

UPF USA: Change in North Korea - What Has to Happen and When Might it Be?

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North America - Organized by the International Media Association for Peace (IMAP) of UPF-USA, an interesting and informative webinar was held on the topic, "Change in North Korea - What Has to Happen and When Might it Be?" The challenges and opportunities for the peaceful unification of the Korean peninsula were examined by three scholars in the August 31, 2021 virtual program. Approximately 125 attended the 90-minute session.

Dr. Michael Jenkins, President of UPF International, served as moderator. The first speaker to address the topic was Dr. Joseph Chung, Professor of Economics at Quebec University in Montreal and former president of the Montreal Korean Association, Canada. Dr. Chung said that many changes must occur for Korean reunification to take place, particularly in the area of mutual trust.

Dr. Chung outlined North Korea's perspective and why they distrust the alliance of the United States, Japan and Korea. The reasons include:

The American military government (1945-1948) ruled Korea with the help of Koreans who collaborated with the Japanese colonial government.

The United States collaborated with Syngman Rhee for the prevention of a pan-Korea general election in 1948 under UN supervision, thus preventing the creation a unified government.

During the Korean war, the United States Air Force dropped 635,000 tons of bombs on North Korea, killing 20% of North Korea's civilian population.

The United States has threatened North Korea with nuclear weapons ever since the 1953 Armistice. The United States deployed 115 nuclear weapons in South Korea until 1990.

Dr. Chung then gave the United States perspective on why to distrust North Korea, including:

During the Korean war, 33,652 American soldiers were killed in action.

North Korea is a communist country.

North Korea does not respect the world order managed by Washington.

North Korea is a threat to the member countries of United States alliances.

Dr. Chung believes there is a demonization campaign against North Korea and that it is a product of South Korea's pro-Japanese conservatives who hate North Korea for historical reasons. To conclude, he

addressed the question: Is North Korea a threat? Comparing the GDP of the United States, Japan and South Korea to that of North Korea clearly demonstrates the implausibility of North Korea being a credible threat, he said. The combined defense budget of the alliance is USD 790 billion compared to North Korea's USD 4.0 billion budget.



"Can one imagine a tiny country like North Korea to be a real physical threat to the three powerful military powers?" Dr. Chung acknowledged North Korea has nuclear weapons and destructive weapons, "but these weapons are for deterrence purposes."

Before any hope of reunification, "there must be more trust between North Korea and those countries and entities which are involved in the peace process." This is where the work of the Universal Peace Federation comes in, he said. It can't come from South Korea or the United States. "It has to come from UPF, which can be an objective peacemaker based on the principles of interdependence, mutual prosperity and universal values."

The second speaker was Dr. Andrew Wilson, Professor of Scriptural Studies at the Unification Theological Seminary, who elaborated on UPF's core principles. Distrust between the nations can be overcome, he said. South Korea should help North Korea through joint ventures, with profits used for improvement of the situation in the North. North Korea should overcome dependence on China. This will make North Korea secure from not becoming a vassal state of China as in the past. Both North and South should support each other's welfare. Then North Korea could halt its nuclear weapons program and work towards a unified government for the peninsula. Dr. Wilson explained that the Koreans are one blood and share a 4300-year history. As long as families are divided because of hostilities, then Korean reunification will be difficult, he emphasized. Also, he pointed out that the role of women in building peace is essential. He concluded by referring to Mother Moon and her lifelong dream for unification to become a reality.

The final speaker was Dr. Thomas Ward, President of the Unification Theological Seminary, who made a comparison of the situation on the Korean peninsula to the relationship between France and Germany in post-World War II Europe. Dr. Ward outlined a "curve of conflict" which runs from "war, crisis, unstable peace, stable peace to durable peace." The post-war governments worked together through diplomacy and peacebuilding towards healing and reconciliation. With time and effort, the people started to see each other as human beings and looked beyond the atrocities of war. It took time to attain a durable peace, but today, France and Germany are close allies.

Dr. Ward highlighted the work of UPF's founders, Rev. Sun Myung Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, who have placed a great deal of emphasis on improving Japan-Korea relations. He referenced the Japan-Korea Undersea Tunnel project and the thousands of Japanese-Korean couples who have participated in the Blessing Movement to build godly families. "The UPF is an essential tool for the reunification of the Korean peninsula," Dr. Ward said.

The Q and A session dealt with questions concerning the role of China and Afghanistan, and the role of faith. Dr. Wilson noted that North Korea "was a hotbed of faith before it became communist. I believe there is real hope for religious revival."