

UPF-USA's IMAP: Covering the Koreas: Traditional and Non-Traditional Approaches

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USA - The International Media Association for Peace (IMAP) webinar on October 21, 2021 focused on the subject, "Covering the Koreas: Traditional and Non-Traditional Approaches to Understanding." The webinar was opened by Mr. Pierre Beauregard, IMAP coordinator for Canada, and moderated by Dr. Michael Jenkins, president of the Washington Times Foundation and the Universal Peace Federation, both sponsoring organizations for the monthly program.



The panelists included: Dr. Ok-Kyung Pak, a social anthropologist and consultant on gender and social development issues, who spoke on the topic "In Search of a Better World: A Never-Ending Journey - Korean Diaspora." She gave her testimony of being born and raised in Korea and eventually moving to Canada where she has spent her last 50 plus years. She spoke of her interests which lie in understanding women's roles to help develop a market economy in the Koreas. This could serve as a catalyst for Korean reunification.

Mr. Guy Taylor, the national security team leader from The Washington Times, discussed the difficulty of a journalist in getting accurate information from North Korea. He gave examples of NBA basketball star Dennis Rodman going to North Korea on several occasions and meeting with Kim Jung Un, and the performance of the K-Pop group Red Velvet in North Korea. He suggested that perhaps social and

cultural events are a good means for exchange, even more so than political ones. He also spoke about various think tanks and their contacts as a source for information.



Mr. Jacco Zwetsloot, a Korean-based podcast host on North Korean related issues for NK News, spoke on "Blind Men Discovering the Elephant: Exploring North Korea from as Many Angles as Possible." He is trying to build a complete and accurate picture of North Korea by collecting information from as many organizations and outlets as possible. He suggested approaching North Korea as "real people and a real society" and not just as property. He proposed getting perspectives from defectors, human aid workers, and students, among others.

The moderator, Dr. Michael Jenkins, emphasized the importance of not overlooking the human aspect of North Korean diplomacy and that we need to engage people to people.

After the panel discussion, Dr. Jenkins led a QandA session in which sanctions, denuclearization, and women's equality and status, among other topics, were discussed to conclude the informative and thought-provoking program.

