

Third Rally of Hope Keynote Speech -- Hope for Unification Endures

Stephen Harper
November 22, 2020



Merci beaucoup mesdames et messieurs. [Thank you very much ladies and gentlemen.] Honorable high office holders past and present, distinguished participants from around the world, and of course, our host, the Universal Peace Federation: Thank you for inviting me to join you once again for this, your third global Rally of Hope.

This is occurring on a very special occasion. We are marking the seventieth anniversary of the start of the Korean War. It is an anniversary that we commemorate with mixed emotions. On the one hand, the start of a war is never something that we celebrate, even if those of us who were allies share no blame for the conflict. But the war left the Korean Peninsula divided, with the North locked in a terrible ordeal that endures to this day. Of course, there has also been much good to come out of that

conflict. Against the early odds, the Allied intervention in 1950 preserved the light of freedom in the South and it allowed a magnificent country to be built from that time forward. The Republic of Korea is today one of the most peaceful, most prosperous and most progressive countries on the planet. Few nations have ever built so much from so little in so short a period of time. Canada was one of the sixteen members of the United Nations to come to the aid of South Korea in that war.

I have had the opportunity on many occasions to meet both Canadian and Korean veterans of that conflict, the people who made all the achievements of modern Korea possible. Their average age today is eighty-eight; so let us use whatever opportunities remain to thank them from the bottom of our hearts for what they accomplished. It is also fitting that given Korea's history and its sacrifice, that this is the nation that would witness the birth of the Universal Peace Federation. Under your founder and our host, a proud citizen of Korea, Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, this organization continues to keep hope alive not only for the reconciliation and reunification of the Korean Peninsula but for the reconciliation and reunification of peoples around the world.

And this is a message we need now more than ever. I spoke last time about the economic, financial, and political turmoil that I fear will be the ultimate result of the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly given the lack of cooperation among nations today. As we enter nine months of global recession, my fears have only grown stronger.

The world still faces multiple lockdowns, restrictions, and quarantines, often without clear criteria or metrics, and largely without international coordination. But there are some hopeful signs: treatments are improving, vaccines are being developed, and populations are gradually learning how to cope. And most notably, we have witnessed one of the most unifying developments of modern times. In the Middle East, nations long and profoundly divided, have put aside their differences with the signing of the Abraham Accords. They have not only achieved an unprecedented peace, they have demonstrated that faith and the common quest for reconciliation between man and God can be a great unifier of humanity. What a tremendous development, and what an extraordinary message. But it is one that I do not have to explain to you, for this is the message and the mission of the Universal Peace Federation, of your founder, and of your followers the world over.

And it is one that I am so pleased to be sharing with you today. Continue to do what you do, look to turn this crisis into opportunity, work at all levels in all nations with governments, with civil society, with business, academia, and faith organizations for the sake of peace, justice harmony, sustainability, and prosperity and for the sake of one family blessed by, and under God. Thank you once again for having me. Take reasonable precautions everyone, and be well. And God bless all of you and your important work.