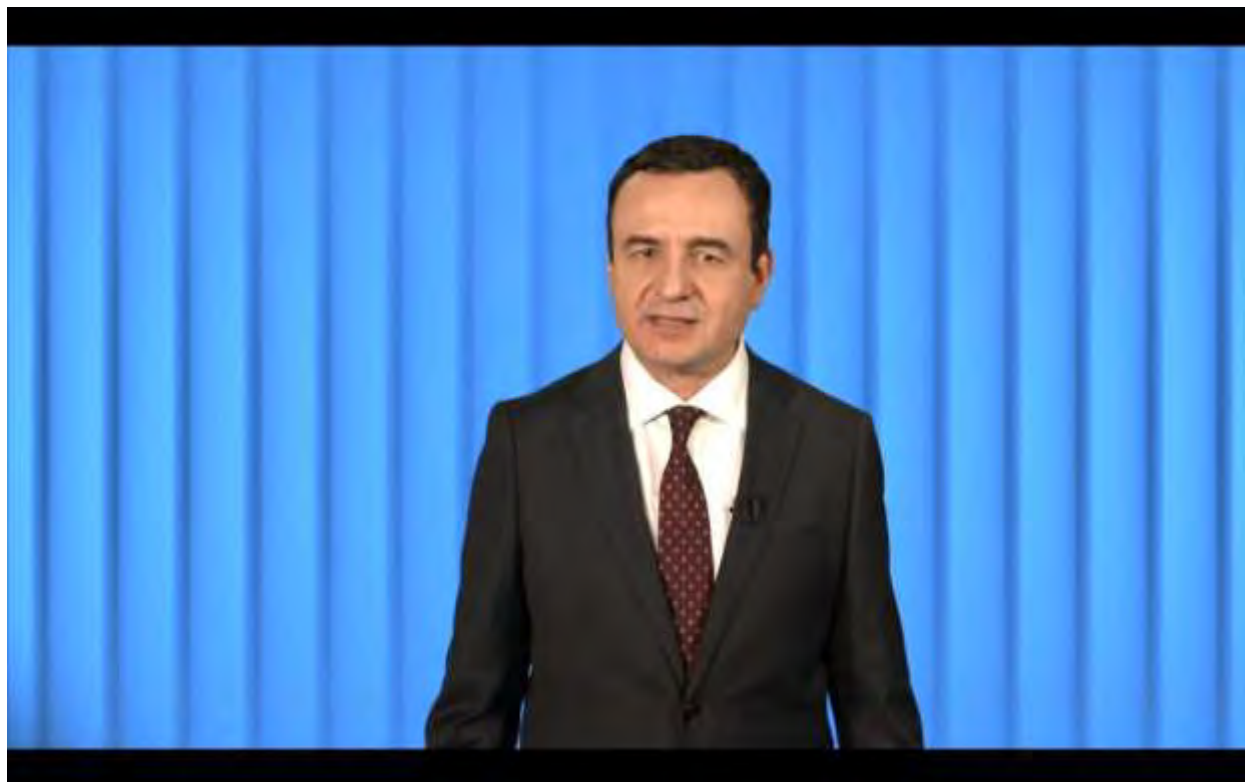


Session V: Peace on the Korean Peninsula: Perspectives from Europe

Mélanie Komagata
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Seoul, South Korea - The fifth plenary session of the World Summit 2022 took place on February 11, 2022, at the Lotte Hotel World in Seoul, South Korea, under the title of "Peace on the Korean Peninsula: Perspectives from Europe." The speakers of this session, mainly heads of state, parliamentarians and government ministers from Europe, gave in-person as well as virtual speeches and brought complementary perspectives on the topic of Europe's role in Korean Peninsula unification and as related to China and the United States.



Report

Mr. Jacques Marion, regional co-chair of UPF Europe and the Middle East, moderated the fifth plenary session. He specified that due to time constraints, only excerpts of speeches would be shown. However, the full speeches can be found online.

Hon. Dr. Claude Béglé, Member of the Swiss Parliament (2015-2019), said that we often may compare

the DPRK's economic situation to that of the Soviet Union before its collapse. However, he did not find that to be the case when he traveled to the DPRK. Indeed, despite the sanctions, the population was doing its best to produce what was needed, and investment in knowledge, education, and science was important. Furthermore, propaganda is present on both sides of the 38th parallel, he said, and we should go against that trend by planting seeds that lead to mutual respect. Concerning the DPRK's nuclear program, Hon. Dr. Béglé said he believes the true intentions of the program are not just military. The DPRK may develop its military and heavy industry, but it also invests in light industry and consumer goods. Therefore, the economy may be a key component to the solution, as it can counter fear and misunderstanding. Furthermore, there is the potential for synergy between the two economies, and opening the DPRK would provide advantages to both. Institutionally, the North and the South could form a federal state. However, what should be remembered in the process is that it is "not about one winning and the other being defeated, but about finding a solution together with two winners," he said.



H.E. Dominique de Villepin, Prime Minister (2005-2007) of France, stated that we are living in a defining moment, with the South Korean presidential elections in March and the U.S. midterm elections and the 20th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party both taking place later this year. In this context, he said, "The Korean Peninsula could be the basis of an exemplary pathway to peace." To have a fruitful dialogue between the two sides, he suggested that the focus should be on political, cultural, and social interactions, which respond to the aspirations of both people and regimes. It is therefore essential to accept "the principle of no regime change" and to offer a vision of a denuclearized Korean Peninsula, free of foreign troops. Regarding negotiations, H.E. Villepin suggested that strong economic and security incentives are to be put forward, such as "a progressive lift of sanctions and a double freeze of nuclear development and military exercises before any process of denuclearization." He further encouraged the mobilization of the international community and of institutions to "accompany, mediate, and guarantee the commitments." He concluded with these words: "Each one of us can and may contribute. This could be the starting point of a peaceful revolution, a renewed awareness of the global community finally taking its destiny into its own hands."

H.E. José María Aznar, Prime Minister (1996-2004) of Spain, first highlighted the importance of organizations such as UPF contributing to peacebuilding and dialogue. He recalled from his own experience during his mandate that all instruments for dialogue and peace must be used and that peace can be pursued not only through Track I diplomacy but also "civil society, trade and commerce, humanitarian relief, interfaith dialogue, cultural exchange, and tourism." In this manner, we can work toward building trust, mutual respect, reconciliation, and cooperation. We can enhance dialogue between North and South Korea using several strategies, he said: First, to improve relations between the two Koreas, the DPRK should denuclearize, and sustainable dialogue should be maintained. In this manner, security concerns of the two Koreas would be addressed, and the great powers of the region could contribute to this constructively. Second, to gain popular support for future negotiations, cooperation with civil society is necessary. In addition, the governments of the two Koreas should facilitate family reunions. Third, if there is willingness to establish peace and prosperity with mutual respect, important agreements will be reached.

H.E. Ilir Meta, President of Albania, affirmed that "a breakthrough of peace on the Korean Peninsula would reflect globally." He highlighted the importance of preserving and protecting peace, which history

has taught us can be fragile and under threat. Peace should never be taken for granted, he said, and it is our responsibility to work and invest seriously for peace. Quoting the Albanian saint Mother Teresa - "What can you do to promote world peace? Go home and love your family" - the president said, "If all leaders love their people as their family, humankind will be at peace without conflicts and divisions." Moreover, he sees the youth and education as the foundation of all societies and the future. He also recognizes religious leaders as guides for social justice and peace who can offer their mediation skills. In conclusion, President Meta recommended that governments and civil society work together not only by speaking the same language of peace but also by truly believing in peace, which must "be the mission of every leader and the aspiration of every nation." In this manner, the 38th parallel will become "a symbol of peace rather than division."



H.E. Filip Vujanović, President (2003-2018) of Montenegro, expressed his appreciation to UPF for establishing a platform to discuss the prospects for peace in the Balkans. Indeed, Montenegro and all of the former Yugoslavia experienced terrible wars in the 20th century, he said. The former president said that because of having personally experienced the suffering and devastation of war, the people understand deeply "the importance of peace, dialogue, and resolving disputes in a peaceful manner." If we want to live with love, happiness, understanding, pluralism, respect, democracy, and prosperity, he said, we must see peace as "the first and foremost value to preserve." Moreover, a future conference organized by UPF with speakers from the Balkans and from Korea would facilitate the exchange of ideas about peacebuilding in both regions, he said. Despite their many differences, he said, all share the same objective: "to reconcile and build lasting peace." It is through continuous dialogue that we can come to understand "each other's way of thinking, culture, challenges, and politics" and in this manner accomplish the shared goal of peace. Peace fosters further cooperation in economy, trade, technology, green energy, fighting diseases, and responding to natural disasters. H.E. Vujanovic concluded that through this, we will build "a sustainable future for our future generations."

H.E. Albin Kurti, Prime Minister of Kosovo, affirmed that the people of Kosovo and the Korean Peninsula share a similar path of suffering, due to numerous experiences of invasions and occupations. Furthermore, he said, ideology is what divided not only our world but also the Korean people. It separated families and friends who then became enemies. However, "what remains true throughout history is that the longing for freedom stirs in every human heart," he said. Indeed, it is essential to speak our opinion freely, which impacts how we are governed and live, he said. However, despite this desire for freedom being shared by all of humankind, some people still haven't let go of the dark ideas of the past. Nevertheless, we cannot let ourselves "succumb to autocrats and dictators who suppress freedoms and oppress the people," the prime minister said. Instead, we must aim at lasting peace on the Korean and Balkan Peninsulas. For that, we must take responsibility to work for peace, as history has proven that "conflicts do not resolve on their own." Dr. Moon has taught us that "peace flourishes where there is justice, and justice requires repentance, which must be accompanied by restitution." H.E. Kurti concluded with these words: "Freedom seeks to attain lasting peace. All of us must do our part wherever we are."

H.E. Mladen Ivanic, President (2014-2018) of Bosnia and Herzegovina, stated that the main causes for conflict in Korea were the relations between the great powers, for which ordinary people had to pay the price. Based on Bosnia-Herzegovina's experience, a major "precondition for peace is the consensus of the great powers," he said. Therefore, we should persuade them to see beyond their interests by hearing local

people's voices, he said. Besides political leaders, the religious and civil sectors play an important role in peacebuilding, reconciliation, and achieving a sustainable progress, he said. H.E. Ivanic expressed his conviction that it is time for Korea to transform from a symbol of conflict to a peaceful example for the world. Moreover, peace on the Korean Peninsula concerns the whole world. Bosnia-Herzegovina has experienced war and conflict, and he testified that it wasn't easy to reach a compromise. However, once it was reached, it affected positively all other conflicts in the world. Therefore, such development on one side of the world impacts all of humanity, notably through positive news spread around the globe. To conclude, he suggested that, since "contact between people is necessary to remove prejudices and build a sustainable and prosperous region," it is essential to open borders and enable tourism, trade, and cultural exchanges, which will contribute to easing relations.



H.E. Ahmet Davutoglu, Prime Minister (2014-2016) of Turkey, said that the global experience of the pandemic has proven that we all share a common destiny, which therefore implies the need for cooperation for the future of humanity. In his last book, he used the terms "systemic earthquake" and "world order" to explain the systemic crisis we are facing and the world cooperation that all regions must establish for peace. He reminded us that the resolution of the Korean question has a symbolic meaning for all of us. Moreover, all the countries that were divided during the Cold War - Germany, Yemen, Vietnam - are again one, except Korea. Nevertheless, despite the many challenges, H.E. Davutoglu said, "It is now time for a new era on the Korean Peninsula," because challenges also mean new opportunities. The German people faced similar challenges before they united. Furthermore, peace on the Korean Peninsula after decades of armistice will bring a strong message to humankind that a new era of peace has begun. Thus, it is time for Korea to unite, and for all families to be brought back together "as one entity of common destiny." He affirmed that this conference will therefore have a historic significance. H.E. Davutoglu concluded with these words: "The destiny of Korea is our common destiny."

Dr. Manuel Rodríguez Rodríguez from Peru, president of the National Association for the Development of Intelligence, Creativity and Talent, said, "UPF seeks to foster a broader dialogue with great love for humanity, which breaks down barriers and traces a path toward peace, respect and mutual understanding."

Hon. Dr. Werner Fasslabend, the Austrian minister of defense (1990-2000) and the president of Austria's National Council (2000-2002), recalled having grown up in a town near the border with the former Czechoslovakia. "We thought that it would take years, maybe decades, until the Iron Curtain could fall, but then it came almost surprisingly and very quickly. And now we are living in a situation that it is not only a neighboring country but it is a member of the European Union, and it is easy to go there without a passport, not even needing to exchange money if you want to buy something. ... And it can go very quickly that things will change fundamentally [between North and South Korea], and for this moment you have to be prepared, but I am sure the European lesson that a divided Germany, a divided Central Europe, could be very unified will be the best lesson also for Korea."

Dr. Alexander Vorontsov, head of the Department of Korean and Mongolian Studies at the Russian Academy of Sciences, said that "in the Republic of Korea there are two main conceptions or approaches to the Korean unification problem. The first one is the so-called German Variant; that means instant absorption of North Korea. The second one means unification through a relatively prolonged period of peaceful coexistence of the two Koreas and the growth of cooperation, gradual rapprochement and

convergence." Dr. Vorontsov said: "Russia is concerned with maintaining peace and safety, security on the Korean Peninsula, friendly relations with both states on the Korean Peninsula and with a unified state. The optimal variant of realization of this goal will be the unification of Korea. In comparison with other key interested states, Russia is more in favor of the prospect of Korean unification - but under the condition that the unification should be carried out peacefully."



Hon. Pier Ferdinando Casini, Senator; President, Italian Chamber of Deputies (2001-2006); Honorary Chair, Inter-Parliamentary Union, said: "The fact that the two Koreas, despite ups and downs in their relations, are not at peace, but neither are they at war, continues to leave the door open to the transformation of the armistice into a veritable peace treaty. ... As the constant commitment of UPF, which has never given up on the idea of a Korean Peninsula free from internal borders, has shown us, strengthening the spirit of collaboration is the best political investment for profitable dialogue now and for a concrete solution in the near future."

