

Welcoming Remarks
by Minister Ban Ki-moon
At Luncheon in Honour of Secretary Colin L. Powell
Former Secretary of State
And Mrs. Alma J. Powell

Secretary and Mrs. Collin Powell,
Chargé d'Affaire Mark Minton,
Minister and Mrs. Yoon Kwang-ung,
General and Mrs. Leon LaPorte,
Mr. and Mrs. Ryu Jin,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my distinct pleasure to host this luncheon today for my old friends, Secretary and Mrs. Powell.

Six months have passed since I last met Secretary Powell in Jakarta on the occasion of the Special ASEAN Leaders' Meeting on Aftermath of Earthquake and Tsunami. During his tenure as Secretary of State, however, I was fortunate enough to meet with him six times and each occasion proved meaningful and rewarding.

My thanks go to Mr. Ryu Jin for all his hard work in making the arrangements for Secretary Powell's visit to Korea at this time. To Secretary Powell, I extend our warmest greetings and remind you that you are always welcome in my country and my home. I am particularly pleased today as this visit will give me the chance to finally pay back the cup of coffee that I have owed Secretary Powell since his last visit to Korea.

Secretary Powell's visit falls at a meaningful juncture - he has arrived in time to witness the recent developments bringing new dynamics to the process for the peaceful resolution of the North Korean nuclear issue. North Korea's decision to return to the Six-Party Talks is welcomed as a positive move forward.

The next step is to ensure that tangible progress is made at the Talks. Secretary Powell's successor, Secretary of State Rice, paid a timely visit to Seoul last week. Korea and the US, as well as the other participating countries, are now engaging in close consultations on the goals and strategies for the forthcoming Talks. This comes after an impasse of about a year and is the result of arduous efforts by all five participants in the Talks. We will do everything in our power to maximize upon this valuable opportunity before us and to keep the momentum alive.

I believe that the present positive developments would not have been possible without Secretary Powell's continued commitment to peace on the Korean peninsula.

I therefore take this opportunity to thank Secretary Powell for his unfaltering support for a peaceful and diplomatic resolution of the North Korean nuclear issue.

When we speak of his contribution to Korea-US relations, we cannot forget his dedication to resolving long-standing alliance issues, such as the relocation of USFK bases, including the Yongsan base. We greatly appreciate his efforts in reinforcing our alliance. President Roh shares my gratitude and has every respect for Secretary Powell, holding him in high regard.

Distinguished Guests,

It is well-known that Secretary Powell has attained remarkable success, rising to the rank of Four-Star General and to the very pinnacle of American diplomacy. His life is marked with achievements earned through hard work and faith, and in itself is seen as the very manifestation of the American Dream. Even today, Secretary Powell continues to travel all over the US offering hope and encouragement to young Americans.

Secretary Powell,

The other day, I read a news article about a youth leadership center in Minneapolis that is to be named after you and I know how honored and proud you will have been. You are indeed a remarkable role model for many American children. I am sure that the wisdom, leadership and confidence that you exemplify will continue to

inspire strong and caring future leaders of America. I hope that they in turn will grow to be as good a friend to Korea as you have been.

And Mrs. Powell,

I would also like to take this opportunity to applaud you for the great work you have done through America's Promise of which you are Chairperson. I hope that your organization will succeed in its noble endeavors to nurture the character and capabilities of young America.

In the East, there is a saying that, "At the end of the day, the sun may fade, but smoke rising from a chimney and the pink glow of sunset become more beautiful. And the end of the year brings the cold, harsh winter, but tangerines become more fragrant."

To put it another way, Koreans like to say that "life really begins after sixty".

Secretary and Mrs. Powell,

There is no doubt that your work and influence will intensify and deepen as you continue your efforts to strengthen the future of America and the ROK-US alliance.

I would like to bring my remarks to a close by proposing a toast to the health and happiness of Secretary and Mrs. Powell and to an everlasting friendship between us.