

The legacy of Reverend Moon and Madame Moon elicited praise and support

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Jose de Venecia Jr. at the Asia Pacific Summit 2019 on November 19, 2019

Let me express greetings to Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, co-founder of Universal Peace Federation and founder of the celebrated Sunhak Peace Prize; and the outstanding UPF President Dr. Thomas Walsh. Let us congratulate Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon for deepening and enlarging the late Reverend Sun Myung Moon's sustained commitment and tireless efforts in promoting peace, reconciliation and unity, interfaith dialogue, the strengthening of marriage and family, and many other heartwarming initiatives in Asia and in the global community.

The lives and legacy of Reverend Moon and Madame Moon, especially in advancing the cause of peace in our troubled world, have continuously elicited praise and support in the United Nations family, in the continents, with admirers and dedicated UPF and International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace (IAPP) members in Asia, Europe, North America, South America, Africa and Australia.

Mother Moon's leadership and UPF's initiative in establishing IAPP -- earlier launched and inaugurated in more than eighty countries, attended by more than three thousand parliamentarians -- today mobilizes legislators not only in Asia but throughout the world to adopt a single-minded agenda and purpose: the achievement of peace -- peace among nations, peace among peoples and peace in the hearts of humankind. For we must focus today on the need for peace in Northeast Asia, most specifically in our immediate environs on the Korean Peninsula, in the South and East China Seas, and onward to South Asia and in the Middle East areas and the danger zones of the Persian (Arabian) Gulf.

A crucial juncture in history

We meet at a critical time. Two contrary impulses pull at every new state in the developing world. The first is the elite impulse to centralize political power, the better to achieve economic development and social modernization. The other impulse stems from ethnic nationalism -- as people forcibly put together by colonialist powers seek to rally round some icon of unique group identity.

Democracy's rise and fall

The postwar wave of emancipation produced a generation of fledgling liberal democracies in the new countries of Africa and Asia. But legislative institutions have not always worked as advertised. Political democracy at times has proved unequal to the complex problems of societies, characterized by great inequality, hierarchical traditions and capitalism.

Less than a century after independence, most of these fledgling democratic societies set up so grandiosely have reverted to authoritarian regimes of various intensities. Indeed, instances of the transition from democracy to authoritarianism have become so common that Harvard Professor Samuel Huntington seemed to justify an "authoritarian transition" for Meiji Japan, Ataturk's Turkey, Lee Kuan Yew's Singapore, Park Chung-hee's South Korea and Chiang Ching-kuo's Taiwan, all of which were forced to march to modernization, wealth and power. None of the successor states has escaped this authoritarian transition. Only some regions have been relatively lucky. But they, too, are feeling the tensions of

separatist extremism and religious terrorism.

The China challenge

Meanwhile, China offers itself as a model of the new "mixed economy" under state direction and control. And the Chinese model has strong credentials. In the late 1970s, China's economy was smaller than Italy's and just about the same size as Canada's. It surpassed Germany as the largest exporter in 2009 and overtook Japan as the second-largest economy in 2010. Now only the United States is ahead in GNP terms -- and even that may change by 2025.

During the cold war, the communist bloc, led by the Soviet Union, presented a military threat, but now China on its own is challenging the West in its own field, the economy. The Beijing model -- a free market guided by state control -- has resulted in unprecedented growth for China and in some respects appears to be superior to the Western model.

Consequently, China sees itself as rising in economic, military and diplomatic power. This phenomenon is transforming the world order, with the center of global gravity shifting from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

Promoting peace and reconciliation

In light of the many difficult, intractable political, territorial, religious, separatist, ideological, and ethnic conflicts in Asia and in various parts of the world, we, in UPF, IAPP, and the International Conference of Asian Political Parties (ICAPP), the members of parliament, political leaders, civil society, and religious leaders must contribute our share in promoting peace and reconciliation, peaceful settlement of disputes, sustainable human development; and in fighting poverty, disease, and climate change and environmental degradation.

While we are deeply aware of the historical and cultural roots of many of those conflicts -- and the enmity and bitter divisions that have grown between rivals -- we cannot turn away from the pursuit of peace, because the alternative, which is conflict and war, would be immeasurably costly and make all of us losers.

Ideological differences shouldn't get in the way

In Northeast Asia today we need to develop pragmatic and creative methods with which to rebuild North-South (relations on the Korean Peninsula -- hopefully without allowing too many ideological differences to get in the way. It is our hope to contribute even small efforts to peace and unification on the Korean Peninsula, which now have the beginnings and potential to lead to a breakthrough that has been long awaited by Asia and the global community.

Proposals for peace on the Korean Peninsula

Over and above North Korea giving up its nuclear weapons, we hope that an agreement with South Korea and the United States will include the following:

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea, (DPRK) and the Republic of Korea, (ROK) remain separate, independent republics but perhaps connect through a loose confederation until at some point in the near or distant future. They can consider uniting like the two Vietnams or the two Germanys. US troops withdraw from South Korea. Large numbers of North Korean and South Korean troops withdraw from the areas of the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) to truly demilitarize the DMZ. Develop a concrete formula for a South-North confederation in which the two Koreas will be separate and independent but develop common, interdependent synergies until they can set up a union or what the Greeks call *enosis* in twenty- five years or less. Develop inter-Korea commercial flights, highways, and a common railway system -- from Busan, at the bottom of South Korea facing Japan, to North Korea's Yalu River border with China, with hope that China interlinks with the Trans-Siberian Railway to Russia and to Europe.

Develop close political and economic relations between North Korea and South Korea and with China, Japan, the US, Russia and ASEAN. Work with the UN system and the global community. Develop and industrialize the North Korean economy and agriculture, putting an end to the recurring causes of famine. Expand the educational system, and immediately open the region to active tourism. North Korea should immediately join ASEAN Plus 3 (Japan, China, South Korea) to become ASEAN Plus 4. Immediately organize an adequate development fund for compensating North Korea for terminating its nuclear weapons and delivery system. This fund should be used for the North's economic and social development and augmentation of its national budget. Consider a state of neutrality for the two independent Koreas which shall interact actively with the regional and global economy so that the North, with its hydrocarbons potential, mining, and hydro-electric resources, etc., can join the South, which already developed much earlier into a credible major economic power.

Transfer of ICAPP Secretariat from Manila to Seoul

May I mention that in 2006, as my small, humble contribution in helping encourage direct talks between Seoul and Pyongyang, I transferred from Manila to Seoul the Secretariat of ICAPP, which I founded and established in Manila in September 2000 and of which I remain chairman of its Standing Committee. The ICAPP Secretariat is now most active in Seoul and headed by Secretary General Park Rob-yug, an experienced South Korean diplomat, and by my co-chairman, South Korean National Security Adviser Chung Eui-yong. I am proud to inform you that ICAPP now includes some three hundred and fifty governing, opposition, and independent parties from fifty-two countries in Asia, and that the Korean Workers Party of North Korea is a respected member of ICAPP.

May I also point out that the late Reverend Moon and Madame Moon over the years have built genuine goodwill in Pyongyang and among the Koreans in the North and donated their much-appreciated hotel and erstwhile automobile factory that they established there to the North Korean government and people, among many other philanthropies in various parts of the world.

The two Koreas should adapt to global changes

We must point out that, despite the occasional harsh rhetoric on both sides of the 38th Parallel, we believe governments, parliaments, political parties, civil society organizations, and religious groups must encourage and support direct talks between Seoul and Pyongyang. Indeed, direct talks between North and South will complement these high-level explorations. Perhaps they could even catalyze the long-suspended Six-Party Talks to prevent nuclear proliferation on the Korean Peninsula. Perhaps direct bilateral or multilateral talks could even lead to agreement on a road map for eventual unification. But these talks have not taken place for a long time now. We in Asia and the global community acknowledge and applaud the forthright efforts of US President Donald Trump and North Korean Leader Kim Jong-un, consistently supported by South Korean President Moon Jae-in, which have the potential for a breakthrough, hopefully sooner rather than later, toward a final peace on the Korean Peninsula.

Today the basic fact is that the distribution of power in the world is fast-changing -- particularly in East Asia -- and the Korean Peninsula must adapt to these epochal transformations. Vietnam itself emerged from three difficult successive wars, winning against great powers, and its socialist government, adopted a market economy, lifted its people from poverty to become today a rising peaceful economic power. North Korea could be like Vietnam, which already is emerging as a significant state in Southeast Asia.

The great example, of course, is how the two Germanys finally emerged from cold war confrontation and totally united under then-Chancellor Helmut Kohl to become today the predominant economic power in Europe. Under the unforgettable leader Deng Xiaoping, China opened itself to the world, lifted more than five hundred million people from poverty and introduced appreciable elements of free-enterprise capitalism to China's socialist economy, which has propelled China to the second largest position in the global economy with the potential to become No. 1 within ten to fifteen years.

In my view, the immediate task of the legislatures and mainstream political parties of the Republic of Korea and the Communist Korean Workers' Party (KWP) of the North, aided by the parliaments, political parties, civil society, and business leaders of the global community, is to draw up a clear, distinct and workable road map toward unification.

The challenge to Asian countries

Our task is to ask ourselves why this is happening and how we can keep peace within our region despite the stiff economic competition our countries face. We must be aware of all the pitfalls and failings of democracy and free-market competition. What ethical standards can we bring in so that we can bring all our entrepreneurial skills but operate fairly and with civility? Perhaps the answer is in our distant past, when the maritime highways linked our nations to one another and we participated in a trade in which one country supplied what was needed in another, for which they bartered. My own country, the Philippines, located as it is on the margins of islands in Southeast Asia, developed virtually on its own, though it did take part in a long-distance trading system that encompassed both the Indian Ocean and the China Seas and reached past Madagascar in East Africa to Nagasaki, Japan.

A practical solution in China Seas crises

As I pointed out much earlier, the raging conflict in the South China Sea (West Philippine Sea to the Filipinos, and East Sea to the Vietnamese), with conflicting sovereignty claims, may be settled by temporarily shelving the issue of sovereignty, as earlier proposed by Deng Xiaoping, the paramount leader of China's peaceful rise. Revive the seismic survey agreement signed by China, the Philippines and Vietnam, which we had the privilege to initiate in 2004; undertake joint oil and gas exploration and joint development with an equitable sharing of production and profits; designate "fishing corridors"; demilitarize the disputed islets through the phased withdrawal of armed garrisons; and convert the zone of

conflict into one of peace, friendship, cooperation and development.

This is perhaps the most realistic, most commonsensical solution to the problem of the Spratly Islands and Paracel Islands, which could be joined subsequently by Malaysia, Brunei, and Taiwan, and also could be the solution to the problem between China and Japan in the Senkaku Islands or Diaoyu in the East China Sea.

Easier said than done, but this is now the time to consider the practical, principled, commonsensical win-win compromises necessary for the geopolitical settlements in the China Seas.

Our own road to the future

We must make our own road to the future. Here in our meeting in Seoul, we know the journey will be difficult. The journey will be long. But the rewards at the journey's end will more than justify every tear, every hurt, every fall. In this spirit, we in UPF, IAPP and ICAPP join hands with all of you, distinguished delegates from around the world, all advocates of reconciliation and peace. For we share rebuilding new roads to the future for humankind, for all our peoples.