Government is built.

National security has to be firmly maintained. As the commander-in-chief of the armed forces, I will firmly guard our nation and people with mighty military force. The joint ROK-U.S. defense posture and cooperative structure are firmer than at any time before.

In order to realize a unified Korea, national unity is more important than anything else. To that end, we have to achieve unity among regions, classes and generations.

Politics should no longer be a struggle between regions or factions; it should rather concentrate the people's strength through unity and harmony; it will have to be developed into politics that manages the nation with a firm vision for the future. It has to develop into globalized politics that could help manage world affairs.

Our economy will also have to make a leap forward so that all 70 million Korean people will enjoy affluence together. We will have to increase the size of our economy to US\$1 trillion and that of trade to US\$500 billion by the beginning of the next century.

I am well aware of the people's concern over our economy of late. In order to reinvigorate our economy, the Government is making utmost efforts. I earnestly urge you to cooperate with the Government in its efforts to recover the nation's economy and make our life affluent through thrift and savings.

We also have to have justice and rationality take root in our society by steadily pushing reform and changes.

By further promoting globalization, we have to raise standards in all fields to the world's top level. If all our people make unified efforts, our capacity for unification will be doubled and unification will be realized much sooner.

A new world is opening up before our eyes.

In the coming 21st century we will stand tall and lead world efforts to achieve prosperity for humankind and peace.

Let us march together, shoulder to shoulder, for the true independence of our country. Let us achieve unification with our own hands. Let us forge a first-rate nation. Let us create the age of the Korean people. Thus, let us hand the glory of the Korean people, that our patriotic forefathers so ardently wished, to our descendants for generations to come. **VIP**