

UPF Rally of Hope: Trump-era officials join world leaders to promote peace

Guy Taylor
May 9, 2021

The Washington Times



In his first public speech since leaving office, former Vice President Mike Pence speaks at a dinner hosted by Palmetto Family on Thursday, April 29, 2021, in Columbia, S.C. (AP Photo/Meg Kinnard/File)

Top officials of the former Trump administration, including former Vice President [Mike Pence](#), Secretary of State [Mike Pompeo](#) and former Defense Secretary [Mark T. Esper](#), joined other world leaders for a summit over the weekend to promote world peace and mobilize hope behind efforts to end the North Korean nuclear crisis and the decades-old conflict between North and South Korea.

Mr. [Pompeo](#) told the gathering, which was projected digitally to participants on every continent, that diplomatic progress made with [North Korea](#) during the Trump era showed that "the reunification of the Korean Peninsula is achievable."

"We encourage the Biden administration - and we pray them well - we hope they will devote the same time we did, the same time and effort that President Trump did to such an important international issue," the former secretary of state and former CIA director told a range of current and former heads of state and prominent U.S. political figures participating in the digital "Rally of Hope."

The event was organized by the Universal Peace Federation (UPF) and united participants around what organizers described as a moral fight against oppression, poverty and racial discrimination across the world.

It was the sixth such virtual rally since August 2020, with the gatherings offering an outlet for collective optimism, hope and encouragement in what has otherwise been a challenging period for peace-oriented civil society discourse amid the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

The event was highlighted by the launch of "Think Tank 2022," which a press release described as a "global network of experts in all sectors and fields" that will work to encourage international efforts to promote peace around the [North Korea](#) issue.

High-level speakers promoted the initiative, which was created by the UPF, a global non-government organization that operates in general consultative status with the U.N. Economic and Social Council.

Among the headliners was David Beasley, the executive director of the U.N. World Food Program, the world's largest humanitarian organization.

"This rally is reaching across continents, uniting people all over the world in a spirit of peace, mutual prosperity and public service. It highlights the importance of everyone coming together to work for peace all around the world," Mr. Beasley said in prerecorded remarks.

"I know that the dream of peace throughout the Korean Peninsula is shared by millions of men, women and children on both sides of the border and by people everywhere," he said. "Congratulations on the launch of Think Tank 2022 at this Rally of Hope."

Other speakers included Kosovo President Vjosa Osmani, Niger President Mohamed Bazoum, former European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso, former House Speaker Newt Gingrich, the Rev. Jonathan Falwell, business leader Jim Rogers and Sarah Gilbert, a professor of vaccinology in the Nuffield Department of Medicine at the University of Oxford who worked on the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine.

Former U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, who was announced as the chairman of Think Tank 2022, said the Rally of Hope event series "has delivered a message of hope and vision for peace for millions of like-minded viewers around the world based on the universal values of coexistence, co-prosperity and righteousness."

UPF Chairman Thomas G. Walsh said Think Tank 2022 will feature "people-to-people diplomacy with high-level delegations to visit key nations."

"[It] will seek to support and augment the work of government agencies and multilateral organizations dedicated to the promotion of peace on the Korean Peninsula as we continue to explore every avenue to break through toward truly bringing about lasting peace," Mr. Walsh said in a statement.

UPF co-founder Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon participated in a ceremonial signing of a resolution formally establishing Think Tank 2022 during the rally.

Mrs. Moon, the widow of the Rev. Sun Myung Moon, is the leader of the Unification movement that grew from the Unification Church that the Rev. Moon founded in 1954 - a year after war between North and South Korea was frozen by a U.S.-backed armistice. She and her late husband devoted their lives to the reunification of the Korean Peninsula and to the promotion of world peace. They founded The Washington Times in 1982.

Mr. [Pompeo](#) and other speakers praised the work of Mrs. Moon.

The former secretary of state also reflected on his experiences as America's top diplomat and as CIA director pursuing a breakthrough on the [North Korea](#) issue.

Mr. [Pompeo](#) lauded South Korean President Moon Jae-in's persistence in pushing for diplomacy with Pyongyang. He also said the Trump administration "tried something different" to spur change in the North Korean nuclear crisis, which has "eluded resolution for decades."

As CIA director, Mr. [Pompeo](#) traveled clandestinely to Pyongyang to meet with North Korean leader Kim Jong-un in April 2018. "The goal was to denuclearize [North Korea](#), make peace and make life better for the people living north of the inter-Korean border," he said.

Mr. [Pompeo](#) stressed that during the Trump administration's diplomatic push, which featured three face-to-face meetings between former President Donald Trump and Mr. Kim, the North Korean leader agreed with the objective of complete and verifiable denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

"[Mr. Kim] agreed this was his objective, while he noted that eventual normalization of relations with the United States was also his goal, as was the reunification of the Korean Peninsula," Mr. [Pompeo](#) said.

"We must all work together to accomplish these important goals," he said, adding that the Trump-era efforts also yielded other measurable results, including a halt of North Korean nuclear and long-range missile testing.

"This took down risks," said Mr. [Pompeo](#), who emphasized that China, which shares a border with [North Korea](#) and is Pyongyang's primary trading partner and ally, should be doing more to assist in efforts to achieve denuclearization.

China also factored into remarks by Mr. [Esper](#), who told the rally that "the world is at an historical inflection point" and has "entered a new era of great power competition."

"As in the past, so too in the future, a strong and ready military, one embedded in a network of alliances and partnerships will be critical in this new era of great power competition that is now upon us," Mr. [Esper](#) said. "This was the Reagan doctrine of peace through strength."

Mr. Pence, whose comments to the gathering marked the second time the former vice president has spoken during a Rally of Hope event, also sought to draw attention to the need for China to take a more constructive role.

"Now more than ever, freedom-loving nations around the world must stand together and call upon China to respect human rights, democratic principles, the freedom of navigation and do their part to achieve the final and fully verified denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula," he said.

Mr. [Pence](#) also praised the weekend's event as an effort to promote peace not only on the Korean Peninsula, but around the globe.

"Today, as leaders from around the world who cherish the values of faith, family, democracy and justice under law," the former vice president said, "I commend you for coming together at this event to continue to sow the seeds of peace, believing that in time we will reap a harvest of peace that will benefit the people of Korea, the United States and all mankind."