

UPF Rome, Italy's Fifth Italian Peace Forum Discusses Summit 2022 and Leadership Conference

Franco Ravaglioli
October 28, 2022



Rome, Italy - At the fifth Italian Peace Forum, an intelligence and security advisor gave his impressions of the Summit 2022 and Leadership Conference held in Korea.

Professor Michele Pavan, a lecturer and the scientific coordinator at the LUM School of Management in Milan, was the invited speaker at the UPF Italian Peace Forum, an online event that was held on October 28, 2022.



He gave an extensive report based on his attendance at the World Summit that UPF held in Seoul, South Korea, from August 11 to 15.

[Professor Pavan's talk](#)

Professor Michele Pavan, lecturer and scientific coordinator at the LUM University School of Management, Milan, Italy

"Report on August 2022 Summit"

Professor Michele Pavan is the founder and president of Mondo Internazionale APS ETS, the founder and CEO of Minter Group S.r.l., and a member of the Technical and Scientific Committee of CESMA (Centro di Studi Militari Aeronautici) "Giulio Douhet" with a focus on military policy using satellite technologies and drones. He also is an intelligence and security advisor and does geostrategic and intelligence analysis for national and international institutions. He is currently a lecturer and scientific coordinator at the LUM University School of Management in Milan for several master's courses on diplomacy, European careers and geopolitics.

Thank you very much! I thank you for the invitation, first of all, for allowing me to go to Korea [to the Summit 2022 and Leadership Conference, held from August 11 to 15], which was really a very, very interesting and very, very important experience. In my opinion, it should be replicated in other parts of the world, including Europe, for a connotation of cultural diplomacy, which then was talked about, eventually, in the international arena.

As has been anticipated, the specific focus was a leadership conference, specifically with Korea as the main subject; Korea as seen from the two sides, so South Korea and North Korea, with what UPF then, as we all know, carries out as its main mission, but not only, because then it declines in other areas.

I will show you some photos and some videos that, in my opinion, without detracting from all the other speeches, I think are the most representative of the current international context. The summit was held starting, yes, from Korea, but trying to introduce many other extremely interesting topics in a much, much more complex international context.

Mention was made of the part on Africa, which was very broadly attended by presidents and representatives of Africa, but also as issues discussed and as a declaration then [finally] which was signed as a commitment by UPF and other actors, including the African Union, for a development of a network of systems and activities for peace and connections at the African level.

The press was also discussed and religion was also discussed. So, many extremely connected issues were discussed.

In one part of the opening ceremony there was a very important remembrance of [former Japanese Prime Minister] Shinzo Abe, who was one of the main figures right in the opening phase, also because I think he was very supportive of UPF's initiatives in previous years. Everyone was extremely grateful to Shinzo Abe for his

contribution, regardless of the political opinion one might have; for his commitment to international activities, not only for the Far East area, but in general as a power level commitment, in some way worldwide, in relations with other countries.

Afterward, several representatives of state, presidents, prime ministers, representatives of the European Union spoke. Among them [was former European Commission President José Manuel] Barroso, but not only Barroso; so many presidents came, including President Donald Trump, Vice President Mike Pence, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, [former Prime Minister] Stephen Harper of Canada, Joseph DeTrani from the United States, who was a U.S. ambassador and special envoy to the six-party talks with North Korea. In short, so many figures who in some way represented the world from different perspectives.

One of the first aspects, in my opinion, that was very, very interesting was just that in the initial opening we saw the different perspectives and the different points of view of the world, although there were some points of convergence, for example on the current issues of new challenges; so the issue of youth and the issue of conflicts.

For example, Korea was taken as an example, but precisely Ukraine was talked about, talked about other territories that actually have the same challenges to face, the same complexities and somehow need a common solution. So where a solution was to be found for the

Koreas, a solution could be found, even if the actors change, in other global contexts.

There was talk about a context of women's empowerment, greater inclusion of young people and then listening more to young people in the international context. And they talked about religious freedom, not just understood as an aspect proper to faith *per se*, but how to represent cultures, accepting their diversity, thus making diversity a strength and not a point of conflict between different populations. I will show you some pictures later.

To close, I went to the sessions on the following days where there were working tables. I attended the Africa ones in particular, so I will tell you more about those later. There were also others held on, as I said, religion and also some on what are the complexities of representation, of sharing information in international contexts.

In this regard, the representative of *The Washington Times* spoke about the press as an extremely complicated context, because right now everybody is doing information with access to social [media], with access to the Internet in general. And so there is a problem of sharing information. That is, how can you verify that information about that territory and that context or that culture to see if it is reliable and true?

And which of this information does not go to create a ripple effect of linkages that may also be to the detriment of what is objective information? In my opinion, it was one of the fundamental points among the interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral points of all the conferences. Fundamental,

if you think about today's political context that not only campaigns politically but also informs about facts.

So where is the line between politics and information? It is a big question mark, and the same can be said about conflicts. The admiral who shares information about a military operation, does information, does dissemination and simply represents the military aspect of the operation or as the ambassador does and so on.

So certainly this was, from my point of view, a very, very interesting presentation that I'm going to see later along with other presentations.

I share with you three speeches—one by former U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo; one by Adm. Harry Harris [a former U.S. ambassador to South Korea]; and one by former Prime Minister Brigi Rafini of Niger—which I think represent a little bit what the vision is at the moment.

Admiral Harris in this video message talks about the current context by talking about [former U.S. President Ronald] Reagan. In my opinion, it was important, because it is difficult for American state representatives, as he was an ambassador, to talk about the end of the unipolar system. Usually Americans always talk about the fact that they are the leading power and about the fact that they are the undisputed leaders in the world who have no adversaries.

And yet we're talking about a former U.S. ambassador to Korea, and we're talking about an admiral who nevertheless knows very well the military aspect as well.

He has had experiences at the military level that are extremely important to the United States. So the fact that a U.S. representative is saying in a public conference that the unipolar system is over and recalling what happened during the Reagan presidency, that was a sensitive context anyway. The recall, at this moment in history, of that kind of activity—at a time when we are talking about world war; we are talking about conflicts; we are talking about the interaction of the extremely complex international context—is at least peculiar.

I think there is no longer a vision like there was at the end of World War II, that is, in an extremely delicate but somewhat delineated context. There were the losers and the winners of what was a context. Right now we have neither a victor nor a vanquished, but we have an extremely polarized context, where there are different visions.

This recalls, in the current context, the vision, of course, of the role of China, the role of Russia, probably in a more sectoral context, but it also recalls what may be instead regional powers, because they have an influence in the regional context anyway that is extremely important. I imagine the Arabian Peninsula. So I think of the Gulf powers, but I also think of Japan or other economic powers that are emerging in this context. So certainly this statement really struck me for that reason.

On the other side was Mike Pompeo, who in some ways has been the spokesman, the secretary of state of the presidency who actually has set foot, even if only one foot,

in North Korea; and he cites five examples, at the level of secretary of state just so in an official capacity, of what he thinks are the current challenges. Again, a U.S. state representative, from what was the [Trump] presidency that said democracy had to be exported, somehow goes to represent peace in another context. That is, he says the Chinese talk about peace, but then they shoot Indians on the border. In Afghanistan he says that with the Doha Agreement we let the Afghans be free to be able to live. Effectively, yes, in part, even though it was the same government that then made the wall between the United States and Mexico. So there is, in my opinion, a dichotomy between what was done and whether the context that you expose of peace is to let their government be free to decide what it does.

And you don't have to talk about peace if you actually kill Indians at the border, as in the case of the Chinese, or you use the economic aspect. The economic aspect actually makes a state subordinate to the Chinese power, so it's just talking about peace, but in fact you become dependent on me and then somehow I establish in you an obligation to relate to me, to accept my conditions.

So it's a different way, perhaps, of imposing a logic, an idea or a condition than using weapons. Certainly the method has changed, but the end hasn't changed; the context, however, is the same, so you have to try to bring the points of view together and understand exactly what is meant.

One: What is meant by peace? Two: What is meant by a peaceful solution? Three: What is meant by an activity that lets others off the hook? Because it's one thing to accept the culture of diversity, it's one thing to say, "Shoot, kill yourself, but I turn the other way, I think of me." That's something he's shed some light on. Already, though, compared to Harris, who represented the same state anyway, he had a totally different view.

The most interesting and peculiar thing—and that's why I'm showing you now directly the former premier of Niger—is that they all talked about the highest systems, the various quite complex interactions between states, so the peace context, the security context and multipolar or unipolar systems. The only one, however, who talked about youth in this context, in a very pronounced way, was the person who actually represents Africa.

Africa, which is a youth context because we are talking about the majority of the population under 25, so obligatorily in some way they are affected. But he talked about it, in my opinion, in an extremely broad way and in different contexts, and in a clear way he made it clear that everything that achieves peace, stability, economic development and social development starts with the youth. So if you get into interaction with young people and get young people involved in the international context, you then have a ripple effect in that dynamic. And, in my opinion, he did that very well.

He cited as examples the main problems that we have in Europe. Everything, according to him, starts with young

people; that is, the moment we invest in young people and we invest in a system that works, we invest in a system that gives hope, we then solve, with a ripple effect, everything that is consequential to this system—so, migration and crime, the fact that there is continuous interstate migration, that is in Africa and intra Africa. And so basically we have a context that is obviously much clearer and easier to solve.

In my opinion, this was the most forward-looking presentation from someone who represented Niger, so I think it was also at the heart of these mechanisms, not only at the African level, but in the context between Africa, Europe and also between Africa and South America.

So it's an extremely interesting system that should be enhanced in some way and should be understood, because even in the later tables, so in the more specific sessions related to Africa, related to youth, which is really the system of the activities that took place in Korea, and the deepening on that, that is how to connect young people with the representative political context of leadership in different countries or how to develop an approach by young people that is participatory in these contexts or how to give them hope.

When it came to Africa, of course, they said there are so many problems because there is a lack of basic elements in some regions and in some areas. There is a lack of future, a lack of funding, a lack of connection. Often foreign powers that come to invest in Africa do so out of a need for their own profit and not to invest in what the

African context is—as has been done by China, for example.

At lunch, just talking to some people from Africa, they were telling me that China invests in Ethiopia or around Africa; we have hospitals, we have railways, we have subways. Very good, but then if we don't have the people working to be able to use them, what do we do with them? What is the return?

China doesn't just make locals work; it makes the detainees it sends to Africa work to cover their detention period. So it is an investment for China itself; for Africa only partially.

I will not elaborate further, because I have given an overview. Then if there are questions, I can answer them. What I thought I would offer as food for thought is that, in my opinion, it has been a unique experience. I'm not saying that because I'm here; it was a unique experience in general, because I think it was one of the few conferences that are held globally where actually there is the possibility of interaction on an equal level between different countries, between different cultures.

And I think that's one of the necessary elements, if you want to talk about peace on a global level, in the sense that the first thing is knowledge of the other culture and giving the possibility for others to know their own culture.

The second is that there is hardly the possibility of interaction to be able to represent so sequentially the different points of view. Because, for example, the initial

opening that was attended by Trump, Pompeo, presidents from Africa and whatnot, really showed the difference in world perspectives.

There are countries that are maybe regional powers and to some extent they touch on Ukraine, to give an example, or Korea, but they don't really have an impact on what is their stability, or at least not directly. So for them the importance of those contexts is less than others; but that doesn't mean that they don't have equal needs in their own territories.

I think what has emerged is how much we, as Westerners, label priorities that are probably the priorities for us globally, but are not for others, and that, in my opinion, is one of the main elements.

Lastly, I would like to highlight a statement made by Mike Pompeo, when he talked about religious freedom, which I think is also very timely. He stated that religious freedom is a key element for security. In my opinion, this is a very important reflection because, as I said before, it is a representation of what is the cultural context of diversity, and in some ways it is reminiscent of Iran in the present day.

So understanding exactly what is meant by religious freedom, we have it too and Spain has it too, which is a Catholic state and still other religions are allowed. Allowing religious freedom can be one of the steps to make sure that there is mutual understanding. So I think it can be one of the essential points on a dialogue table, before even talking about human rights, which is getting to know each

other, as I said before, and getting to know the other culture.

I share just a few pictures so you see some of the activities that have been done. These that you see are the resolutions. Three documents were produced during the summit:

- a resolution for the Universal Peace Charter, a resolution to establish an advisory committee between a representation of UPF and Africa, in collaboration, as I said, with the African Union and to promote interfaith cooperation.
- And then a declaration on the universal value of religious freedom, protection of this right for all people.
- Then, finally, a memorandum of understanding was signed with the very participation of Rafini, who is the representative of the Community of Sahel-Saharan States currently, with UPF, with Youth [and Students] for Peace and with the International Education Foundation, which is always connected with UPF. And this is one of the activities of the opening ceremony.

This was one of the Africa sessions, and, as you can see, Africa's representation was extremely important. Among other things, there were countries that for us are insignificant, they are tourist destinations. The representative from Cape Verde, to give an example, was extremely participatory and gave a point of view on Cape Verde that is totally different; there is also the relationship

and synergy with Senegal on the importance of the relationships, on the contributions that Cape Verde also gives to the African Union, not so much economic, but as much as ideas, activities that can be implemented.

This is Mr. Rafini. The events that were taking place in the various rooms of this giant hotel in Korea. Here you see [UPF co-founder] Mrs. [Hak Ja Han] Moon. This is a representation of Africa. I wanted to show you some last pictures. Here the activity related just to Korea, China and Japan. So all that is the Pacific context; here we were talking about not only the conflict aspect; we were talking about a whole system of relationships, university education, infrastructure to be built, ties that can be there, information. So we were not limited to the conflict itself, but opened up, let's say, to interdisciplinary perspectives on what the various contexts were. I won't go any further, and I thank you.

Final conclusions of Professor Michele Pavan after a short question-and-answer session:

One thing that amazed me was to see the United States in such a massive presence at such an event. Usually the United States—at least as I have experienced international relations and as my background has been—has always had an approach in saying, "We do this and you conform."

Instead, in my opinion, in a historical context like the current one, where they try to demonstrate their strength

and their international importance, they are, however, also aware of their weakness in what is the cultural system; it is not by chance that this mechanism is starting from them, this need for cultural diplomacy that they don't call it that, they call it the need to know and give freedom. But if we read between the lines, their message actually is cultural diplomacy. So they are retracing their steps.

If we also see in Africa, they have changed the mechanism of presentation; they are not doing like in the Middle East, where they sent troops, saying, "We pay you and we do it." Instead they say, "If you guys need, come to us and we are there. Otherwise we look and somehow give you a minimum of support." It's totally different in policy, and if we put it all into system, it's what we call cultural diplomacy.

Video link: <https://vimeo.com/765227008>