

1st Think Tank 2022 Forum Series – Harmony is Needed for Peace and Unity

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Washington, DC, USA -- Former U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo was the keynote speaker for the first *Think Tank 2022* Forum Series on October 16 (Korea time). The event included panels of U.S., Korean and Japanese experts who responded to Mr. Pompeo as part of a lively discussion.

The *Think Tank 2022* Forums are sponsored by the Universal Peace Federation (UPF) and The Washington Times Foundation. The project was inspired by **Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon**, who co-founded UPF and The Washington Times with her late husband, **Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon**. Both Rev. Moon and Dr. Moon were born in what is now North Korea, and they have worked for the peaceful reconciliation in their homeland for more than 60 years.

In keeping with the first Forum's theme, "Religious Freedom and the Reunification of Korea," Mr. Pompeo stressed the importance of religious liberty as the undergirding for peace.



"My key message today is this: One of the most important ways to help create 'one family under God,' is to make sure people are free to actually worship God," Mr. Pompeo told the *Think Tank 2022* Forum. Reconciliation in Korea "might seem impossible," he said, "but as Jesus reminds us in the Book of Matthew, 'With God, all things are possible.'"

As stated by the U.S. State Department's Commission on Unalienable Rights, religious freedom is "the seedbed of civic virtue" and the reason why freedom of conscience is essential for a "stable, prosperous society," Mr. Pompeo said. Thus, freedom of religion, freedom of speech and religious tolerance must be

part of the future for the Korean Peninsula.

However, in contrast to these freedoms, North Korean leaders now oversee the persecution of believers and are believed to have imprisoned at least 50,000 people just for being Christian. To the north, the Chinese Communist Party is also accused of brutally mistreating Falun Gong practitioners, Tibetan Buddhists, Chinese Christians and especially Uyghur Muslims.



China is "destabilizing" countries in Northeast Asia, Mr. Pompeo said. He called for warmer relations between South Korea and Japan and an end to "dithering" in the region by the U.S.

But he concluded that "diplomacy and dialogue" will continue to be primary avenues to peace. The newly reinstated "hotline" between leaders of North and South Korea is "a good thing," as was the 2019 historic meeting between North Korea's Chairman Kim Jong-un and then-President Donald Trump, said Mr. Pompeo. "Peace also comes from strength," he said, as does stating publicly that "the Chinese Communist Party does not represent the people."



Professor Kim Yeon-chul, former South Korean minister of Unification and now chairman of the Korea Peace Forum, responded to Mr. Pompeo by underscoring the need to focus on human rights. It is also important, he said, to "learn lessons" from previous summits and engage China in the quest for peace. "In the process of denuclearizing North Korea," China-U.S. cooperation will "be crucial to transform the ceasefire-based regime on the Korean Peninsula into a regime of permanent peace," Minister Kim said.

Members of the American panel included former **Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives Newt Gingrich**; former **U.S. Representative Dan Burton**; **U.S. Ambassador Christopher Hill**, who has worked on Korean issues for 30 years; and **U.S. Ambassador Joseph DeTrani**, who served as U.S.

Envoy to the Six Party Talks in the early 2000s. The panel from Japan included former **Minister of Defense Yoshinori Ohno**; **Hon. Nobuyasu Abe**, former Deputy Secretary General of the United Nations in charge of disarmament; former **Ambassador to Australia Hideaki Ueda**; and **Professor Yamaguchi Noboru** who teaches International Relations at the International University of Japan.

The panel from Korea included former **National Assembly Member Shim Jae-kwon**; **Hon. Lee Ho-jin**, vice president of the United Nations Republic of Korea Assembly; former Marine Corps Education and Training **Commander Park Seung-hoon**; and **Hon. Moon Byung-chul**, policy researcher and Chief Research Fellow of *Think Tank 2022*.



Topics raised by the panels included:

- Renewing talks with North Korea, especially on denuclearization
- The role of international sanctions on North Korea during efforts to make peace
- Chairman Kim Jong-un's possible roles in peacebuilding
- The U.S.-Korea Alliance and U.S.-Korea-Japan relationships
- S. and other freedom-loving countries' commitment to peace in Northeast Asia
- Ensuring respect for religious freedom in nations that currently fear religious belief
- The idea of opening a UN Headquarters and international Peace Park in the DMZ
- Reunification of families, including Japanese men and women held in North Korea

To watch the video of the *Think Tank 2022 Forum*, [click here](#).

Details about the first *Think Tank 2022 Forum*, as well as subsequent Forums, will be available on the UPF website (upf.org).

