

## Our Unity Is Essential - Strong Ties Bind Our Nations

Mike Pence

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Distinguished Leaders, Ladies and Gentlemen: I am former vice president Mike Pence, and I am truly honored to address the Think Tank 2022 Forum sponsored by the Universal Peace Federation and endorsed by the Washington Times Foundation.

I want to thank the 1,200 decision makers and experts on Northeast Asia as well who are joining us from the Republic of Korea, Japan and the United States as well as nations around the world to promote the prospects for peace on the Korean Peninsula and to no lesser extent for all mankind. I want to express my appreciation to the Washington Times -- a courageous voice for freedom in America and around the world promoting faith, family and liberty for all. I want to thank Dr. [Hak Ja Han] Moon for hosting this important event, and for faithfully continuing the significant work she began with her late husband. Thank you, Dr. Moon, for promoting the cause of peace, and for living out your life's calling with compassion and grace.

During my four years as vice president, at home and abroad I have seen firsthand that truly great nations embrace the principles of religious liberty, freedom of speech, democracy and free enterprise. We know that strong families, education, equality under the law, and a recognition of the dignity and worth of every human life, born and unborn, is the true foundation of national greatness.

These are the values that have united the people of Korea and the United States for nearly seventy years. They are the same values that my late father, US Army Lieutenant Ed Pence -- and freedom-loving Americans and Koreans just like him--fought to defend in the Korean War.

They are the same values I have had the privilege to defend in my twenty years of public life. America was founded on the principle that we are, all of us, endowed by our Creator with certain unalienable rights: life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

I know I speak on behalf of millions of Americans when I say how proud we are to stand with the people of Japan, the people of the Republic of Korea, and all of you to support these shared values in the cause of freedom and peace in Northeast Asia. I believe, if our commitment to these principles remains true and unshakable, the day will arrive when a great land once divided by war can become one nation, and one people, united in freedom and peace.

While the reunification of their homeland has been a cherished dream of all Koreans, we must understand that the dream of reunification will only be achieved by an unwavering commitment to freedom, security and peace. We gather at a time of both immense challenge and unprecedented opportunity. Renewed threats coming from the North, continued military provocations by China, supply chain disruptions, inflation, are adding to the heartbreak and hardship inflicted on the world by the COVID-19 over these past two years.



### **Strong ties bind our nations**

During my time as vice president of the United States, our nation and the Republic of Korea proved how much could be accomplished by nations that share a common commitment to democracy, basic freedoms, strong family values and equality under the law.

Our commitment to our common defense remained unbreakable. We stood firm against our common adversaries, even as we worked in good faith to turn adversaries into friends.

Together, we strengthened our historic alliance, improved our trading relationship, and during our four years of service in the White House we reaffirmed America's commitment to support the Republic of Korea, Japan and all of our allies in the region.

Peace follows strength. And I believe the unwavering commitment to our common defense and our shared values is the surest pathway to the final and fully verified denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and to bringing about a peaceful unification of Korea within our lifetime.

Reunification on the Korean Peninsula has eluded resolution for decades. When the Trump-Pence administration took office, North Korea had established a formidable nuclear weapons arsenal with ballistic missiles that could reach South Korea, Japan and even threaten the United States.

But as our administration proved with the historic Abraham Accords of just one year ago, which normalized relations between several Arab nations and Israel, much can be accomplished with the combination of strength and engagement.

As vice president I was honored to play a role in sending the unwavering message of our support for the Republic of Korea, first during my visit in 2017, when at President Trump's direction, we made it clear that the era of strategic patience was over. We brought a maximum pressure campaign from the outset of our administration. And we proved that progress towards peace is possible when America is strong. Few people imagined that they would see the leaders of the United States and North Korea sitting down to discuss peace. At the historic summit in Singapore, we showed it was possible. And nuclear testing in North Korea stopped.

The strong stand taken by our administration followed by the historic dialog between President Trump and Chairman Jong-un Kim brought an end to nuclear testing and to missiles that they threatened to actually begin to resume today, creating destabilization on the peninsula, the region and the world. The truth is that weakness arouses evil. With North Korea once again firing missiles and working to expand its nuclear capabilities, I fervently hope the Biden administration displays the same strength as our administration did, the strength the world needs even while continuing to build on the progress we made toward peace.

### **Regarding China**

And let me also assure you, despite the current American administration's disastrous withdrawal from Afghanistan, the American people remain absolutely committed to defending our allies in Asia and around the world. America will always be freedom's greatest champion, liberty's greatest protector, and the military of the United States will remain the greatest force for good the world has ever known. As freedom-loving nations across the Asia-Pacific stand strong and united in our commitment to security

for all the Korean people, sadly, China continues to tie international cooperation to demands that the world look the other way on their record on human rights, trade abuses, Hong Kong, and aggressive military maneuvers in the South China Sea. Now more than ever, the free nations of the world must call upon China to respect human rights, democratic principles, the freedom of navigation, and to do their part to achieve the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.



America and her allies must also continue to stand with the people of Hong Kong. As we gather, voices of freedom like Jimmy Lai are languishing in a Hong Kong prison merely for having advocated democracy for the Chinese people. On this very day, Jimmy Lai was back in court facing the latest charges for participating in protests that commemorated the June 1989 massacre at Tienanmen Square.

Beijing is continuing to seek to bring Hong Kong to heel and make it just like the rest of China. For decades, Beijing promised that Hong Kong would remain a free city under the One Country, Two Systems framework. But the takeover of Hong Kong has given the lie to the promise of "One Country, Two Systems," and today there is one China under the rule of the Communist party.

The Free World must demand justice for Jimmy Lai and all who are suffering for their commitment to democracy in Hong Kong and across China, and we must hold accountable those Chinese officials who failed to honor their historic commitment.

America and our allies in the region must also make it clear that we will stand with the people of Taiwan. China is becoming more aggressive towards Taiwan with each passing day. Even this week, China issued a new warning to foreign forces after twenty-eight Chinese warplanes violated Taiwan's air defense zone.

The United States administration has renewed our commitment to support Taiwan in maintaining sufficient self-defense capabilities under the Taiwan Relations Act. And the rest of the Free World must join us in this commitment. We cannot stand idle in the face of China's aggressive military maneuvers, lest Taiwan soon face the same fate as Hong Kong.

Despite the many challenges we face across Northeast Asia, I remain confident that a brighter future is on the horizon -- for the United States, for the Korean people, for our allies in the region and for all who stand strong for freedom and security.

I leave you with the encouragement of Scripture: "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up." So to everyone participating in the Think Tank 2022 Forum, I look forward to our dialog. But I urge you tonight to keep working, keep striving. Never give up -- the truth is that times of crisis in our world have always been times of the greatest opportunity when we find ways to overcome our differences and cooperate together for a world of freedom, peace and equality for all.

America will always stand for freedom. We will strive for a freer, more prosperous and peaceful world.

So help us God. Thank you for the honor of addressing you today, and may God bless you all.