

Parliamentarians for Peace Launched in Japan

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Tokyo, Japan -- The UPF International Leadership Conference (ILC) was held in Japan on November 11 and from November 16 to 17, 2016 under the auspices of UPF-Japan and the Institute for Peace Policies (IPP).

Among the 800 guests attending the ILC and launching of the International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace (IAPP) were parliamentarians; current and former diplomats; academic, religious, NGO and youth leaders; representatives from the media; and Ambassadors for Peace.

The conference addressed a wide range of international issues, including issues relating to the USA, Europe, Russia and the Middle East. The role of youth in Japan's future was also discussed. The keynote speeches and comments from the experts as well as from the audience led to substantive debates.

Peace Diplomats Forum: "Europe's Future Prospects Regarding Refugees, Terrorism and Rising Nationalism"

The first program of the ILC was a Peace Diplomats Forum on "Europe's Future Prospects Regarding Refugees, Terrorism and Rising Nationalism," which took place on November 11 at a hotel. An initiative of UPF-Japan, the Forum regularly brings foreign diplomats together with Japanese diplomats, experts, representatives from business and UN officials to exchange views on achieving peace.

About 70 people, including 40 diplomats; among them, ambassadors and charge d'affaires; members of the National Diet, Japan's bicameral legislature; foreign ministry officials; and academics, attended the forum.

In his welcoming remarks, UPF-Japan chair, Dr. Yong Cheon Song, introduced the Japan-Korea undersea Tunnel and the International Peace Highway, two projects proposed by UPF Founder Rev. Sun Myung Moon, and quoted from "World Peace by Dismantling National Borders," a speech Rev. Moon gave at the UN Headquarters in New York in 2000.

Referring to Donald Trump's victory in winning the presidential election in America, a member of the Diet's upper house, in his congratulatory remarks, stressed the importance of Japan and the USA further strengthening trust between one another.

The keynote address, which was given by a university professor, reviewed the European Union's (EU) achievements and the challenges the EU has faced as it has expanded. The dismantling of Europe's borders has allowed many countries to join the pan-European project peacefully, accelerating democratization and enhancing liberty. The massive inflow of migrants and refugees, mainly from the Middle East, however, presents a risk to the future of the EU; the refugee and migrant crisis can potentially divide democracies in the multilateral society, the professor remarked. European countries need to become more integrated, the professor concluded.

In the discussion that followed the keynote address, diplomats from several countries grappling to cope with the refugee crisis or grappling with challenges associated with democratization – including Sudan, Syria, Germany, Ethiopia and China – raised questions and made comments.

At the end of the program, diplomats from Ethiopia and Afghanistan were appointed as Ambassadors for Peace.



Opening Session and Four Specialized Sessions

On November 16, the Opening Session; three consecutive sessions on the theme, “Japan’s Choice in a Turbulent World;” and a fourth session on the role of young people in revitalizing Japan were held. A total of 600 people, including experts and Ambassadors for Peace attended the three sessions, and 150 youth attended the fourth session.

Opening Session

The ILC began with opening remarks by Dr. Masahisa Hayashi, professor emeritus of Waseda University, and board member of the IPP, who explained the significance of the conference. He described this time as a time of uncertainty, as demonstrated by Brexit, the U.K.’s vote to leave the EU; the outcome of the recent U.S. presidential election; and South Korea’s political crisis, and urged stronger collaboration between Japan, the USA and South Korea.

Dr. Song of UPF-Japan spoke about the International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace, a project of UPF that was launched in February this year in the Korean National Assembly building.

The keynote address, the UPF Co-Founder’s Address from Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon was delivered by her daughter, Dr. Sun Jin Moon. Dr. Moon elaborated on UPF’s vision and work for peace: UPF has been engaged in “promoting interfaith cooperation, strengthening the family, supporting the mission of the United Nations, humanitarian service, and advocating soft power approaches to peace and conflict resolution.” The Sunhak Peace Prize, for example, was established to honor individuals and organizations that demonstrate outstanding service to humanity and make the world better for future generations.

Referring to the phenomena of terrorism, street demonstrations and corruption, which has agitated hatred and tarnished confidence in society, she emphasized that our world badly needs transparency and balancing of things. “I have learnt from my parents that we must live not for myself but for the sake of the world. This philosophy guides us even to higher governance. Neither right-wing nor left-wing, but head-wing thought will direct us to realizing One Human Family and everlasting peace centering on True Love,” she said.

She also expressed her appreciation for the work UPF-Japan has done: it is like “an engine that drives the work of UPF globally, providing leadership and setting the highest standards of best practices.”

Session 1: “New Administration of the US and Prospects of Japan-US alliance”

The moderator of the first session, a former professor of international development and peace, outlined three shifts that have occurred in the world: (1) America’s shift in interest from Russia to China; (2)

terrorism-related conflicts are taking place more frequently as a result of clashes of civilizations; and (3) more than 100 countries have achieved independence from colonial rule. “In this turbulent era, the impact of the American presidential race could act like a trigger. Japan will have to fundamentally question its choice,” he said.

In his keynote speech to the packed audience of about 250 people, Mr. Bill Gertz, a columnist at the *Washington Times*, reflected on Donald Trump’s unexpected win of the U.S. presidential election.

Mr. Gertz explained, “The national defense-related scandals under the (Bill) Clinton administration invited China’s military buildup, causing the current national security problems. Many American citizens seem to recognize the difficult times ahead, casting their votes not exactly for Mr. Trump but in opposition to President Obama and (Hillary) Clinton.”

Regarding the President-elect’s policies, Mr. Gertz said: “Mr. Trump’s remarks during the campaign and his actual policies should be distinguished. According to my experiences, America’s federal government is like a gigantic tanker, not easy to change its course.” Mr. Gertz noted that Mr. Trump has since adjusted comments he made earlier about Japan.

Regarding Mr. Trump’s political ideas, Mr. Gertz said that the president-elect has admiration for the political dynamism of the Reagan administration and its engagement in the struggle against communism.

Concerning America’s China policy, Mr. Gertz talked about America’s misguided notion that as long as America engages China in trade and commerce, China’s communist systems will evolve into something less threatening to the world. Mr. Trump deems such a notion as untrue and not functioning.

In addition, Mr. Gertz expressed, “While China is an important trade partner, America will never alter its principles or belief for the sake of business. Mr. Trump aspires peace through strength, so he is rather tolerant to military expansion.”

The massive use of social media tools in the presidential campaigns this time, particularly by the Trump camp, would be a good subject of future studies by political scientists, Mr. Gertz noted.

A Japanese commentator who previously was a researcher at a prestigious American think tank, cautioned that America’s social shifts are not properly understood in Japan. She said, “During the Cold War and the post-Cold War period, America’s homeland was never threatened. The 9/11 incident changed this, obliging increased budgets for ‘America First’ elements against threats. America perceives the TPP (Trans Pacific Partnership) in terms of its national security. Mr. Trump, however, perceives it as a domestic issue.” She urged the audience to pay attention to the shifts that are taking place in the Republican Party.

Mr. David Kilgour, former Secretary of State of Canada, warned against China’s threats, saying: The “Democratic system of governance is being challenged. I do hope that the world will be governed by the forces of peace.”

The moderator of the session added: (1) A politician changes face from a campaigner to an administrator; (2) America will most likely carry forward policies based on social trends; (3) Japan will be challenged with how it will contribute to the world. He concluded the session by saying, “Following the Meiji Restoration, Japan was influenced by three great thinkers: Yukichi Fukuzawa, Tenshin Okakura and Inazo Nitobe. Another fourth thinker is highly anticipated in this turbulent time, when we should reconsider Japan’s role in the world.”

Session 2: “Turmoil in the Middle East and its Peace Process”

Hon. Yehiel Hilik Bar, deputy speaker of Israel’s parliament, the Knesset, gave the keynote speech for the second session. He outlined his peace proposal for the Israel-Palestine conflict, stressing the need to “solve the conflict,” instead of “managing the conflict,” which the current Israeli government is doing. He averred that the ultimate solution to the conflict is the two-state solution, in which both Israel and Palestine would recognize each other as nations.

“While we cannot agree 100 percent, both sides should strive to solve the problem,” through academic and business exchanges. He declared, “Peace is not a privilege nor a costly prize. Rather than awaiting peace, we must produce peace! That is our duty!”

Dr. Thomas Walsh, president of UPF International, then introduced UPF’s soft power approaches to peace in the Middle East, which include engaging religious leaders not in theological debates but dialogues that seek to establish common grounds for coexistence.

Ms. Moriko Hori, president of the Women’s Federation for World Peace (WFWP)-Japan, reported on the

organization's activities in six Middle Eastern countries, including Israel, Jordan and Iran. She also spoke about WFP's "Women's Conference for Peace in the Middle East." "We aspire to create a process of reconciliation among local women through heart-to-heart exchanges," she said.

Speaking on how Japan can contribute to peace in the Middle East, a former ambassador to the Japan office of a UN agency proposed a grassroots movement connecting peoples from countries in hostile relations be developed.

When asked about America's and Russia's positions on the Israel-Palestine issue, Hon. Bar commented: "The Israel-Palestine question has to be tackled by the two sides concerned. Please observe closely as we will be able to find only [one] settlement on the two-state solution. We desire for warm peace, not cold peace, with peoples [of both Israel and Palestine] reconciling with each other."

Session 3: "Growing Tension in Northeast Asia and Prospects of Japan-Russia Relationship"

As anticipation for the Japan-Russia summit on December 15 grows, Dr. Vladimir Petrovskiy, chief academic researcher at the Russian Academy of Military Science, noted that this year marks the 60th anniversary of the signing of the Soviet-Japanese Joint Declaration (1956) as well as the 65th anniversary of the conclusion of the San Francisco Peace Treaty (1951).

He pointed out that existing territorial disputes and national security issues stem from diverse interpretations of relevant international treaties. Concerning the dispute between Russia and Japan over the Northern Territories or Southern Kuril Islands off Hokkaido, the northernmost of Japan's main islands, Dr. Petrovskiy said that "Territorial matters are sacral for both countries," and noted that Russia deals with territorial issues and economic cooperation as separate matters. He stressed the importance of mutual economic cooperation between as well as communication among Ambassadors of Peace of both countries.

Dr. Victor Razbegin, director of the Interdepartmental Center for Integrated Regional Transport Projects at the Russian Ministry of Economic Development, spoke about the wide-ranging prospects for infrastructure that can link transportation, energy supply and information traffic across Northeast Asia. He mentioned a number of proposals that have been made: the construction of a bridge over the Bering Sea that would link Eurasia with North America; a project that would link Sakhalin, a Russian island in the North Pacific Ocean, with Hokkaido; and the building of an undersea tunnel between Japan and Korea, among others.

He also cited a proposed information infrastructure project that would connect London with Tokyo through fiber optic cables under the Arctic Ocean. "Construction of the infrastructures will not only link Japan and Russia, but also significantly contribute to the development of Northeast Asia."

A former Japanese ambassador stationed in Oceania and Europe gave an overview of the history of and the political and economic systems in Northeast Asia, and commented on the future of Japan-Russia relations. "As long as both countries can find economic benefits in spite of a lack of mutual trust, [both countries] can find confidence as business partners." A member of the audience suggested a mechanism be established that can enhance enhancing cultural exchanges between Japan and Russia.



Session 4: "Potential of Vitalization of Japan and the Role of Young People"

About 150 youth, including college students, attended the fourth session, which was co-hosted by UPF-Japan and the Youth Federation for World Peace (YFWP)-Japan. Dr. In Sup Park, a board member of UPF International, gave words of encouragement.

A university professor gave the keynote speech for the session, which was followed by a panel discussion among young leaders from various fields on how to develop a multicultural Japan as well as revitalize rural communities. In group discussions, the participants renewed their commitment to solving the nation's challenges.

Special Session with Sun Jin Moon: "The Role of Parliamentarians for World Peace"

The special session, "The Role of Parliamentarians for World Peace," was the final session of the ILC, and took place on November 17 in a conference room in the Diet facilities. About 100 people, including dozens of members of the Diet attended the program.

Although the Diet was in session, many of its members joined the event. One member of the House of Representatives (the lower house of the Diet) expressed his aspiration for the new roles of parliamentarians. He said, "We are in an uncertain and tumultuous world. But this may be a blessing in disguise, if we all can open a new path by mustering our dedication and wisdoms for a better world."

Dr. Song of UPF-Japan spoke about the significance of the session, which was especially designed for the parliamentarians: "This format is the brainchild of Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, the co-founders of UPF, in their aspiration for genuine peace overcoming narrow national interests, age-old walls of civilizations and the modern division between religion and politics."

Dr. Sun Jin Moon, chair of UPF International, delivered a message on behalf of Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon. In her message, Mrs. Moon emphasized the role of parliaments and their members, saying, "You are servants of the people, and, as such, are expected to serve the public good, guided by the basic principles of good governance: accountability, transparency, collegiality, inclusivity, and respect for human rights and the rule of law."

"Good governance is secured not only by the policies and laws of the political system. It is also necessary that those who hold positions of power be people of good character, guided by their conscience and universal moral principles."

Mrs. Moon also introduced the founders' vision for peace and highlighted various peace projects initiated by the UPF founders. She also appealed to the parliamentarians to preserve the environment. Furthermore, she made specific proposals for the creation of an interreligious council at the United Nations and of a fifth UN office on the Korean peninsula.

Dr. Moon concluded Mrs. Moon's message by saying, "If parliamentarians of the world can join together in harmony and cooperation for the sake of peace, we can transform the current reality of our world, creating a world of joy, harmony and lasting peace."

Afterwards, Dr. Petrovskiy spoke about the historical background of the Japan Russia peace treaty. Reviewing the two country's bilateral relations, he said, "The mutual relationship needs to be perceived through multiple perspectives, not only from the political aspect but also from human encounters. In this way, the territorial dispute will have to be eventually resolved." He expressed his appreciation to UPF for the Parliamentarians for Peace initiative.

Dr. Thomas Walsh of UPF International addressed the important roles of parliamentarians, particularly for peace and human development. He explained the vision of the International Association of Parliamentarians for Peace as well as that the creation of an international network of parliamentarians was proposed by Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon. He expressed his anticipation for the initiative: "IAPP will assemble parliamentarians committed to world peace who can build bridges of trust among their nations." He reported that the IAPP has been launched in several regions of the world.

Representing the parliamentarians from overseas, Hon. Bar of Israel appealed to the Japanese parliamentarians in this way: "In a ten-hour flight from Tokyo, you will be in the Middle East, [which is] still plagued by violence and conflict. Please pay close attention to that part of the world!" He pledged, as a representative of citizens, "I will fulfill my responsibility for world peace!"

Many participants including members of the Diet signed the proposal to establish the IAPP in Japan.