May 2015 JoongAng Ilbo-CSIS Forum Welcoming Remarks
By Dr. John Hamre
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Dr. John Hamre was elected president and CEO of CSIS in January 2000 and named Pritzker Chair in December 2012. Before joining CSIS, he served as the 26th U.S. deputy secretary of defense. Prior to holding that post, he was the under secretary of defense (comptroller) from 1993 to 1997. As comptroller, Dr. Hamre was the principal assistant to the secretary of defense for the preparation, presentation, and execution of the defense budget and management improvement programs. In 2007, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates appointed Dr. Hamre to serve as chairman of the Defense Policy Board. Before serving in the Department of Defense, Dr. Hamre worked for 10 years as a professional staff member of the Senate Armed Services Committee. From 1978 to 1984, Dr. Hamre served in the Congressional Budget Office, where he became its deputy assistant director for national security and international affairs. Dr. Hamre received his Ph.D. from the School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University on international politics and economics and U.S. foreign policy. He received his B.A. from Augustana College in Sioux Falls, South Dakota on political science and economics. The following year he studied as a Rockefeller fellow at the Harvard Divinity School in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Thank Ladies and Gentlemen, I am honored and pleased to welcome you all to the 5th JoongAng Ilbo-CSIS conference. At the outset, please let me thank Dr. Hong Seok-hyun and his very impressive colleagues for all their help in organizing this conference. It is a genuine partnership.

This conference is the product of Dr. Hong directly. Throughout his life, he has championed a smarter, more creative bilateral policy between Korea and America. He has done this in every one of his professional activities—as a leader here in Korea in civil society, as a successful businessman, as an Ambassador for Korea to the United States, and most happily for me, as a trustee of CSIS. In all these roles, Dr. Hong has championed a smart, thoughtful and constructive foreign policy for Korea and increasingly close ties to the United States. I am deeply grateful.

The topic for our conference this year is looking forward to the next 70 years. I think this is a very good topic. Let me offer my forecast for the next 70 years.

First, Korea will be unified.

Second, because of unification, Korea will become the 6th largest economy in the world.

Third, we will have a Northeast Asia consultation mechanism made up of China, Korea, Japan and the United States. At this stage, I think Russia will no longer be an Asian power. That could
change. But current Russian activity is isolating itself from the international community and has no sustained effort to remain an Asian power. This could change, but I think they will be out of the picture.

This last prediction is maybe more of a hope, than a forecast. I hope that in 70 years Korea is on the UN Security Council as a permanent member without a veto. I think Japan, Germany and India will be in the same spot.

Let me offer one more prediction, but this is with total certainty. America and Korea will remain eternal partners. The nature of our alliance with Korea will change in the details, but our fundamental commitment to the country will never change.

Of course I am not an expert. I will learn more today listening to our experts.

At this point I want to turn to my real purpose today which is to introduce to you Robert Zoellick as a keynote speaker of today’s conference. You have his official resume so I will not spend time on that. I just want you to understand what an important leader he is in American policy circles. Bob Zoellick is the only person other than former Secretary of State James Baker who is both a leader in foreign policy and economic policy at the highest levels. He has been Under Secretary of both the Treasury Department and the State Department. He also was Deputy Secretary of State. He will be a very senior official in the next Republican presidency. We are delighted that he is here with us today.

 Please welcome Secretary Robert Zoellick as our keynote speaker.

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