

Asan Plenum 2014

“Future of History”

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Welcome to the *Asan Plenum 2014*. It's great to have so many friends and colleagues all here in Seoul. We gather at a very special moment in world history, the region's history, and, I think very poignantly, in our nation's history.

There is a lot of soul searching going on currently within my country regarding the tragedy that is unfolding even at this moment. It only adds to the urgency for us to look back and to see what exactly it is that we have achieved, what our goals are, whether they should be changed, and whether they should be altered.

That is why this year we took the theme of “What is the Future of History,” and as we tried to show in the video that you just saw, there are many layers to this in a sense, whether they are geopolitical issues or economic issues. There's a sense in which the theme of history is making a major comeback and it is time for us to seriously grapple with this issue—all of us.

As we look forward to two days of intense discussions, debates, and conversation, as all of you know, the format we try to maintain is one that would allow maximum interaction and maximum dialogue. So I urge all of you, not just the panelists but all of you in the audience, to fully participate in the dialogue of each and every panel.

Now I have the special privilege and honor of introducing to you our keynote speaker. As you may well imagine, he's one of the busiest people in Korea. I could not be more honored nor could I thank him enough for taking time out of his incredibly busy schedule to address this session.

Please join me in welcoming the Foreign Minister of the Republic of Korea, the Honorable Yun Byung-se.