

Think Tank 2022 Session VII: The Korean Peninsula in the Context of the Asia Pacific Region

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Seoul, South Korea - In Session VII, "The Korean Peninsula in the Context of the Asia Pacific Region," Hon. Ek Nath Dhakal, UPF Asia - Pacific Regional Chairman, and former Minister for the Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction of the Government of Nepal moderated a panel of nine speakers.

Speakers:

Hon. Hyung Suk Kim, Vice Minister of the Ministry of Unification (2016-2017), South Korea, said, "It is my honor to speak to the World Summit 2022. The current situation in Korea is complicated and worrisome. In 2019 we had three inter-Korean summits and two DPRK - U.S. summits so we anticipated much success for diplomacy, but the DPRK - U.S. summit in Hanoi, Vietnam caused the North to become rigid and hostile. The pandemic in 2020 created a barrier to communication. The DPRK exerted its strength by testing ICBM missiles seven times in January of 2022. They demand that hostile policies against the North must be abandoned. If not, it threatens to continue testing more ICBMs. The U.S. is saying the international community must push the DPRK to stop the violations of the Security Council of the UN, but still there is a possibility of dialogue without strings attached. China and Russia have not taken an interest in this issue. At the same time, the U.S. and China are in economic conflict while the U.S. and Russia are in conflict over tension in the Ukraine. It appears that the new aggression of the DPRK has been put on the back burner. Here at this Summit, it is our common belief that current peace is possible and the ultimate reunification of the Korean Peninsula must be achieved. To accomplish this goal, we must utilize diplomacy and active intervention instead of weapons or armed forces. With diplomacy there should be ways of deterring the recklessness of the North. Many nations can become involved, but we need to focus on the DPRK. We must encourage them to move in the direction we want. We must look at the German model. Commerce should continue in the private sector. Now the North has over 500 farmers' markets and the youth have many mobile phones. When Kim Jong-un took office, he spoke of building a strong infrastructure. He studied in Switzerland as a youth, so he knows the importance of economic affluence. It is in the economic interest of the DPRK to listen to the suggestions of Asia."

H.E. Suos Yara, Chairman of the Commission of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Cambodia, stated, "I am very grateful for Dr. Walsh and UPF for hosting this Summit. I believe parliamentary diplomacy is a powerful platform for building peace. It has been 70 years since the end of hostilities in Korea, but a peace treaty has yet to be signed in Korea. I call upon the two Koreas to establish a channel for communication so that a peace treaty can be achieved at some point. The Korean people long for this peace. The Korean conflict is a unique situation. Once peace is established, it will be possible for mutual prosperity to be realized; however, we need a new solution, a new paradigm shift. We need a safe and open space for new ideas." He also called for the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) to be redeployed by non-military personnel and the cooperation among different stakeholders on food security for peace.

"There are three policy proposals: 1) A peace treaty should be reached as soon as possible. The government can only do so much; the solution is mostly in the hands of the Korean people. The international community can create a supportive environment. 2) Explore changing the DMZ into a Peace Zone. Non-military personnel should be allowed to conduct commercial activity, tourism, and cultural events. 3) Promote cultural cooperation. The Winter Olympics 2018 is a good example. All this should be based upon the principle of 'two states toward one nation based on one peninsula with one people and one culture.' Family reunions between the two Koreas should be put at the front of the dialogue. This 'low-hanging fruit' is easily attainable and puts people-to-people relationships first. A peace solution should be approached from a humanitarian aspect. We hope for peace, but we must take action. We cannot wait too long. Peace must start with realistic action. I wish for the two Koreas: peace and prosperity."

H.E. Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, President (2001-2010) of the Philippines remarked, "My father, the late president, had a good relationship with Father and Mother Moon when they visited our nation in 2005. I am proud to follow in his footsteps. Our nation sent troops to protect your nation. We should look at how the world has grown since the two World Wars. We must take all steps to avoid wars, especially due to the threat of nuclear weapons. We must help the underdeveloped nations to grow more prosperous. No poverty! This is one of the greatest challenges for humanity. This requires the efforts of all of us. We must work within our communities to assist each other. Peace is the natural state of mankind! Today there exists a great disparity between North and South. There is too much hunger in the North and this prolongs poverty. This crisis provides an opportunity to mend fences on the part of the South by initiating projects that can close the income gap. The two Korean leaders have sought better relations since 2018. Such efforts will help people in local communities."

H.E. Maithripala Sirisena, President (2015-2019) of Sri Lanka stated, "I am honored to attend this Summit. Sri Lanka enjoys a long friendship with South Korea. We must bring together our collective experiences and wisdom to achieve mutual understanding, peace, and prosperity for the world. The separation between the two nations has created great economic difficulty for the North. The German reunification is a good example of collapsing the wall of separation to achieve a strong economy. Vietnam has exhibited another novel example of unification. These two nations have achieved peace in two different ways. Sometimes there are certain portions of the population that resist reunification. That is usually evident in the side that enjoys economic affluence. People fear that unification could negatively affect the prosperity of their country due to immigration. Economic affluence may come from reunification because of the assets of shared language and culture. In 2018 South Korean President Moon met with the North and created the Kaesong Industrial Zone. In 2020 a building was destroyed. There are no short or easy solutions. One must look at the long-term effects. The two examples of Germany and Vietnam show that, even though there were conflicts due to different political ideologies, they now enjoy peace and prosperity through a common language and living pattern. Threatening nuclear attacks will not bring unification. What good can possibly come from these missiles? Also drawing lines on a map at the 38th parallel have not drawn the two sides to come together. Let us swear that we will not be warmongers but peacemakers and sacrifice in whatever way necessary to benefit mankind. I sincerely hope that strength and willingness to sacrifice will emerge from this summit."

H.E. Ing Kantha Phavi, Minister of Women's Affairs, Cambodia, said, "I am here today to represent the First Lady of Cambodia. May I express my deep appreciation for being invited to speak at this Summit and to contribute in some way to peace on the Korean Peninsula. Cambodia has a special relationship with both the people of South and North Korea. Both countries have been our friends for many years. I wish to speak on the issues of women leaders, first ladies, and the reunification of Korea. Considering the heightened tension in the Asia Pacific region, this Summit could not have been more timely."

"Thanks to the wise leadership of Prime Minister Samdech Hun Sen, total peace has been achieved throughout Cambodia. He has also contributed to general peace in the Asia Pacific region and beyond. Thanks to peacekeeping forces from the UN, Cambodia now experiences peace throughout our nation. Since 2006 Cambodia has sent many of its own peacekeepers to join UN forces in other nations. We are second only to Indonesia in sending our women in support of peacekeeping forces in Asia. Prime Minister Samdech Hun Sen is the leader of ASEAN. Only through mutual respect, understanding, and trust can lasting peace be achieved. This cannot be achieved without women's participation and women sitting at the meeting table. The Mother of Peace, founder of this Summit, is a good example of the vital role of women. I would like to suggest that it is only through gender equality that true and lasting peace can be achieved for all. Cambodia is committed to achieving peace through the contribution of women."

Mdm. Adi Koila Nailatikau, First Lady (2009-2015) of Fiji, stated, "I have attended many World Summits since 2013 and each one of them has been focused upon reunification of the Korean Peninsula. As a result of these summits, I feel confident that we will see peace on the Korean Peninsula in our lifetime. In Fiji both land and ocean give us life and are at the center of our lives. The scattered island nations in the Pacific find strength as we share the ocean together. In Korea you only need to look back at nature to find what both sides share in common. The very ground is what is in common throughout the entire peninsula. By finding out what you have in common, you can remove what causes differences. Making these differences work together can help move you forward."

"Rev. Sun Myung Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon have known that peace would come to the Korean Peninsula. Their constant efforts have achieved more for lasting peace than many nations put together. They have known that peace is a process and may take a long time to achieve. Following the leadership of UPF, it is now up to the leaders of North and South to provide their people with incentives to seek peace. Beyond laws and politics, each person wants to live in peace. There are major differences between the two sides, so the process of dialogue may not give each side what they want but they will get what they need. Faith-based organizations will always lead their people to peace with values of respect for one's self and for human life. The family unit is what people will fight for. Economic incentives for peace should begin with families to insure stability, economic growth, employment, education, food and water. It is the Korean people who are the peninsula's greatest resource. They suffered the most during the war and accomplished much to rebuild afterwards. This should be a 'Korean-led' reunification. They will be affected by this the most and it will be the Korean people who will achieve reunification and keep the peace for hundreds of years to come. Other countries should support them. All stakeholders, governments, non-profit organizations, and civil societies have a part to play. The essence of it all is that Koreans should lead this reunification process themselves."

"In the island nation of Tonga, an undersea volcano created shock waves around the world. They are a resilient people. The shockwaves from this volcano and the corona pandemic remind us all that we share the same earth and environment. We are all human at the end of the day. We must respect each other as we move forward on this peace process."

H.E. Yousaf Raza Gillani, Prime Minister (2008-2012) of Pakistan, remarked, "Considering our challenges, war is never a solution to settling differences. Our challenge lies in delicately balancing the critical equation between peace and development. 'There can be no human development without peace.' Ending poverty and ensuring human rights are all essential sustainable development goals that cannot be achieved without peace. 'Peace is indispensable for the development and nourishment of our civilization, and it must be maintained by all means.' We must join hands and make concerted efforts to put out the raging fires of conflicts through increased cooperation, harmony, and dialogue. It is time to build bridges between minds and hearts. It is time to move from escalation to de-escalation. I firmly believe that conflict resolution based on mutual respect must be our priority for human existence as well as the goal of peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula."

Hon. Lord Fatafehi Fakafanua, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Tonga, remarked, "I am deeply honored to speak to this World Summit 2022. Our two nations are separated by a great ocean, but your vision of peace in your region and the world has reached our shores. We are recovering from one of the largest volcano eruptions in history. We thank you wholeheartedly for your prayers and support. The legacy of peace established by Rev. Sun Myung Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon has united us all today in our endeavor to achieve world peace. I offer my extreme gratitude to UPF for convening the World Summit 2022. This summit provides an opportunity for us as peace-builders and leaders to continue this legacy established by the founders. 'Peace is not just the destination but also the journey.' That journey has seen UPF make progressive steps towards this vision. It is my fervent hope that peace will be achieved on the Korean Peninsula very soon. I want to reassure the founders of UPF and the hosts of this summit that your efforts are shared by all of us as your global family. As your fellow peacebuilder, I call upon the international community to work together through trust and mutual respect. I offer my best wishes for a fruitful outcome of this summit."

Mdm. Shiranthi Wickremasinghe Rajapaksa, First Lady (2005-2015) of Sri Lanka, said, "I am honored to speak to this summit of UPF. It is the goal of all people to live in harmony. World peace is an ideal of a world without violence. The UPF's programs have made significant progress for promoting peace in multiple ways, such as the empowerment of women and developing the next generation of leaders. Peace is the path we take for bringing growth and prosperity. The path towards peace must be carefully planned to accommodate the needs of all people. I would like to emphasize that the pursuit for peace in Korea is a life-changing process inside and outside their borders. This World Summit 2022 will provide the way for us as we learn, listen, and discuss. Let us press onward to a bright and peaceful future. I salute those of you who have dedicated your life to the pursuit of peace."