

## **We need more bold faith leaders like you who are not afraid to let their light shine**

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It is an honor to be with you today. I been told that many high-level leaders are with us today including a few of South Korea's former prime ministers and foreign ministers and many current and former members of the Korean National Assembly and diplomatic corps. Thank you all for attending. I just recently, less than forty-eight hours ago, returned from a trip to South Korea, a nation of friendship. It is always an honor to visit.

I especially want to thank all of the faith leaders that are in attendance today. We need more bold leaders like you who are not afraid to let their light shine in the public square. Of course, too I want to acknowledge Dr. Moon who escaped from North Korea just before the Korean War and is still as dedicated as ever to peaceful reunification on the Korean Peninsula. Her vision of Think Tank 2022, which is assembling global experts -- from Korea, Japan, America and all nations -- is indeed commendable.

It's her lifelong dream to see Korea peacefully unified. I understand that the thirtieth anniversary of her and her late husband's Rev. Moon's visit with Kim Il-sung is coming in November and that the Global Peace Summit on a peaceful reunified Korea will be held with the participation of 150 countries in Seoul early next year. Thank you, Dr. Moon, for such work and for building on peace. We're looking forward to the day, as the Scripture reminds us, that peace-makers are in fact blessed. Bless you, ma'am.

America, too, is a land of peacemakers. The people of South Korea know that so well. The year was 1950, UN Forces, comprised substantially of US soldiers fighting to keep the Korean Peninsula free of communism. One of the units on the frontlines was the Eighth Cavalry Regiment, First Cavalry Division. A chaplain for that unit was Father Emil Kapaun, a Catholic priest from Pilsen, Kansas, my home state. On November 2, his unit came under a vicious Chinese assault. Father Kapaun rescued forty wounded men in the face of massive enemy fire. This was an act for which he received the Medal of Honor in 2013. I was proud to advocate him for that medal. It was so deserved.

Father Kapaun was captured and taken to a Chinese prison camp. For seven agonizing months, Kapaun ministered to his fellow soldiers in that camp, in spite of hunger, disease, lice and frigid cold. He stole food to give to others; he prayed for his men and for his enemies. Although Father Kapaun was dying of dysentery and pneumonia, he still mustered the courage to lead an Easter service in March. He sadly died two months later, his body thrown into a mass grave. This past spring scientific analysis done on a once unidentified set of remains proved they were Father Kapaun's....

I am so grateful that in July, President Moon awarded Father Kapaun South Korea's highest commendation for outstanding military service. America is grateful to have allies that recognize our sacrifices for peace.... Father Kapaun never made it out of his camp, but thanks to American liberators, Prisoner 596, held in the Hungnam Labor Camp during the war, did make it out. You may know him better as the Rev. Sun Myung Moon. Indeed, after being freed, the late Rev. Moon spent his life for a laudable goal -- one family under God. His wife Dr. Moon still holds that same hope for that future today, and it's a big dream. It's going to take a lot of work and prayers to get there. Even if that goal sounds too ambitious for you, we can all agree that we want mankind to live in peace and harmony.

Citizens in democratic countries like the United States and South Korea are blessed. We get to exercise

our constitutional right to pray toward that end and work for the good of our fellow man. Sadly, not all of our brothers and sisters in the rest of the world share those liberties. My key message today is this: One of the most important ways to create one family under God is to make sure that people are free to actually worship God.

### **Man of faith return home**

Religious freedom is crucial to peace in Northeast Asia and indeed the world. We worked on it hard for four years. Many of you know that we spent a lot of time on this. I met religious leaders all around the world to drive home the importance of standing up for religious freedom -- from the Chief Rabbi of the United Kingdom to Pope Francis at the Vatican, to leaders of the largest Muslim organization in the world in Indonesia, and I was proud to convene the largest human rights event in the history of the US Department of State. Leaders, religious leaders from all over the world, came together at the Ministerial to Advance Religious Freedom. It was a glorious event.

But it was an episode related to our diplomacy with North Korea that was absolutely the most memorable time during my four years. I, myself, know something about liberating those in prison for their faith. Let's go back to May of 2018. I had been the secretary of state for just a couple of weeks. President Trump asked me to go to North Korea to meet with Chairman Kim to work on arrangements for the summit in Singapore in June of that year. I certainly hit the ground running in that job.

During the course of my meeting with Chairman Kim, I repeated the president's request, indeed his expectation, that Chairman Kim release three American men who had been detained inside North Korea. Dong Chul Kim, Hak-song Kim and Tony Kim, who were held in part for being men of faith. Thank God I was able to return home with those men. It was a joyful scene on the tarmac as they were reunited with their families and their friends here in America.

### **Religious persecution in the DPRK**

But other Christians inside North Korea are far from tasting that same joy of freedom. As those persecuted for their faith, they have a certain kinship with Rev. and Mrs. Moon. We know the atrocities that take place inside of that country. An estimated fifty to seventy thousand people are in prison just for being Christians. One defector reported that a Christian woman became so ill in detention that she could not feed herself and when she asked a guard a question, he beat her to death with a ladle. In another instance a Korean People's Party worker was reportedly arrested and executed in front of three thousand people for simply possessing a Bible.

What makes these abuses especially terrible is not just the unjust crushing of human life, it's also the jackboot suppression of religious freedom, the most fundamental of all human rights. America's founders knew. They knew how important freedom of religion and freedom of conscience is to a stable, prosperous society. The State Department's Commission on Unalienable Rights said it is a seedbed of civic virtue. I couldn't agree more. I was America's seventieth secretary of state, but it was our first secretary of state, Thomas Jefferson, who once wrote, "Almighty God has created the mind free; no man shall be compelled to frequent or support any religious worship or ministry or shall otherwise suffer no account of his religious opinions or belief."

Indeed, Almighty God has created the mind free and when societies respect that freedom, peace and harmony grows. It is inevitable. When people are free to talk about the most consequential ideas, societies can find the way forward. When people see their neighbors worshipping peacefully, they gain tolerance for different viewpoints. When churches, mosques and synagogues are free to engage in their neighborhoods, bonds of community are made stronger. People of faith are quick to demonstrate it in their charity toward their fellow man.

I think of the Christian organization, International Justice Mission, devoted to rescuing millions from human trafficking. Religious freedom creates blessings for the world. America must always stand for it at home and abroad. I urge each of you, all, to make the same stand in your country.

### **The Chinese Communist Party**

I also ask you today to contrast American respect for religious freedom what that of the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP's) soul-crushing deprivations. You know what I mean. We see brutal treatment of Falun Gong practitioners and Tibetan Buddhists. We read of churches forced to replace displays of the Ten Commandments with quotations from General Secretary Xi. We read reports of party officials recruiting children to become informants against their church-going parents. And of course we all know the truth about the sickening genocide against the Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang.

Back in 2017, China began forcibly extraditing Uyghurs living in foreign countries. One of them was a man named Yusuf Ablikim. He was living in Pakistan. One day he found himself being forced onto a

one-way flight to Beijing, but by God's grace, the flight had a layover in Qatar. In what was likely to be his final hours of freedom, Yusuf posted a cry for help on social media.

Amazingly, the US State Department saw it. Our team there in Doha did excellent work with the Qatari government to keep Yusuf off his next flight to Beijing. We looked for partner countries where Yusuf could stay if only temporarily. But sadly, no country was willing to cross China. They declined to take Yusuf.

Time was running out before he would be on the next plane to Beijing. So our diplomatic team sprang into action. We crammed what would have normally been a long vetting process for entry into the United States in just a handful of minutes. As soon as we received permission from Customs and Border Control, a young, skilled American diplomat who worked at the Office of International Religious Freedom used her own credit card to book him a seat on the very next flight to the United States.



### **China's strategy**

Why is China so desperate to extend its long arm of tyranny abroad? As with all Communist regimes, there is a strategy behind these evils. It doesn't want the truth of its brutality getting out. The CCP cannot abide the idea that the Chinese people would find their identity or their meaning in life and in God.

Party believers believe the party alone should command the loyalties of the human heart. But little do they know that their suppression of faith is bound to backfire. Crippling religious freedom only creates more curiosity about faith and distrust of the regime. When China throws pastors in jail, prisons become seminaries. More suffering souls seek salvation from the CCP's repression. Try as they might to crush religious freedom, the communist overlords in Beijing forget that no scheme of man can hinder the Lord's work.

Let's also consider the CCP's aggression outside of its borders, so much of which happens right here in Northeast Asia. Make no mistake about it, China is a destabilizing force for the region -- the list is head spinning! China continues to turn a blind eye to North Korea's sanction evasions. That behavior undermines the maximum pressure campaign that was successful in helping Chairman Kim come to the negotiating table with President Trump.

Indeed, China has become more aggressive with Taiwan. In March the head of the US Indo-Pacific Command, Admiral Philip Davis, testified to Congress that China could invade Taiwan by 2027. I think that timeline is scary and accurate. It could in fact be sooner. This summer the world discovered that China appears to be constructing approximately two hundred and fifty new nuclear missile silos. What sort of message does that send to the region? When a Japanese official recently suggested that Japan would come to Taiwan's aid in conflict with China, a Chinese official threatened a nuclear attack on Japan in just that scenario....

### **Communication is the key**

Now, as great as these challenges are, diplomacy and dialog must always be the option of first resort to resolve them. I am encouraged that UPF tries to urge personal connections to try to make progress toward peace and reunification between North and South Korea. I am encouraged that those two nations recently agreed to restore their hotline for regular phone calls. That's a good thing.

I know first-hand from my time as secretary of state that a personal approach is an outstanding asset for diplomacy. If I didn't personally ask Chairman Kim to free those three men I spoke of earlier, I am not sure it would have happened. And the historic meetings between Chairman Kim and President Trump showed the power of a personal connection as well.

In the end we didn't get everything we prayed for and that we wanted but the first-ever leader-level meetings between an American president and a North Korean leader ultimately produced an agreement from North Korea to denuclearize. This was the first-ever leader-level commitment to do so. Those negotiations also resulted in a long moratorium on nuclear testing and the testing of their long-range, intercontinental missiles.

When they can't conduct those high-end tests, their ability to gather data on what they have and how to improve it is reduced. The risk of accident from those and the collateral damage to the peninsula is also reduced. And as a matter of human nature it is probably much harder to fire a weapon of mass destruction at someone you've shaken hands with. So we should always be willing to talk. As much as dialog and personal connections are helpful for diplomacy and peace, they are not always sufficient tools to obtain the outcomes that the world must seek. China sustained dialog with America for years, while taking advantage of the United States and ignoring our legitimate grievances.

Last year, I met with China's top diplomat, Jiechi Yang, in Hawaii at his request. That meeting happened at a time when friction was rising between our two countries.... Instead of China's offer to mend fences, I heard the same tired calls to return to more dialog. For the Chinese Communist Party "dialog" is just a buzz word. It's their strategy to get the other side to get bogged down in fruitless discussions and delay action. So the CCP can continue its lawless power grabs without consequence.

Meanwhile, in the year since that meeting we still have not had proper transparency from the CCP.... The party continues to fail to fully honor its commitment to the Phase One Trade Deal as Yang said in China he would do when I met with him. My experience as secretary of state confirms that peace also comes from strength. That's why the Trump Administration also imposed a maximum pressure campaign on North Korea. We restored pressure and military deterrence on Iran for the very same reason. It's the only way from stopping the regime in Iran from executing its violent revolutionary agenda against America, Israel and the people of the Middle East.

On China we put in place a new tough policy for the first time in history. America's Department of Defense strengthened our military presence in the Indo-Pacific. The Justice Department cracked down harder than ever on Chinese intellectual property theft and espionage.

The State Department threw out Chinese spies from Houston [Texas] and rallied more than sixty democracies to ban Huawei from Five-G networks across the world, and for the first time since 1949, a US presidential administration said the last thing that the CCP wants people in the world to hear: The Chinese Communist Party does not represent the people. These were the first turns of the wheel to turn around a big ship. There is some much more to do....

### **Support for allies**

Today across the world and specifically in Northeast Asia, democracies must continue with clear strategies, strong deterrence and powerful alliances. Under President Trump Australia India, Japan and the United States got together in the quad format for the first time in a long time and we did it at the level of foreign ministers for the first time ever. Our countries had differences to overcome in many places, but we got it done. It is my great hope that South Korea and Japan can work through their difference and figure out how best to cooperate together.

For my time serving as a foreign minister, I know both nations share the same goal of a stable and prosperous Indo-Pacific Region. Regional stability is not served well by frosty relations between two of America's most important allies. This is one area where I feel that dialog can and will make a difference.

My country has a lot of work to do, too. The Biden administration has continued the Trump administration good work in the Indo-Pacific. I congratulate them on that. The president's team is making a few dangerous moves that don't reinforce strength....

The DPRK regime seems to have restarted activities at their Yongbyon facilities and just a few days ago North Korea claimed to have successfully tested long-range cruise missiles. They are testing the world; they are testing the Biden Administration to see how it will respond, and a strategy of strategic patience 2.0 will weaken our credibility with allies and partners throughout the entire world who want to see leadership from the United States. It says North Korea is not a priority for us as well.... We most especially need to strengthen our naval resources which are critical to countering China in the Indo-Pacific and supporting our allies, like the Republic of Korea.... No matter what happens the alliance must be prepared to defend the Korean Peninsula.