

ILC Session 7 - Military Experts Take a Sobering Look at Northeast Asia at ILC

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North America -- The seventh session of the June 2021 International Leadership Conference for UPF's North America region was titled "Military Perspectives About and Within Northeast Asia."

The June 26 session was one of nine ILC webinars that were held from June 24 to June 29 under the theme "Toward Peaceful Reunification of the Korean Peninsula: Peace and Security."

Speakers

- **Tomiko Duggan** (moderator), Senior Vice President, UPF- USA
- **James E. Fanell**, (U.S. Navy ret) Former Director of Intelligence and Information Operations, the U.S. Pacific Fleet, U.S. Navy
- **Grant Newsham** (USMC ret), Senior Fellow, Center for Security Policy; Research Fellow, Japan Forum for Strategic Studies
- **Congressman Matt Salmon**, U.S. House of Representatives (1995-2001, and 2013-2017); former Chairman, Foreign Affairs Sub-Committee on Asia and the Pacific; Gubernatorial Candidate, 2022, Arizona

Session Report

Honest discussion about goals and ambitions for peace on the Korean peninsula requires acknowledging the enormous preparations and intense anticipation that exists for involving the Koreans in armed conflict and possibly devastating war. Peacemakers must be clear eyed about the very real military threats and fears that block the way to trust, good will, and honest discussion.

Each of the Koreas is supported by highly capable standing armies of over 500,000 and reserve armies of millions more. There is the involvement of the world's superpowers testing inflexible political positions and seeking to show dominance. There is no apparent willingness to exclude consideration of the use of nuclear weapons to resolve their issues. Therefore, there is real danger of conflict far beyond local or regional outcomes.

This important session featured speakers with experience, training, and intelligence in how governments with large militaries can seek out alternatives to destructive combat and preserve a road to peace.

The presentations and discussions focused on the rapid expansion of the military capabilities and intentions of the Peoples Republic of China (PRC), the main ally and supporter of the North Korean regime's economy and military.

Captain James E. Fanell (U.S. Navy ret) is the former Director of Intelligence and Information Operations for the U.S. Pacific Fleet. He served the United States for nearly 30 years as a naval intelligence officer specializing in Indo-Asia Pacific security affairs, with an emphasis on the Chinese navy and its operations. He presented a sobering factual description of the PRC's commitment to overwhelming naval supremacy not only in the East and South Asian Seas but in the Pacific from Guam to Hawaii.

The PRC in a short period of time has built not only the largest military fleet in the world but continues to enhance its technological capabilities (superior anti-ship missiles, converting disputed islands into military positions, launching vastly more tonnage) to defeat or surpass any countermanding force of the United States and its allies. The PRC committed to spend 6.8% of its GDP on its military regardless of the wavering of its economy during the pandemic.

Captain Fallen warned of a timeline tied to the PRC's stated goals to be accomplished by 2049, the anniversary of the founding of the Chinese Communist Party. It creates a "danger zone" in which aggressive offensive military action, such as seizing Taiwan (something that China has long prepared for), will be taken if its "Chinese Dream" goals cannot be accomplished by the acquiescence or withdrawal of American influence in the face of China's growing social, political, and economic power.

Col. Grant Newsham (USMC ret) is a Senior Fellow with the Center for Security Policy. He also is a Research Fellow at the Japan Forum for Strategic Studies focusing on Asia/Pacific defense, political and economic matters. A retired U.S. Marine Colonel, he was the first U.S. Marine Liaison Officer to the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force, served as reserve head of intelligence for Marine Forces Pacific, and was the U.S. Marine Attaché, US Embassy Tokyo on two occasions.

Colonel Newsham agreed with Captain Fanell in the principle that you know what governments believe in by observing what they spend money on and expressed his concern about the increasing and consistent expenditures of the PRC's GDP on its military in contrast to the declining commitment to funding of U.S. and Western democracies defense budgets. He believes the Japan Self-Defense Forces are dramatically underfunded by as much as half of what is required. It has not been able to fulfill its recruitment goals for years, and it does not have even the structural organization such as a headquarters to coordinate with other allies' militaries.

While recognizing that the South Korean military has more robust capabilities and stronger integration with U.S. forces, he pointed out that its commitment is to the Korean peninsula and has no meaningful ability to coordinate or function beyond that.

In regard to the PRC's aggressive efforts to dominate the political as well as military environment in the region, he expressed his belief that it is the insanity of democratic countries -- especially the United States -- to continue investing in China in the manner they do and therefore continue funding the ability of China to expand its military and wage war to defeat those very countries.

Hon. Matt Salmon was until recently, vice president of Government Relations at Arizona State University. He stepped down from that position in mid-June 2021 when he announced he would run for governor of Arizona in the 2022 election. Mr. Salmon was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives from 1995 to 2001 and then again from 2013-17. During much of this time he chaired the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific.

As the only Member of Congress fluent in Mandarin, along with his position on the International Relations Committee, Honorable Salmon led multiple U.S. delegations to China. He has intimate knowledge and empathy for the people of Taiwan and their determination to resist the communist Chinese.

Honorable Salmon explained the U.S. Congress' mistakes in the 1990s, which were to liberalize its approach to China, open favorable trade agreements, allow China to enter the World Trade Organization, and shared technological and business information, which created China's booming economy and influence. He pointed to the ascension of Xi Ping and his consolidation of power and focus on the "Revival of China" under the emblem of Mao and the ruthless administration of the Communist Party that changed the nature of China's dealings with the world. Xi China proved false the "Kissinger-ism" that guided us from the time of Nixon that held that economic growth and wealth creation would lead to greater civil openness and political freedoms.

Honorable Salmon expressed serious concern that are those in leadership and positions of influence who are losing belief in the ideals of Western democracy and are capitulating to the idea that the Chinese communism can offer a better solution to governance and problem solving. China's flaws should be recognized. He and the other panelists agreed on the need to educate people on the contrast in ideals between our nations, the historic failures and corruption of Communist leadership, the Communist Party's coordination of the oppression of minorities, and its opposition to individual freedom and belief in God.

The panelists concurred on stating that China's ideological posturing and proclaimed inevitable path of shaping the future can and must be opposed. Trade agreements should be reviewed to eliminate unfair advantage. ASEAN should be strengthened -- as should the dynamic coordination between the "quad" states of India, Australia, Japan and the United States. Taiwan should be further recognized through military equipment sales and inclusion in the World Health Organization. The credibility of opponents to the Communists must be established and renewed. Intellectual property theft and failure to abide by negotiated agreements must be punished.