

Universal Peace Federation continued full throttle in the depths of the pandemic

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Because the themes of reconciliation and peaceful reunification on the Korean Peninsula are not only important for Northeast Asia but are also important for the entire world I welcomed the opportunity to speak to the previous World Summits here in 2019 and 2020. In fact, my speech here comes almost exactly two years later and stands against the backdrop of then growing reports of a very serious pandemic emanating from the People's Republic of China. Soon after, I would not have the opportunity to speak in public again for almost a year and a half. But, while much of the world shut down or stood still, the work of the Universal Peace Federation continued full throttle. In the depths of the pandemic, UPF held Rallies of Hope in August 2020 and again in November 2020 on the seventieth anniversary of the outbreak of the Korean War. UPF also held a number of global webcasts to discuss pressing geo-political issues. One in particular focused on the Middle East Peace Initiative and the impact of the Abraham Accords, brought about through the efforts of man including the then American Administration. And we are honored to have former vice president Pence and former secretary of state Pompeo here today. We congratulate them for their roles in this historic achievement. And so, the Universal Peace Federation has continued its work without pause or fatigue.

I salute the organizers of this important world summit for forging ahead and for bringing us together, despite the tremendous logistical challenges you have faced. These UPF online events and conferences are notable not only for their relentless pursuit of humanity's most important missions, but also for their uniqueness in assembling, together with world political leaders, spiritual leaders, business leaders, women's leaders, media leaders, leading academics, and leading artists, all dedicated to continuously exploring the routes to peace and reconciliation on the Korean Peninsula and elsewhere. This gathering is no exception, with confirmed participation- in person and online—from various countries, including forty-five current and former heads of state, government and national legislatures, along with accomplished experts from every field of human endeavor. Together they co-founded numerous organizations, including UPF and the Washington Times, to strengthen the family, to promote faith and to encourage inter-religious cooperation, as well as, of course, to support the greatest of causes, freedom and peace.

Dr. Moon, we all thank you! We thank you, among other things for inviting us to be here, in the Republic of Korea. I've been here many, many times, but I can never come here often enough. Whenever we have cause to despair at the state of the world, we must take a moment to reflect on what South Korea has achieved. It was only during the shared sacrifices of the Korean War that most Canadians became broadly knowledgeable about this country. It was then a poor and desperate place, with its hopes for freedom and prosperity on the verge of being extinguished. From that time, it has risen to become one of the most prosperous, most peaceful, and most progressive countries in the world.

As I've said many times, this country is one of humanity's greatest success stories. Few nations have ever achieved so much in so short a period of time. I hold out a similar hope for the North. In Canada, the Korean community has likewise grown and prospered, and is now some 200,000 strong. A critical part of our relationship is continuously broadened by the exchanges of teachers, students, tourists and businesspeople. And, of course, I will forever be proud of the enormous step forward my government took in relations with the Republic of Korea when we concluded the Canada–Korea free trade agreement in 2014. Under it, we've witnessed the continual growth of our commercial relationship, making South Korea today Canada's seventh largest trade partner. None of this is to deny the enormity and persistence of the problem that the D.P.R.K., in the north, continues to present, and for which, in the days to come, I and many others will explore the options. I wish to say, that, for good reason, we have hope, we have faith, and we have a great love for this country. All of which will keep us, and your many other friends and allies, by your side through the challenges and opportunities that await the Korean nation.

Thank you again for this chance to be here, to speak to the Universal Peace Federation, and to once again be part of your efforts to reconcile the peoples of the world, and to bring about peace between the nations. Merci beaucoup.