# UPF Moscow, Russia's Webinar: Prospects for Peace on the Korean Peninsula

Maria Nazarova November 10, 2020



Moscow, Russia -- The Universal Peace Federation held a webinar on the theme "Prospects for Peace on the Korean Peninsula."

A survey conducted during the November 10, 2020, webinar showed that most of the 160 participants were NGO representatives, academic researchers, and representatives from the business and cultural fields.

The moderator, UPF-Russia President Maria Nazarova, explained that the webinar was being held to support UPF's Rally of Hope, scheduled to be broadcast around the world on November 22, with the aim of promoting the peaceful reunification of Korea.

The panelists of the webinar were Dr. Alexander Zhebin from the Center for Korean Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences' Institute of Far Eastern Studies, based in Moscow; and Dr. Katsumi Otsuka, UPF chair for Europe, Eurasia and the Middle East.

Each panelist gave a 10-minute presentation, followed by a question-and-answer session.

Dr. Zhebin spoke about U.S. President Donald Trump's Korea legacy and the steps that a Joseph Biden administration most likely would take toward Korea. <u>Click here to read Dr. Zhebin's full speech</u>. He referred to the U.S. foreign policy's focus on geopolitics vs. nonproliferation, then spoke about U.S.-China relations from the perspective of the situation on the Korean Peninsula.

Pointing to the common interest of Korea and Russia in a process of reconciliation, Dr. Zhebin stated:

"Russia's firm conviction is that there is no alternative to inter-Korean dialogue and cooperation. Besides being economically advantageous, such interaction is highly likely to contribute to confidence-building and reconciliation between South and North Korea." And he added: "Russia is ready to work with China, the United States, Japan and other parties concerned to create international conditions favorable for a sustainable peace process on the peninsula."

"It is high time," he concluded, "for the Korean people, both in the North and the South, to take their nation's destiny in their own hands."

Dr. Katsumi Otsuka talked about the merits of the reunification of Korea. <u>Click here to read Dr. Otsuka's</u> <u>full speech</u>. "If South Korean technology and natural resources in the North were combined," he said, "the unified Korea would become a very powerful nation in Asia."

He described three possible ways for unification. The first – by force – was tried unsuccessfully during the Korean War. The second – by competition – would mean that "the winner absorbs the loser." Citing Germany as a case study, comparing it to the Korean situation, he mentioned several factors that would make such a path uncertain: the greater gap between the two economies, the greater mutual distrust, the gradual loss of a common identity, the instability of the local and international environment.

He described the very high cost the unification process would entail, and the possibility that the Korean people would demand the support of the international community. He quoted a 2005 survey by the South Korean newspaper JoongAng Ilbo asking readers which nation they thought had the greatest responsibility for the division of the Korean Peninsula. Fifty-three percent of the respondents said the United States; 15.8 said Japan; 13.7 percent said Russia; and 8.8 percent said China – although there was no denial of internal reasons for the division.

Speaking about the third way, Dr. Otsuka referred to the vision of UPF founders Dr. and Mrs. Moon, quoting them: "The unification of Korea should be made with the heart of walking together." He told about the agreements the UPF founders signed with North Korea's supreme leader Kim II Sung during their historic meeting in North Korea in December 1991.

In conclusion, he said: "Because Korea was divided by the Cold War and during the Cold War, today the international community needs to send a Warm Spring Breeze to re-unify Korea. ... Therefore, reunification needs an atmosphere of cooperation beyond selfish interests. I hope that Russia, China, and the United States will play a historic role as peacemakers."

# **Question-and-answer session**

The first question, to Dr. Zhebin, was about President Trump's policy and the expected policy of Joe Biden toward Korea. His opinion, Dr. Zhebin said, was that despite all his policy's shortcomings, President Trump made a huge step forward in allowing the summit meetings between the U.S. and North Korean heads of state. With power in North Korea so personalized and concentrated in the hands of one person, he added, dialogue is essential. From his viewpoint, there most likely would not be any drastic policy change between a Joe Biden administration and the Barack Obama administration, which pursued a policy of strategic patience.

Asked how a new focus on Korean people's identity might help reunification, Dr. Otsuka interpreted Dr. Moon's view as the need for Korean people to go back to their historical roots, to look at their 5,000-year history of suffering, and to forge a new path together toward the future.

To watch the full version of the webinar in English, click here.



## UPF INTERNATIONAL TINITZEDSAT DEACE

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	Studies,	by Dr. Alexander Zhebin, director, Moscow, Russia , November 10, 2020	Center for Korean Studies, In	stitute of Far Eastern			
WORLDWIDE CHAPTERS	Address to UPF-Russia Webinar "Prospects for Peace on the Korean Peninsula," November 10, 2020						
NEWSLETTER SIGN UP	1. Donald Trump's Korean Heritage and Joe Biden						
Search Go	Almost all experts agree that a Joe Biden victory in the U.S. presidential election would lead to significant changes in U.S. foreign policy. The world is already far with such U-turns, which, every eight or even four years, confuse both friends a foes of the United States. It is enough to recall the ABC ("Anything but Clinton") policy, de facto carried out by George W. Bush, or the very recent example of th ABO ("Anything but Obama") line, practiced by Donald Trump.						
«< November 2020 >»   S M T W T F S   1 2 3 4 5 6 7   8 9 10 11 12 13 14   15 16 17 18 19 20 21   22 23 24 25 26 27 28	blamin States i highly l and wit	This is to say about the predictability of foreign policy. The United States is so fond of blaming North Korea for its lack of predictability. But when it concerns the United States itself, the only thing that is predictable is that each new U.S. president is highly likely to violate or cancel international treaties signed by his predecessors, and withdraw from bilateral and even multilateral international agreements and organizations.					
29 30 1 2 3 4 5	slogan	ntly, we all may have to go thr ABT ("Anything but Trump"). Bi Ja. What changes could we ex	ut today we will talk about	the Korean			
NOV 21: 2020 G20 Blyadh summit NOV 22; Rally of Hope #3 NOV 23: LIPEJapan LLC webinar NOV 26: UN Int, Day - Elimination of Violence Against Women and Girls NOV 27; LIPE-Africa LLC webinar	feature probler badly d Europe	Firstly, almost all experts agree that the Korean Peninsula would be unlikely to feature prominently on Biden's foreign policy agenda. Besides huge domestic problems, there is an urgent task to repair bilateral relations with key U.S. allies, badly damaged under Trump, as well as U.Sled military and political alliances – from Europe to East Asia. Only North Korea's ICBM or nuclear weapons tests might require a shift of attention to Korea.					
NOV 27: UPF-EUME. WFWP ILC webinar NOV 27: UPF-South America ILC webinar NOV 28: UPF-Central America and the Caribbean ILC webinar NOV 29: UPF-Asia Pacific ILC webinar	Kim Jor he agre foreign probler purpos	Secondly, Biden himself has repeatedly criticized Trump's "summit diplomacy" with Kim Jong Un and said that a meeting with the North Korean leader is possible only if he agrees to the American denuclearization scenario. At the same time, Biden's foreign policy team has an understanding that a one-time solution to the nuclear problem is unrealistic. They do not rule out contacts at the working level for the purpose of exchanging mutual concessions if they lead to the DPRK's abandonment of its nuclear an missile programs.					
LANGUAGES Français - French Español - Spanish русский - Russian Italiano - Italian	Obama Obama abando by Trur credite	some experts believe that, tal administration, a return to th 's term could not be excluded. on the policy of "maximum pre np. It enjoys almost unanimou d with the fact that the DPRK h nce the fall of 2017.	e policy of "strategic patie At the same time, the Dens ssure" against the DPRK w is bipartisan support on Ca	nce" practiced during mocrats would not which was carried out apitol Hill, and it is			
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	2. <b>G</b>	eopolitics vs. Nonproliferatio	on in U.S. Foreign Policy				
	Declara Korean which r	ited States' obvious unwillingn ation with North Korea proves Peninsula is prompted mainly represents the real, not declam Tha, a well-known expert on Ko	once again that the U.S. p / by geopolitical considera natory U.S. policy on Korea	olicy toward the tions. The approach was epitomized by			

Victor Cha, a well-known expert on Korean affairs in the George W. Bush administration. As early as 2009, he left a very explicit behest to Obama administrations: "Keep an eye on the prize: Remember that the ultimate prize is not denuclearization but managing an eventual 'inheritance' process where a united Korea, free and democratic, is an engine of peace and economic growth in Asia and a global partner of the United States in world affairs."[i]

The nonproliferation agenda was and remains a supplementary tool to achieve U.S. geopolitical aims in the region. Those aims have remained unchanged for the whole post-World War II period, irrespective of the incumbent administration – Republican or Democratic. These aims can be summarized as maintaining political and military supremacy in the Asia-Pacific, nowadays extended to the Indo-Pacific, and, according to Joe Biden, continuing "to write the rules of the road for the world."[ii]

Any real détente in Korea-the more so, normalization of relations between the United States and the DPRK, or between North and South Korea—inevitably would call into question the U.S. military presence on the peninsula. U.S. troops' withdrawal from South Korea could provoke the same developments in Japan. Both developments would remove a cornerstone of the U.S. strategy in the Asia-Pacific as a whole, since it is based on bilateral military-political alliances with Japan and the ROK and the forward deployment of U.S. armed forces in these countries.

Besides, the normalization of relations between the United States and the DPRK or the drastic improvement of inter-Korean relations would lead to the disappearance of the so-called "North Korean threat." The development, in its turn, would deprive the United States of the last more or less serious argument justifying deployment of missile defense systems in Northeast Asia.

Therefore the United States is actually interested either in maintaining tension on the peninsula at the level justifying deployment of U.S. troops and the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system, or, in the best of cases, in bringing about a

regime change in the DPRK. The latter scenario would allow the United States to spread its control over the whole of the Korean Peninsula – a region of Asia that is unique in military-strategic value, bordering both Russia and China – two powers which potentially can still challenge the U.S. world hegemony. The advancement of U.S. armed forces right on Korea's overland borders with China and Russia would bring about radical changes in the military-political situation in East Asia and in the Asia-Pacific region.

#### 3. The Korean Peninsula and U.S.-China Relations

To understand China's position, it is necessary to consider that China and Korea have been neighbors for several thousand years. Till the 20<sup>th</sup> century Korea was included in China's exclusive sphere of influence. The break of the last 150 years means nothing from China's vision of history and its long-term interests on the peninsula and in the region, when compared with the previous 5,000 years and maybe the same period in the future.

In spite of an ongoing debate within Chinese leadership and among foreign policy experts on the feasibility of China's current policy of keeping North Korea afloat, it is unlikely that even post-communist China, to say nothing of the present-day one, which is preserving the socialist system and the ruling role of the Communist Party, would agree to a situation in which it finds a united Korea under the U.S. prevailing political influence, to say nothing of U.S. troops. However, it will be exactly the case if North Korea collapses in the near future.

China, irrespective of other great powers' positions, prefers, at least for the time being, to keep North Korea afloat as a buffer zone between itself and the U.S. forward deployment forces on Asia's mainland. For China to lose North Korea would be equal to losing the second Korean War with the possible subsequent stationing of U.S. troops on the Yalu River. The prospect is absolutely unacceptable in view of both the current U.S. policy toward China and Beijing's plans concerning Taiwan and the South China Sea.

The United States understands that any attempt to take hold of what China has considered its sphere of influence for hundreds of years would lead to a major quarrel with the world's economic superpower and with another world civilization – a Confucian one. For the time being, the United States seemingly also is not ready for a major conflict with China over North Korea.

Beijing, apparently, will try henceforth to employ all diplomatic as well as economic resources necessary to ensure the DPRK's survival. At the same time, China will encourage North Korea in every possible way to exercise restraint in foreign policy and to go on with economic transformations which would lessen the political and economic burden on China to support the regime in Pyongyang.

Meanwhile, Washington is actively exploiting Beijing's desire to avoid direct confrontation with the United States and to prolong the peace situation on its borders. The United States exerts enormous pressure on China, trying to force it to participate in the economic strangulation of the DPRK, and at the same time to show to the world that the United States is capable of forcing China to act as the United States wishes, even in relations with countries that are China's neighbors or even allies.

The United States is persistently trying to involve China in the planning of coordinated actions in the event of some emergency in the DPRK, by which the West understands the collapse of the regime. I think the Chinese do not believe the promises of the Americans that in this case the United States would not expand its military presence to the northern part of the peninsula, but would limit itself only to the search and removal of North Korean weapons of mass destruction. Beijing is unlikely unaware of similar promises made to the Soviet leadership about the NATO non-expansion to the East and compares them with the current realities in Europe.

At the moment there is quite a delicate balance on the peninsula – the United States is trying by "maximum pressure" (sticks) and promises of security assurances and economic prosperity (carrots) to rein in and "drag" the DPRK into its sphere of influence, but China is doing its best to retain North Korea as a friendly state and a buffer to U.S. forward deployment forces in East Asia.

#### 4. Reconciliation in Korea and Russia's Interests

Russia always welcomed all moves by the two Korean states aimed at relaxing tension and promoting inter-Korean cooperation, because of two major considerations: Moscow hopes that inter-Korean reconciliation, firstly, will remove the threat of military conflict right next to its eastern border, and secondly, will promote a more favorable environment for development of Russia's bilateral economic ties with the two Korean states as well as for implementing multilateral economic projects with Russia's participation in Northeast Asia.

Russia's firm conviction is that there is no alternative to inter-Korean dialogue and cooperation. Besides being economically advantageous, such interaction is highly likely to contribute to confidence-building and reconciliation between South and North Korea.

Russia is ready to work with China, the United States, Japan and other parties concerned to create international conditions favorable for a sustainable peace process on the peninsula.

#### 5. Conclusion

The ongoing suspension of the negotiating process on the nuclear problem provides South and North Korea with a unique chance, through their own mutual efforts, to seize leadership in removing the threat of another major conflict, promoting peace and common prosperity. The best option for the Koreans would be to resume working to implement the bilateral agreements reached between South and North Korea at the various talks held during several previous decades, including those agreed upon at the three historic inter-Korean summits held in 2018. It is high time for Koreans both in the North and in the South to take their nation's destiny in their own hands.

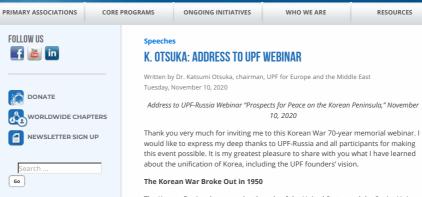
Russia hopes that the future unified Korea will become its good neighbor and a major economic partner. The emergence of such an actor in the region is perceived in Moscow as beneficial both for Russia's security and for its economic interests in East Asia.

#### References:

 [i] Cha, Victor. U.S.-Korea Relations: Obama's Korea Inheritance. Comparative Connections. Oct.-Dec. 2009. URL: http://cc.pacforum.org/2009/01/obamas-korea inheritance/

[ii] Marc Champion, Nick Wadhams and Arne Delfs. The World Has Changed Too Much for Biden to Erase the Trump Effect. *Bloomberg*. 17.07.2020.URL: https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-07-17/the-world-has-changed-toomuch-for-biden-to-erase-the-trump-effect

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### CALENDAR OF EVENTS

«<	No	ver	nbe	r 20	20	> x
s	м	т	w	т	F	s
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	1	2	3	4	5

NOV 20: UPF-EUME ILC webinar NOV 21: 2020 G20 Riyadh summit NOV 22: Rally of Hope #3 NOV 23: UPF-lapan ILC webinar NOV 26: UN Int. Day - Elimination of NOV 27: UPF-Africa ILC webinar NOV 27: UPF-EUME, WFWP ILC webinar NOV 27: UPF-South America ILC webina NOV 28: UPF-Central America and the Caribbean ILC webinar NOV 29: UPF-Asia Pacific ILC webinar

LANGUAGES Français - French Español - Spanish русский - Russian Italiano - Italian

The Korean Peninsula was under the rule of the United States and the Soviet Union. which had divided the nation at the 38th parallel after the Second World War. During the 35 years of Japanese occupation, the active independence movements we mainly organized by Christians and communists. After the South Korean and North Korean governments each declared independence in 1948, the nation was fully divided, and the division eventually ignited the Korean War. On June 25, 1950, the North Korean army, supported by the Soviet Union, crossed the 38th parallel into South Korea for the purpose of unifying the country, in their view

The United Nations Command was organized in 1950 to support South Korea. This is why some scholars refer to the Korean War as the "Third World War." The background of Korean division was the emergence of the Cold War. The ceasefire agreement, signed after Joseph Stalin died in 1953, has been maintained until today. Since time is very limited in this webinar, let me focus on the reunification of Korea.

#### The Benefits of Reunification

Let me first introduce some scholars' views regarding the benefits of reunification. Peaceful unification would realize 1) political stability and multilateral cooperation in East Asia, which would lead to 2) the reduction of military power in East Asia. Peace would bring 3) the dynamic economic development of Korea. The reunification would also mean 4) the final end of the Cold War, which would escalate 5) the establishment of the East Asia Union. As a result, the Far East would develop. Korean people commonly think that if South Korean technology and the natural resources in the North would be combined, the unified Korea would become a very powerful nation in Asia

#### The Way for Reunification

How, then, can the reunification of Korea be realized? Let me introduce the three steps for reunification

The first step (model) is unification by force. This was attempted through the Korean War. The war, however, brought tremendous damage to the Korean land and people. We all agree that a second Korean War should not happen on the peninsula The second step is unification by competition. This means the winner in national development and international recognition absorbs the loser. We can learn a lot from Germany in this regard.

#### The Lessons from the Case of Germany

There were many factors that made German unification possible. The key factors were 1) the economic power gap between West and East was fairly small, 2) the West German economy was well developed to cover the cost of reunification, 3) the historical and cultural identity was maintained to some extent, 4) they had no tragic experience of bloodshed, 5) the Cold War was ending. German reunification would have been impossible without international consent including Russia.

#### What about the Case of Korea?

We can make only a limited analysis, due to the lack of North Korean data. Let me dare to speak about it.

1) The economic disparity between North and South is unmeasurable. Some scholars analyzed it at about 1:50 or more. 2) The South Korean economy has greatly developed but has not been strong enough to embrace North Korea. 3) The national identities of both sides are completely different. 4) Mutual distrust is still quite intense due to the Korean War. 5) The international peripheral environment for reunification looks like it has not matured yet

This second model for unification has not brought reunification to the Korean Peninsula. In the case of Korea, the winner could not absorb the loser. The current South Korean president, Moon Jae-in, delivered the following message on June 25, 2020, on the occasion of a memorial ceremony for the 70th anniversary of the start of the Korean War

"We are against a war. Our GDP is more than 50 times that of North Korea, and our trade is over 400 times that of the North. The two Koreas' competition over political and economic systems already ended a long time ago."

This is why the Korean people, and including surrounding nations, need the third model for unification. Before introducing the third stage and the views of Dr. Sun Myung Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon, let me speak about something fundamental.

### Challenges to Unification: The Cost of Unification

According to an estimate by the Federation of Korean Industries (2005), between 2 trillion and 3 trillion USD would be necessary as the cost of unification. I suppose they would need more!

What would be the possible solutions to cover this huge cost? One would be to install a re-unification tax, and the other would be for the Korean government to request support from the international community. Let me introduce one interesting data about the Korean people's understanding. In 2005 the JoongAng Ilbo, a South Korean newspaper, conducted a survey of its readers, asking the question "Who was responsible for the division of Korea?" The responses were as follows:

United States-53%, Japan-15.8%, Russia-13.7%, China-8.8%

A unified Korea may demand support based on this percentage. Of course, there were domestic reasons for division, but it could not be denied that the Cold War divided Korea.

#### North Korea's Uniqueness

The unique characteristic of North Korea is the Juche ideology, which means "selfreliance or subjectivity" and is a totally human-centric thought. The North Korean supreme leader *Kim II Sung* started to speak about Juche in the 1950s, and *Hwang Jang-yop*, who later defected to South Korea, systematized it in the 1970s.

The Juche ideology was understood as a Korean version of Marxism-Leninism in the beginning, but gradually it turned into a nationalistic idea, losing the original factors. The key points of this thought are "Subjectivity in ideology, Political independence, Economic self-sustenance, Self-reliance in defense." The country of North Korea is based upon this ideology.

Seen from this ideology, North Korea has been developing nuclear weapons to achieve self-defense. This is why many scholars think that North Korea will never give up upgrading its nuclear capability. The denuclearization of "North Korea" or of the "Korean Peninsula" is the biggest issue of the U.S.-North Korean Peace Talks.

#### The UPF Founders' View

The fundamental issue is the South Korean people's desire for unification. According to a survey conducted in 2017 by the *Korean Institute for National Unification*, 57.8 percent of South Koreans responded that unification was needed; however, 60 percent of young people in their 20s said they didn't want unification. More than any political or economic measures, the enthusiasm for unification must be revived.

Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon were both born in what is now North Korea during the Japanese occupation. They experienced the Second World War and the Korean War. They were both refugees during the Korean War. This is one of the factors that motivated them to work tirelessly for peace and unification. This year of 2020 is the 100-year commemoration of Reverend Moon's birth.

Dr. and Mrs. Moon visited North Korea in December 1991 for the sake of building peace on the peninsula, even risking their lives. They had a peace talk with North Korean supreme leader *Kim Il Sung*, who once attempted to kill Dr. Moon. It was a big surprise for us that the peace agreement was signed by them. Let me introduce:

The implementation of separated-family visitations

The peaceful use of nuclear energy

The welcoming of investments by overseas Koreans

The realization of summit talks between North and South

The development of the Mount Kumgang Tourist Region

This agreement became a fundamental framework of North Korea's diplomatic policy in the 1990s and the early 21st century.

#### Dr. Moon's Tearful Speech

We can know the heart behind their visit to North Korea from Dr. Moon's speech in 1987 in which he urged South Koreans to have "the heart to walk together [with North Koreans] as an accompanying person."

Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon also speaks with the heart of a mother, saying that "God, as the Parent of humanity, is desiring that His children live in harmony, eliminating hostile relationships." The words of the UPF founders may sound overly religious and abstract, but this message had an impact on the South Korean people at that time.

Based on their speeches, the agreement can be explained as follows:

Since the fundamental issue is the enthusiasm for unification, Dr. and Mrs. Moon proposed a new identity to both.

Ten million North Korean refugees live in the South. Separated-family visitation is a very humanitarian plan. By implementing this plan, misunderstandings on both sides will be resolved gradually.

The peaceful use of nuclear energy is crucial for peace.

It is expected that overseas Koreans' investments will contribute to unification. This is why Dr. Moon has been involved in the unity of pro-North and pro-South people in Japan.

After this agreement was made, South Korean President *Kim Dae-jung* and North Korean leader *Kim Jong-il* met on June 15, 2000.

The Mount Kumgang Project was the one Dr. Moon proposed first to the North Korean government.

#### Closing

Of course, the United States and China may play a decisive role, but the role of Russia will be greater than we imagine. As no nation can stand alone in the world, effective international cooperation and support are extremely important for the unification of Korea.

As Korea was divided by and during the Cold War, it would be good for the international community to send a "warm spring Dreeze" for unifying Korea. This is why Dr. Sun Myung Moon and Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon have stated that reunification has to be realized based upon true love. I am hoping that Russia, China, and the United States will play a historic role as peacemakers. Thank you very much.

To go back to the report on the Russian Webinar exploring Korea's Future, click here.

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