

ILC2021 UPF Europe and the Middle East: Session I – Japan-Korea Tunnel

Yvo Bruffaerts
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Europe and the Middle East -- The August 2021 International Leadership Conference (ILC) started with a session titled "The Japan-Korea Tunnel: Toward Northeast Asian Prosperity and a Connected World of Peace."

From August 19 to 21 the seven sessions of the ILC were held online under the title "Toward Peaceful Reunification of the Korean Peninsula: Prospects for Economic Development and Peace, and Ideologies, Worldviews, and International Relations."

The first session on the morning of August 19 had a total of 303 participants on the Zoom broadcast, with 575 watching the livestream on the UPF Europe Facebook page and an additional 235 viewers on Russian networks.

The Japan-Korea Tunnel was proposed 40 years ago by the co-founders of the Universal Peace Federation, Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon and his wife, Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon. The panelists of Session I considered the impact such a tunnel would have on the relationship between Japan and Korea, the situation on the Korean Peninsula, and indeed in the entire Northeast Asian region, affecting peace, stability, and prosperity. Moreover, Peace Road events initiated in South Korea and Japan are now organized worldwide in support of the International Peace Highway project, of which the Japan-Korea Tunnel would be a part.



The ILC and its first session were opened by **Jacques Marion**, the co-chair of UPF for Europe and the Middle East, who explained that the ILC in June was dedicated to issues of Peace and Security, while the second, in July, focused on Track II Diplomacy Initiatives. The ILC in August addressed two topics: "Prospects for Economic Development and Peace" and "Ideologies, Worldviews, and International Relations."



In his opening remarks, **Dr. Katsumi Otsuka**, chair of UPF for Europe and the Middle East, stated that the 20th century saw great progress in science and technology, which brought great economic development and improved living standards for many. However, the 20th century also was characterized by war and revolution.

Dealing collectively with the human conscience, spirituality, and scientific development is a challenge not only for scientists but for all humankind, Dr. Otsuka said. This inspired the UPF co-founders to establish the International Conference on the Unity of the Sciences (ICUS) in 1972. The separation between science and Christianity in the 19th century, and the Bolshevik revolution in Russia in 1917, greatly impacted politics, the economy, and culture in the 20th century, Dr. Otsuka said. To end the division of the Korean Peninsula, the ideological conflict between communism and democracy should be discussed. Rev. and Mrs. Moon proposed the Headwing ideology, the core principles of which are interdependence, mutual prosperity, and universally shared values, as the basis for the unification of the Korean Peninsula and the realization of world peace.



Session moderator **Robin Marsh**, the secretary general of UPF-United Kingdom, said the Japan-Korea Tunnel is a very significant component of the grand vision of the International Peace Highway proposed

by Rev. and Mrs. Moon.



Speaking in a recorded message, **Masayoshi Kajikuri**, the chair of the International Highway Construction Foundation and of UPF-Japan, said that the Japan-Korea Tunnel project was first announced in 1981 by Reverend Moon at the 10th International Conference on the Unity of the Sciences in Seoul. His aim was to build a unified economic zone, a new civilization that would unify the East and West, and lead to a truly peaceful world. This was to be accomplished by building an "Asian Highway" linking Japan, the Korean Peninsula, and China. It then would expand to an International Peace Highway linked to the world's highway systems.

The International Highway Construction Corporation was established in 1981, and the Japan-Korea Tunnel Research Institute was established in 1983. A groundbreaking ceremony to begin the tunnel excavation was held in Chinzeimachi-Nagoya in Japan's Saga Prefecture in October 1986. Construction works were interrupted several times, and precious little has been built ever since.

In response to Reverend Moon's International Peace Highway project in 1981, the Chinese government promised it would persuade North Korea to join the project, if necessary.

For the Japan-Korea Tunnel project to really take off, Mr. Kajikuri said, three conditions need to be fulfilled:

- An agreement must be reached between the governments of Japan and South Korea;
- Public opinion in Japan and South Korea must encourage lawmakers to consider the Japan-Korea Tunnel as a national project;
- Further investigation is required into construction methods and time frames.

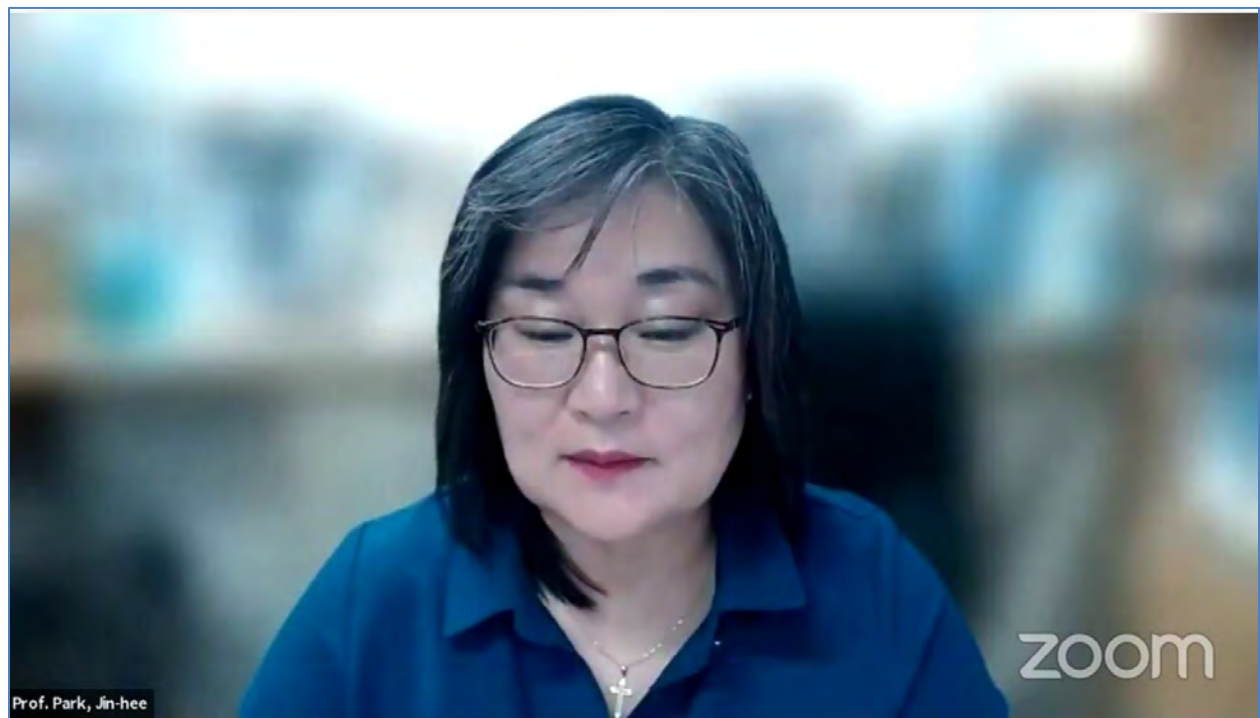
A video was shown that introduced the Japan-Korea Tunnel project (see [here](#)), illustrating the preparatory work already invested.

Then **Professor Jin-hee Park**, a professor of transportation and logistics at the Department of Logistics System Engineering at the Korean Maritime and Oceanic University in Busan, South Korea, gave a presentation titled "The Expected Effect of the Korea-Japan Undersea Tunnel, the Connecting Axis of Eurasia."

She explained that South Korea favors stronger cooperation between Eurasian countries. Infrastructure projects in Northeast Asia, such as the Transcontinental Railway and the Asian Highway, are attracting attention. However, political and historical conflicts between South Korea and Japan, as well as environmental issues, have hampered this tunnel project. The cost of building the tunnel is estimated at 90 trillion to 200 trillion Korean won (about \$76 billion to \$169 billion). Depending on the technological development and financial support, the works could last between 10 and 20 years.

Using the undersea Marmaray Tunnel in Istanbul and the Channel Tunnel between France and Great Britain as benchmarks, Professor Park showed that a better and quicker connection between Japan and Korea by high-speed trains would considerably boost the transportation of goods and people, saving

money and time. She also revealed an economic ripple effect to the wider region. Professor Park analyzed the types of freight and journeys that would be expected to use an undersea tunnel between Japan and Korea.



She concluded that the construction of this undersea tunnel would positively affect the regional development and logistics of South Korea. The tunnel would contribute to a balanced national development by expanding investment to other regions, such as Busan, which would become an economic hub away from the intensive development centered on Seoul. The tunnel would considerably improve and simplify transportation links in Northeast Asia and increase urban connectivity as well as exchanges between countries in the region.



Dr. James Jung Sang Lee, a former senior director at the World Bank, argued that the Japan-Korea Tunnel, once completed, would be one of the most significant historical monuments. It would give a strong boost to the economy and cultural exchange in both countries and indeed in the wider Northeast Asian region.

Dr. Lee explained that, unfortunately, even though the undersea tunnel between Japan and Korea has been highly evaluated, the project has not been on the official table of the two countries, for several reasons. The tunnel would be approximately 240 km long, and the estimated costs for its construction and maintenance are expected to be huge. More importantly, political tensions between Korea and Japan, and the heavy legacy of a troubled past, need to be overcome.

For the project to be successful, a better understanding is needed of the mutual benefits of economic cooperation, cultural exchanges -- and of the additional benefits, once the transportation network also

included North Korea and China.

If Japan and South Korea agreed to construct the tunnel, both governments would put the contract to international public tender. A consortium of companies could bid to construct the tunnel. There are several ways that it could be financed. It could be a government project run by the two nations. It could be constructed solely by a private consortium with the approval of both nations or by a public-private partnership. A consortium could build, own and operate or build, operate and transfer, etc., all of which would have implications for the long-term operation and costs of using the undersea tunnel.

A video of "The Peace Road Project Promoting the Vision of the International Peace Highway" was shown, which explained the project, an initiative of UPF co-founder Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon (see [here](#)).



Then **Dr. David Hanna** from the United Kingdom, the president of UPF for Northern Europe, spoke about the spiritual and humanitarian implications of the Japan-Korea Tunnel. Most significantly, he said, the project was introduced by a religious leader, and it is being pursued by people who share the same vision and desire for a world without unnecessary or artificial barriers.

As building the Japan-Korea Tunnel is a mega project, Dr. Hanna said, widespread support from both the people and the leaders of the nations involved is indispensable. There is no room for protectionism or discrimination. Trading with people of different cultures or religions creates bonds of friendship, trust, and mutual dependence. The Japan-Korea Tunnel would be a huge triumph of reconciliation, given the history these two nations share.

Dr. Hanna then shed some light on the Peace Road initiative, a global goodwill project of UPF that was proposed by Reverend Moon. The Peace Road initiative promotes two projects in particular: the Japan-Korea Tunnel and the Bering Strait Tunnel, which would connect Alaska and Russia.

Many events have been organized under the Peace Road banner to raise awareness and encourage cooperation among nations and communities. As an example, Dr. Hanna mentioned a coast-to-coast peace walk for national unity along Hadrian's Wall in the United Kingdom that took place in August 2021. The wall was built 1,900 years ago as a barrier between what is now Scotland and England. Today, however, it is no longer a barrier, and hopefully it never will become one, he said.

During the question-and-answer session, interesting questions were brought forward, such as whether the Japan-Korea Tunnel project should not be presented in a wider regional context, rather than merely Japan and Korea. Reference was made to the construction of the Channel Tunnel, which was closely associated with the European Union and the further economic development and integration of Europe. Dr. Park said that in Northeast Asia, the same approach is needed for the Japan-Korea Tunnel project. Also, international NGOs and the United Nations could help to promote this project beyond national borders.

Two recommendations were noted from this first session:

- Information campaigns should result in widespread grassroots support for the Japan-Korea Tunnel project.
- The project should be given international support by NGOs and the United Nations, among others, and not be merely the responsibility of South Korea and Japan.