

UPF USA: Experts Discuss the Merits of Bering Strait Tunnel Project

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Washington, DC, United States – Experts and interested parties discussed the practicality of building a tunnel across the Bering Strait at a meeting in Washington, DC, on May 21, 2024, hosted by UPF and The Washington Times Foundation. Despite current conflicts between the United States and Russia, participants agreed that a transportation link across the strait that divides these two countries could ease tensions between them, and in the world.

The "International Highway New York to London: The Bering Strait Connector" was held at the Washington Times building, with 70 attendees in person and 50 participating through Zoom, including from Alaska and Russia. **Ms. Kaeleigh Moffitt**, congressional liaison for UPF, did an excellent job as the emcee.



Dr. Michael Jenkins, president of UPF-International and The Washington Times Foundation,

opened the meeting with words of welcome to everyone present and watching online. He summed up the history of UPF's interest in the Bering Strait project, and its ongoing commitment to this and other projects that connect the world and pursue peaceful development.

At the conclusion of his remarks, Dr. Jenkins showed a video about the tunnel project that was created by the Russian Academy of Sciences and the Russian Ministry of Economic Development, revealing Russia's enthusiasm for the project.

Dr. Charles S. Yang is chairman of UPF-International and also the World Peace Road Foundation,

which advocates for both the Bering Strait tunnel and a tunnel between Korea and Japan. He described these as two unfinished links that prevent land access between every part of the world. He also explained Rev. Sun Myung Moon's vision for an International Highway that included the two tunnel projects, which he called "the new Silk Road."



Dr. Yang cited three factors required for the success of the Bering Strait project: (1) political commitment from the leaders of the United States and Russia; (2) economic feasibility and investment capital from many governments; and (3) the sharing of the most advanced tunneling technology.

The next speaker was **Mr. Scott Spencer** from Intercontinental Railway, a non-profit NGO in the United States and Russia, committed to connecting North America, Russia and Asia by rail. Mr. Spencer is chief project advisor to the group, with the mission of pulling together the people and resources to build the Bering Strait tunnel and the railway connectors across the wilderness regions of Canada and Siberia.



As a consultant to many railway companies, he usually speaks about the engineering, operating and environmental challenges of building an 8,000-kilometer railroad linking the United States and Canada with Russia and China via an 85-kilometer tunnel under the Bering Strait. Instead, he emphasized the urgency of undertaking this project now, saying it could be part of a mutually beneficial diplomatic initiative to end the war between Ukraine and Russia. Creating an opportunity for peace is the best way to avoid a wider war, he said, adding that waiting for a war to go away is not an option. He encouraged participants to take action to save lives and secure the peace.

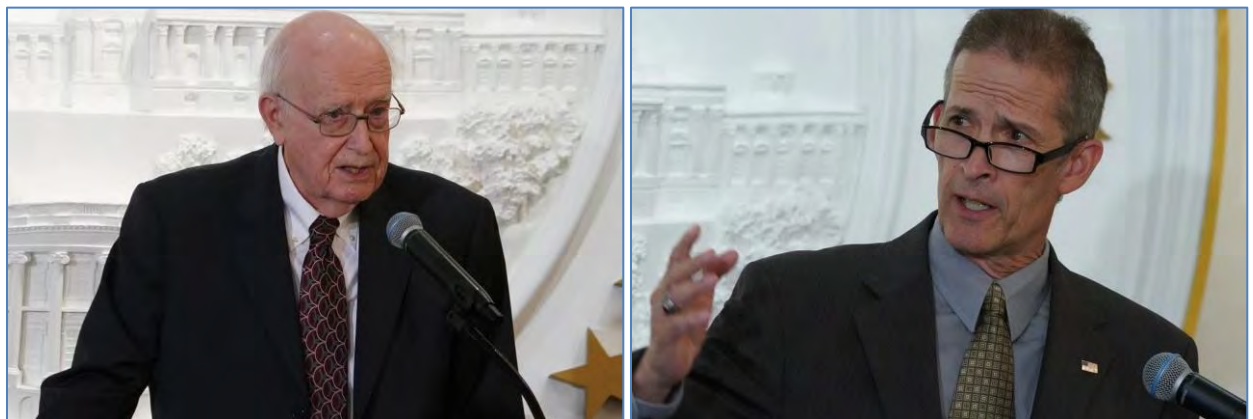
Mr. Mead Treadwell was lieutenant governor of Alaska from 2010 to 2014; today he runs his own consultancy called Treadwell Development. He has long worked to develop ties with Russia, as his closest neighbor in the Arctic region. "That includes strengthening economic, personal, and cultural relations with Russia," he said. "In the Arctic, many Russian citizens are not just neighbors to Alaskans, they are brothers, cousins, grandparents, family. Whether our nations are friends or adversaries – and we've seen both, sadly, several times in our lives – it's important to remember that we are all people, we want peace, and we love our children too."

Dr. Victor Razbegin is a Russian scientist and government official, director of the Interdepartmental Centre for Integrated Regional Transport Projects. He is also co-founder of Intercontinental Railway, serving on the Russia end of that project. Dr. Razbegin spoke, through Zoom, on "Russia's Readiness and Willingness" to build the Bering Strait connector. He is a vocal advocate for the tunnel as a way to promote peace and reduce tensions between Russia and the United States.



Mr. Eugene Harnett is executive director of UPF-Alaska, and chief-of-staff for a member of the Alaska State House of Representatives. He spoke of the need for a think tank devoted to the Bering Strait connector to Russia, a place where people could meet, and the best ideas could be distilled and put into practice. "The think tank would be the yeast to make the dough rise," he said.

Mr. Louis Cerny has been involved in railways since the early 1960s, and is the former executive director of the American Railway Engineering Association. His specialty is designing large-scale steel bridges, tunnels and railroad systems. He understands the technical challenges of building railroads in the most harsh conditions, such as permafrost and extremely cold weather.



He said the cost of the Bering Strait tunnel is estimated at around US\$120 billion. If the tunnel and connecting railways require 15 years to complete, the total cost will be less than 1 percent of the combined military spending of the United States and Russia during that time. He also explained that a tunnel would greatly reduce the need for new port facilities and ocean shipping, so there could be opposition from container ship companies and contractors who build ports.

Of course, the first condition for the project to go forward is reasonably good relations between the United States and Russia. He pointed out that the direction of history can shift quickly, so project plans should be developed and ready to take advantage of any favorable turns in U.S.-Russia relations.

Dr. Masoyoshi Kajikuri serves as chairman of the Japan-Korea Tunnel Project. He sent a video in which he explained the vision of an undersea passage connecting Japan and South Korea with North Korea and the rest of the world. He showed the 600-meter exploration tunnel that has been constructed, and practical plans for its completion.