

UPF Europe and the Middle East: Developing a Foundation for Korean Reunification

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Europe and the Middle East - The regional branches of UPF and its International Association of Academicians for Peace (IAAP) held a webinar on "Building an International Environment Conducive to the Peaceful Unification of North and South Korea."

An international audience of more than 70 participants attended the program on September 3, 2021.

The main presenter was Professor Yoshisumi Asai, a special lecturer at the Faculty of Global Regional Studies of Doshisha University in Kyoto, Japan. In August 2021, Professor Asai was one of the speakers at the UPF-organized International Leadership Conference (ILC), in which he spoke about North Korea's Juche ideology.

《1》 The Yalta Talks and the Division of the Korean Peninsula (4.2.1945)

Treatment of Japanese territory (Korean Peninsula, etc.)

(1) U.S. Choices (1) Independent management by the United States
(2) International control by allied countries

Roosevelt Administration

Korea must build trust with three countries: the Soviet Union, China, and the United States. (Yalta Talks)

(2) U.S. → request to The Soviet Union to join against Japan

Former Manchukuo · Korean Peninsula (Territory of Japan)

Allied Position (9.8.1945)

Prof. Yoshisumi Asai

Professor Asai began by pointing out that the root cause of the division of Korea lay in the Yalta Conference of 1945. At that time, the leaders of the United States, the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union, who were meeting to decide the postwar reorganization of Europe, made a tacit agreement to divide the Korean Peninsula. The subsequent Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union prolonged the division after the Korean War, preventing Koreans from reuniting their nation.

By the time the Cold War ended in the 1990s, Japan had become the No. 2 economy next to the United States, while in the 2000s China grew rapidly, surpassing Japan as the second global economy. Thus, both countries also have exerted considerable influence over Korea's future course, Professor Asai said.

North Korea, as a communist regime, has been aligned with the Soviet Union and China, while South Korea has been protected by the United States and economically supported by Japan. While the North and the South each is struggling to find its own course, including peaceful coexistence, if not unification, they are desperately exploring means to diplomatically accommodate the four countries concerned - the United States, Japan, China and Russia - in order to arrive at a conducive international system.



Around the end of the Cold War in Europe, South Korea took the chance of normalizing relations with Eastern European countries and eventually the Soviet Union in 1990, mainly thanks to South Korea's economic strength, Professor Asai said. Though North Korea tried a similar action with the United States and Japan, it could not achieve normalization with either nation. Thus, isolated North Korea opted for its nuclear diplomacy, perfecting its nuclear deterrence by 2007. In spite of two summits with the United States (2018, 2019), the North could not achieve normalization with the United States.

Based on several missed opportunities in the past decades, Professor Asai advised the following:

- 1) Firm collaboration among South Korea, the United States and Japan
- 2) Normalization of U.S. and Japanese relations with North Korea
- 3) Inviting a United Nations organ to the 38th parallel (the Demilitarized Zone).

Professor Asai's lecture referred to the direct efforts of UPF founder Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon to support the achievement of the above-mentioned goals through his meetings with Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev (1990) and North Korean President Kim Il Sung (1991). Reverend Moon's personal engagements with Japanese political leaders also turned out to be vital in improving relations between Japan and South Korea, Professor Asai said.