

UPF International Peace Summit 2023: Session VII-A: IMAP and IAED Panel

Cheryl Wetzstein
May 4, 2023



Seoul, South Korea -- UPF's peace associations for the realms of the media and the business world held a joint plenary session during Peace Summit 2023 on May 4, 2023 in Seoul, Korea.

Mr. Thomas P. McDevitt, chairman of Washington, D.C.-based *The Washington Times*, moderated the session, "Toward a World Culture of Peace: The Role of the Media and the Economy: International Media Association for Peace (IMAP) and International Association for Economic Development (IAED)."

The vision of both associations, Mr. McDevitt explained, is to have substantial networks of peace-minded allies globally -- such as 1,000 journalists and 1,000 business leaders on each continent -- to effect positive change on cultures and current events.



Mr. Puy Kea, president of the Club of Cambodian Journalists and *Kyodo News* correspondent, said his life has long been caught between war and peace. He was raised as a child during a coup of Cambodia, the Vietnam War, and the reign of the communist Khmer Rouge, infamous for its genocide known as "The Killing Fields."

Peace came to Cambodia 25 years ago, thanks to "win-win" policies, and today this is regularly emphasized in the culture -- especially through many of Cambodia's 1,000 registered media outlets, which reflects the nation's freedom of the press, Mr. Kea said. Cambodia is "ready to share 'peace journalism' with other nations," he stated.

Ms. Shova Gyawali, a Nepalese business leader and publisher of the national daily, *Republic Media*, said her media's attitude is to find ways to "enrich our common humanity" and promote better understanding about others' communities and faith. In the business world, she added, economic interests can "promote peace by providing opportunities for all," especially marginalized workers.



From Brazil, **Dr. Sergio Redo**, a respected leader of the Sao Paulo Press Association and National Press Federation, talked about the importance of media in building a culture of peace. A media with high standards for truth, fairness and ethics is relevant when "[traditional] values are being boycotted and buried by materialism and ideological opportunism," he said.

Mr. Guy Taylor, a veteran foreign affairs and U.S. State Department reporter of *The Washington Times*, said the media does its job when it sticks to fact-based news reporting and "civility" in both news and opinion. He touted the importance of "media independence" (and "transparency" in cases where government funding backs a media outlet or project). The public is best served when the media has "deep respect for truth and integrity," he added.



Mr. Leong Bee Lee, chairman of the Malaysian Association of Canada, has a long history as an economist engaged in international joint ventures. Media greatly impacts business, he said, quoting U.S. Muslim civil rights leader Malcolm X: "The media's the most powerful entity on earth. They have the power to make the innocent guilty and to make the guilty innocent, and that's power. Because they control the minds of the masses."

The media has morphed from print, television and radio to social media, websites and mobile applications, which means people have more information in real time, Mr. Lee said.

But it can also quickly "create stereotypes and reinforce negative perceptions" instead of promoting understanding, peace and respect. Thus, the media is "a double-edged sword," he stated.

Singapore-based American businessman **Mr. James Rogers** said stable and prosperous economies that

build fair partnerships are unlikely to engage in conflict. He mentioned several historical hotspots that resolved themselves, and added that, on the Korean Peninsula, when the way is found to "bring prosperity to the North, we can bring peace."



Dr. Surinder Pal Singh Oberoi, businessman and a leader in the Sikh community, talked about his history with nonprofits and for-profits, and the values of "honest living," "dignity of labor and the workforce," and giving to nonprofits that care for the less fortunate.



Dr. Jorge Alberto Ceballos Rodrigues, a professor of law and politics in Panama, reviewed his nation's efforts to build prosperity through tourism and an extensive banking system.

The final speaker -- "from the heart of the Caribbean" -- was **Mr. German Yael Feliz**, a journalist, TV producer and host of *Agenda del Pueblo (People's Agenda)* in the Dominican Republic. His advice to the media was to be empathetic on social problems but also be impartial and seek quality content. Today's social media has challenges, such as "pursuit of likes," and fame and money, he said. However, the way to peace is to "renew and recover family values."

The panel ended with a discussion about objectivity in the news media. Mr. Rogers urged media leaders to always "examine both sides" of an issue. Since many media outlets offer only "the party line," the fastest way to get the most perspectives is to read different outlets, he said, adding "let us decide" what to think.