

UPF Europe and the Middle East ILC: Europe and the Korean Peninsula

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ILC2021-6-Session 6 "Europe and the Korean Peninsula" and Closing "Think Tank 2022 Recommendations"

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MR. PETER HAIDER
President, UPF Austria

CONCLUDING REMARKS
DR. AFSAR RATHOR
President of LIOS, Austria

SPEAKERS

MR. ALYN WARE
Director, Peace and Disarmament Program,
World Future Council

DR. BEATRICE BISCHOF
Foreign Affairs Association,
Munich, Germany

DR. WALTER FEICHTINGER
President, Center for Strategic Analysis (CSA) in Vienna

DR. DIETER SCHMIDT
Medical doctor,
Chairman of UPF Central Europe

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Europe and the Middle East -- The sixth session of the June 2021 International Leadership Conference was titled "Europe and the Korean Peninsula."

The June 30 session was one of six ILC webinars that were held from June 24 to 30, 2021, under the theme of "Toward Peaceful Reunification of the Korean Peninsula."



Background

The Korean War -- the first major conflict of the Cold War -- broke out in 1950. Several European countries sent troops in support of the United Nations Command. Korea, which until then was a relatively unknown country in the West, was put on the map. The armistice signed in July 1953 brought an end to the armed conflict on the peninsula, which remained divided between North and South. However, no peace treaty was signed. Whether there will ever be lasting peace depends in great part on the major powers in the region.

Europe's role has evolved from military intervention to a soft-power approach, economic cooperation with South Korea, humanitarian aid for and diplomacy with North Korea. Drawing on their experience in conflict management, the panelists addressed the question of Europe's contribution to the easing of tensions on the Korean Peninsula.



Speakers

Dr. Walter Feichtinger, president, Center for Strategic Analysis, located in Vienna, Austria

Alyn Ware, director, Peace and Disarmament Program, World Future Council, located in Hamburg, Germany

Dr. Beatrice Bischof, Foreign Affairs Association, Munich, Germany

Dr. Dieter Schmidt, medical doctor, chairman of UPF for Central Europe

The moderator was **Peter Haider**, the president of UPF-Austria.



Dr. Walter Feichtinger addressed the webinar via a video message. After assessing the security situation in the western Pacific Ocean and South China Sea, he spoke of the impact Europe may have in this regard. He said he has the feeling that the Cold War is continuing unabated, with China now replacing Russia in a bipolar system still in place.

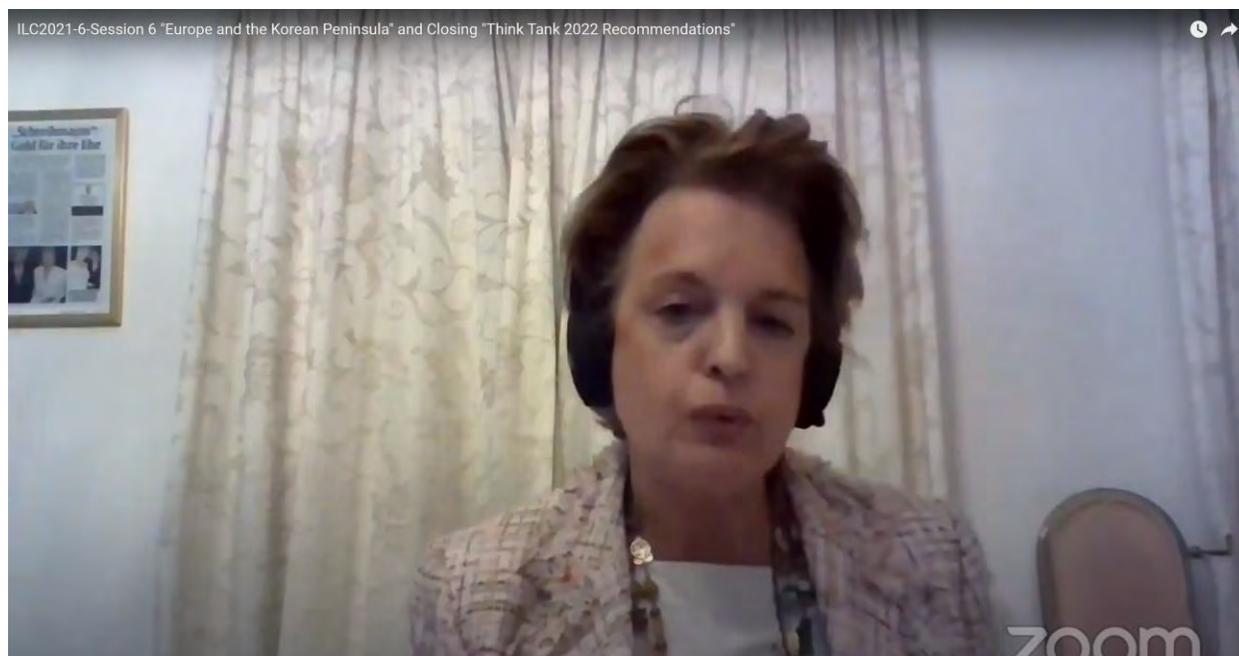
First, on the level of regional actors, North Korea still relies on self-isolation and nuclear deterrence. South Korea is strongly dependent on the United States for its security and stability in the region. China, the most dominant neighbor, is steadily growing stronger militarily and economically. It supports North Korea and does not shy away from applying pressure on other countries, such as Japan, which has the effect of strengthening its bond with the United States.

On a second level, he said, there is the overwhelming competition between the United States and China. The hot topic in the region is Taiwan. Recent events in Hong Kong have shown that China is going for one country, one system. In the event of an escalation, the United States will have no choice but to take a

strong stance. The threat coming from North Korea helps the United States to further provide a security umbrella for and intensify relations and cooperation with its allies in the region, while it is increasingly being challenged by China.

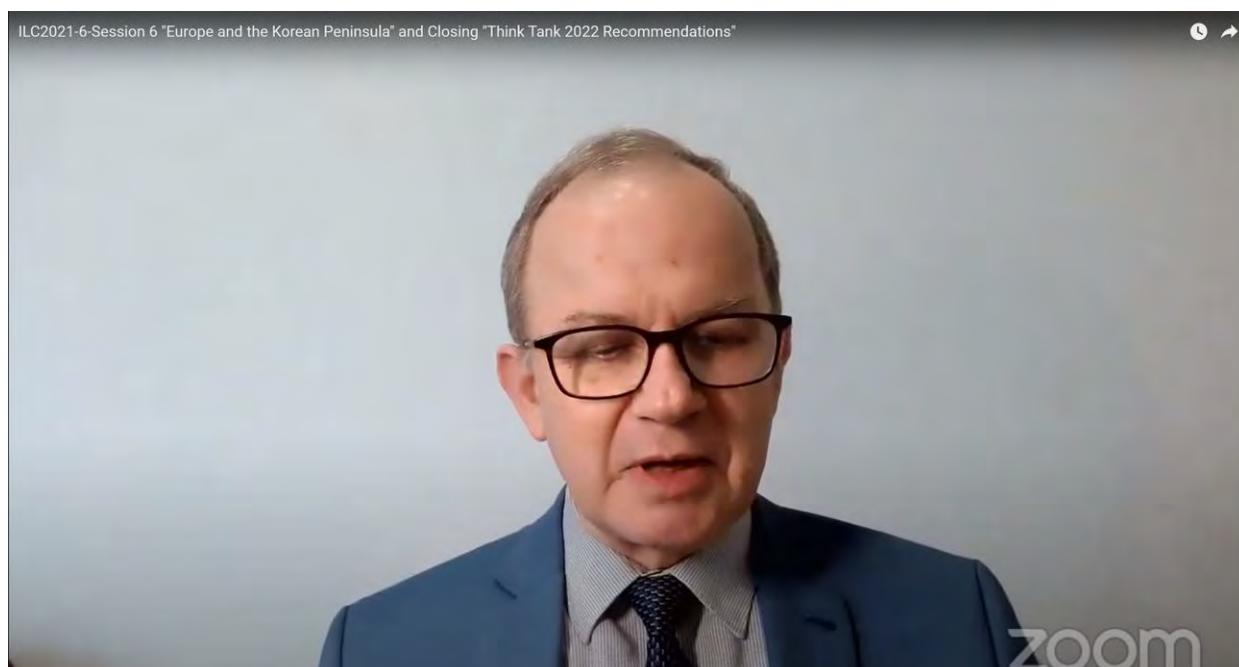
Russia's interest on the international scene is to cooperate with China to be perceived as a global actor. It is supportive of North Korea. The growing tensions between China, Russia and the United States are not conducive to peace in the region.

What does this mean for Europe? Europe, a co-signer of the non-proliferation treaty, fears that North Korea may inspire other authoritarian regimes to develop nuclear weapons. The more the United States is shifting its interests and resources into the western Pacific, the more Europe should take its security into its own hands. To conclude, Dr. Feichtinger said peace in Northeast Asia much depends on how relations between China and the United States will develop. Taiwan can be a game-changer.



Alyn Ware spoke about two initiatives with which he has been involved. The first was the proposal for a Northeast Asian nuclear-free zone, which would denuclearize not only North Korea but also other key countries in the region and create a cooperative security framework modeled on nuclear-free zones in other regions.

The treaties signed are based on a common security approach, with all countries involved and not just a few. There has been cooperation with the Asia Pacific Leadership Network, which is a network of former prime ministers, ministers of defense, parliamentarians and other experts in the region, and also the United States, China, Japan. A model was developed that would require the two Koreas and Japan not to have nuclear weapons of their own or to use those of their allies to threaten each other. The common security framework is supported by the two Koreas and Japan.



The other initiative Mr. Ware mentioned is the PyeongChang Peace Forum, which aims at elevating

sports diplomacy. It builds off the 2018 Olympic Peace Initiative launched by South Korea to have a joint ice hockey team at the Olympics and to use the Olympics as a place for informal discussions on a basis of equality. The pandemic has put a stop to this initiative, but it will be picked up again with the next Winter Olympics.

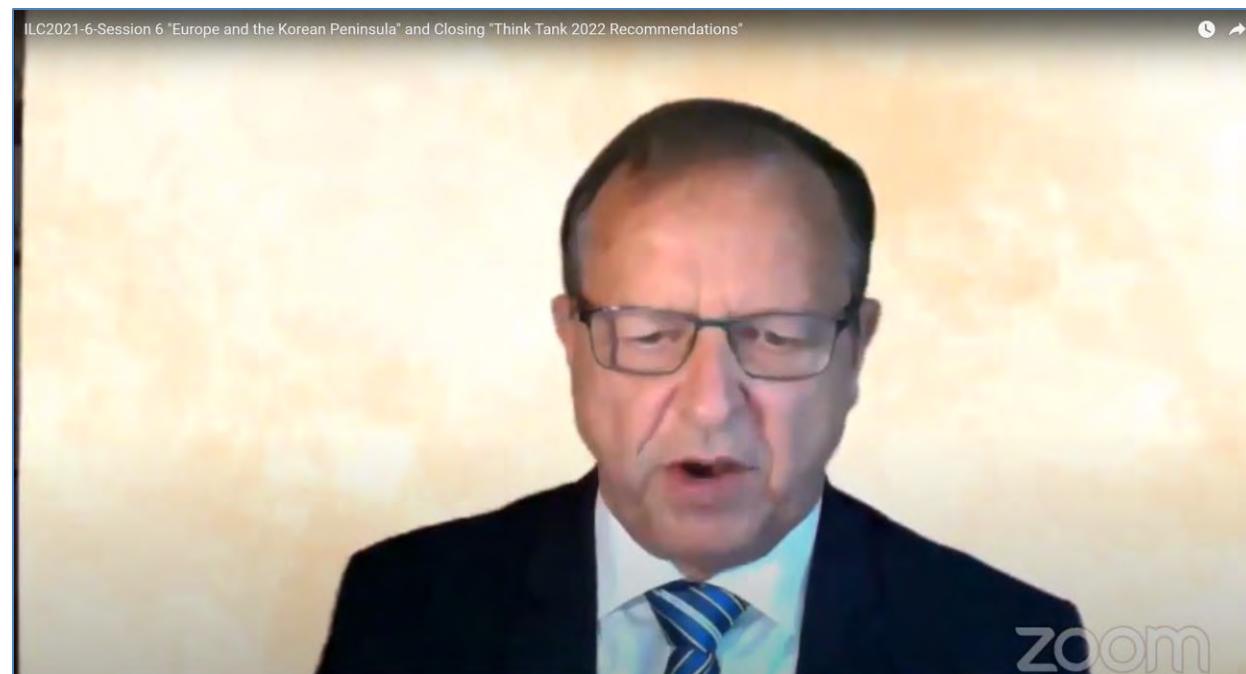
In the meantime, annual PyeongChang peace forums are gathering not only sports personalities but also academics and businesspeople to find paths to sustainable peace between North and South Korea. Most importantly, this initiative is expanding the peace process beyond the political sphere. The forum has demonstrated that there are many ways to move forward while showing mutual respect for all parties.

Many efforts, however, are being hampered by the comprehensive sanctions against the North Korean regime, Mr. Ware said. He recommended that they should be replaced by targeted sanctions, so that there is more room for humanitarian aid and citizen diplomacy.



Dr. Beatrice Bischof began by speaking of the Korean-German relationship that began 136 years ago. After World War II and the Korean War, both Germany and Korea were divided. The German Democratic Republic and North Korea established diplomatic relations in 1949; the Federal Republic of Germany established diplomatic relations with South Korea in 1955.

After the reunification of Germany, the ties became stronger, Dr. Bischof said. The Sunshine Policy of South Korean President Kim Dae-Jung (1988-2003) was very similar to the Ostpolitik of West German Chancellor Willy Brandt (1969 to 1974). In 2008 Germany decided to strengthen ties with South Korea, which had become an important market for Germany and vice versa. Diplomatic relations between the unified Germany and North Korea were established in 2001 on the proposal of South Korea.



Relations between North and South Korea today are somewhat changed, Dr. Bischof said, as the Sunshine

Policy has made a comeback in the South, while in the North the focus has switched from self-sufficiency to economic development. A breakthrough came with the 2018 Olympics and the Panmunjom Declaration. Women's Federation for World Peace, an organization that is affiliated with UPF, has proposed the development of a peace zone within the Demilitarized Zone. To boost people-to-people exchange, Dr. Bischof suggested that economic hubs be created within the DMZ to allow women from the North and the South to cooperate on common projects.

The last topic Dr. Bischof raised was the example of German reunification. In fact, the South Koreans do not want to absorb the North, as they fear the economic impact this would have. Both North and South Koreans prefer a step-by-step approach of integration, a process of coexistence and common prosperity, whereas the United States wants North Korea to denuclearize first. Germany favors a carrot-and-stick approach; it wants the dialogue to continue but also the sanctions to be supervised.

The last speaker, **Dr. Dieter Schmidt**, was inspired by his activities as a student to bring about German unification and the four years he spent studying in South Korea. He quoted UPF founder Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon: "Efforts to improve relations between two nations in the political, economic or military field will lead to unity only if they are motivated by true, selfless love."

Even though selfless love was not always guiding the German unification process, much love and concern were shown by people on both sides before, during and after unification, Dr. Schmidt said. Moreover, there was an unseen spiritual power behind the unification, especially in East Germany.

Inspired by the vision and teaching of Reverend Moon, rallies were held in Berlin in support of unification and denouncing the flaws of Marxism and Leninism. Reverend Moon himself showed how to win over one's enemy with love. Unlike any other religious leader, he had the courage to clearly denounce the Juche ideology during a visit to the North Korean parliament. Because of Reverend Moon's deep love for North Korea and its people, Chairman Kim Il Sung miraculously welcomed Reverend Moon like a brother.

The same joy that Europeans felt in traveling freely to the former East Germany and Eastern European nations may inspire young Koreans on both sides to strive for the reunification of the Korean Peninsula, Dr. Schmidt said.

Unification has proved to be a long process of relationship-building and reconciliation. The Peace Road Project initiated by Reverend Moon, involving the building of a tunnel between South Korea and Japan, and a Peace Tunnel to cross the Bering Strait, calls for reconciliation between former enemy nations.

The division of Korea is directly related to World War II, which started in Europe, Dr. Schmidt said. Europeans therefore feel the urge to support the unification process on the Korean Peninsula. As China, Russia and the United States are involved, this will have a worldwide impact.

