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CONNECTIONS

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Asia-Pacific Approaches to Peace

Parliaments, Partnerships and a Peace Charter in Cambodia
Track Two Diplomacy for a Unified Korea
China's Vision of a Shared Future for Humanity



Dr. Charles S. Yang
International Chairman
Universal Peace Federation

MESSAGE FROM THE PUBLISHER

As we enter 2025, we find ourselves caught up in ongoing wars, unable to bridge the gap between the peace we dream of and the reality we face. Yet in the midst of conflict and struggle, efforts to build lasting peace through cooperation offer a vision of hope. In this issue we explore the perspectives and projects of leaders in the Asia-Pacific region who are engaged in the pursuit of peace.

One such initiative is the Universal Peace Charter, adopted by global representatives in the Kingdom of Cambodia last November. We congratulate former Prime Minister and current Senate President HE Hun Sen and current Prime Minister HE Hun Manet for this significant contribution to global peace.

UPF participated in a number of consultations on the development of the Peace Charter, and is among its first signatories representing civil society. Today's challenges – from climate change and pandemics to economic inequality and conflict resolution – demand a unique approach to peacebuilding that includes cooperation between state and non-state actors. UPF has been a leader in facilitating this type of cooperation, which has proven invaluable in achieving peace and reconciliation. We look forward to further engagement with all the signatories of the Universal Peace Charter.

This year, 2025, marks the 80th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations and its commitment to ending war and conflict. It is also the 80th anniversary of Korea's liberation and its division into North and South. This anniversary offers an opportunity and a challenge to resolve this painful remnant of global war.

The founders of UPF, Rev. Sun Myung Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, were both born in North Korea, yet could not return to their homeland for more than 40 years. Since their breakthrough visit to the North in 1991, they have pursued political, cultural and economic projects to encourage engagement between North and South. Some of these efforts are highlighted in this issue. They demonstrate how religious leaders and faith-based organizations can be integral participants in the peace process. Their moral authority and grassroots networks make them invaluable partners in fostering reconciliation, particularly when political engagement falters.

The conflict surrounding the Korean Peninsula is a multidimensional issue, intricately entangled with the interests of surrounding powers. The first step toward peace is mutual understanding. We must listen to and respect North Korea's security apprehensions, China's desire to maintain regional influence, the United States' commitment to protect its allies, Japan's economic interests, and South Korea's yearning for peaceful reunification. All these factors must be carefully balanced.

The path forward requires us to combine our spiritual wisdom with practical capabilities, moral values with technological advancement, and individual initiatives with collective efforts. Let us unite in this noble cause to build a world where interdependence, mutual prosperity, and universally shared values are not just ideals but living realities for all members of our human family.



CONTENTS



02 Message from the Publisher
— Dr. Charles S. Yang

04 Parliaments, Partnerships and a Peace Charter in Cambodia
— Ursula McLackland

07 Why is Cambodia Taking the Lead?
— Hajime Saito

08 China's Vision of a Shared Future for Humanity
— So Yuk Choy

10 Track Two Diplomacy for a Unified Korea
— Julian Gray

14 Motherly Love in Action
— Dr. Lan Young Moon

17 Asian Insights on Managing Conflict
— Dr. Samir Puri

20 An Australian Aboriginal Reflection on Culture and Community
— Pearl Wymarra

22 Dialogue: Talking Things Through
— David Fraser Harris

24 Divergent Paths to Global Peace and Stability
— Frank Kaufmann

26 IAPP Joins Global Parliamentarians at Pakistan Conference on Rule of Law
— Santosh Paudel

28 Romanian-Bulgarian Peace Road Anticipates Schengen Accession
— Edina Zsolcsak-Dimitrova and Miki Predescu

29 UPF-Portugal Participates in Prestigious Estoril Conferences
— Dr. Sergio Vieira

30 Montevideo Peace Road Features Joyful Celebration
— Raul Rey

31 Christian Leaders Unite to Advance Social Cohesion in Zambia
— Fabrice Djimadoun

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Cover photo: (left to right) HE Suos Yara, president of the International Parliament for Tolerance and Peace (IPTP); HE Ahmed bin Mohamed Aljarwan, president of the Global Council for Tolerance and Peace (GCTP); and Dr. Charles S. Yang, chairman of the International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace (IAPP), after signing a Memorandum of Understanding between their three organizations.

Parliaments, Partnerships and a Peace Charter in Cambodia

By Ursula McLackland



An innovative global initiative launched in Phnom Penh, Cambodia on November 24, 2024, promises to pave the way for greater cooperation between governments and civil society in creating a culture of peace. Delegates from

53 countries attended the 11th Plenary Session of the International Parliament for Tolerance and Peace (IPTP), during which the Universal Peace Charter for People and the Planet was adopted.

Paths to Partnership

Dr. Charles S. Yang, chairman of the International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace (IAPP), with Dr. Michael Jenkins, president of UPF International and The Washington Times Foundation, as well as Hon. Ek Nath Dhakal, member of Parliament of Nepal and chair of IAPP Asia Pacific, led an 11-member IAPP delegation to participate in the IPTP conference, which ran from November 23-26, 2024.

During the event, IAPP signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with IPTP and the Global Council for Tolerance and Peace (GCTP) to strengthen the partnership and co-operation for peace with these two global organizations.

Dr. Yang addressed the gathering during the first plenary session on “Advancing the Global Architecture of Peace, Peacebuilding, Reconciliation and Tolerance: Synergy of Governments, Parliaments and Civil Society.” In his address he proposed three key measures for effective peacebuilding based on UPF’s principles and approach to peace:

1. Establishing robust institutional mechanisms that integrate religious and civil society leaders into policy-making processes.
2. Expanding programs that promote intercultural and interreligious understanding, building on UPF’s successful model of interfaith dialogue.



IAPP leaders (center, left to right) Dr. Michael Jenkins, Dr. Charles S. Yang, and Hon. Ek Nath Dhakal, after signing the Universal Peace Charter. They are flanked by members of the Cambodian Parliament, representing the host country.



The IAPP delegation at the 11th Plenary Session of the International Parliament for Tolerance and Peace.

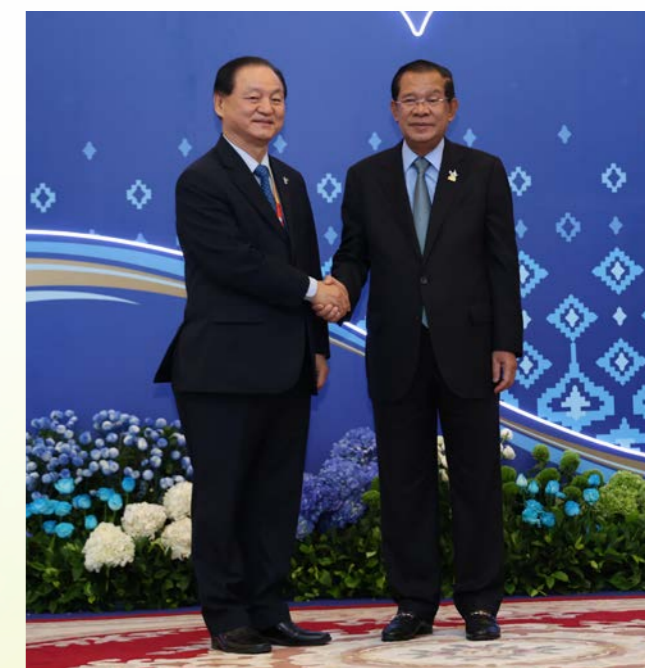
3. Leveraging digital technology to create inclusive platforms for cooperation while nurturing young leaders to drive economic revolution without losing the essential human connection vital for peacebuilding.

The IAPP delegation held several productive bilateral and multilateral meetings, including with Hon. Dev Raj Ghimire, speaker of the House of Representatives of Nepal, and Hon. Celmira Sacramento, president of the National Assembly of Sao Tome and Principe, strengthening their collaboration to bring about a world of peace.

Throughout the conference, IAPP leaders had many opportunities to exchange opinions and views with representatives of major governmental and non-governmental organizations. Of special mention was the one-hour meeting with former Cambodian prime minister and current Senate President Samdech Hun Sen, who conveyed his appreciation of UPF founder Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon’s dedicated work for peace, and confirmed his commitment to further cooperation with IAPP and UPF. The IAPP delegates also greeted Prime Minister Samdech Hun Manet and Samdech Khuon Sudary, president of the Cambodian National Assembly, who have had warm and cordial relations with UPF over many years.

IAPP also hosted a Special Session, which provided conference participants with a wonderful opportunity for close interaction and sharing of experiences.

The adoption of the Universal Peace Charter and the Phnom Penh Declaration on the Endorsement of the Universal Peace Charter in a Quest for Peace, Tolerance and Reconciliation were hailed as the main outcomes of the entire event.



Dr. Charles S. Yang with Cambodian Senate President Hun Sen.

The Universal Peace Charter

From the beginning, IAPP leaders participated in all consultations on the development of the Universal Peace Charter for People and the Planet, and signed it as one of its co-sponsors. The aims and concepts of the Peace Charter align well with the UPF founders' vision and work for world peace.

The Peace Charter is an institutional framework established to strengthen international solidarity and partnerships for peace, harmony, dignity and prosperity for humanity.

It is unique in that it promotes active dialogue and collaboration among government and civil society. The Peace Charter's membership is open to governments, parliaments, intergovernmental and international non-governmental, private and civil society organizations.

Members will adhere to and work based on the following fundamental principles:

1. Unity in diversity, national sovereignty, territorial integrity, good-neighborliness, non-aggression, non-interference, and co-prosperity;
2. Mutual respect, mutual understanding, mutual trust and mutual interest for peace and prosperity (M4P2);

3. Tolerance, love, equality, fairness and justice;
4. Peaceful co-existence and peaceful settlement of disputes and differences;
5. A culture of peace and dialogue.

The parties will promote cultural connectivity, interfaith dialogue and cross-cultural understanding, and advocate for the establishment of an Interfaith Unity Council (IUC) at the United Nations, as well as at national and local levels, to provide mechanisms for interfaith dialogue and build a network of interfaith peacebuilders.

The Peace Charter also aims at forging closer and more comprehensive partnerships among parliaments worldwide, and advocates for the eventual establishment of the Universal Parliamentary Assembly (UPA) as a subsidiary platform of the UN General Assembly.

By signing the Universal Peace Charter and Phnom Penh Declaration, IAPP commits itself to working towards the fulfillment of their noble goals and purposes and contributing to the building of a peaceful world.

– Ursula McLackland is secretary general of UPF-Asia-Pacific.



Participants at the International Parliament for Tolerance and Peace celebrate the adoption of the Universal Peace Charter in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, on November 24, 2024.

Why is Cambodia Taking the Lead?

By Hajime Saito



Cambodia may seem an unlikely country to be initiating a global peace pact in the midst of unrest and conflict around the world. It is a small nation of 17 million people, at the heart of Southeast Asia.

The country is renowned for its ancient temples, including the famous Angkor Wat complex in Siem Reap, as well as its unique Khmer culture.

Cambodia is also known through its portrayal in the British film, "The Killing Fields," which depicts the period when more than 1.3 million people were killed by the Communist Party of Kampuchea, the Khmer Rouge, during its rule from 1975-1979. At that time Samdech Hun Sen, who later served as Cambodia's prime minister for over 30 years, experienced war as a young soldier and witnessed firsthand the devastation it brings. It is a lesson he took deeply to heart.

In his speech at the opening ceremony of the IPTP on November 24, 2024, Samdech Hun Sen described Cambodia's process of reconciliation and forgiveness in order to rebuild the nation after the war. Through his speech, the audience could feel that Cambodia is a self-made nation. There is no shortcut to building peace; it can only be built with the principles of forgiveness, love and unity.

In the 45 years since Cambodia's civil war, it has transformed to a land of life from a land of death. It has one of the world's fastest growing economies. In 2023, 4.45 million tourists visited the country.

Samdech Hun Sen was an early participant in UPF's peacemaking efforts in Asia. In November 2019 he welcomed UPF founder Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon to Cambodia. When she spoke in Phnom Penh of her vision for an Asia

Pacific Union, Prime Minister Hun Sen agreed with her idea; since then he has pursued numerous initiatives to promote multilateral progress in Asia. In 2022, he was awarded the Sunhak Peace Prize for his efforts.

The adoption of the Universal Peace Charter is the culmination of Samdech Hun Sen's commitment to peacebuilding. In his speech he said, "The preservation of peace is of the highest priority for Cambodia. Since nothing can be achieved without peace, no other issues can take precedence. Cambodia has already suffered immensely and does not need to experience the devastation of another war."

The Universal Peace Charter is not only for Cambodia. It will advance international cooperation, accelerate economic growth around the world, and promote collaboration in addressing problems from climate change to managing new technologies. In the future, Cambodia may be known not only for its astonishingly beautiful ancient temples, but for its contribution to building a beautiful world of peace.

– Hajime Saito is vice chair of UPF-Asia Pacific. He is currently based in Bangkok, Thailand, where he lives with his wife and three children, but he travels frequently to Cambodia, where he has been working for over 20 years.

Hajime Saito (center) with colleagues in rural Cambodia.



China's Vision of a Shared Future for Humanity

By So Yuk Choy



People around the world, and especially in the West, may tend to think of China as a huge nation of people that all think, act, and look alike. In fact, China is a nation of multiple ethnic groups, and Chinese civilization has always sought harmony in diversity. The Chinese people respect cultural diversity, seek mutual economic prosperity, and share an emotional affinity and intrinsic drive to pursue unity and harmony. That is what makes Chinese civilization so inclusive.

The world is a global community consisting of multiple ethnicities and races. In 2013, Chinese President Xi Jinping put forth the vision of building a community with a shared future for humanity. As a Chinese, I strongly support this concept. Over the past decade, this has become a core value of the Chinese government and people, as well as a new direction for China's foreign policy. This is reflected in the Belt and Road Initiative, which is building and expanding road and rail transportation to open up and develop global trade. This initiative now involves 140 countries.

President Xi Jinping has said: "As the term suggests, a community with a shared future for humanity means that the future of every nation and country is interlocked. We are in the same boat and we should stick together, share weal and woe, and endeavor to build this planet of ours into a single harmonious unit, turning people's longing for a better life into a reality."

Seeking Harmony

From my perspective, the concept of a community with a shared future for humanity

contains the essence of China's traditional cultural values. This includes harmony between man and nature; striving to achieve universal peace; and the concept of the world as one family. It includes putting righteousness first, and upholding justice while pursuing shared interests. It can lead to a world of universal harmony characterized by material prosperity, moral elevation, and social equity and justice.

This concept provides direction and guidance for the fate and destiny of humanity. In international relations, China supports dialogue and consultation, working together for mutual benefit, win-win cooperation, and low-carbon development. As a major country, China has a strong sense of responsibility to integrate its development with world development. Therefore, in 2021 and 2022, China proposed the Global Development Initiative and the Global Security Initiative, to promote development and security through global policy coordination, and has demonstrated its willingness to work through international relationships to implement this.

“China's traditional cultural values [include] harmony between man and nature; striving to achieve universal peace; and the concept of the world as one family.”

A global community with a shared future represents a world at peace. China remains firm in pursuing an independent foreign policy of peace. China respects the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries, big or small, as well as the development paths and social systems chosen by their people. China



China's Belt and Road Initiative in Asia, Africa and Europe as of 2018. Green: railway line; Blue: oil pipeline; Yellow: gas pipeline; Square: port; Circle: electrical power plant. (By Lena Appenzeller, Sabine Hecher and Janine Sack. *Infrastrukturatlas: Daten und Fakten über öffentliche Räume und Netze*. Reprinted under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International license.)

stands firmly against all forms of hegemonism and power politics, the Cold War mentality, interference in other countries' internal affairs, and double standards in international matters. China adheres to a defensive national defense policy and will never seek hegemony. Regarding the economy, China pursues an open strategy of mutual benefit, and adheres to the course of economic globalization.

China opposes protectionism, unilateral sanctions and maximum-pressure tactics. It is committed to supporting other developing countries in accelerating development.

Advancing Global Governance

China also takes an active part in reforming and developing the global governance system. China actively safeguards the international system with the United Nations at its core, the international order underpinned by international law, and the basic norms of international relations based on the principles of the UN Charter. China is actively involved in setting global rules in global trade, economy, security, carbon emissions and other areas; works to promote international security cooperation; and takes an active part in UN peace-keeping operations.

Finally, let us consider China's role in Asia. As China has become the world's second largest economy, its economic growth has benefited the world, especially China's neighbors. Asia is now a thriving region, and a significant engine driving the global economy. However, Asian countries need to further strengthen mutual trust and regional security cooperation; collaborate to deal with non-traditional security challenges such as terrorism, transnational crimes, environmental security, cyber security, energy and resource security, and major natural disasters. We need to prevent certain countries with malicious intentions from driving a wedge between us, creating conflicts and tensions and exploiting regional disputes for their own interests.

By working with regional and global allies in pursuit of its vision for a community with a shared future for humanity, China is actively promoting world peace and development, and contributing to the progress of human civilization.

— So Yuk Choy is a retired Hong Kong politician. She was a member of the Hong Kong Legislative Council for 12 years, a member of the District Council for 19 years, and a deputy of the National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China for 15 years.

Track Two Diplomacy for a Unified Korea

By Julian Gray



In the 80 years since the division of the Korean Peninsula into two nations, relations between North Korea and South Korea have fluctuated between open hostility and uneasy peace. For most of that time, residents on both sides of the border have hoped for an eventual reunification of their divided people. In recent times those hopes have dimmed, as the two nations' political, economic and cultural realities have pulled further apart.

However, there are still advocates of reunification who are working very hard toward that goal. The efforts supported or inspired by UPF's founders, the late Rev. Sun Myung Moon and his wife, Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, are the substance of this article. What effect these efforts have had, or may have, must eventually be evaluated by history. In any case, their actions demonstrate that private citizens can do something, with initiative and will, and of course a foundation of resources, both personnel and finances, built up over many years.

Relics of History

The two Koreas remain separated by a four-kilometer-wide demilitarized zone, as specified in the Armistice Agreement signed in 1953, after the Korean War, between China and North Korea on one side, and the United States, representing UN forces, on the other. Technically, the two sides remain at war. They do not recognize each other, both claiming to be the sole legitimate government of Korea. This is the reason that, for example, South Korea welcomes refugees from North Korea as its own citizens.

Korean reunification requires that both sides be willing to unite. But neither would be willing to give up control to the other. This is a vestige of the Cold War political divide.

China values North Korea as a buffer separating it from the Westernized South Korea; it is not clear how China might respond to a unified Korea under South Korean leadership. Any move to end the war and reunify the peninsula would necessarily involve the United States and China, as signatories of the armistice, with neither willing to lose their strategic position.

In short, it is an entangled political situation; resolving it would require multinational cooperation between nations with fundamental ideological differences and interests. Then what civilian efforts hope might have?



Rev. and Mrs. Moon with North Korean President Kim Il Sung (center) at his palace in Hung Nam, North Korea.

Both Sun Myung Moon and his wife, Hak Ja Han Moon, were born in what is now North Korea. Rev. Moon, after returning from his studies in Japan, was sharing his spiritual teachings in the south in 1946 when he felt called to go back to the north, not long after Kim Il Sung was installed as the new communist leader in the northern part of the Korean Peninsula.

To make a long story short, he was arrested by the communist authorities and sent to a forced labor camp, which the regime used to systematically destroy its political enemies emotionally, mentally and then physically, with appalling cruelty. He was put to work in a fertilizer plant; North Korea was bartering the fertilizer for arms from Russia, to prepare for the Korean War.

Pulitzer Prize winning journalist Carlton Sherwood wrote that people who survive such conditions are special. They must not give in to useless anger against their captors or to self-pity. Sun Myung Moon survived by thinking not of his physical hunger or cold, or resenting his situation; instead he turned his heart to God, and to his fellow inmates, and sought to relieve their suffering rather than his own. In so doing he paradoxically gained the power to transcend the physical deprivation to which so many succumbed.

He survived and went on to build a sizable movement through teaching such principles to many others. But he also had ambition enough to want to inspire change on a larger scale.

Meeting with Kim Il Sung

Some 40 years after he was freed from prison, through the efforts of diplomats and supporters who opened the way, Rev. Moon was able to meet with North Korean leader Kim Il Sung, who had established the very system of death camps in which he had been incarcerated.

Rev. Moon had spoken out strongly about the fallacies of Kim Il Sung's ideology and the failings of his regime. President Kim's aides advised him not to meet Rev. Moon, but he was interested in this bold man who dared come to his country and challenge the authority of his teachings in his own parliament.



Rev. Moon (seated left) and North Korean government official Mr. Ki Bok Yoon sign an agreement to facilitate exchanges between North and South Korea, including meetings of separated families.

During their meeting, Rev. Moon and President Kim discussed initiatives to open up exchanges between North and South Korea, including meetings between separated families, cultural exchanges and economic collaboration. An informal agreement was signed, and it had results.

One such initiative was to develop the beautiful Kumgang Mountain area in North Korea as an international tourist site. This venture was taken up by one of the large Korean conglomerates. It flourished for a time, before falling victim to the political rift and mistrust between North and South.



Rev. Moon (center) visits his parents' gravesite in Jung Joo County, Pyung An Bukdo, North Korea, along with his wife and North Korean relatives.

Humanitarian Aid

Rev. Moon had created an international commission on Korean reunification, involving diplomats, politicians, and influential citizens from many nations. Led by Antonio Betancourt, an aide to Rev. Moon from Colombia, members of this commission met five times with the late President Kim Il Sung.

Mr. Betancourt explained how the commission assisted North Korea in dealing with the famine that started in 1995, by helping to alert the world about the hunger problem. "I traveled to Europe and spoke in Strasbourg at the Council of Europe with members of the European Parliament. I spoke in France with President Mitterrand's advisors on Korea. I spoke with the Korea desk at the US State Department and with the United Nations. Through our contacts, we impressed upon some of the Western governments that it was important for them to consider assisting North Korea through the UN ... We did a lot of humanitarian work for North Korea behind the scenes."

Another organization founded by Rev. Moon and his wife, the Women's Federation for World Peace, has also carried out a food aid initiative for North Korean children, and other assistance programs. The WFWP sent several delegations to the North, at one time including several hundred international women leaders, to demonstrate support for the North Korean people. These were promising programs, but in recent years both the North and South Korean governments have restricted such private forays to the North.

Youthful Peace Ambassadors

Opportunities for North and South Korean youth to meet each other are extremely rare. In the 1990s, however, Rev. Moon supported international student gatherings in Beijing, China, that included North and South Korean students. One five-day seminar on the theme, "The Role of Youth in Building a Unified Homeland," brought 155 students and professors from 18 nations.

American educator Dr. Robert Kittel described the event: "The closing banquet was an unbelievably intense, emotional experience for both the North and South Koreans. Arm-in-arm they stood on stage singing slightly different variations of "Tongil" [a Korean song of unity], but there was not a dry eye among them. When the singing stopped, small groups of North and South Koreans intensely embraced each other, wiping each other's tears. Several of the students were sobbing uncontrollably."



North and South Korean students meet in Beijing during a youth seminar in July 1999.



The Little Angels and the Pyongyang Schoolchildren's Art Troupe on stage following their performance in Seoul in 2000.



Children from North and South share an emotional farewell.

Rev. Moon founded the Little Angels Korean Folk Ballet in 1962, with the hope that these graceful, innocent children would become ambassadors of Korea, sharing its culture with the world. In May 1998, the dance team was invited to perform in Pyongyang, North Korea, where their beautiful renditions of Korean songs and charming folk dances completely melted the hearts of North Korean audiences. In return, the North Korean government sent the Pyongyang Schoolchildren's Art Troupe to South Korea in May 2000. They gave a very heartwarming performance in Seoul, where they once again met the Little Angels. These young girls from opposite sides of the border embraced each other as sisters, and cried when they had to part.

Through such methods of "soft diplomacy," young North and South Koreans came to view one another not only as human, but as family. During a television interview soon afterwards, one young Little Angel was asked her views on the reunification of Korea. She replied, "The children from North and South are already united in heart; we are waiting for the grown-ups."



The Pyeonghwa Motors factory in Nampo, North Korea.



Billboard in Pyongyang advertising Pyeonghwa Motors.

Promise of Prosperity

In considering ways to develop economic exchanges with North Korea, Rev. Moon decided that a modern automobile factory would be a good place to start. In 2000 a joint venture agreement was signed with North Korea's state-owned Ryongbong Corporation and a factory was opened near the west-coast city of Nampo. In 2002, Pyeonghwa (Peace) Motors produced its first vehicle.

Mr. Sang-gwon Pak was in charge of the project. He explained: "Having a car factory is not just for business; we are leading the way for the reunification of North Korea and South Korea and for world peace. We are reviving hope in the North Koreans and in people from the South who would like to go there and do business. We are giving pride to North Koreans who can say, 'Oh, yes, we make cars too.'"

American investor Jim Rogers has shared his unique perspective on the potential for a future prosperous unified Korea: "Can you imagine what would be possible if what is now the DMZ were opened for railway and highway traffic? The opportunities for commercial development and cultural development would be unlimited ... Once the barriers start to come down, once there will be an explosion of growth, once we open the 38th parallel, it will benefit not only North and South Korea, but China, Russia,

Japan, Asia, Southeast Asia, the whole world ... Think of the savings alone that would come from demilitarization."

Although Rev. Moon passed away in 2012, Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon has continued the work they were doing together. In 2014 Dr. Moon initiated the World Summit Series, which brings together world leaders to discuss global problems. In 2021 she created Think Tank 2022, which has held forums for discussion of the unification of North and South Korea. It has formed expert working groups in various fields of expertise to find the best pathways for the peaceful development of Korea. Its meetings have drawn commentators from among the most prominent negotiators of recent years, including former US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and former six-party talks negotiator Joseph DeTrani.

Rev. Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon have never abandoned their efforts for reconciliation between the two halves of Korea, firmly believing it is Korea's destiny to be one nation once again. As Rev. Moon said to the North Koreans during his visit there, "Blood is thicker than water."

— Julian Gray has worked in Korea as a writer, editor and translator, for 30 years. He currently heads the translation department of Family Federation for World Peace and Unification International.

Think Tank 2022 assembly at the Cheongshim Peace World Center in Gapyeong, South Korea, on November 20, 2021.



Motherly Love in Action

By Dr. Lan Young Moon



I was born in Wonsan, a city on the east coast of North Korea, in 1942. But when I was 8 years old, my family fled to the South. The Korean War had broken out in June, 1950, and three months later UN forces landed at Incheon and marched all the way to Wonsan and Pyongyang. At that time, Christians, intellectuals, and people who were oppressed in North Korea took advantage of this opportunity to evacuate to the South.

I remember well that horrific journey. We had missed an earlier refugee ship and were stranded at the dock. It was December 8; there was a fierce blizzard; the Chinese army was chasing us and shooting at us. My father was not well – until recently he had been imprisoned on suspicion of anti-communist sympathies – my mother was heavily pregnant, and we children were 10, 8 and 4 years old. My father managed to find a small boat and row us to one of the small islands in the waters off Wonsan.

My father found a small room where we could stay, and went off to look for a bigger ship that could take us to the South. He never came back. We stayed six months on that island, with many other refugees. My mother gave birth there, and with absolute determination, courage and love, managed to feed and

protect our family until South Korean soldiers finally arranged transportation to the South.

Through many more hardships, we settled in the South and slowly built our lives there. Because of these experiences, I am always sympathetic to refugees who are fleeing from wars and other tragedies, and also to people who are struggling to survive under difficult circumstances.

Founding of WFWP

The year after their visit to North Korea, in 1992 Rev. Sun Myung Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon founded the Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP). In 1994 I became international secretary general; in 2000 I became international president, a position I held until 2014. After that, I served as special emissary to Europe until 2018.

Unlike other women's groups, WFWP is not about gender equality or expanding women's rights. Father and Mother Moon said our mission was to demonstrate maternal love and help people build true families. A mother's love is one of tears. A mother must have a compassionate heart. We need that kind of leadership and we are educating women to develop it. I tell our members, "If you want to be a great leader you have to be humble, with a motherly heart, and then everyone will respect you."



Lan Young Moon (top) with her teacher and mother, Jeong Soon Choi (center), and other students at the Wonju Girls High School in Wonju, South Korea, 1952.



Lan Young Moon (back row center) arrives in Pyongyang with a delegation of women leaders from South Korea for their first North-South cooperation meeting, February, 2001.



Meeting between women leaders of North Korea's Civil Reconciliation Association and South Korea's WFWP in Kaesong, North Korea, October 20, 2011.

Work with North Korea

WFWP works in over 100 countries, but since our founders are Korean, in their hearts they have always longed to relieve the suffering of the Korean people and reunite the North and South. They asked WFWP to work on this. In the 1990s it was not easy to connect with North Korea, so we organized annual concerts on the theme "Wishing for Unification," and we invited North Koreans who had come to South Korea. In February 2001, the Chosun Women's Association in North Korea invited a group of South Korean women to visit Pyongyang, and two of our members joined that delegation. That was the opening we needed.

I shed so many tears when I went to the North. We traveled around by bus, but we were asked to keep the curtains closed; still I opened them a little bit to peek out. There were so many heartbreaking scenes. We visited a hospital and saw that their machines were 20 years old. We visited a kindergarten; the children were 5 or 6 years old, but when we held them, they were as light as newborn babies.

When we came back, we started raising donations for North Korea. We held a walking competition at Olympic Park; we collected the money from the participation fees and sent it to North Korea.

In 2002 we started the 1% Love Share Project, asking South Korean citizens to donate just 1% of their paycheck every month to help the less fortunate North Koreans, especially women and children. Our first donation was 30,000 pairs of children's undergarments, through the Korean Women Leader's Association. We sent children's underwear and women's work clothes. Over many years, we sent whatever they asked for; we always sent good quality items to reflect our love and sincerity.

In 2007, Father and Mother Moon asked WFWP to organize an international women leaders' conference at the Mount Geumgang Resort, just across the border in North Korea. This had opened to foreign tourists in 1998, following Rev. Moon's suggestion to do this during his 1991 meeting with Kim Il Sung.

The organization was very challenging! It required approval from the governments of both North and South. But in the end, over 700 women from all over the world, in 22 buses, crossed the Military Demarcation Line and headed north. It was a spectacular sight. They stayed for three days, from October 30 to November 2, 2007, along with a delegation of ten North Korean women leaders. We held a candlelight prayer service for unification, reconciliation and peace, and many people cried. They were in tears. It was truly an unforgettable event.



Participants at the WFWP International Women Leaders Conference at the Mt. Geumgang Resort in North Korea, November 1, 2007.



WFWP leaders planting trees in Pyongyang with members of North Korea's Civil Reconciliation Association, May, 2008.



Facing Obstacles

Unfortunately, the very next year the Mount Geumgang Resort was closed after a South Korean woman was shot and killed by a North Korean soldier. Relations between North and South deteriorated badly after that. Still, I continued to engage in inter-Korean exchange activities. I went to the North to plant trees, to bring donations. In all I visited 19 times. However, I haven't been to my hometown yet; it was never possible, even though Wonsan is only a 30-minute drive from Mount Geumgang. It's that close. I still hope for that opportunity. North Korea sealed its borders in 2020, when Covid-19 began to spread, and became more isolated than ever. It is only now starting to slowly reopen. But the world has changed, and trust between North and South is at an all-time low.

It breaks my heart to think that the inter-Korean movement is so blocked right now. I

often visit the border region at Panmunjom, and I think about the way forward. Unification of the South and North cannot be achieved with theory alone or with military force. If we look at our experience, it must be done with love. Love can melt everything.

At this point, I think this cannot be done only among our own people. We need the support of the international community, and we need to be consistent and persistent. We need more courage and determination than ever. But most of all we need to maintain the heart of a mother, who can never stop loving and seeking the best outcome for all of her children.

– Dr. Lan Young Moon served as secretary general, then international president of WFWP from 1994 to 2014. Since then she has continued to support the organization as president emeritus, and to promote North and South unification through talks and lectures. She is currently a professor of biblical studies at the Sunhak Universal Peace Academy.



WFWP representatives gather at Imjingok, South Korea, to dispatch trucks full of 1% Love Share aid to North Korea, September 16, 2010.



WFWP representatives at Incheon Port, South Korea, preparing to ship 1% Love Share aid to North Korea, November 1, 2008.

Asian Insights on Managing Conflict

By Dr. Samir Puri



When you see Americans, Europeans and Asians meeting and discussing contemporary geopolitical problems, North Korea remains an absolutely persistent one, more so than ever after North Korean soldiers deployed to fight with Russia against Ukrainian forces in 2024. So, where are the winds blowing and how are things changing?

Much has changed regarding the Korean Peninsula since the 2000s. It was just over two decades ago that the six-party talks first convened. Russia was one of those six parties, along with North and South Korea, China, Japan and the United States. Clearly, there can be no resurrection of that format in terms of the international community, given the catastrophic falling out between Russia and the West. That has a direct bearing on the Korean Peninsula.

In Asia, Western narratives around the war in Ukraine are not automatically accepted without critical thinking, and without, in some cases, very direct pushback. The exceptions are South Korea and Japan, whose security partnerships with the United States include them hosting major US military garrisons. They can be considered part of the “non-geographic West.”

That doesn't mean to say that the North Korean partnership with Russia, which is burgeoning, elicits anything other than great alarm, especially in Japan and South Korea. But it does mean that the official position of most governments in Asia has been that there should be a negotiated settlement between Russia and Ukraine, rather than arming Ukraine to evict the Russians by force, which has been the dominant Western official position since 2022.

Countries like Indonesia, India and China, and other major countries that are increasingly

geopolitically important, have argued since 2022 that dialogue is the way to end the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

These days, Europe has low leverage in terms of being able to move the Korean Peninsula situation in a positive direction. Rather than Koreans learning lessons from Europe, I think the Europeans are inadvertently going to be learning lessons from the Korean Peninsula.

Unresolved Conflicts

East Asian security is defined by unresolved geopolitical tensions that originated in wars gone by. This includes the Korean War in the 1950s, which left the peninsula divided. The Chinese civil war ended in 1949, but it left the situation between Taiwan and the People's Republic of China as it is today, unresolved and in dispute.

East Asians have managed their security by navigating a path for the past 70 to 80 years that has left these conflicts unresolved; arguably treating them as unresolvable. A conflict-management apparatus has been developed to prevent disputes from becoming hot conflicts, rather than resolving them fully.

One could be stereotypical and say this is a “live with your neighbor” approach, but I think it's more like pragmatism. The depth of the dispute over the Korean War is huge – the way it embroiled the United States and China, who had their troops killing each other face-to-face, the sheer number of casualties. There's no superficial way you can paper over the cracks, especially knowing how idiosyncratically odd the regime in Pyongyang is.

The same goes for Taiwan and the PRC; the legacy of that conflict is so deep and historical. Rather than the idea that you can have a mediation, or a resolution, or some

kind of conference to divide it all up, I think there's a pragmatism that says some disputes are unresolvable. There may come a window of opportunity to resolve them at some point down the line, but that situation can't be forced.

Has there ever been any real optimism around North Korea? Certainly, that optimism is now at its lowest ebb, including for Europeans. North Korea is supplying weapons to Russia for use on Ukrainian battlefields, and now is also sending troops to fight alongside the Russians.

Now there's also the very real possibility that Europe will face a situation like that on the Korean Peninsula, living with a de-facto dividing line between Ukraine and Russia, in which Russian troops continue to occupy around 20% of Ukraine's territory and around 80% of its coastline (based on the frontline situation at the time of writing). Not that this is a good idea, but the reality is dawning in Europe that the total defeat of Russia in Ukraine isn't possible, and that President Donald Trump's return to the White House in January 2025 will likely accelerate US pressure on Ukraine and Russia to stop fighting based on the current front lines.

An Emerging Threat Triangle

What does that mean for the Korean Peninsula? We cannot suddenly describe an "axis of military partnership" between North Korea, Russia and China that is even half of what NATO offers in terms of collective security.



But North Korea and Russia now have their own mutual security arrangement, while China and Russia are enjoying a burgeoning trading relationship. The Ukraine war has accelerated all of this.

These trends deeply alarm the Japanese and the South Koreans. Picture the evolving situation whereby security in the Sea of Japan, and in East Asia generally, is dramatically affected by increasing cooperation between the armed forces of Russia, China and North Korea.

What does that cooperation look like? Some of it is based on trade. Economic development of Russia's Pacific coast and its cities using Chinese investment is already a big feature. North Korea might fit into this equation if, for example, it is included in joint air or naval patrols with Russia and/or China. That's now possible, given that North Korea is a long-standing treaty ally of China and now an increasingly close partner of Russia.

There's a possibility that tensions develop between the three points of this triangle. Beijing is likely to perceive Moscow's developing relations with Pyongyang with some suspicion; it doesn't want North Korea prized away from its grasp, or to have North Korea playing off China and Russia competitively against each other.

The most acute concerns of the Japanese and South Koreans focus on the possible augmentation of North Korea's ballistic missile technology and nuclear missile capability through its revitalized military partnership with Russia. I doubt Russia's defense ministry has given the North Koreans everything they want all at once. I'm sure the Russians have said, "Here's money, here's diplomatic support, here are vital oil exports ... and there could be much more in the future."

“East Asians have managed their security by [leaving] these conflicts unresolved; arguably treating them as unresolvable.”

For North Korea there's also the promise of Russian diplomatic support at the UN Security Council in New York. This is one of the most important developments in decades, assuaging North Korea's "hermit kingdom" status. North Korea's relationship with China has been relatively slow and steady since their mutual recognition 75 years ago. But the relationship with Russia promises to move things quickly for North Korea in interesting ways, not least because Kim Jong Un really helped out Vladimir Putin when the latter's invasion of Ukraine so quickly became a grinding war of attrition, with Russia's military mauled by Western-backed Ukrainian forces. Putin will be very grateful to Kim in the short term.

Another point to consider is what Russia thinks about South Korea. When sanctions were unleashed by the West against Russia in 2022, Japan was in lockstep with the West, given it is a G7 country. South Korea also joined the sanctions on Russia, but not as witheringly; it did not sanction Russia to the hilt. Russia has a list of "unfriendly countries" that have sanctioned them. A Russian official once described South Korea as "the least unfriendly of the unfriendly countries." But Russia's careful balancing act, aimed at not alienating South Korea, has now utterly collapsed after Russia invited North Korean troops to fight against the Ukrainians.

The sanctions on North Korea, policed by a multi-nation maritime force, is where our eyes should be drawn. Russia will likely try to protect North Korea in the UN Security Council, just as Russia protected Syria's Bashar al-Assad regime during the Syrian civil war, which began in 2013, right until Assad's regime collapsed in 2024. I think that's a very worrying portent. But we have

to wait and see if Russia actually wants to help North Korea to that extent, and if the Russian regime that emerges from the expected end of fighting in Ukraine in 2025 has enough political energy left to meaningfully support its allies and partners.

Lessons for Europe

Taking stock of all this, the implications for Europe are quite depressing. Consider the precedent of the divided island of Cyprus, with a peace process that has been rattling on since Turkey's invasion and occupation of the northern part that began in 1974. There is a well-developed conflict management apparatus still in Cyprus, including stabilization by UN peacekeepers.

Europe doesn't have the recent muscle memory of dealing with an unresolvable inter-state grievance that is still in the "hot phase" and moving it into a de-facto division of land in which fighting ceases, followed by reconstruction and economic development. In Russia and Ukraine there is a deep unease that this awful situation is ongoing, and a huge desire to resolve it. When pragmatism takes over, it may look a lot like East Asian pragmatism.

Europeans are going to be looking for examples, such as how North and South Korea stabilized the front lines in the years after the guns fell silent in 1953. How much diplomatic effort is required to make sure there isn't a resumption of hostilities? How do you go about establishing the kind of border observation and peacekeeping activities that will be appropriate to the situation of Ukraine? Koreans have lots of lessons to share, but as yet, I don't think the reverse is true; I don't think the Koreans are going to learn much from Europeans on conflict management at this particular geopolitical moment.

— Dr. Samir Puri is an associate fellow at Chatham House, and the author of "Westlessness: The Great Global Rebalancing" (Hodder & Stoughton, 2024). He has previously served as senior fellow at the International Institute for Strategic Studies in Singapore, and taught war studies at King's College London and the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies.

An Australian Aboriginal Reflection on Culture and Community

By Pearl Wymarra



I begin this article by acknowledging and honoring my parents, Nicholas and Marjorie Wymarra, for giving me the gift of life, loving me unconditionally, being my first two best friends and introducing me to Jesus when I was a child.

I was raised in a small community on Thursday Island, in the Torres Strait Islands of northern Australia. I am of mixed heritage – Aboriginal, European, Indonesian and Filipino – but I identify as Aboriginal. Growing up under Australia's protection and assimilation policies, my siblings and I were subject to a system that put boundaries on where we were accepted, officially and socially. I can remember there were times when I had resentment inside, knowing that we were the bottom rung of the ladder.

However, our parents helped us survive and maintain our sense of dignity, strength and resilience. Our home was simple, poor and crowded with 10 children, but it was the model of unconditional love. Our parents taught us humanity, and that transcends everything. Throughout my life, in times of grief and loss or confusion, that house presents itself in my dreams.



Pearl Wymarra's parents, Nicholas and Marjorie Wymarra.



Our family's rules were that we must be servants of God; give God the glory for all things great and small; show love to all people; show respect to our elders; share what we have; be humble at all times; care for each other; work as a team; act and speak in proper ways; obey our parents; praise each other; and practice forgiveness. These family rules were not written on a poster in our house; they were our daily practice of the good and proper cultural ways, learned from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and our Christian faith.

My Christian upbringing was in the Presbyterian Church on Thursday Island. Learning from the Catholic Church and the Anglican Church traditions there also enhanced my Christian upbringing. I also learned the good and proper ways of the Muslim faith traditions from people who came from Indonesia and Malaya to work on Thursday Island in the pearling industry.

The popular saying is, "It takes a village to raise a child." But I say, we must know who is in the village. Our children in today's Australia need us to tell them the stories of the way we were taught to navigate our way among the tensions of growing up, in the old days. We need to make time with them to pass on our strategies of how we managed it.

Unfortunately, although my husband and I did our best to provide love and guidance to our own children, we were not able to protect our son from the bigotry and cruelty that lurk in society. There is a nasty practice that some people enjoy, called "taking the mickey out of others." In the Cambridge Dictionary, "taking the mickey out of someone" means to make fun of them in an unkind way. Growing up on Thursday Island in the 1950s, I have childhood memories of people who did this to me and my family. Being the eldest daughter, I

remember getting into fights because of it, especially when it was done to my brother Herbie, because he was mentally challenged.

My son Rodney was raised to be proud of his mother's and father's families. He was raised to be a kind, loving, respectful and generous person. Being loyal to family and friends was paramount in his upbringing. But this was to no avail, as exploitation by others of those good qualities hurt his spirit and caused him pain. He talked with us about some of his nasty experiences, yet some he kept secret. We tried to give him strategies to deflect the darts that came because of his racial heritage.

We, as a family, did the best we could to support, guide, protect and keep him safe when he was diagnosed with schizophrenia. Unfortunately, we could not be there with him physically as he mingled with other people.

On January 22, 1990, our family lost our only son and brother, Rodney William Bridger, 22 years old, to suicide. The pain of that loss will always and forever be with us. We miss him and will never stop grieving for him; every suicide we hear about triggers our pain. Rodney did not die in a physical prison cell; he died in the "custody of his mind" as he searched to find himself. He struggled with the questions: Who am I? Where do I belong?

The type of behavior he faced is no respecter of race, color, culture or creed. It happens all over the world. The onus is usually placed

on the person who is being made fun of to toughen up, wear it, bear it, lighten up, laugh at yourself. I tried researching the origin of this "mickey culture." It depressed me, because it goes back a long way in the history of the world.

Reflecting on my memories of how it affected my life, I recall that it roamed our island paradise. It was a way of making fun, mocking, teasing, sending up, putting down, laughing at, not laughing with, tricking and treating, playing mind games, battling for power and control and bullying. Some people would brag about their conquests over others.

However, our saving grace was that we had our close-knit community in those days. We were very watchful and careful not to overstep the boundaries of good and proper cultural ways when having "harmless fun." We tried to treat each other as we ourselves wanted to be treated. If we did not try to do that, we would not have had peace and harmony. Violence would have ruled in all its fullness.

I am passionately committed to working in association with all faith groups and all people of goodwill to lose the "mickey culture." I am committed to building a strong and protective community, working with people of all cultural backgrounds. We can make a difference if we work collaboratively and in mutually respectful relationships. We need to make our community a place where future generations have a sense of belonging. This includes all our children, young people and families from all cultural backgrounds and ways of life, who are here now and all those yet to come.

– Pearl Wymarra is a distinguished teacher and researcher in the restoration of people's emotional health and social well-being. She is one of many Indigenous women offering inspiring leadership in addressing the crisis of violence experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families in Australia.



The Wymarra house on Thursday Island, purchased after World War II in 1946. (Photo by Captain Mac, Harbor Master)

Dialogue: Talking Things Through

By David Fraser Harris



There are times and situations when the last thing you want to do is talk; and there are times and places where words are not going to help. But when the opportunity does appear, the right mindset can make all the

difference. Surely, part of that mindset has to be, quite simply, never giving up on dialogue, which also implies never letting go of the conviction that there is goodness in everyone, be that partner, opponent or even enemy.

Bridging Religious Divides

Sometimes it is courage and vision that open the way. At UPF's 2019 Southeast Europe Summit in Tirana, I met Dr. Marijan Orsolic, who told us about Pontanima, the "Soul Bridge" interreligious choir. Following the tragic conflict in Bosnia from 1992 to 1995, which resulted in more than 400,000 people being killed or injured, Dr. Orsolic chose to highlight some moving examples of people coming together to heal the wounds, in a "land of broken bridges."

Pontanima was created by the Bosnian Franciscan monk, Father Ivo Markovic, to unite people through the universal power of music. With not enough Catholics to form a choir, Father Ivo invited members of other faiths to join, and Pontanima was born. Growing from 12 to 60 members, the choir has performed more than 350 times, all over the world including at the United Nations Headquarters, and progressed from Catholic to Orthodox to Jewish, Islamic and African styles. Meeting many challenges, such as singing songs of "the enemy," it has allowed so many friendships to be made, relationships to be rebuilt, and has initiated the re-humanization of an entire people.

The UPF-affiliated Religious Youth Service (RYS) has been bringing young people of different faiths together since 1985 – this project successfully changed the dynamic of dialogue from table talk to combined efforts, the youth discovering the goodness of each other as they work together to help a community. At a Hungary project in 1991, 100 such young people took on projects at a school in Tatabanya, an old people's home in Pecs, and an orphanage in Fot; then they met for two days at a 1000-year-old monastery in Pannonhalma.

A Jewish girl from Israel told us, "Every day of my life I see Muslims and Christians in my town, but I never speak to them. Here in Hungary, I have worked alongside them and they have become my friends."

A 2008 project in Lebanon brought together Armenian Christian scouts with Sunni and Shia Muslim scouts to paint a peace mural outside the town hospital in Nabatieh, Southern Lebanon. On the bus back to Beirut, one scout commented, "For the first time in my life, I really had the feeling that we are one country."

Hearing All Sides

In addition to its major contributions to interfaith dialogue, UPF is often seen as an impartial actor in the fields of leadership and governance. I will include two examples here. In 2006, following a civil war, the Liberian government established a truth and reconciliation commission. As reported in *The Analyst*: "Calling on the UPF last Friday at the Capitol Building in Monrovia, the Chairman of House Standing Committee on Peace and National Reconciliation, Mr. Wesseh Blamo, praised the UPF for having conducted a highly successful reconciliation conference from

February 9–11, 2006 in which about 300 delegates from counties of Liberia and countries of the Mano River Union participated. According to the lawmaker, the model of peacebuilding used by the UPF would assist the TRC in carrying out its mandate, hence the need to assist in enhancing the national endeavor."

The second example comes from Nepal. UPF-Nepal played a significant part in developments following the Maoist insurgency and civil war. UPF held six South Asia Peace Initiative conferences that brought together monarchists, Maoists, and members of the Seven-Party Alliance to dialogue on issues and modalities of Nepal's peace process. At a 2008 Parliamentarians for Peace conference, the former education minister, Mr. Ram Hari Joshy, called the conference "a dream come true." Nepal, he noted, was passing through a stage of peace, but to achieve lasting peace the root problems had to be addressed.

At a July 2009 conference, Nepal's former prime minister thanked UPF Chair Hon. Ek Nath Dhakal, then a member of the Constituent Assembly and organizing chairman of the conference, "for the highly successful, unprecedented, and very productive series of back-to-back peace initiatives."

Respecting Our Common Humanity

One explanation for UPF's impartiality can be found in its five principles of peace, which serve as a common point of reference for UPF's worldwide network of ambassadors for peace. The first is: "We are one human family created by God." The way to rise above the pursuit of self-interest is to recognize our common humanity, given to us by our Creator. Just as a parent can intercede in the disputes of children, the parental heart originating from the Creator can help us resolve the differences that exist between nations, cultures and religions."

This mindset – the heart of a parent – lies behind our approach to dialogue. This is what made possible UPF's series of Europe-Eurasia conferences, the fourth of which took place in Chisinau, Moldova, in December, 2014. In 2014 Ukraine was already experiencing a crisis. In such circumstances, the fourth UPF conference on "Europe-Eurasia dialogue" was both a source of expectation and concern: could the conference avoid an open confrontation between Russian, Ukrainian, and Moldovan participants? UPF-Eurasia invited prominent ambassadors for peace from these three nations; they came with a mindset of dialogue, and although everyone expressed their positions frankly, the debates were handled serenely.

Another such conference focused on the conflict in Syria. UPF convened on the theme, "Syria: Opening Lines of Communication and Soft Power Approaches to Peace," in Cyprus in December, 2016. The invitation stated that the conveners "are hoping to establish an environment where agendas – political, religious or other – are set aside, while participants come to listen and communicate."

Dr. Mohammed Habash, co-host of the conference, shared, "Five years of meetings between the opposition and the regime have brought no reconciliation; only mutual recriminations... I believe that this can be considered the first time an international organization has brought together representatives of both the regime and the opposition."

These are just a few examples of UPF efforts to initiate and support dialogue between parties divided by historical or current conflicts. The key is a mindset that truly desires a positive outcome for all – the mindset of a parent. The world needs it more than ever.

– David Fraser Harris is secretary general of UPF-Middle East and North Africa. This is an extract from a longer article published in the October, 2024 issue of "Freedom From Fear," the magazine of the UN Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI).

Divergent Paths to Global Peace and Stability

By Frank Kaufmann



The global landscape of international relations is currently witnessing a push towards redefining the established norms and principles of global governance. Two notable frameworks –

China's vision under President Xi Jinping's leadership and the Universal Peace Charter, guided by former Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen – offer contrasting blueprints for achieving peace, stability and development.

This short essay aims to delineate these frameworks, exploring their philosophical underpinnings, operational strategies, and potential impacts on the international order. This essay is descriptive, taking the public, international claims of leaders at face value. It does not delve into the volumes of analysis, much of which suggests the existence of behavior in direct contradiction to expressed ideals, even to the extent of significant violations of rights and norms.

Core Principles

China's approach, articulated by President Xi Jinping, advocates for a new type of international relations characterized by mutual benefit, respect for sovereignty and cultural diversity. The "community with a shared future for humankind" seeks to transition from a unipolar, Western-dominated system to a multipolar order where economic cooperation serves as the cornerstone for global stability and development. Beijing challenges universal Western values, promoting instead a model where each nation can pursue its unique path of development without interference. Through initiatives like the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), Global Development Initiative, and Global Security Initiative, China aims to reshape global economic and political interactions. Critics, however, argue that this vision might prioritize centralized state sovereignty over human

rights, potentially leading to a dilution of international human rights standards.

The Universal Peace Charter is a comprehensive international framework designed to strengthen global solidarity and partnerships for peace, harmony, dignity and human prosperity. It too represents a universal approach to international cooperation, but is grounded fundamentally in principles of unity, mutual respect and peaceful coexistence. The Charter aligns with the United Nations Charter and other internationally recognized treaties, emphasizing core values of human rights, self-determination and collective responsibility.

Comparative Considerations

Both the China vision and the Universal Peace Charter are global and universal in scope. China's vision is global, aiming at a systemic change in international relations. The Charter offers a nuanced approach to global governance that both parallels and diverges from China's vision.

While sharing similar aspirations for international cooperation, the Universal Peace Charter provides a more multilateral and inclusive framework. It advocates for comprehensive partnerships involving not just governments, but also civil society, academic institutions, parliaments and diverse stakeholders. The document explicitly promotes principles of mutual understanding, tolerance and peaceful dispute resolution, positioning itself as a collaborative platform for global peace rather than a state-centric model of international relations.

Philosophically, China promotes a state-dominant view of governance and development, contrasting with the Peace Charter's more intense focus and stance on human rights and democratic values.

“Both frameworks reflect a desire to move beyond the current Western-dominated international system, but they differ in their approaches.”

The implementation strategies further illustrate these contrasts. China utilizes economic, diplomatic and military influence through initiatives like the BRI and other geopolitical stands to build a network of partner countries (or beholden countries) aligned with or conscripted to its worldview. This vision represents a bold attempt to redefine the rules of international engagement, promoting a system that China believes better serves the interests of developing nations. On the other hand, the Peace Charter's implementation depends on Cambodia's own efforts and cooperation with regional and international partners, focusing on securing its position within the existing global order.

These visions also differ in their approach to development and economic cooperation. China's vision, exemplified by the BRI, emphasizes large-scale infrastructure projects and economic integration as means to promote development and stability. The Peace Charter, while not ignoring economic development, places more emphasis on political stability, human rights and democratic processes within states. Moreover, China's vision includes a strong cultural component through the Global Civilization Initiative, advocating that each country has its own distinct civilization, and diversity in governance systems should be protected. This contrasts with the Peace Charter's traditional focus on universal human rights and democratic values.

– Dr. Frank Kaufmann is founder and president of The Settlement Project, which promotes peace, freedom, and God-given rights. He is also founder of the International Peace Organization, Twelve Gates Foundation, and editor-in chief of the Wikipedia alternative New World Encyclopedia. He lives in New York, USA.



Shaping the Global Order

Critically, China's vision has faced skepticism from some quarters, with arguments that it could undercut efforts to protect human rights and settle international disputes due to its emphasis on state sovereignty. The Peace Charter, with its explicit commitment to human rights and international law, may offer more safeguards in this regard. Both frameworks reflect a desire to move beyond the current Western-dominated international system, but they differ in their approaches.

In conclusion, while China's vision for an ideal future world and the Universal Peace Charter share some common goals of peace, stability and development, they diverge significantly in their scope, approach and underlying philosophies. China's vision is an ambitious blueprint to reshape the global order according to its principles and interests, challenging Western hegemony. Meanwhile, the Peace Charter focuses on securing the position of Cambodia and member states within the existing international system, emphasizing traditional principles of international law and regional stability.

As the international community grapples with these contrasting visions, they highlight the ongoing debate about the future of global governance and the balance between national interests and international cooperation.

IAPP Joins Global Parliamentarians at Pakistan Conference on Rule of Law

By Santosh Paudel

From October 26 to 30, 2024, a distinguished delegation from UPF International and the International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace (IAPP), led by UPF International Chair Dr. Charles S. Yang, IAPP Asia Pacific Chair Hon. Ek Nath Dhakal, and UPF South Asia Director Mr. Santosh Kumar Paudel attended the 45th Annual Forum of Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA) and the 13th Consultative Assembly of Parliamentarians on the International Criminal Court and the Rule of Law (CAP-ICC) in Islamabad, Pakistan. Hosted by Pakistan's National Assembly, this significant gathering brought together over 100 parliamentarians from 24 countries to address urgent global issues, including climate change, peacebuilding, human rights, and international justice.

Pakistan Senate Chairman and former Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani hosted a lunch meeting for UPF leaders at his official residence. They discussed global peacebuilding initiatives and the upcoming UPF World Summit 2025. During the meeting Chairman Gilani received a gift, a traditional work of art from Multan city in Pakistan, symbolizing friendship and peace, to honor his efforts toward global harmony, inspired by the vision of UPF Co-Founder Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon.



Dr. Charles S. Yang and Hon. Ek Nath Dhakal at a luncheon (left) with Pakistani Senate Chairman Yusuf Raza Gilani, and a meeting (right) with Governor Faisal Karim Kundi in Islamabad, Pakistan.

UPF leaders also met with Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed, chair of the Defense Committee, who invited them for a coffee meeting. Their discussions focused on peacebuilding, regional stability, and UPF's longstanding commitment to the peaceful reunification of the Korean Peninsula.

The joint PGA Forum and CAP-ICC assembly, held on October 28 at the Pakistan Institute for Parliamentary Services, gathered over 250 delegates, including Pakistani National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, who opened the forum by underscoring the parliamentarians' roles as advocates for peace, justice and human rights, while voicing support for resolving the ongoing humanitarian crisis in Palestine.

The assembly featured discussions led by ICC officials, who elaborated on their work under the Rome Statute. Dr. Yang joined a panel on "Safeguarding Global Justice," where he highlighted the importance of upholding the rule of law and ensuring judicial independence as key elements of international justice. Hon. Dhakal, speaking on a related panel, emphasized the crucial role of parliamentarians in promoting the Rome Statute and ICC initiatives for a peaceful global society.



A special moment occurred when Dr. Yang interacted with Hon. Valentina Matviyenko, speaker of the Russian Federation Council. During the cultural evening and dinner hosted by Senate Chairman Gilani, he introduced Dr. Yang to Speaker Matviyenko, where they exchanged greetings and shared a brief conversation.

The delegation also attended the "China at 75" conference organized by the Pakistan-China Institute, celebrating the 75th anniversary of the People's Republic of China. This event brought together leaders from Pakistan and China to discuss global leadership, with keynotes from prominent figures including Pakistan's Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar, Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed, China's ambassador to Pakistan Hon. Jiang Zaidong, and economist Dr. Ishrat Hussain.



Dr. Yang and Hon. Dhakal meet with the international president of Parliamentarians for Global Action, Hon. Syed Naveed Qamar (center).

In addition, the UPF delegation connected with local leaders such as Hon. Faisal Karim Kundi, governor of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Cultural visits included the historic Faisal Mosque and Heritage Museum, arranged with support from the Senate office.

On October 29, Senate Chairman Gilani hosted an official dinner in honor of the PGA delegates. During the event, he highlighted the global role of parliamentarians in promoting peace and security and commended UPF's initiatives for interfaith harmony and conflict resolution.

The 45th PGA Forum and CAP-ICC assembly offered a valuable platform to advance UPF's vision of a peaceful world through collaboration with global leaders dedicated to justice and interfaith harmony. UPF remains steadfast in its mission to foster peace and understanding across borders, celebrating and supporting parliamentarians as advocates for a harmonious global society.

— Santosh Paudel is secretary general of UPF - South Asia.

Romanian-Bulgarian Peace Road Anticipates Schengen Accession

By Edina Zsolcsak-Dimitrova and Miki Predescu

Several Bulgarian families were joined by a group of mostly young people from Romania to participate in a UPF Peace Road event in Russe, on the Bulgarian side of the Romanian-Bulgarian border, on November 2, 2024. The event started with lunch in a restaurant in Russe, where the opening ceremony and special sisterhood ceremony were held.

Participants were divided into small groups to make it easier to bond and develop relationships. The group members exchanged presents and walked together during the event and several made commitments to stay in contact, with a view to future cooperation.

The groups explored Russe on foot and visited the most important sights of the city, distributing flyers in Bulgarian and Romanian to passers-by and explaining the meaning of the Peace Road. A small booklet was distributed among the participants with UPF founder Rev. Sun Myung Moon's explanation of the International Peace Highway.

The peace walk concluded on the banks of the Danube River, which marks the border between the two countries. Because of time limits and the early autumn darkness, it was not possible to cross the bridge of friendship connecting the two countries, but a plan was made to continue the project next spring on the other side of the river in Giurgiu.

The event was greatly enjoyed by all, as reflected in the overwhelmingly positive feedback praising the food, hospitality and overall organization.

Many expressed gratitude for the opportunity to meet and become better acquainted with those from a different country and to experience hope for peace and unity.

On January 1, 2025, Bulgaria and Romania became part of the Schengen Area, making it possible to cross the bridge without passport control and opening the way to many similar activities in the future.



UPF-Portugal Participates in Prestigious Estoril Conferences

By Dr. Sergio Vieira

For the third consecutive year, UPF-Portugal was invited to be a partner in the 2024 edition of the Estoril Conferences, which took place on October 24 and 25, 2024 at the Nova School of Business and Economics on the Carcavelos Campus in Cascais, Portugal.

The theme of this year's conference was "Time to ReThink," as it aimed to address significant global changes and challenges, reevaluating thinking and actions related to major world problems. The two-day event mobilized students, teachers, civil society, world leaders and business institutions to turn knowledge into action. The focus was on five pillars: Planet, Peace, Policies, Artificial Intelligence and Technology, and Health and Longevity.

This year, UPF participated in and contributed to this important conference with a delegation of 15 people, including key ambassadors for peace and partners and, for the first time, a speaker on the main stage in the person of Hon. Senida Mesi, a development economist and former deputy prime minister of Albania.

After several welcoming addresses, the conference was opened by Mr. Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa, president of Portugal, and Mr. José Ramos-Horta, president of Timor-Leste and 1996 Nobel Peace Prize laureate, who kicked off the first day of this two-day event by sharing his insights on effective peacebuilding strategies gained from his decades-long fight for Timor-Leste's independence. On this 25th anniversary of his country's independence, he discussed the critical lessons learned and the relentless pursuit of justice that shaped his journey.

Following presentations from Mrs. Olena Zelenska, first lady of Ukraine, and Mrs. Oleksandra Matviichuk, chairwoman of the Center for Civil Liberties and Nobel Peace Prize laureate 2022, on how to keep the spirit of a nation alive and uphold human rights in a time of war, Mrs. Senida Mesi, spoke in the session entitled "Why There Is No Peace Without Women," together with Mrs. Yulia Svyrydenko, first deputy prime minister of Ukraine, in which they were interviewed by Mrs. Rita Rodrigues, news anchor for CNN Portugal.



Mrs. Senida Mesi, former deputy prime minister of Albania, and Mrs. Yulia Svyrydenko, first deputy prime minister of Ukraine.

During this session, Mrs. Mesi spoke about the importance of the activities of UPF and Women's Federation for World Peace (WFWP), an organization affiliated with UPF, and the experience of their co-founder, Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, as a refugee, overcoming many difficult challenges to build, together with her husband, a global peace movement. It should be noted that Mrs. Mesi had herself initiated the concept of "No Peace Without Women" in a webinar held on September 15, 2022, organized by the International Association of First Ladies for Peace (IAFLP), one of UPF's associations, together with the EUME branch of WFWP and other organizations.

Montevideo Peace Road Features Joyful Celebration

By Raul Rey

On the theme "Peace Begins with Me," UPF-Uruguay and partner organizations conducted a Peace Road event on November 16, 2024, at the Uruguay National Garden in Montevideo. It was a great celebration, featuring food stalls, a craft exhibition, talks on health and well-being, traditional gaucho dances, and a performance by the Youth and Students for Peace music group. More than 500 people attended this event, which began at 2:00 pm and continued till 7:30 pm.



Opening remarks were given by Rev. Seo Sung Jong, UPF sub-regional president; Dr. Carlos Flores Santos, ambassador for peace; Imam Yousaf Khan, president of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community; and Prof. Raúl Rey, president of UPF-Uruguay. An opening prayer was led by Rev. Kazuhiro Tsusaka, president of FFWPU Uruguay.

Imam Yousaf Khan shared his reflections on the importance of building bridges of peace through interreligious dialogue. Rev. Tsusaka warmly greeted all the participants of the Peace Road and highlighted the value of actively participating in dialogue and the search for peace.

More than 40 participants, including adults, youth and children, walked or cycled from the National Garden to the Legislative Palace and back. Overcoming the heat and city traffic, they covered approximately 10 kilometers round trip.



Uruguay joined this global campaign in 2015, participating in annual walks and bike rides in various forms since then. This year's theme stressed that the best way to promote a culture of peace and cooperation is by taking responsibility through one's own example in relating to other people and the environment.

Christian Leaders Unite to Advance Social Cohesion in Zambia

By Fabrice Djimadoum

Christian leaders from various denominations took part in a seminar organized by UPF-Zambia and the World Clergy Leadership Conference Zambia (WCLC) on November 16, 2024, at Ndozo Lodge in Lusaka. The objective was to equip WCLC leadership and core members with knowledge, skills and attitudes for effective leadership in their respective churches and communities.

The secretary general of WCLC Zambia, Bishop Duncan Mboma, gave the opening remarks, followed by words of inspiration from the vice president, Pastor Eudora Chisamba. Bishop John Hardy Mambo, WCLC Zambia president, welcomed participants and led them in a moment of silence in honor of the late Archbishop Peter Ndhlovu, the group's first president.

Next, the head of the Interreligious Association for Peace and Development Africa, (IAPD) Rev. Bakary Camara, explained the genesis of WCLC and its relationship with UPF. He described the many social ills encountered in society and the responsibility of Christian leaders in tackling these problems and spearheading a stable, peaceful society. He encouraged all participants to spread the message of peace, unity and reconciliation to every corner of Zambia.

Rev. David Isaac Phiri of FFWPU Zambia

shared a lecture on true family values, and urged the Christian leaders to uphold a high standard of morality as an example to their families and congregations. The president of the International Association of Youth and Students for Peace (IAYSP) Africa, Rev. Mica Camara, shared her organization's objectives, mission and activities, including character education, to guide youths to play a constructive role in society.

A short video was shown on the Peace Blessing held at the FNB Stadium in Johannesburg, South Africa, in 2018, officiated by Mother Moon and organized by Bishop Mambo. Mrs. Judith Mwila, vice secretary general of IAPD Zambia and an executive member of ACLC, pointed out that good collaboration between IAPD and WCLC will foster peace in Zambia.

The secretary general of UPF-Zambia, Rev. Rudolf Faerber, shared the aims and objectives of UPF and its associations and the five guiding principles of ambassadors for peace. Six WCLC Zambia executive members were then appointed as ambassadors for peace.

In conclusion, Bishop Mambo announced that he was donating land to WCLC to implement its programs. The seminar ended with a closing prayer by Rev. Dr. Atlas Sakumuma, WCLC Zambia vice secretary general, and a group photo to commemorate the event.





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