

UPF International - Peace Summit 2023: Session III-A: Focus on Asia Pacific

Greg Stone
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Seoul, South Korea -- Session IIIA of UPF's Peace Summit 2023 was held on May 3, 2023 at the Lotte Hotel World in Seoul, Korea. The Asia Pacific region was the focus of the event, which discussed contemporary challenges to the global order and fostering a culture of peace. Among the speakers were a former president of the Philippines and the vice president of Palau; a former prime minister of Kyrgyzstan and a former deputy prime minister of Mongolia; and parliamentarians from five countries.

Hon. Ek Nath Dhakal, *chair of UPF-Asia Pacific and member of the Parliament of Nepal*, introduced the session and each speaker.

The first speaker was **Ven. Shi Kuanyun**, *president of the Hong Kong Buddhist Association*, who spoke by video. Ven. Kuanyun began his remarks by relating a story about a telegram U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt sent to China at the end of World War II asking the eminent Chinese monk Master Taixu: "What is Buddhism's plan for world peace?" Master Taixu replied that only when people deny the existence of the self, can peace be obtained. Ven. Kuanyun went on to explain that if each of us achieves selflessness and compassion, the world will be peaceful forever. He stressed that each of us must refrain from killing, stealing, committing adultery, lying and drinking alcohol. And, if these five precepts are fulfilled, it will be an important step in bringing peace in the world.

The second speaker was **H.E. Gloria Macapagal Arroyo**, *senior deputy speaker of the House of Representatives of the Philippines and former president of the Philippines (2001 - 2010)*, who gave her message by video. She spoke of how 7,000 Philippine soldiers had fought alongside Korean soldiers during the Korean War from 1950 to 1953 and how Korea arose from that war to become an economic and cultural powerhouse in just one generation. Now, 70 years after the armistice, there are contemporary challenges to the global order that in many ways mirror the challenges that Korea faced in 1950. This time, however, the prospects for preserving peace might be brighter because there are now two contrasting ways of thought available: the Asian way and the Western way, unlike in 1950 when only a Western way was possible. The Western way involves a balance of the power approach used in the Cold War era. Through this, Europe became the most militarized part of the world. The Asian way, in contrast, involves the expansion of economic and diplomatic ties while quietly managing disputes through dialogue and consensus building.

The third speaker was **Hon. Suos Yara**, *chairman of the Commission on Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the National Assembly of the Kingdom of Cambodia*. He stated that we face many diverse challenges at this time which, if left unaddressed, have the potential to damage human progress, in the best case scenario, and wipe out the whole human race, in the worst case scenario. To minimize the impact of these threats, while enhancing a robust ecosystem, we need to increase and diversify our collaborations and partnerships, with multilateralism at their core. Regarding the peaceful reunification of the Korean Peninsula, which is inhabited by one people and one culture, it should be led by Koreans with the support of all relevant, concerned parties. He affirmed his belief that two nations towards one state, one peninsula, one culture and one people will become a reality in the future. As the "peace architect" of the Mekong region, Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen envisioned establishing the Mekong Peace Park as a model to promote peace. Humanity shares a common destiny, and we are becoming increasingly interdependent. Hon. Yara made two proposals. The first was the adoption of a universal vision for multilateralism featuring win-win cooperation. The world order needs to be based on a rule-based, inclusive and sustainable multilateralism. The second is the promotion of peaceful

negotiation and dialogue as the foundation for peace and development where there is tolerance, coexistence and nonviolence. Hon. Yara concluded his remarks by saying that peace is precious and the precondition for human development.

The fourth speaker was **Hon. Bhubaneswar Kalita**, *member of the Parliament of India*.

He explained that India is a peace-loving country which gained its independence in 1947 by peaceful and nonviolent struggle. Peace begins with the individual. If the individual cannot be peaceful, society and the world cannot be peaceful. No conflict has been won through war. Hon. Kalita expressed his appreciation to UPF and its co-founders for playing an important role in bringing about world peace. The U.N. was formed to bring peace in the world, but until now, it has not been able to reach that goal. We have the responsibility to support the peaceful reunification of the Korean Peninsula and the resolution of other conflicts around the world through dialogue, negotiation and mutual good will. We are all peace leaders, peace activists. Let the struggle for peace go on, he added.

The fifth speaker was **H.E. Matubraimov Almanbet**, *prime minister (1993-1993) and speaker of the Assembly of People's Representatives (1995-1997) of Kyrgyzstan*. He described how Central Asia is becoming increasingly important to the global community. The region comprises six nations, has been inhabited since ancient times, has many diverse ethnic groups and cultures, and is a bridge between East Asia and Europe. The modern era has seen many changes take place. Central Asia is facing issues, such as political instability; economic development challenges, including in the areas of healthcare and education; and social difficulties. These, however, can be overcome if we work together as a global community, H.E. Almanbet said. In the process, we need foster a culture of peace that will unite our peoples, and we must respect human rights and every ethnic group and culture. As stated by the Kyrgyz writer Chingiz Aitmatov: "It is very important and very difficult to stay human in all aspects of life."

The sixth speaker was **Hon. Oyunbaatar Tserendash**, *deputy prime minister (2015-2017) of and president of the Human Rights and Development Center in Mongolia*. He mentioned that we are living in a time of unrest where the use of armed force is rampant. This instability is not restricted to Europe; it can spill over to other parts of the world. He urged, "In response, let us join hands and spread the message of peace throughout the world." The tensions between China and Taiwan must be eased as much as possible, and we must contribute to the peaceful resolution of conflicts in Sudan, Yemen and Syria and help to organize dialogue and peace negotiations. We must also work to encourage Russia to withdraw from occupied territories in Ukraine and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to stop fuelling the war by providing modern weapons to Ukraine. And, we should encourage the U.N. to be more active in resolving the conflicts. As a lawyer who has been actively defending human rights for over 30 years, Hon. Tserendash feels it his duty to expose to the international community human rights abuses taking place in Mongolia and elsewhere.

The seventh speaker of the session was **Hon. Ganesh Prasad Timilsina**, *chairperson of the National Assembly of Nepal*. He explained that parliamentarians play a vitally important role in creating the conditions for peace in a nation. Without rules, lawlessness prevails. After the 10-year civil war in Nepal, a new constitution was drawn up by an elected body. The constitution of a nation is its heart and soul and the supreme law of the land. The rule of law is the cornerstone of a nation that is free and prosperous. Hon. Timilsina commended UPF and its co-founders Rev. Sun Myung Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon on their extensive work for peace and wished Dr. Moon a very happy birthday.

The eighth speaker was **H.E. J. Uduch Sengebau Senior**, *vice president of Palau*. She began her remarks by speaking about Palau. It is a very small nation with a population of only 20,000; a member of the U. N.; and next year, will celebrate 30 years as an independent nation. Palau experienced some of the bloodiest fighting during the Pacific War between Japan and the U.S. from 1943 to 1945. We lived

through the tragedy of war. The constitution of Palau, which was instituted in 1981, states that we rely on the divine guidance of Almighty God. This is important because, in the words of Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon and UPF, we are one family under God. The constitution also guarantees freedom of conscience and belief. At a time when there are tensions and challenges around the world, it is important to pass on a culture of peace to the young people of Palau. Love and peace is taught in the family. Vice President Senior concluded her remarks by saying that she really feels a part of the UPF family and felt that especially so when UPF leaders supported her and her husband when he had an accident and received medical treatment in the Philippines.

The ninth speaker was **Hon. So Yuk Choy**, *congresswoman of the National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China*. Hon. Choy related the story of one of her neighbors in Hong Kong. Shortly after an earthquake, her neighbor volunteered, at his own expense, to lead the Blue Leopard rescue team from China's Fujian province to go to the disaster-stricken area to aid in rescue efforts. This is a typical example of how Chinese people are willing to help those to whom they have no relation. This compassionate and helpful mindset stems from the heart and is also nourished by the deep roots of Chinese civilization and traditional culture. China is a nation of multiple ethnic groups, and Chinese civilization has always sought harmony in diversity. Xi Jinping has said: "As the term suggests, a community with a shared future for mankind means that the future of every nation and country is interlocked. We are in the same boat and we should stick together, share weal and woe, and endeavor to build this planet of ours into a single harmonious unit, turning people's longing for a better life into a reality." Hon. Choy said: "As a Chinese, I strongly support this concept, and I hope that through today's meeting, this vision can be better understood around the world."

The tenth speaker was **Hon. Ajith Nishantha Rajapakse**, *deputy speaker of the Parliament of Sri Lanka*, whose speech was given by **Hon. Chameera Yapa Abeywardana**, *coordinating secretary to the speaker of the parliament*. It addressed three areas.

The first was the great power rivalry in the Indo-Pacific and globally. Technological advances in cutting edge spheres like artificial intelligence (AI) are taking warfare to unprecedented paradigms and proves the danger certain technology advancements pose to humankind. We see the use and development of AI-driven drones, hypersonic technologies and cutting edge weapons while the world watches in alarm on what could be next.

The second area was post-pandemic regional and global economic challenges. Global wealth creation continues to rise, while other indicators of progress, including wealth equity and sustainability, signal major concerns. Credit Suisse's Global Wealth Report calculates that the top 1% of households own over 43% of the world's wealth.

The third was climate change. In the Asia Pacific and around the world, many countries are facing environmental challenges, including climate change, biodiversity loss and resource depletion. Hon. Rajapakse's speech concluded with remarks that we are heading to an extremely uncertain time in history and the way forward is through dialogue, multilateral cooperation and technological innovation, with an unwavering commitment to global peace. That is the beauty of this forum, which, we, you and me, are part of today.

The session closed with Hon. Dhakal thanking all the speakers.