

# Remarks on the 50th Memorial Day

Fellow citizens, patriotic veterans and bereaved families,

On this the 50th Memorial Day, I pay tribute to the lofty sacrifices of the fallen patriots and pray for their repose. I offer my deep respect and thanks to all veterans and bereaved families.

It is due to the passionate dedication of our patriotic forefathers that we were able to write a proud history by overcoming numerous tribulations, including Japanese colonial rule, the Korean War and military-influenced authoritarian regimes. We owe the freedom, peace and prosperity we enjoy today to the indomitable endeavors of the patriots.

At the very least, it behooves us to value and exalt their contributions. In paying full honor to the national patriots and bereaved families, we will redouble efforts to enhance our self-reliant independence and national self-respect. We will do our utmost so that all those who dedicated their lives to the country can be proud of being citizens of the Republic of Korea.

Fellow citizens,

Thus far we have achieved much, ranging from national liberation and the establishment of the nation to the development of the economy and democracy. Many countries have gained independence since the end of World War II, but few have scored as many achievements as we have.

Continuing that trend, we will join the ranks of the advanced countries in the not distant future, and the day will come without fail when we overcome national division.

In light of that, what is the most important task before us now? I think it is to achieve a integrated community. It is to overcome internal division and friction and nurture the capabilities to reach a decision through national consensus when change is required.

The first condition of integration is to build a balanced society.

Integration cannot be achieved with words. We will become a cohesive community when we have created an environment conducive to mutual survival and coexistence and when we share the perception that showing compassion for others is beneficial to all.

That is why the Participatory Government has been pressing ahead with balanced national development as a priority task. The multifunctional administrative city, the relocation of public entities

to provincial areas and the resolution of metropolitan problems are all intended to alleviate regional imbalance.

In addition, it is important to resolve the bipolarization of development and achieve simultaneous growth of all entities. We have to support the growth of medium-size, small and very small businesses and help farmers and irregular workers as their disadvantages are becoming larger and larger. Keen attention should be given to solving issues involving alienation and discrimination in all sectors.

Through this effort, we will surely create a balanced community in which no citizen is subject to undue oppression but everybody lives a happy life.

Fellow Koreans,

Another basis for national unity is a mature democracy. We have to establish a firm culture of dialogue, compromise and coexistence.

We are now living in times different from the past authoritarian age when the people had to resist and struggle to safeguard their rights and due benefits. No problems will be solved if people keep struggling without presenting alternatives out of collective egotism and self-interests.

Conflicts should be solved through dialogue and compromise. In particular, if a decision is made through reasonable procedures, it has to be complied with actively. We need to strive to bolster social consensus in reducing the elements of conflict involved in labor-management relations, education and environment, among other sectors.

When we achieve greater integration as a community, Korean society will progress one step higher.

Fellow citizens,

Later this week, I am scheduled to visit the United States and have a summit with President George W. Bush. Not long after that, the South and North will hold Minister-Level Talks. Through these efforts, I will do my best to help solve the North Korean nuclear issue peacefully and relieve your apprehensions.

Fellow Koreans,

With nothing much in their hands, our ancestors laid the foundation of the Republic of Korea. And we now have enough power to safeguard ourselves and develop our future. Let us all have self-confidence and construct an advanced Korea. Our forefathers will guide us in this.

Once more, I offer my tribute to and pray for the repose of our martyred patriotic forefathers whose spirits are protecting the Korean nation.

Thank you.