

Ending the Cold War And Building the Common Peace

World Leadership Message

Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev

former President of the USSR

I sincerely greet you, the participants of the international Peace Forum, who gather on the Jeju Island in commemoration of the one-year anniversary of the Inter-Korean Summit to discuss the problems of promoting peace and prosperity in the North-East Asia.

I have many warm memories connected to Jeju Island – this wonderful corner of the Korean land. It is here that 10 years ago, in 1991, my meeting with the President of the Republic of Korea Mr. Roh Tae Woo took place. During that meeting we discussed the development of cooperation between our two countries after the establishment of bilateral diplomatic relations, from which a new impulse was initiated.

That was the time of a drastic change in the relations between our countries. The subsequent events proved absolutely right the steps we had

then taken. The development of our economic relations began, and the Republic of Korea became one of Russia's key partners in economy and trade, although our capacities and reserves in this aspect are by far underused. The same is true of the scientific and technical cooperation, and the cultural and humanitarian exchanges.

The establishment of diplomatic relations between our countries also had an important international response. It assisted the invigoration and improvement of the situation on the Korea Peninsula, and in the North-East Asia in general, as well as substantially influencing the international climate as a whole. The Republic of Korea is now recognized by all the leading countries, and North Korea is gradually moving away from international isolation. Both Korean states have become the members of the United Nations, and the scope of a military confrontation of the Great Powers in the region has decreased. All that created more favorable preconditions for the inter-Korean dialogue and for the getting-together of the North and South. It brought closer the perspective of a peaceful democratic reunion of the Korean people, and the gradual extinction of one of the last centers of tension remaining from the Cold War.

I want to assure you that Russia has a deep understanding of the Korean people's desire to live in one modern democratic state, with its

own independent place on the international scene, and supports the policy implemented by the President Putin to maintain a balanced relationship with the North and the South, thus contributing to their reconciliation. We estimate the Inter-Korean Summit, which took place a year ago, at its full worth, and consider the meeting between the leaders of the North and the South as a brave and noble step, which became internationally recognized in the Noble Peace Prize being awarded to the President of the Republic of Korea Mr. Kim Dae-jung.

I wholeheartedly support the idea of the development and strengthening of political, economic, and humanitarian cooperation between the countries of the North-East Asian and the Asian-Pacific Regions in general, Russia is deeply interested in good-neighbor relations with all the countries of the region and in solving the problems inherited from the past in a peaceful and democratic way, while taking national interests into consideration. I believe these relations could develop in both a bilateral and multilateral way, on the state level, and on the level of the non-governmental, civil society organizations, and that Jeju Island can well become the center for such contacts, meeting, negotiations and discussions.