

Thank you, Mr. President,

As I am taking the floor for the first time under your Presidency, I wish to congratulate you on your assumption of the Presidency and assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation.

Now I am speaking in exercise of my right of reply to the statement made by the distinguished delegate of the United States concerning the nuclear issue.

We have made it clear more than once in the 6-party talks and elsewhere that we had no uranium based nuclear programme. However, the continued insistence of the United States on the existence of the uranium enrichment programme here and there without presenting any evidence is aimed at creating artificial obstacles in the way of the progress of the 6-party talks by hindering the peaceful settlement of the nuclear problem. We consider that it is also an attempt of the United States to continuously isolate and stifle our country. All the facts clearly show that our judgment was correct that there had been no change in the position of the United States.

The "complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantlement" of our nuclear programme is totally unacceptable to us. Ours is not a country that was defeated in the war. The United States has no right to demand us to disarm. It is ridiculous that the United States asks us to disarm first under the present circumstances in which the DPRK and the US are technically in a state of war. We will never disarm ourselves in face of the continued nuclear threat and the threat of pre-emptive attack against our country.

The denuclearization of the Korean peninsula is our goal. Had the United States not pursued hostile policy towards our country, the nuclear issue would not have occurred and persisted until today like now. We have made a constructive package proposal based on the principle of simultaneous action under the welcome and support of other parties to the 6-party talks.

We will, in the future, too make every efforts for the peaceful settlement of the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula.

Thank you, Mr. President.