

Think Tank 2022 Forum, Europe and the Middle East: ISCP Session

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Europe and the Middle East -- The third webinar of the Think Tank 2022 Global Forum invited world leaders to express their views on Korean reunification. To view the webinar, [click here](#).

The February 1 session, titled "Enlisting Global Cooperation on the Issue of the Peaceful Reunification of the Korean Peninsula," was held jointly by the Europe-Middle East and North American branches of UPF's International Summit Council for Peace (ISCP).

The eight webinars of the Think Tank 2022 Global Forum were held from February 1 to 3 as a precursor to the events of World Summit 2022, which would be held in Seoul, South Korea, and online from February 11 to 13.



The Think Tank 2022 webinars were held not only in Europe and the Middle East but also in Asia, Africa, and the Americas by UPF and its associations. Several of the online sessions were held jointly with UPF associations from other continents.

Dr. Franco Famularo, the coordinator of ISCP for North America and the president of UPF-Canada, gave a brief introduction before introducing the moderator, **Ambassador Christopher Hill** from the United States, a professor of international relations at Columbia University and a former U.S. ambassador to the Republic of Korea, among other nations.

Ambassador Hill described the session as going right to the heart of the problem, which is the failure to bring North Korea into the overall international community and, in particular, the failure to achieve peaceful reunification. He referred to North Korea's recent nuclear tests, saying there is much to be concerned about. He continued by introducing the three main speakers and three panelists:



The **Rt. Hon. Stephen Harper**, the prime minister of Canada (2006-2015), focused on six points. He emphasized that in their hearts Koreans feel that Korea is one nation, but that it is the society of the Republic of Korea that free Koreans desire. He nevertheless commended South Korean President Moon Jae-in for pursuing a peace treaty with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un. At the same time, he advised deep caution when it comes to North Korea. He also insisted that reunification by invasion must never be allowed to happen.

While emphasizing the critical role of the People's Republic of China in this ongoing conflict and the need to hold it accountable, Mr. Harper recommended minimizing the involvement of President Vladimir Putin's Russian Federation in any dialogue since, he said, it is unlikely to be a positive contributor to the evolution of the Korean Peninsula. Mr. Harper concluded by emphasizing the importance of South Korea staying close to its allies, especially the United States, while not forgetting its many other friends in the world, including Japan.

H.E. Kjell Magne Bondevik, the prime minister of Norway (1997-2000, 2001-2005), agreed that there is a danger that the Korean challenge will be forgotten due to the other issues in the world. He said that the Korean people have suffered greatly during history and deserve peace. After the Korean armistice, both sides said they wanted unification, but under their own political systems. He saw firsthand the difference between the two countries when he visited both in the 1990s, and the gap has only increased. Unification was successfully accomplished in Germany, he said, so why not in Korea?

He was inspired by the sunshine policy of South Korean President Kim Dae-jung, who met Chairman Kim Jong Il in 2000. In 2007, there was a meeting between President Roh Moo-hyun and Chairman Kim Jong Il. However, later the dialogue died out and tensions increased. The 2018 Winter Olympics paved the way for a summit between Kim Jong Un and President Donald Trump, but the U.S. side seemed ill-prepared, he said, and there was no tangible result.

Therefore, a new approach is needed. The participants in the six-party talks must play a role. However, Mr. Bondevik believes we need confidence-building measures to kick-start such talks, such as family reunions between North and South and other joint projects. North Korea's recent missile testing can be seen as an attempt to garner attention, and so he hopes the current administration in Washington will take a new approach with better preparations.

The final speaker, **H.E. Anthony Carmona**, the president of Trinidad and Tobago (2013-2018), cited North Korea's launching of several missiles in January 2022, including a Nuclear Capable Hypersonic Glide Missile, and pointed to the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Treaty of Tlatelolco), which he said offers a solution to this predicament. It led to the founding of the Agency for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (OPANAL), establishing Latin America and the Caribbean as a Nuclear Weapons Free Zone.

This roadmap can trigger action to achieve the universalization of the Nuclear Weapon Ban Treaty, which eliminates the production and use of nuclear weapons, he said. Additionally, urgent attention must be given to adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) signed by 185 countries and ratified by 170. This treaty prohibits nuclear weapon tests or explosions, and its implementation must be zealously invoked by all global partners, he said.

Mr. Carmona affirmed that the Caribbean, as a zone of peace, can facilitate future peaceful negotiations of the Korean Peninsula. Also, the economics of peace will support a culture of peace. Given the economic ravages of the COVID-19 pandemic, the reopening of the Kaesong Industrial Complex would mutually benefit North and South Korea, providing a sustainable economic environment. As South Korean President Moon Jae-In has stated, "The peace economy would dismantle the last remaining Cold War regime on earth and build a new order of peace and prosperity."



The first panelist, **Doug Bandow** from the United States, a senior fellow at the Cato Institute, mentioned the upcoming elections in South Korea and the missile tests by North Korea. Dealing with these tensions today will help prepare for the reunification of tomorrow, but this will require the help of other states in the region, he said: the allies, US and China, as well as the countries close by, such as Russia and Japan, and international organizations such as the UN and the World Bank.

The six-party talks constitute a possible model going forward. However, he acknowledged that it's difficult to bring together the capitalist South and communist North. Also, the North is concerned about being swallowed up. Reunification will be up to the Korean people, and they need to know that they will be supported; it would provide a model for the world, he affirmed.

Mr. Bandow concluded by asking Mr. Harper if there was something in the Canadian experience that could encourage the countries in Asia to work together, and he asked how to deal with both China and Russia?

Mr. Harper replied that in general the Canadian experience cannot be compared to that of Korea, due to the absence of external forces in the equation. North Korea can survive only by maintaining a state of war, and that's a serious problem for the regime, he said. All the approaches so far have not changed North Korea, but as long as the South and its partners continue engagement, there is hope.

It's often interaction between individuals that can lead to results, and that's probably the best hope here, while keeping our guard up until the leadership of North Korea wakes up, Mr. Harper said.

Hon. Salvador Nasralla, the vice president of Honduras, pointed to sports, such as football, as a means to bring countries together, citing such experiences as that between the United States and Iran. Honduras is a small nation, he said, and in some ways feels closer to North Korea than to South Korea. Therefore it can help these two countries to come together and can propose some sports events to bring these two countries together.

Dr. Niklas Swanström from Sweden, the executive director of the Institute for Security and Development Policy, said he held a pessimistic view about reunification, explaining that the German experience, in which a strong economy effectively swallowed a struggling one, was not a good one. We need to look at a version of the Helsinki Process -- which he dubbed the "Arirang process" -- in which we

can work on different issues, such as confidence-building measures, the economy, aid, etc. In other words, if you can't move forward on one issue, you try another, he said. However, the North Koreans don't like this, because they realize that the Soviet Union was undermined by the Helsinki Process. He affirmed that without lifting sanctions we need to deal with the questions that the North Koreans deem to be important. He concluded by asking Mr. Bondevik what Norway's role could be in such a process of re-engagement?

Mr. Bondevik also expressed that we have to address the North's security concerns and that confidence-building measures, such as those suggested by Mr. Nasralla, are crucial. Mr. Bondevik said that Norway's greatest contribution for peace was in Guatemala while he was minister of foreign affairs. It was an NGO that had been working on the ground, with access to both sides, that built up confidence and brought the two sides together. However, there are few such organizations in North Korea, so Norway's contribution would be limited to introducing confidence-building measures, perhaps through NGOs. He also disagreed with Mr. Harper, stating that Russia, as a neighboring country, has to play a role.

Ambassador Hill agreed that Russia's attitude was generally positive during the six-party talks and mentioned that the United States is an important player in this process.



Mr. Carmona mentioned the PyeongChang Winter Olympics of 2018, or "peace Olympics," where North and South came together. From an economic viewpoint, there is a big difference between the two sides, and there likely will be a cost of \$3 trillion to achieve reunification. According to Mr. Carmona, North Korea wants to be "friends of all, satellites of none," just as Prime Minister [Mia Mottley](#) of Barbados recently expressed about her country.

Mr. Carmona was less pessimistic in his appraisal, stating that just as the Berlin Wall fell rapidly, things may happen unexpectedly in Korea. However, there are many issues that need to be dealt with, such as a possible mass migration if North Korea falls apart.

To conclude, Ambassador Hill thanked the Universal Peace Federation for bringing together a diverse panel of experts from around the world. Finally, Dr. Franco Famularo wrapped up the session, inviting the audience to attend the upcoming World Summit 2022 scheduled to take place both in person in Korea and virtually.