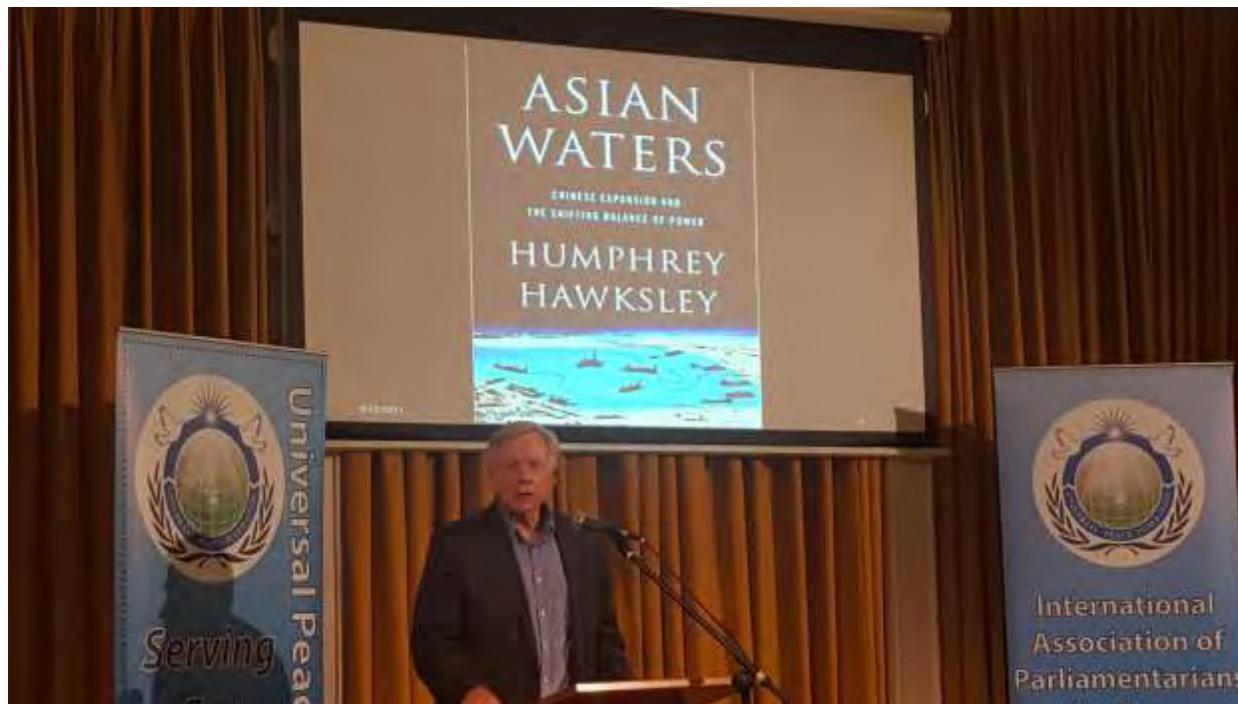


## How to Stop the Next War: UN International Peace Day 2017 Event

Robin Marsh  
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Humphrey Hawksley, The Universal Peace Federation (UPF) – UK convened an event on the theme, ‘How Do We Stop the Next War?’ at its’ London HQ on the 21st September that is an annual commemoration of the value and significance of international peace. Humphrey Hawksley, writer, commentator and journalist, gave the keynote speech proposing themes from his upcoming book. Mark Brann, former Universal Peace Federation Europe Secretary General responded along with His Excellency Mr. Sayakane Sisouvong, Ambassador of the Embassy of Laos, who commented in a personal capacity.

Humphrey Hawksley has commented that where a dominant power has declined and is being superseded by a rising power there is almost always a major conflict. Harvard Professor Graham Allison, describing this as a 'Thucydides Trap' after the Sparta-Athenian conflict, has found: “in 12 of 16 cases in the past 500 years when a rising power challenged a ruling power, the outcome was war.” (link Guardian article)

Video of Humphrey Hawksley talk on [youtu.be/XVKFyD6XoWU](https://youtu.be/XVKFyD6XoWU)

Hawksley adds that when an awful conflict has occurred then there is usually a conference to design the shape of the international relationships to follow. Why do we not have a conscious effort to think through what would lead to relationships that would avoid the conflict before it happens? He provided several examples of those conferences such as the conference that led to the treaty of Versailles at the conclusion of the 1st World War and the Treaty of Westphalia that brought the 30 years’ war to a conclusion. His presentation concluded with a slide proposing a conference of 'Eastphalia'.

Mark Brann, former Universal Peace Federation Europe Secretary General, highlighted the need for a principled approach to foreign policy. He explained that NGOs can more easily appeal for a higher standard in Foreign Policy than Governments who reflect national self-interest. NGO's can more easily express the conscience of humanity. He spoke of the Korean peninsula tensions that are threatening to destabilise North East Asia. UPF Co-Founders Father and Mother Moon, forged a relationship with the Kim dynasty that was based on a reconciliation made during a brave 1991 visit to Pyongyang and subsequent investments. That back channel link is ongoing and significant in the current crisis, Mark Brann explained.

His Excellency Mr. Sayakane Sisouvong Ambassador, Embassy of Laos commented in a personal capacity on the horrors of a war finished 30 plus years ago whose consequences still blight Laotian life. He was involved in the first efforts of reconciliation with the United States to find lost pilots’ remains. It was very unpopular among the Laotian people who had suffered greatly as the most bombed nation in the world. The Laos Ambassador explained that since the US bombing in the 1970's one third of Laos is uninhabitable because of un-exploded bombs. At the current rate of clearance it will take 600 years to remove all those bombs. People regularly lose limbs when they accidentally set off one of those bombs. The ‘yellow rain’ chemicals that were dropped on Laos to remove the foliage of the forest have caused genetic mutations among some of those born since the conclusion of the war. Despite all this the Ambassador added that Laos is experiencing a prolonged economic boom with one of the fastest growth

rates in the world. Thus it has been important to put the lingering feelings from the war behind them and focus on more positive developments.



### **Speakers:**

Humphrey Hawksley is a foreign correspondent, author and commentator on world affairs. His work as a BBC foreign correspondent has taken him all over the world. He was expelled from Sri Lanka, opened the BBC's television bureau in China, arrested in Serbia and initiated a global campaign against enslaved children in the chocolate industry. The campaign continues today.

His television documentaries include *The Curse of Gold and Bitter Sweet* examining human rights abuse in global trade; *Aid Under Scrutiny* on the failures of international development; *Old Man Atom* that investigates the global nuclear industry; and *Danger: Democracy at Work* on the risks of bringing Western-style democracy too quickly to some societies.

Humphrey is the author of the acclaimed 'Future History' series *Dragon Strike*, *Dragon Fire* and *The Third World War* that explores world conflict. He has published four international thrillers, *Ceremony of Innocence*, *Absolute Measures*, *Red Spirit* and *Security Breach*, together with the non-fiction *Democracy Kills: What's so good about the Vote* - a tie-in to his TV documentary on the pitfalls of the modern-day path to democracy from dictatorship.

His Excellency Mr. Sayakane Sisouvong Ambassador - Embassy of Laos

Mr. Sisouvong arrived to reopen Laos's Embassy in the UK after a diplomatic absence of nearly three decades. He completed this in November 2014, when his Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister reopened the Embassy, which had been closed since 1985. The opening ceremony was followed by the signing of a bilateral agreement to hold biannual political consultations to strengthen policy cooperation and exchange between the two countries. These events have marked a significant milestone in UK-Lao relations.

Mr. Sisouvong was one of four students from Laos selected to study at a high school in Michigan. As one of 5,000 students from 57 countries in the US, he acquired "a global awareness" interacting with students from all over the world. Scholarships to study in Thailand and Cuba followed, and in 1983, he was recruited to serve as a Desk Officer in the US and Canadian Division at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Mr. Sisouvong went on to set up the ASEAN division in Laos, eventually becoming its Director General in 1998. By 2009, he was Deputy Secretary-General for the ASEAN Political and Security Community at the ASEAN Secretariat in Jakarta, serving there for three years. Prior to this appointment, Mr. Sisouvong was Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2012-14). Currently, Mr. Sisouvong is the Ambassador of Laos and the Chair of the ASEAN London Committee.

### **Mark Brann:**

Mark Brann is currently a lawyer in private practise in London and a Director of Universal Peace Federation (UPF) in the UK. He was formerly Secretary-General of UPF in Europe (2003-2015) in which capacity (amongst other things) he coordinated European outreach to current and former Heads of State and Government on behalf of UPF International. He has worked extensively in media writing for a number of internationally known newspapers, as Director for Europe, The Middle East and Africa for the well known international press agency 'United Press International' and as Director of Special Projects (Europe) for The Washington Times in Washington DC. He is married with 4 grown up children.