

Launch of Think Tank 2022: Efforts to Achieve an Elusive Goal

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It is an honor to address this Rally of Hope sponsored by the Universal Peace Federation as one in the series of such virtual gatherings that bring together heads of state, parliamentarians, faith, business, and academic leaders from a hundred and fifty nations for dialogue on the peaceful resolution of differences leading to cooperation for a better world.

I want to recognize also and thank Dr. Moon, who founded the Washington Times with her late husband and continues her work today with the UPF, focusing her energy on healing the great conflicts in our world and especially those between long-standing conflict nations, North Korea and South Korea, attempting to heal that divide.

Dr. Moon, having escaped with her Christian mother and grandmother from North Korea before the Korean War, made it her life's work to seek permanent and peaceful reconciliation on the Korean Peninsula. This can happen. When the Trump Administration came into office, we took seriously the need to confront the problem set presented not only to the people of the DPRK and the Republic of Korea, resulting from their historic conflicts, but also to bring nations around the world together to deliver a good outcome related to the global risk to peace from North Korea's nuclear weapons arsenal.

So, we tried something different, and I will talk about that. Now, as we all know, reunification of the Korean Peninsula has eluded resolution for decades. During this process, North Korea has established a formidable nuclear weapons arsenal with ballistic missiles that can reach South Korea, Japan, and the United States. I think this tells clearly that it is time to finally resolve issues with North Korea. A reunified, denuclearized Korean Peninsula will bring massive peace and prosperity to the peninsula and to the region.

I want to give a great deal of credit to President Moon Jae-in of the Republic of Korea. His historic meeting in 2018 with Chairman Jong-un Kim and the resultant Panmunjom Declaration took an initiative that was so important to what President Trump and our team were trying to do. And it was President Trump and his willingness to personally meet with the chairman to resolve issues that have defied resolution for over twenty-five years, twenty-five years of failed negotiations. We knew that could not continue.

President Trump worked diligently to bring North Korea to the negotiating table in the simple hope that we could establish a lasting peace on the Korean Peninsula and in the hope that the leadership of North

Korea would finally commit to an end of aggressive acts like the maintenance of a nuclear program, as the price of admission to the community of nations. When I traveled clandestinely to Pyongyang on Easter weekend in 2018, as the director of the CIA, it was with noble intentions. The goal was to denuclearize North Korea, make peace and make life better for the people living north of the inter-Korean border.

Work of the lead negotiator

I was honored to work with President Trump as his lead negotiator, spending dozens and dozens of hours arranging for the two Summits in Singapore and Hanoi and ultimately the historic DMZ visit as well. We had a good team at the State Department, and we had help from other government agencies in a whole-of-government effort aimed at supporting President Trump in his negotiations with Chairman Kim. And we had great partners around the world helping us as well.

The joint statement from the June 18 Singapore Summit is a historic document. It was President Trump who emphasized in his meetings with Chairman Kim that our objective was simple: the complete and verifiable denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. Chairman Kim agreed to this. He agreed this was his objective, while noting that eventual normalization of relations with the United States was also his goal, as was the reunification of the Korean Peninsula.

The work for reunification continues

Done well, the reunification of the Korean Peninsula is achievable. We must all work together to accomplish these important goals. We saw great progress with Chairman Kim and North Korea throughout our engagement with him. Nuclear testing stopped; long-range missile tests stopped. This took down risk. I want to encourage President Moon to continue to pursue resolution of these issues with North Korea. And we encourage the Biden administration, and we pray for them well. We hope they will devote the same time that we did, the same time and effort that President Trump did, to such an important international issue.

For this to be successful, America will also have to be strong in confronting the Chinese Communist Party. A good demonstration of the CCP's acting for peace in concert with all nations would be to provide actual, tangible, real assistance in the denuclearization of North Korea. It is improper and unbalanced for China or any nation to claim the control of the South China Sea and critical trade routes. Trade between China and the West must be based on fairness, reciprocity, and equality. Peace depends on this.

More broadly, America must continue its commitment to religious freedom around the world as well. Religious freedom is indeed the foundation of all freedoms. It means we must have strong family values in which marriages are strengthened through faith, and a commitment to fidelity. The challenges to peace can seem daunting. I know that.

And many days some of these conflicts seem absolutely irreconcilable. Yet, there were no new wars during the Trump Administration that the United States participated in, because we were ready and strong, and we were committed to peace. And it must remain so. One does not know in any given conflict, which day, or hour that peace will come. But with prayer, faith, and commitment to the Lord, peace will follow. Our nation, America, is called by God to preserve and advance the God-given rights for all people. America will stand for freedom and peace in Northeast Asia as well.

The good work and love of all people in the region will, Lord willing, continue this drive toward increasing peace and broad-based prosperity for every human being. May God bless you all.