

Antonio Betancourt An American Who Changed the Mind of North Korea

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May 10, 2016



At a Universal Peace Federation (UPF) UK meeting last night, Antonio Betancourt, (Videos One and Two) the former Secretary General of the Summit Council for World Peace, explained his foreign policy strategy saying, 'Don't create a strong enemy from an adversary by demonising them. You will live to regret it!' He added, 'You must give your adversary the respect and dignity you, in your bias, may not think that they deserve! In the long term it is worth it! You can change your adversary into a partner.'
Video One Two

Betancourt added that he had met most of the leaders of South American nations in the 1980's before the end of communism. He was sent also as an envoy to meet North Korean leaders (Video Three Link) to open the way for the visit of the founders of UPF, Father and Mother Moon, to Pyongyang, North Korea.

He had three obstacles in those meetings. His native country, Colombia, had fought with the United Nations against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea) in the Korean war alongside the United States of which he had become a citizen. He was also an envoy of Father Moon who was known as a leading anti-communist.

Consequently, he had to endure a great deal of criticism before he was even invited to Pyongyang to discuss the visit. From these difficult early efforts a reconciliation between Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon and President Kim Il Sung occurred establishing a dynastic relationship between the Kim family and the Moon family that is still respected today.

Antonio Betancourt found by treating his work from the 'realm of the heart' he was welcomed by many current and former Heads of State from around the world. One even came to the airport with his wife to greet him.

Video One An American Who Was Able to Change the Mind of North Korea

Video Two - Turning Adversaries into Partners.

Video Three - Changing the Mind of North Korea.

Betancourt emphasised giving respect and listening to the other. By understanding the other with the magnanimity with which Japan and Germany were treated after World War Two enduring partnerships can be created. If we treat weaker nations with arrogance and attempt to suppress them, enmity and bitter resentment will limit our future destiny. For this our religious values that have been the source of all great civilisations are important. Dialogue between those religious leaders as well as discussions on how to apply those values to solve our contemporary problems is an important and often missing component of international diplomacy. Father Moon proposed an inter-religious council at the United Nations to fill this gap. Such a body would be a great assistance in defusing conflicts and tensions between the Islamic and Christian realms today.