

UPF International: Conference of Hope for Universal Human Rights and Religious Freedom

Thomas G. Walsh
November 12, 2022



Seoul, Korea -- The greatest difference between open, free societies and authoritarian regimes is respect for human rights and religious freedom, speakers told the Conference of Hope for Universal Human Rights and Religious Freedom, sponsored by **The Washington Times Foundation** and *Think Tank 2022*.

The conference, held Nov. 12 in South Korea and livestreamed to millions of viewers globally, concluded with a call to action for people worldwide to sign a **Declaration on the Universal Value of Religious Freedom**. "We call upon all people throughout the world to stand firmly against all forms of intolerance, prejudice, slander, and hate toward believers of our world's religions," says the statement.



"When we speak of human rights, the most basic, fundamental right would be religious freedom," said **Dr. Yoon Young Ho**, Chairman of the Steering Committee for *Think Tank 2022*. This right is well-known, he said, noting that freedom of religion was included in Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted in 1948 by the United Nations General Assembly.

At a time when many religious groups face persecution, intolerance, discrimination, and violence in many countries, this is "a critical moment in which we must unite, we face the truth, and we move forward

courageously based on the principles expressed in the Declaration on the Universal Value of Religious Freedom," said Conference of Hope co-host **Thomas P. McDevitt**, Chairman of *The Washington Times* and board member of The Washington Times Foundation.

Speakers pointed to persecution of religious groups including Muslim Uyghurs, Tibetan Buddhists, Jews, Christians, Muslims, Ahmadis, Bahais, Jehovah's Witnesses, Yazidis, Falun Gong, and, more recently, the Family Federation of World Peace and Unification, formerly the Unification Church, in Japan.



The Chinese Communist Party is "at war with all faiths," said **Ambassador Sam Brownback**, former US senator who served as Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom (2018-2021).

In contrast, "religious freedom is a hallmark of an open society in a democracy" and democracies "must stand for religious freedom for everybody, everywhere, all the time," he said.

"Why is evil so influential in today's world? Because it has many allies. Three siblings are the most spread and efficient: Indifference, ignorance and fear (when we don't care, when we do not know, or when we are scared to say or do something)," said **Hon. Jan Figel**, First Special Envoy for the Promotion of Freedom of Religion, European Union (2016-2019). "To overcome these siblings, we must invest more into active engagement, lifelong education, and civil courage. Then a century of hope may come, and a culture of human dignity may prevail over extreme violence, aggressive wars and a century of genocides."

Several speakers addressed the persecution of the Family Federation in Japan that has intensified since the tragic and senseless assassination of former **Prime Minister Shinzo Abe**. The Paris-based CAP Freedom of Conscience, a respected UN NGO, filed a formal complaint with the UN Human Rights Committee in Geneva, saying that Japan's "national tragedy" has been turned "into a bizarre narrative that makes the alleged assassin into a victim."

"Religious liberty has been defined by the Holy See as the most violated human right in the 21st century," said **Mr. Massimo Introvigne**, Founder and Managing Director, Center for Studies on New Religions in Italy. "The events in Japan prove that the use of the word 'cult' to discriminate against and persecute peaceful religious movements has now reached intolerable levels and should be stopped. Those who do not publicly reject and denounce the campaigns against 'cults' are not real friends of religious freedom."

"After World War II, the Soviet Union was aggressively working to bring Japan into the Communist sphere of influence," said **Hon. Newt Gingrich**, US House Speaker (1995-1999). Japanese leaders, including Mr. Abe's grandfather **Prime Minister Nobusuke Kishi**, met with **Rev. Sun Myung Moon** during the Cold War, he said, and "a natural relationship formed between the victory-over-communism movement, Mr. Kishi and many members of the Diet, especially the Liberal Democratic Party."

Today, "we are seeing that many in the [Japanese] media are trying to dissolve the movement in Japan without any legal due process," Mr. Gingrich said.

"We are not surprised that so many current and former members of the Liberal Democratic Party and other parties in Japan understood that work with the Universal Peace Federation, co-founded by Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, was so important and collaborated with it," said **Pastor Paula White-Cain**, former advisor to US President Donald Trump and director of the White House Faith and Opportunity Initiative. She

added, "it is good for Japan, good for the Republic of Korea and for America and good for peace in Northeast Asia and the world."

Former BBC Correspondent **Humphrey Hawksley**, who spoke live from London, recalled how the Family Federation and other NGOs helped him lead a BBC crew into North Korea. "The work the church did in the 1990s helped bring about a peace deal that took the prospect of war off the table on the Korean Peninsula, and it has been doing similar work since," he said.



Cardinal Kelvin Felix, Archbishop emeritus of Castries, Saint Lucia, recalled meeting Japanese volunteers with the Women's Federation for World Peace in the island nation of Dominica. "For 26 years, they have been conducting art classes at our Teachers' Training College and in many schools around the country," while also holding programs to strengthen family unions," he said.

The Family Federation has had 4,300 of its members in Japan kidnapped and held in forced confinement by highly paid professional "faith breakers" during the last 45 years, said **Norishige Kondo**, an attorney in Japan who has been serving as legal counsel to the Association of Victims of Kidnappings, Forced Confinement and Conversions. Kidnapped victims have also suffered sexual assault, violence, and threats, he said. In one case, a medical doctor -- who had critically ill patients under his care -- was held

for more than a year by kidnapers. Another man, Toro Goto, was held for more than 12 years. "Mr. Goto was able to maintain his faith," Mr. Kondo added, "but 70 to 80 percent of the victims of forced conversions and kidnappings lose their faith due to these inhuman and illegal detentions."

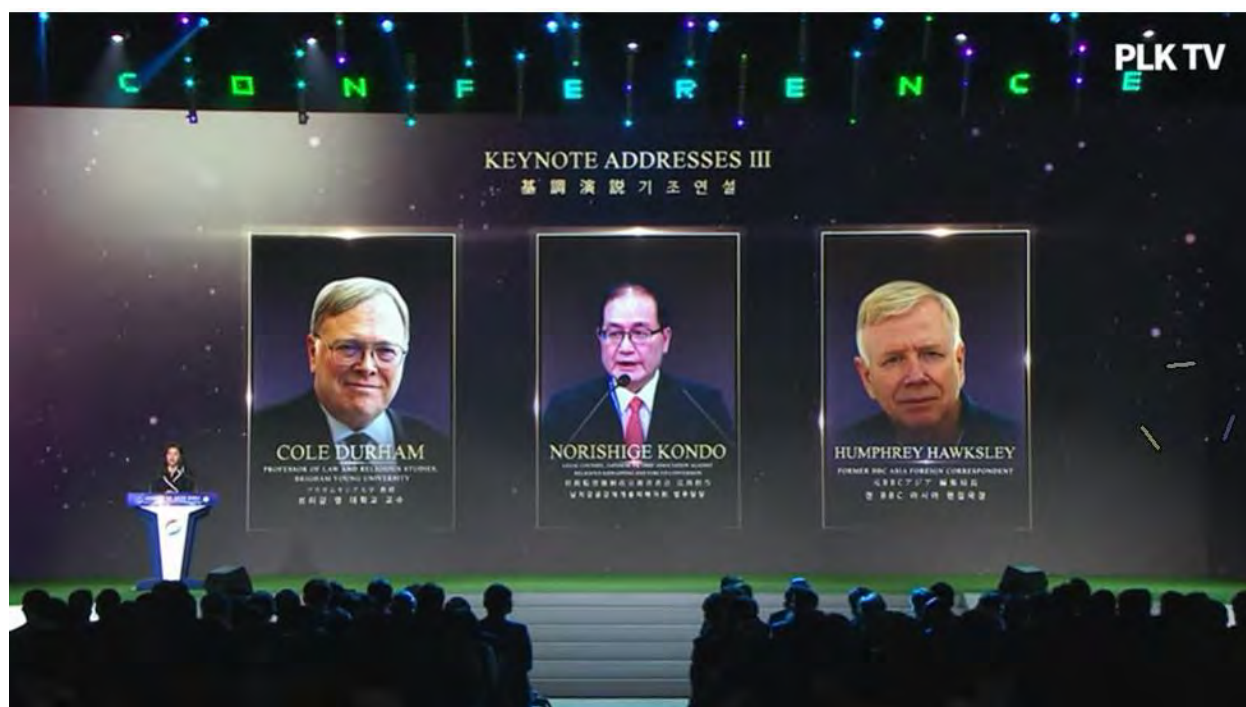
"Religious freedom has long been called the first freedom, like the famed 'canary in the mine,' the violation of which warns us of impending danger elsewhere," said **Doug Bandow**, Senior Fellow at Cato Institute, who specializes in foreign policy and civil liberty.

A group called Open Doors lists 50 of the top persecutors of Christians and other faiths, starting with Afghanistan's Taliban and North Korea's regime, said Mr. Bandow. "Governments which refuse to protect us as we seek God -- or otherwise address the transcendent -- are unlikely to protect us as we exercise our conscience in other ways," he added, noting that eroding of religious freedom leads to denials of free speech, debate, and elections, and breeds terrible conflicts, including terrorism and genocide.

Prof. W. Cole Durham Jr., who directs the International Center for Law and Religion Studies at Brigham Young University's J. Reuben Clark Law School, recalled how leaders and members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (LDS) endured decades of persecution, brutal rejection, and bloodshed. Today, the LDS Church is a major denomination, and its members are widely accepted. "Standing up under persecution builds a kind of strength, which is its own reward," he said. Moreover, surviving persecution leads to "an intensified appreciation of the practical importance of the freedom of religion" and "empathy for the suffering of others," he said.

The Washington Times Foundation, founded in 1984 in Washington, D.C., hosts numerous programs, including its monthly webcast "The Washington Brief," to gather expert commentary on issues relating to peace and security in the world. *Think Tank 2022*, a project of the Universal Peace Federation, regularly mobilizes its worldwide network to promote dialogue, reconciliation and peace on the Korean Peninsula.

The Washington Times Foundation and *Think Tank 2022* plan to continue sponsoring the "Conference of Hope" programs to promote peace and security globally -- and especially on the Korean Peninsula and the Pacific Rim.



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PRESS RELEASE

Conference of Hope for Universal Human Rights and Religious Freedom

WASHINGTON, D.C. — In light of attacks on religious freedom in China, Japan, the Middle East, and elsewhere, **The Washington Times Foundation** and *Think Tank 2022* are convening the **Conference of Hope for Universal Human Rights and Religious Freedom**.

The conference will highlight human rights issues around the world as part of the missions of The Washington Times Foundation and *Think Tank 2022*, a Korean Peninsula reunification initiative, to promote peace and security globally—and especially on the Korean Peninsula and the Pacific Rim.

The conference will be live-streamed from South Korea simultaneously in time zones around the world. In the United States, it will begin Friday, November 11, 2022, at 7:30 p.m. EST and 4:30 p.m. PST.

A highlight of the conference will be the introduction and adoption of a **Declaration on the Universal Value of Religious Freedom**. “We call on all people throughout the world to stand firm against all forms of religious intolerance, prejudice, slander, and hate,” concludes the Declaration, which will be signed by representatives of Korea, Japan, and numerous countries.

The conference’s keynote speakers will underscore the importance of universal human rights and religious freedom at a time when many followers of the world’s major and minor religions face persecution, intolerance, discrimination, and violence in many countries.

Distinguished keynote speakers include:

- **Pastor Paula White-Cain**, Senior Pastor, City of Destiny Church, USA
- **Mr. Massimo Introvigne**, Founder & Managing Director, Center for Studies on New Religions, Italy
- **Bishop Dr. Munib Younan**, Bishop emeritus, Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land
- **Hon. Newt Gingrich**, U.S. Speaker of the House (1995-1999)
- **Dr. Young-ho Yun**, Chairman, Conference of Hope Organizing Committee
- **Cardinal Kelvin Felix**, Archbishop emeritus of Castries, Saint Lucia, West Indies

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- **Mr. Thomas P. McDevitt**, Chairman, *The Washington Times*, and Board Member of The Washington Times Foundation
- **Hon. Jan Figel**, First Special Envoy for the Promotion of Freedom of Religion, European Union (2016-2019)
- **Mr. Doug Bandow**, Senior Fellow, Cato Institute, specializing in foreign policy and civil liberties
- **Mr. Norishige Kondo**, Attorney in Japan

The **Conference of Hope for Universal Human Rights and Religious Freedom** transcends political, religious, racial, and ideological boundaries and seeks to build a unified and more peaceful world around the core ideals of **interdependence, mutual prosperity, and universal values.**

Among the issues to be discussed are the plights of Muslim Uyghurs, Tibetan Buddhists, Jews, Christians, Bahais, Jehovah's Witnesses, Yazidis, Falun Gong, and Unificationists. During the conference, representatives from Japan will ask their government and people to "honor long-standing traditions of fairness and mutual respect" and cease the "unjustified persecution of the members of the Family Federation" that began after the shocking and tragic assassination of former **Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.**

The Washington Times Foundation, founded in 1984 in Washington, D.C., hosts numerous programs, including its monthly "Washington Brief," to gather expert commentary on issues relating to peace and security in the world.

The **Conference of Hope for Universal Human Rights and Religious Freedom** will offer translation in numerous languages. Please register and join us for this important and timely event at www.ConferenceofHope.info

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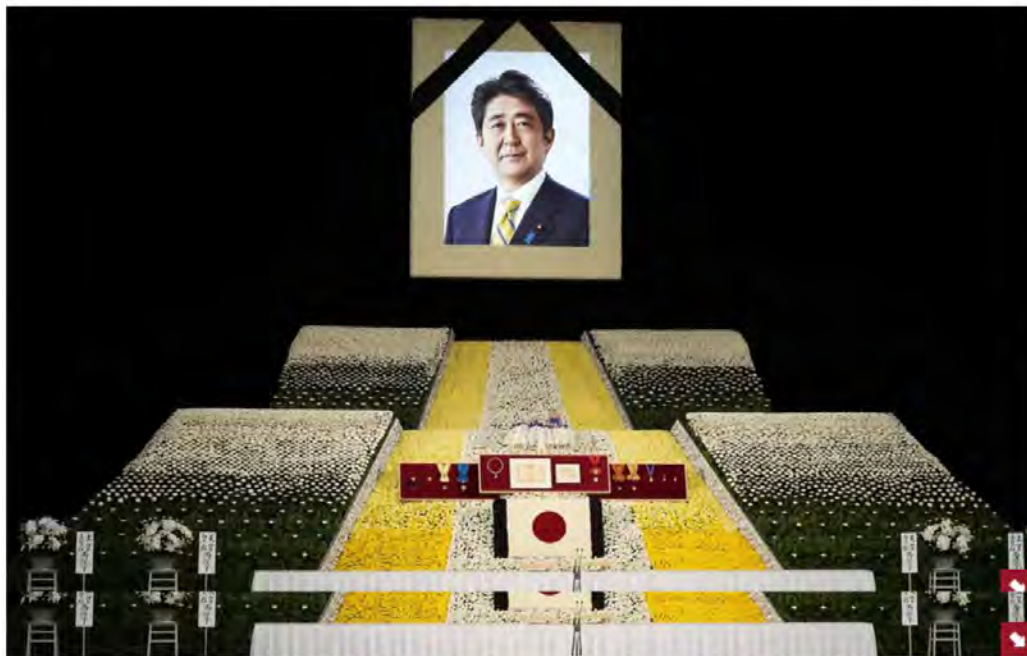
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Prime Minister Abe's assassination and the Japanese communist attack on freedom

A long-term communist strategy to weaken the pro-freedom and anti-communist forces in Japan

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The portrait of former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe is seen on the altar during his state funeral at Nippon Budokan in Tokyo, Japan, Tuesday, Sept. 22, 2022. (Franck Robichon/Pool Photo via AP) [more >](#)

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Print

COMMENTARY

By Newt Gingrich -- Friday, November 11, 2022

OPINION:

After former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's tragic assassination on July 8, the far left has exploited this horrific crime by attempting to destroy Abe's supporters in the Japanese Diet and eliminate the anti-Communist organization he supported.

It is particularly ironic that Prime Minister Abe's death has become an excuse to attack his allies and his wing of the governing party, the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). After all, Abe was the most pro-American and openly anti-Chinese Communist Party prime minister in Japanese history.

The Japanese Communist Party's assaults on the Abe wing of the LDP and the work of the [Unification Church](#) are remarkably blatant attacks on everything Abe worked for throughout his life as a political and governmental leader.

Amazingly, this deliberate effort to eliminate anti-communists and undermine the Japanese-American alliance was openly explained in the official newspaper of the Japanese Communist Party, Shimbun Akahata.

The paper interviewed Kazuo Shii, the chairman of the Japanese Communist Party, who described the history of effective anti-communism and pro-Americanism in [Japan](#).

QUESTION OF THE DAY**What was the 'Trump Effect' in the 2022 midterm elections?**

- HE BOOSTED REPUBLICANS
- HE GALVANIZED DEMOCRATS
- HE DRAGGED DOWN THE GOP
- HE HELPED SOME CANDIDATES
- HE HAD NO IMPACT ON THE RACES

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The interview makes clear how much the current attack on the [Unification Church](#) is part of a long-term communist strategy to weaken the pro-freedom and anti-communist forces in Japan.

“From the Communist Party’s point of view, this is the final war against the [Unification Church](#),” the interviewer said.

“It has been a long struggle,” Mr. Shii agreed and added, “The first time they bared their fangs as the vanguard of the anti-communist movement was in the 1978 gubernatorial election to choose the successor to Torazo Ninagawa.”

As chairman of the Japanese Communist Party, Mr. Shii’s comments and assertions are openly political and brazenly hostile.

It is clear that the attack on the [Unification Church](#) is an attack on the LDP and especially on the Abe faction, which has been aggressively anti-communist and pro-American.

Mr. Shii said openly: “The starting point [with LDP] was the Shogyo Rengo, an anti-communist organization that was united with the [Unification Church](#). Since then, there has been a half-century of historical collusion between the two organizations.”

He emphasized that “the essence of the problem is that the two parties are inextricably linked.”

The anti-American component of this attack is made remarkably clear in Mr. Shii’s comments.

As written in the article, “Mr. Shii pointed out that strengthening the deterrence of the Japan-U.S. alliance, the Quad (the security framework of the four countries of [Japan](#), the U.S., Australia, and India), and other frameworks to encircle or eliminate China would lead to a vicious cycle of military to military.”

Mr. Shii asserted, “We should have a concept of creating a framework that includes China and resolve all issues peacefully.”

No one should be confused. The current attack on the [Unification Church](#) is an effort to undermine and weaken the Japanese-United States alliance and create an opening for a Chinese Communist-Japanese rapprochement.

• For more commentary from Newt, visit [Gingrich360.com](#).

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Conference promotes religious freedom as a human right

Highlights persecution against the Unification movement in Japan



Police officers stand at the outer entrance of the Urumqi No. 3 Detention Center in Dabancheng in western China's Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region on April 23, 2021. State officials took AP journalists on a tour of a "training center" turned ...[more >](#)

[Print](#)By [Guy Taylor](#) - *The Washington Times* - Saturday, November 12, 2022

The Chinese Communist Party is "at war with all faiths," according to former U.S. Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom Sam Brownback, who says America and its democratic allies must "stand firmly" in promoting religious freedom as a "common human right."

Mr. Brownback, who held the post under former President Trump, made the assertions to an international conference Friday aimed at advancing freedom of faith amid attacks on religious freedom in China, North Korea, [Japan](#), the Middle East, and elsewhere around the world.

The event, live-streamed from South Korea, called out what organizers described as the "unjustified persecution" of members of the Unification Church, whose followers say they've faced death threats and other forms of harassment in [Japan](#) since the July assassination of former Prime Minister [Shinzo Abe](#).

Mr. [Abe](#) was shot by a gunman who claimed to have a personal grievance with the church — [his](#) mother made large donations to it — and is reported to have targeted the former prime minister for having appeared at events sponsored by the church, which has long been active in [Japan](#).

Some speakers at Friday's conference homed in on the issue, with former U.S. House Speaker [Newt Gingrich](#) voicing concern that those pushing "discriminatory actions" against

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Unificationists in Japan “are really seeking to weaken the security and peace of Japan, making Japan weaker in the face of threats from China and [North Korea].”

Pastor Paula White-Cain, a spiritual adviser to Mr. Trump during his presidency, also raised the issue, stressing that many current and former leaders worldwide have spoken in support of the Unification movement’s decades-old fight against communism and promotion of peace and strong families.

“That’s why it is no surprise that Prime Minister Abe stood with many heads of state in appreciating this work because it is good for Japan, good for the Republic of Korea and for America and good for peace in Northeast Asia and the world,” said Pastor White of the Florida-based City of Destiny Church.

Mr. Brownback, meanwhile, said “religious freedom is a hallmark of an open society in a democracy.”

“The United States, Japan [and] South Korea [are] key democracies that must stand for religious freedom for everybody everywhere all the time,” he said.

Mr. Brownback, who is also a former Republican Senator from Kansas and a former governor of that state, went on to assert that “faith is the one institution that has the strength to bring down a government.”

For that reason, he said, China’s ruling communist party “looks and says, ‘we’re going to stop this. We’re coming at war with this.’”

Friday’s gathering, officially titled a “Conference of Hope for Universal Human Rights,” featured in-person and virtual presentations from a range of political and religious dignitaries. It was organized by The Washington Times Foundation and Think Tank 2022, a Korean Peninsula reunification initiative sponsored by the Unification Church, also known as the Family Federation for World Peace and Unification.

Speakers called out the full range of religious persecution by authoritarian governments, shining a light on the plight of Tibetan Buddhists, Jews, Christians, Muslims, Bahais, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Yazidis and Falun Gong followers and Unificationists.

Several spoke of the North Korean and Chinese governments’ intolerance towards freedom of faith. Some homed in particularly on the plight of Muslims within China’s minority ethnic Uyghur population, against whom Beijing is committing genocide, according to the U.S. State Department.

Others focused their remarks on the philosophical tenets of religious freedom.

“Religious liberty long has been called the first freedom,” said Doug Bandow, a senior fellow specializing in foreign policy and civil liberties with Cato Institute, a Washington-based think tank.

“Of course, other liberties also are important, even vital. But the foundation upon which they rest is the right to seek the transcendent and understand one’s role in life,” he said.

“People’s relationship with (or without) God is up to them and no one else, especially the state, despite its pretense of omniscience,” Mr. Bandow told the conference in prepared remarks. “This essential liberty is under attack around the world. The greatest threats come from oppressive governments, determined to supplant religious belief for their own purposes.”

Conference organizers said in a press release that a highlight of the event was the adoption of a “Declaration on the Universal Value of Religious Freedom” calling on “all people throughout the world to stand firm against all forms of religious intolerance, prejudice, slander, and hate.”

With that as a backdrop, Mr. [Gingrich](#) highlighted the work of the late Reverend Sun Myung Moon, an ardent anti-communist, who founded the Unification Church in 1954.

Rev. Moon's wife, Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, has headed the Unification movement since Rev. Moon died in 2012. Together, the two devoted their lives to reunifying the Korean Peninsula and promoting world peace. They founded The Washington Times in 1982.

Mr. [Gingrich](#) spoke of the movement's decades-long battle against communism, noting that the movement has long included "a large base of patriotic Japanese citizens" and early on featured the formation of the "International Federation for Victory Over Communism."

"This movement has been strongly supporting [Japan's](#) freedom, prosperity and its role as a leader for peace and security," Mr. [Gingrich](#) said.

"We are seeing that many in the media are trying to dissolve the movement in [Japan](#) without any legal due process," he said. "We've also found that many are politically sympathetic to the communist or socialist anti-religious, anti-America and anti-[Abe](#) view."

"We believe that [Japan](#) will uphold its commitment to freedom of religion and democracy," Mr. [Gingrich](#) said.

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According to the "former U.S. Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom Sam Brownback, who says America and its democratic allies must "stand firmly" in promoting religious freedom as a "common human right.""

Again, the POTS calling some Kettles black.

The following "democracies" have laws preventing women from practicing their religious beliefs. France, Switzerland, Belgium, Netherlands, Sri Lanka, Austria, Bulgaria, China (**Yes there are elections in China. All Marxism based tyrannies champion elections**).

Here in the USA attempts are being made in some states to force women to die of pregnancy for the glory of "GOD" and in other states people of faith and morals are being forced to pay for the murder of innocents in the womb. These words in the 1st Amend: "The

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