

The European Leadership Conference

*Towards Lasting Peace
in a World of Rapid Change*

Oslo, Norway, 30th April – 1st May 2011

Day One at the Norwegian Parliament, the Stortinget

Published by
the Universal Peace Federation of Norway,
Colbjørnsensgate 8c, 0256 Oslo, Norway
Tel: (47) 2255 3975
E-mail: post@fredsforbundet.no
Web: www.fredsforbundet.no
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Foreword

The European Leadership Conference (ELC), is a series of conferences organized during the last five years by the Universal Peace Federation (UPF) of Europe. The events have mainly been held in different European locations in the Netherlands, Germany, Spain, Norway and Hungary, but there has also taken place one such conference in the Middle East and one in South Korea.

A valuable aspect of these conferences is the participants themselves, coming from a broad variety of backgrounds, which can be everything from religious leaders to politicians, academics or youth leaders. This blend of people often contributes to valuable networking, among like-minded people from all over Europe. On several occasions, these new relationships have inspired new projects for peace.

In every ELC there is a topic related to peace. The conference always presents general principles for peace building and reconciliation, as well as an outline of a vision for a better society. In addition, there is always a specific theme to each conference. Sometimes it was *Peace in the Middle East*, other times it could focus on *Human Rights*, and sometimes on *The Importance of Family Values*.

In 2008, there was one such ELC held here in Norway, at Langesund Bad, a hotel in a South Coast spa town, with the title *Unity in Diversity*, focusing on the challenges in a multicultural society.

On 30th April and 1st May this year, 2011, we organized an ELC in Oslo. One day was in the Radisson Blue Scandinavia Hotel and one day at the Norwegian Parliament, the Stortinget. In this very challenging time, with many potential crises looming on the horizon, we decided on the topic *Towards Lasting Peace in a World of Rapid Change*.

Valuable insights were shared by the participants on this topic. It is our hope that all the new contacts made at the conference, and all the ideas that were shared, could lead to further inspiration and initiatives for peace building, both in each participant's own society and the world.

Finally we are very grateful to all the participants, from home and abroad, for their preparations and presentations. In this booklet we have collected an edited version of the presentations given at the Stortinget on the first day of the conference.

Thank you to everyone, and in particular to Pål Arne Davidsen, who made the conference possible.

Oslo 3rd August 2011

Steinar Murud
Secretary General, UPF Norway

Welcome and Introduction to UPF



Jack Corley,

Assistant Director UPF-UK

I'd like to introduce what the UPF is about, our views and activities. We are global in our scope, a global organization of like-minded individuals who are concerned about the issue peace.

It is significant to discuss peace here in the city where you award the Nobel Peace Prize. Discussing peace is truly a significant thing.

We do not simply believe peace is merely the absence of war. Peace is not just about war and weapons and so on. A society could be quite peaceful externally, without any civil war or war with its neighboring countries, but there could be a war going on within the society, within the nation itself, eating away at the very fabric of that country. Many of our societies, especially in the Western world, are indeed facing such challenges. Although we may be living in an era of peace and prosperity – although recently even that's been shaken – nonetheless we are facing some very serious issues within our societies which are maybe more insidious, dangerous and more difficult to overcome than traditional war.

Think about it, just over 50-60 years ago, this continent of Europe was torn apart by war. The countries of Europe were destroyed. Then, within a very short space of time, Europe was able to rebuild itself and regain an even greater prosperity than it had experienced before. So, to rebuild

a society or a country from the material destruction of war in one way is not that difficult. But what we are facing now, this is our next big challenge. How do we protect our societies from the moral decay that is eating away at the very heart of our society? That is something that is not as obvious, but is actually far more dangerous than military war. And the consequences can be much more long lasting.

That is the way we approach this issue from UPF. We try to look at the deeper causes of the problems which we face. We look beyond the actual wars, into the deeper causes that are eating away at our societies.
[...]

Europe's Role in a Changing World



Willem van Eekelen,
Former Dutch Defense
Minister , and a Secretary
General of the Western
European Union

For me it's great to be back in Norway. I've been here many times before.

My theme is *Europe's Role in a Changing World*. What is Europe today? When I talk about Europe, I usually mean the European Union. We came through a terrible time of war, and one of the great achievements of course is that young Germans, young French, young people in Europe, are not thinking about war among themselves. I think that's a great achievement, but looking at the past is not good enough. What are we going to do in the future?

In the Netherlands we had an interesting public opinion poll by one of our social economic institutes. They asked the same questions in several European countries. [...] They came to the conclusion that people are satisfied with their present situation, but very worried about the future. Worried in terms of instability, worried about their jobs, will the children be able to go ahead and do better even than their parents, or will we all slide back and have to do with less prosperity, less welfare than we enjoy at the moment. That is an area where the UPF could strengthen the moral aspects of what we are trying to do.

I started out as a diplomat. As a diplomat you have to try to understand why the other people you are dealing with are doing the things they do, how they tick, why they do silly things in my opinion. If I understand that, I have the chance to make a compromise and reach an agreement. That is the great value of the origin of the European Union. Change the

context. That is also a message to our personal lives. If you have a problem and try to attack it head on, you are never successful. If you are changing the context – difficult, but if you are able to do that – then you have a chance. That is the message of the EU. We changed the context of every country being on its own, with borders around each territory [...].

Now we have a mix. We have a mix in the EU, which establishes the rule of law, which is a rules based organization, and which organizes competition – because in the competition of economic life, every firm, every business wants to do better than the others. But on the other hand, you have to match that with a certain degree of solidarity or at least a joint approach to solving the problems we all face.

Of course, the EU is not perfect. It is a mix of a rules based organization, with a qualified majority voting – that's a big difference. In an inter-governmental organization everyone has to agree. It takes a long time, and sometimes it is impossible. If in the Security Council, which has the primary responsibility for peace and security, there is a veto by one of the permanent members, nothing happens. And for decades not very much happened. A bit later I will come to what I think is changing, and where Europe could hopefully play a useful role.

What are our values? Our values are democracy, the rule of law, accountability – accountability for government for what they are doing, to parliament – checks and balances and so on. If we are managing to do that, we can indeed be an example to the world.

Today we are talking much about the BRICs – Brazil, Russia, India and China. Of course, they are very important countries. They will play a much bigger role in the economic life in our world. But there is no cement between the BRICs. The Chinese and the Indians have had a war. The Russians are scared stiff of the Chinese. The Brazilians slowly,

slowly are starting to play a big role in international affairs, but are still basically a Latin American power. On the one hand I'm in favor of bringing them into the international community and certainly China. But on the other hand I have to recognize that this will be a very slow process.

And some of the values of the Chinese are not the values that you Norwegians and we Dutch share. They have a different approach. It is possible, I think. They are fairly responsible in their flexible policy, but still, we have a long, long way to go.

We have seen great upheavals. And maybe even a paradigm shift – you know paradigm, a wonderful word which means the whole context is changing. I don't know, but it looks like it. And certainly when we're looking at North Africa and the Middle East, potentially that could be a fantastic change. And there are several reasons why I say that, which are encouraging. In the first place, the revolts were not inspired by religious fundamentalism. They were inspired by young people wanting jobs. They were inspired by people not having enough money to buy food. And in that way, they reacted against governments which had been there for 30-40 years without really doing very much for the people and being dictatorships rather than democracies.

The second encouraging sign, mainly in Egypt and Tunisia, is that the regular army did not play the role we were afraid of, namely supporting the dictatorships. [...] There are possible solutions.

In countries like Indonesia and Turkey which are Muslim countries, where the army has certainly played a big role in history, we have seen a shift towards a more democratic system and a certain coexistence between the military power and the forces of democracy in the parliament.

Well, that sort of system and development, we will have to support. And I hope the UPF will be able to play a role.

Then the UN Security Council sometimes doesn't act according to their responsibility. Then, there is a deadlock.

There have, however, been two encouraging signs recently. One is that the UN was able to act in the Ivory Coast. After months and months of deliberations, finally the democratically elected president was able to take over. The UN in the end, with the support of the African Union, was prepared to use force there. Fortunately, fairly limited force, but nevertheless... — [...]

And we have seen that in the Libyan case — in spite of the fact that in the past, China and Russia had always vetoed acts which were limiting national sovereignty. That was really the crux. In the United Nations Charter — which was established immediately after World War II — there is great emphasis on national sovereignty. So, it's very difficult for the UN to act if something is going on within a country. Because then immediately the Russians and the Chinese come up, "No, no, no, no interference in domestic affairs!" And very often, the developing countries are supporting that because they say, "We don't want any neo-colonialism. You Western powers are telling us what to do in our internal affairs." And, they very often have a point there. So it is extremely difficult for the UN to act in situations where national sovereignty is at stake. And now, just recently we have seen two examples, in the Ivory Coast — and Libya [...]

That is a follow up of the system which Kofi Annan described when he was Secretary General, "We need responsibility to protect." In other words, there is the responsibility of governments to protect their own people and not to suppress them and act against their interests. Now who is going to determine when such a case exists? The international system

and the General Assembly have limited the application of the responsibility to protect to war crimes, genocide, ethnic cleansing and what we call crimes against humanity. And, it is the latter one that Colonel Gaddafi will be charged with if he is still alive by then.

I think that is progress. This notion of responsibility to protect is fine as words, but what about the action? Where are the deeds? Now finally I see that the UN – and of course those were extreme cases – nevertheless were able to act.

And to Norwegians I say, “This is something which goes beyond the EU.” We have had – and I was present in 1975 – the final act of Helsinki. That was the time when there was still The Cold War. The Russians – or the Soviets in those days – were trying to build a fence in the middle of Europe. Then together – and Norway played an important role – we managed to establish certain principles for the conduct of governments in Europe. And one of the main principles was that it is a legitimate subject of international diplomacy to talk about the way a government is treating its own people. That is what we established in 1975. That was one of the reasons why the Soviet system ultimately disintegrated. In Prague and Poland we had movements of liberation and expression. Well, that we did in Europe, the whole of Europe, not only in the EU. That is an example we should show to the world.

What are the consequences of these developments? In the first place, no conflict, no crisis can be resolved by military means only. That is a crucial European principle. Sometimes the Americans have not really followed that up. They have this tendency of quick solutions to every problem. But I think we have all learnt in the meantime whether in Afghanistan or Iraq, that quick solutions and solutions with military means only, don't do it. Sometimes military solutions are necessary, but then immediately you have to think of the next phase, the post-conflict

stabilization, the peace building and in the end the role of government. We call that security sector reform. What is the role of the military, the police, and the judiciary in a democracy? That is the crucial element. They have to fit in together. There should be a balance of forces. Parliament, accountability and transparency are vital principles. [...]

What can we do not only as UPF, but also as individuals and countries? In the first place, support the moderates, especially among religious groups.

And that is special for UPF – avoid violence in the name of God. If you have the message of UPF – one family under God – then that is completely opposed to the notion of violence in the name of God. And that is the distinguishing point we should try to stress.

Secondly, spread the message of hope. A message of hope to these young people. A message of hope to the people who are now all trying to go into the EU and upset our social system and Schengen system. [...]

Engage with civil society. That is our hope. There is no real civil society in most of the Muslim countries which are now in upheaval. Organizations of citizens in every field, social field, political field, whatever, in dealing with responsible leaders, emphasize the principles of transparency in government. A government should reveal what it is doing. And then it should justify what it wants to do, in parliament, but also in public debate. So reveal, explain and justify, those are the three principles of democratic government.

And finally, as a very special point with regard to UPF. My wife and I have both participated in MEPI activities, the Middle East Peace Initiative by UPF. It was a wonderful program, a balanced program. We were able to talk to people of all sides. Now is high time to renew that.

Global Challenges to Peace and Security



Iver Neuman,
*Research Director and Acting
Director of the Norwegian
Institute of International
Affairs – NUPI*

Peace can be the absence of war, and peace can be something more building in the sense of wellbeing, security of existence, etc.

There tend to be two discourses about this.

The WHO has definitions of the kind of life we're striving towards that look very much as peace in the more extended sense.

In this country, those two discourses stretch back to different historical beginnings. We have a military discourse that begins in the 1820s, when the world tends to be seen as a military challenge and where peace tends to be defined in military terms.

A wider political movement in Norwegian life started in the 1890s, inspired by the British peace activist Norman Angel. It, together with Scandinavian counterparts, was trying to strive for a more inclusive idea of peace. The interesting thing is that all the people in this country who knew something about the wider world in the 1890s and 1900s, belonged to this particular set of people. It was a small cadre of not all that many souls, and they tended to fill the positions of politicians and academics. Everything that has to do with knowledge production about the international in this country, goes back to a period where the peace organization inspired by

Britain was of the essence. In the Norwegian perspective, this would be part of our own way of discussing the world.

We are talking about an international organization, an international movement which perhaps came to a head with the setting up of the International criminal court some years ago. The question to my mind is whether the International Criminal Court is a sunrise when we talk of peace, or is it a sunset because the international order, as we know it, is under a serious challenge from a major development in international relations, the rise of new great powers.

The commercial setting for this would be BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India, China). I think we talk about a much wider movement. I think we have to include South Africa, Indonesia and a number of other countries. We are talking about the kind of situation where new global powers are coming on stage. [...] I'm simply making the observation that when you have one particular order, and that order is being challenged by there being new powerful members, the order will have to be renegotiated.

Anyone who is a member of a club or association, e.g. like this one, will know that with an extended membership, and particularly when you have new large and powerful members, there will have to be a new body.

The major thrust towards this international order would be the rise of first and foremost China, also India, and in a minor degree Brazil. Russia is more of a known entity. It is definitely a power, but how can you talk of Russia as a rising power when the question is whether it is as strong as it was the last 100 years? [...]

A number of people when talking about the big picture on global challenges to peace and security, would have talked about the situation in places like Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya. All those countries belong to a specific region in the world, a region which has no rising power. On the lists of rising powers, you'll find none of the countries in this area. You have states from a number of places. You will have Indonesia as a Muslim state which is on all the lists of rising states, but you will have no states from the Middle East. There may be a number of reasons for this, but I find it to be an extremely interesting fact. [...]

What happens to peace in a wider sense? What are the things going on there? What now? A trite observation because it is so obvious and so often talked about, is the question of Security Council reform. That is a bureaucratic game that is being played. When we are talking about reducing the number of European seats to one seat for the EU, the Brits and the French do not like that. The Germans are in two minds about it. From my analytical, academic point of view, it is quite obvious that this should have happened a long time ago. That doesn't mean it will happen soon, because there is a lot of vested interest. But the game is not particularly interesting on a bureaucratic level, but as a measuring rod, a litmus test for how the global society and how the debate on global politics are being handled in this world. So, it's worth keeping an eye on.

Your topic is "Towards Lasting Peace in a World of Rapid Change", but I saw the undertitle was "Innovate Approaches to Global Peace". I took that as an invitation to be speculative. So I will make a couple of speculations, and that has to do with the question of religion.

In the scholarly world, a number of people have listened to what Max Weber, one of the founders of sociology, said about religion almost a hundred years ago, that we were looking at the fading of religion, the disenchantment of the world, that religion was on the wane. The key example, the truth of this, has been Scandinavia, which is, ostensibly the most secularized countries in the world.

Ladies and gentlemen, I think this is wrong. I simply do not believe that this is a correct analysis. If you look at Scandinavian life, for one thing you have state churches. People are talking about religion not being here, and at the same time the state runs a church. This makes no sense. The question is that people have been blind to this because there were no challenges to this particular religious setup. Now when you have a more pluralistic religious situation in terms of cults as religious sociologists call it, meaning the different organizational sides of religion, it is becoming obvious there was a lot of religion around all the time.

I have made it my sideline in a scholarly sense to try and study what is animating the big box office successes in terms of popular culture, successes like Star Wars, Star Trek, Harry Potter, Avatar, etc. All of them are super-infused with religion. We're talking about a religious discourse that is alive and well.

I have seven children; none of them are church goers, mosque goers, or synagogue goers. Does that mean that they are not religious? Not at all. Five of them are very spiritually organized and oriented. What does this tell us?

I'm inclined to quote one of the former members of the Swedish pop group Abba, who said, "I know there's something going on." It's a good quote.

A final observation of mine has to do with a parallel to development in the world from the 1890s onwards. The 1890s, in addition to being a peaking and breakthrough period for the world peace organizations, was also a key point in world history for what has been called the theosophical enlightenment, which was in hindsight rather a strange and haphazard and maybe jumbled reception of Eastern religions in the West. This was the period when people like Madame Blavatsky were bringing certain mainstream Eastern ideas to a West which didn't understand them at all, and the reception was – should we say – pluralistic.

And I have observed that every time there has been an interest in peace and peace work, e.g. in the late 1920s and early 1930s, there has also been an increase in this kind of work, for example, Gurdjieff and a number of other people being active in the late 1920s, early 1930s.

The 1960s – a peak of peace activity and at the same time a religious revival of thought that went by the name of New Age. And I see a New Age movement all over the place. I go a place like the Blue Mosque, and I see a lot of activity around that place. And why? Because the Blue Mosque has been a place of worship for people from a number of different religions.

So, there is in our midst, and not politically very pronounced, but still a socially powerful force, of people who are embracing some kind of a syncretistic spirituality. And in that direction, there is interesting stuff going on.

For a political analyst like myself, the question then becomes how this is translated into political action, how is this making its mark on political life. And that is where the analysis is not so interesting

anymore because it doesn't to a large degree. These are isolated phenomena.

But, I think this is a social force which is lurking right under the surface. I think that the world's atheists who have had a lot of spiel over the last 40 or 50 years, are in for a huge surprise. Take Russia as an example. When I go to Russia these days, I meet all different kinds of spiritual expressions, all the time. And during the communist era, they were there, but they were right below the surface. When I lived in Moscow in 1980, there were homeopathic shops all over town. And it is a small observation; it's not of any immediate political interest. Nobody saw that as a contradiction against anything because it was so far out.

So, at this end I should have syncretized the small peace question – the absence of war – and the big peace question, and that ladies and gentlemen, I cannot do because the workings, or should I say the machinations, of international relations, understood as a play between the states and NGOs and transnational actors, etc, has its logic, and it is full of challenges of rising powers. And then there is the alternative world of social stuff, which is right below the surface and which may at any time erupt in something approaching what we now see in places like Egypt. But it is very hard to get these two logics to come together in an analytical whole, and I'm glad I wasn't asked to do that, Mr. Chairman.

A Model for the Promotion of Health in Post-Conflict Situations



Jean Elizabeth Brant,
School of Health and Wellbeing, University of Wolverhampton, UK

It's lovely that the term "wellbeing" is being more recognized now as meaning peace and the internal sense of connection. My background for many years is nursing and promoting health, but a holistic view of health. I'm teaching it now, but my heart is very much with action and seeing people in the field, and trying to inspire people to work in the field and make changes in people's lives.

I was invited two years ago with a group of three of us to go to Sri Lanka. Many of you may be aware of the circumstances there. We were working in the east of the country with a Tamil group who had suffered the most of the conflicts in a country that had been at war for 25 years. The advice at the time from the Foreign Office was to be very careful, even not to go there. We did have contact with a local person who'd been living there for a while, so we felt it was meaningful to go. We did not know when we left London, we would be there at the very end of this conflict, even though it was resolved in a way that wasn't particularly helpful.

What I'd like to talk briefly about and share now, is some of the principles of health promotion and particularly illustrate these with what we saw on the ground there. I'm very interested in definitions

of health, and I often go back to the WHO for that because they are neutral. They have been around for a long time, and they came out of a conflict situation, postwar in Europe. They have a very broad, holistic definition of health, which include the emotional, the mental, and the social. They recognize that there are prerequisites for health, primarily peace. It's very hard to have the conditions of health without peace. Of course peace includes the internal peace as well, then shelter, goods, etc. They define health promotion as enabling people, enabling people to take control of their own health. So the focus is on empowering people, a more bottom up negotiated approach – which I favor very much – rather than telling people what to.

They have defined action areas. From defining what health help promotion is, to how to do it. That's the difficult bit. They focus very much on the broad political sphere included in that. One of the key action areas is healthy public policies. They don't say health policies, they say public policies, so it can be foreign policy, or it can be home policy, particularly policies around the distribution of goods, particularly around services. So, again this has huge implications for areas which have suffered conflicts, and often lots of conflicts have come out of unequal distribution.

Another key point is bringing in the personal, recognizing the individual. One of their key areas is developing personal skills. It can be the skill of making decisions. We see this a lot with young people who are very confused, inundated with messages. It's very difficult for them to develop decision making skills for their own life, particularly many aspects of health, also negotiation skills and interpersonal skills. And this in particular, is the area I've been involved in, trying to develop personal skills with people.

Another focus area for the WHO is to reorient health services, to take the focus from the acute sector, from cure, from care, to prevention, looking at the causes of the problems, having a long term view, going to where people are and using the people's skills themselves.

Another important area is strengthening community action, recognize that the communities, the recipients, hold the knowledge of an area. How can we work with them and get them to work collectively in unity to get their needs met?

And then the last area is to create supportive environments for health. There are various social contextual conditions which brings again back into the political area as well.

WHO also said that the role of health promotion is to be an advocate for health on all levels, working with people, working with conflict groups, working with areas in difficulty, but also being a voice for them in the political arena and many other arenas. From the WHO we get the image of a multistrategy approach to promote health in all areas.

So, where does this bring us in areas of conflict? I certainly saw when I was in Sri Lanka, that the priorities in the beginning of the conflict were to work with basics. Sri Lanka had 25 years of war; they also had the tsunami. And the people, who'd suffered the war, suffered the worst of the tsunami as well. So there were multiple areas of needs. The first priority is obviously saving lives — it is obviously distribution of resources, shelter, and food. With each of the principles that need to be met, there are problems. There are conflicts how to do this. I tried to learn as much as I could from local people. What had been their experience? Their experience

when people were distributing the needs of life, was unequal distribution. The people who often were given most, were the people who needed least. The people came forward who were not particularly affected. Those who had been most affected, were often too traumatized to come forward. So, often the women and children got less. They suffered from material deprivation, but also psychologically, and they felt uncared for as well.

Another issue that came up through distribution, was the suitability of what was given. Often provisions were not made for cultural needs. Often shelter was provided which didn't meet the areas like having privacy for women. The food that was provided, wasn't culturally acceptable. In Sri Lanka after the tsunami, the main livelihood of the people was fishing. So they were given boats, but they weren't the right type of boats to work in the lagoons there. A lot of it was not listening and not finding out. Often, outside agencies are very keen to be involved to give, but their services do need to be used by volunteers using the local knowledge.

Another issue that came out through distribution, is if it is possible through this to inadvertently create a culture of dependency, that people tend to look not at their own resources, but outside. When we were there, in the area there had been many problems, and it was evident that some people had developed this dependency. We have to ask ourselves, "Are we feeding this?" There's a balance when people need to be given, but another area when people need to be encouraged about their own skills. In our naivety in some ways we worked with a local person working there, but recognized that what we see as generosity, is actually not helpful. It's favoring some people to the extent of others. This encouraged me to try and

understand the culture a lot more and try and listen to many perspectives. [...]

Over the centuries a lot of resentment had developed. That was the instigation for the civil war. Try to understand how people thought and felt about it, how to be more emphatic with them. A lot of the work we were involved in, was trying to move on from the basics, rebuilding lives and bringing holistic healing to people. [...]

We worked a lot on relationships. People had been living under fear and distrust for so long. Even within the Tamil group there had been many factions. People had been kidnapped; children were taken in to be child soldiers. So, they didn't trust their own people. Who could they trust? This was reflected in their interpersonal relationships. The woman setting up the community development project, was very keen that local people would be involved as much as possible. But they were arguing all the time with themselves. They had nominally a common goal, but could not agree. [...]

To promote health, is to actually look at relationships as being healing, not to collude, not to favor one group more than the other, not to get caught into the dynamics, but to actually look at the process, what are the feelings under this. Otherwise you hear the story he did that, she did that. Some of the important skills that were developed around this, was empathy, empathizing ourselves with people and encouraging them to empathize with each other. They had been taught the basics of non-violent communication, an excellent program and formula to coach people to listen to each other, starting with empathizing themselves. They had also been taught assertiveness skills, that communication should be cleaner and healthier. People could recognize that they had rights, but other

people had rights as well, that it wasn't a competition. So, relationship building was very important.

Identity building was very important. Their identity had been as victims, as recipients of generosity — so it was important to build a healthy sense of identity as the basis to operate. [...]

To give them the opportunity to face their fears, meet the people from the different ethnic groups and to recognize the value in their cultural heritage was important. [...]

We looked very much at the psychological aspect of health. People were traumatized. Without dealing with the trauma, it was very difficult to build any ongoing peace. [...] We tried to do grassroots counseling. We did a course, teaching people virtually to be their own counselor. It was based very much on just listening to people. The focus was on expressing your emotions. Emotions are good. Fear, anger, are very important, not to feel ashamed of them, not to repress them or blame others for them. First of all, I need to feel healthy about my own emotions; that helps me to understand other people's emotions.

We also did a course in communication skills. Ideally, that is a skill they can use for employability as well.

Our form of education was very much focused on experiential learning, not telling people what to do. Showing a skill, an interpersonal skill letting people explore and develop their own way of doing it and then finding ways of integrating it into their lives.

[...] The counseling skills we taught, is very much about validating oneself and validating other people, recognizing that everyone is doing the best they can at the time, not blaming oneself or others.

From what I saw there, the key principles of health promotion can be adopted in conflict situations. It is a challenge, working small scale; healing people on the relationship level can often have the best results.

A Perspective on Conflicts – Past, Present and Future



Kristian Berg Harpviken

*Director, Peace Research
Institute Oslo – PRIO*

I have had the pleasure of lecturing to various gatherings of the UPF on several occasions before, and it is always a pleasure.

I have been briefed on the topic of the conference “Towards Lasting Peace in a World of Lasting Peace”. In order to talk about it, I will first have a glance at what we know, and what we know is necessarily a reflection of what the current situation is and what events the past few years indicate. I will use that as a starting point for offering some speculations on the challenges we are in the midst of today, and what we should expect in the years ahead. And as we all know, prediction is always much more difficult, so that’s why I emphasize that the latter will be in the form of speculation.

I am the director of the Peace Research Institute Oslo, which is an international research institute investigating matters of conflict and peace. We have passed our first fifty years of existence. We celebrated 50 years in 2009; in other words, we were set up in the midst of the cold war. We are now in a very different political climate, but there certainly still is the need for our services.

Somebody asked me at the outset how peace research in Norway and how PRIO, my institute in particular, was regarded. Of course, this is the type of question one should be careful to respond to in a Norwegian context, where modesty is the norm. But in an international context like this, I will allow myself to refer to a recent article which was published in a new reference work on international studies, where the article on peace research does say, and I quote, "PRIO is probably the premier peace research institute in the world." I am not taking the main credit for that because we are a very good collective. We have been building up knowledge over a number of years. Much of what I will talk about to you today, are things that have been worked up by a large number of colleagues at PRIO. Since I will introduce some figures to you, and some of those will probably be familiar, without you ever having noticed that those are gathered and systematized in an attic here in downtown Oslo. We are collaborating with a number of institutions in this endeavor, the endeavor of registering trends in global peace and conflict, including the University of Uppsala, which is quite prominent in this field, and the Human Security Report Project at Simon Fraser's University in Vancouver, Canada. But often when you hear various statements and policy makers make references to various figures in this field, it would be figures that are actually processed in the attic of what used to be the old Gas Works in downtown Oslo, just a few blocks from here.

Let's see what we know, what are the trends if you look backwards. This is a graph of how many conflicts we have had in the world in the post World War II period. There are interstate conflicts, the conflicts between states, and intrastate conflicts, conflicts within states. When it comes to international conflicts between states, there has been a very positive development, where we

moved from a situation where we used to have 5, 6, 7 of those at any given time in the first years after World War II, to a situation in the last decade where we had virtually none. And I think you would all be hard put in fact to identify the few ones we've had in recent years. The one that you would see in 2009 for example, the only armed conflict between states in 2009 that led to the death of more than 1000 persons, was the confrontation between Djibouti and Eritrea. If you go back to 2003, you would have one between Peru and Ecuador, again not a conflict that most of us would regard as a major conflict in the world.

But when it comes to civil war, wars within states, the pattern is different. There is a significant throw back in 2006, when the number of conflicts in the world was down at 29. Since 2006 there has been an increase. It is probably still a little early to tell whether this increase is statistically significant, whether it is going to last. But of course the fact that there are more conflicts today than there were only a few years ago, is a reason for worry for those of us who follow this area.

But it is not only the number of conflicts that are interesting. It is also interesting what the consequences of those conflicts are. And one aspect is how many people get killed in the armed confrontations. If we go back to the turn of the previous century, the beginning of the 1900s, we see that the two peaks are coinciding with the two world wars. You also see that the number of people who have been killed in the last few years is very low compared to the peaks we have seen historically.

After 1945, the Korean War was significant. In the 1960's we had the Indochina wars and the war in Vietnam in particular. In the 1980's we had a significant peak produced by two wars in

particular, the war in Afghanistan and the wars between Iraq and Iran. In recent years, the number of people killed directly in battle is much lower. [...]

In the recent few years, the positive trend after the Cold War, since 1991, may have been reversed in the past few years. There has been a steady increase from 2001 and until the present. It is not a super-dramatic increase, but nevertheless an increase. We also see that people killed in conflicts, are first and foremost killed in internal wars.

2001 marks the onset of the war on terror with the attacks in New York and Washington and the following intervention in Afghanistan.

If we look at where the conflicts are in the world focusing on three recent years, the period from 2006 to 2008 – many of you'd be surprised how a map of where the conflicts were just a decade ago, not to mention a few decades ago, would be very different – but now we see that the central areas of Africa are certainly hosting a number of conflicts. We also have a belt stretching from the Levant, including Turkey all the way over to Malaysia. And then a couple of conflicts in Latin America, but those were relatively quickly solved.

Almost all of the conflicts in the world today are focused within two belts or ellipses. One ellipse that spans much of Central Africa and goes all the way up to North Africa in its western part. And you have one ellipse that includes much of the Islamic part of the world.

If we look at how many new conflicts we have in a given year, we see that there have been relatively few new conflicts breaking out. But this is not exclusively good news because when we have so few new conflicts occurring, that means that the conflicts we have at the moment, tend to have a long history. They are protracted conflicts because they are proven difficult to resolve. So it seems that there is a tendency that in the years after the Cold War, we had a good development where we were able to solve a number of conflicts. We believed that this was the start of an ongoing trend where we would virtually extinguish armed confrontations from the world.

Also, we have seen a dramatic change the last 15 years. We witnessed the transformation from a system of bipolarity to USA becoming the one major political power – unipolarity. Now we seem to see the end of that era with a transformation of the international system.

The prelude to the international aerial activity in Libya was a strong illustration of the end of US supremacy. For the first time in recent history we have seen a major Western initiative where USA did its utmost not to be in the driver's seat.

We also probably see a decline of Europe. [...] Europe as a whole has little ability to position itself as a major international actor because of its form of individual states rather than a coherent European entity. If you look at the absolute invisibility of the so-called Foreign Minister of the EU, Lady Ashton, in the play-up to Libya, that seems quite evident.

Then we have the emergence of new global powers. We all realize that China has emerged as a serious challenger to US supremacy as

a state with major ambitions in Eastern Asia, but also throughout much of the Middle East, Central Asia and not the least Africa. We also see India as a country with major ambitions in its region and globally. We see Turkey, Brazil, Indonesia and South Africa. All of these countries, perhaps with the exception of China, are currently struggling with finding a balance between their position in the region where they belong, and their position on the global scene. [...]

At the moment, several of these new global powers are members of the Security Council. China, of course, is a permanent member, but currently we have South Africa, Brazil, Turkey and India, four other emerging powers as members of the Security Council, and even more notably, none of those countries voted in favor of the intervention in Libya. So, what we are possibly seeing now is that if the Libya intervention will prove to be a failure, then that will be a moral victory for the emerging powers. They stood back and said, "Calm down here, let's look a little bit more carefully at this before we jump to any action." If they are proven right, that is going to be quite important.

If we are moving towards a multipolar world, one of the key questions is what that will mean for multilateral action. After Obama's entry into office in the US in 2009, there was a great optimism that multilateral cooperation globally, the UN and other multilateral global bodies would strengthen their position. The record for Obama has been mixed. He has certainly thrown himself into certain multilateral processes, but in other areas he has taken a much more reserved stand on multilateralism. What currently is the most interesting thing for multilateralism, is what role the new emerging powers will play in international cooperation. We don't know yet, but it is not unthinkable that what we will see, is that rather than the

current situation with quite a degree of consensus when it comes to international issues of peace and security, there is an established agreement on what the major issues are. There is even an agreement that e.g. using military power to protect civilians in a particular country under certain circumstances may be permissible. This international consensus is going to be increasingly challenged by new powers such as China, India, Brazil, Turkey and others. [...]

A slightly different topic is that of nonviolence. [...] One of the major success factors has been that we have been able to foster nonviolent means of handling conflicts. [...]

It's been very interesting to see how effective nonviolent means of protest have been in a number of countries in North Africa and the Middle East. Of course Egypt is the prime example where Mubarak stepped down under significant pressure not only from the protesters, but also from significant forces within his own regime.

Do nonviolent protests work? Some researchers have been comparing various protest movements looking at whether they resort to violent means or not, and have found that statistically spoken non-violent movements, i.e. movements that decide to limit themselves to only nonviolent means, are twice as successful as those who resort to violent means.

Why is nonviolence more effective? First of all, many of us would be much more inclined to join in a nonviolent protest movement, rather than a violent movement, partly because we may feel uncomfortable with the use of violence, partly because the costs of violence, the risks even to our own lives and the lives of those dear to us, is a serious issue. We don't necessarily take the same risks on

behalf of ourselves or on behalf of others if we engage in nonviolent protests.

Also, nonviolence is a rather variegated repertoire. One possibility why the initially nonviolent protests in Libya failed and transformed into a violent protest, is that in Libya the strategists behind the protests weren't as clever as they were in Egypt at launching a variegated repertoire of nonviolent protests. If you are able to use anything from strikes to sit-ins, to protests, if you are able to spread the protest and express them in different fora, the likelihood of success is much higher. This is one of the strengths of nonviolent means of protest.

If the protests are nonviolent, that also has an impact on observers, on third parties, even on those who are part of the regime's security apparatus. We saw that in Egypt, how the army was very hesitant to use force to clamp down on forms of protest that were nonviolent. [...]

Lastly, a few dilemmas when it comes to peace and security. These are dilemmas in a deep sense, dilemmas in the sense that it is fundamentally unclear whether we have the right answers or even whether there are any clear answers to them. They are difficult issues to grapple with.

The first one is the war on terror vs. political solutions. If you look at the situation from 2001 onwards, with the war on terror, conflict resolution became much more difficult. It is no longer seen as acceptable to talk to the bad guys. They are now depicted as terrorists. Of course, most of us know that yesterday's terrorist may be seen as today's liberation fighter. But once we have this vocabulary of terrorism, and legal implications quoted in the EU, the USA and

elsewhere for actors who engage with terrorists, resolving conflicts become much more difficult.

The Norwegian foreign minister, Jonas Gahr Støre, recently published an article in the New York Review of Books, where he mentioned this very issue and made reference to the development in Afghanistan soon after 2001 and rather firmly stated that if we had been as willing to talk to the Taliban in 2001, 2002, 2003 as most people are today, then probably we'd be far better off. The irony of the Afghan situation is that now when virtually everyone is ready to talk with the Taliban, bringing about a political situation through talking to the Taliban is far more difficult than it was back in 2002, 2003 when Taliban lay with a broken back and virtually everyone who had fought for the Taliban, were committed to a political future for the country.

A second dilemma is between state sovereignty and international interventions. This is connected to transformations in the global system. We have had a period now where the respect for state sovereignty has been played down. There has been a willingness – it has even been established as a principle – that the international community has the responsibility to intervene in a state if the regime is repressing its own people. And Libya is an example of that.

A third dilemma is that between liberal democracy as a model that fits all, and more variegated political models. We have had great faith in liberal democracy for a long time. Certainly for peace research one of our clearest findings is that democracies are fundamentally more peaceful than non-democracies. At least they don't fight other democracies. Once there is a non-democracy in the equation, we can nevertheless have armed conflicts. Again, the issue of emerging powers comes into this, and whether liberal

democracy is necessarily the success recipe for all states at all periods and at all stages of their internal political development.

We have a similar discussion when it comes to economic liberalism. Is economic liberalism necessarily the right prescription under any circumstances, or are there other and more variegated economic models that are a better answer to the problems of individual countries and regions?

And finally, the norm that has developed over the past ten to fifteen years, is that war criminals should be held responsible for their acts. It is not difficult to sympathize with that as a principle. But one may ask in a situation such as the one in Libya, whether the insistence of keeping Gaddafi responsible at any cost, has been contributing to the escalation of conflict and led us to the situation in which we currently find ourselves. And I emphasize that the reason I pick this up, is that it is a fundamental dilemma. I think none of us think that Gaddafi deserves a handshake, a thank you and a generous life in a safe corner of the world as a thank you for what he has done to Libya's population. But the question is nonetheless whether Libya's population could have been better off certainly in the short term, but also in the long term, if a better political solution had been found.

Those were my dilemmas, and it is not easy to give fixed answers to the questions I have raised.

Faith, Action and Positive Change



Dr. Husna Ahmad, OBE
*CEO of Faith Regen
Foundation, UK*

I feel there is a moral imperative for me as a woman of faith to be here with you today because I can foresee a world of conflict unfolding before me, and I feel helpless. I feel there is an urgency to stand up and be counted. As global citizens we cannot ignore the plight of others and must realize the interconnectedness of us all.

I have been asked today to speak about Faith Action and Positive Change, which really echoes what my organization Faith Regen Foundation is about. In my presentation I'd like to focus on the theme of the conference which is "Towards Lasting Peace", and how through faith action and positive change we can walk together in the direction of peace.

I will speak about my organization, which is a multi-faith charity, and its working faith action in the UK. And I will give you an insight into the summit perspective of faith action also.

I'd like to also spend some time on two areas which I feel are neglected; number one the role of our governments in utilizing faith communities in building peace through ethical foreign policies; number two the role of women, particularly Muslim women.

Faith Regen Foundation was born after 9/11 as a Muslim response to the negative stereotypes about Muslims and the secular mindset of many Muslims in the UK.

We attempted a multi-faith approach to cultivate a universal responsibility for one another, which recognizes the importance of social cohesion and integration whilst holding firmly to one's faith identity. Identifying the common values among the diverse faiths and beliefs in the UK and working to overcome the disadvantages and barriers to progression and empowerment is what we have been working on for the last decade.

As the Dalai Lama has clearly announced, the problems we face today — violent conflict, destruction of nature, poverty, hunger, etc. are human created problems which can be resolved through human effort, understanding and the development of a sense of brotherhood and sisterhood. We need to cultivate the universal responsibility for one another and the planet we share.

I believe, despite being in the Norwegian Parliament, that we cannot be waiting for our governments to do our thinking and acting. If we leave everything up to our politicians and governments, we end up with the world that we have at present, crisis upon crisis, expenses scandal, the banking and financial mess, individualism and greed. We need to work with our governments by challenging, holding to account and assisting and supporting them to get things right.

FRF works at grassroots level to bring diverse community groups together under the banner of sustainable development. Behind this banner there is an inherent belief that no matter what our

background is, we all seek the same goals and we all hold a strong desire to leave behind a better world for our future generations.

From our experience in the UK, it is clear that there is a vital link missing between government and the faith sector. I cannot emphasize enough the importance of government and faith communities working together in partnership to build safer, integrated and cohesive communities while still maintaining their distinct faith identities. It is these faith identities which provide a strong sense of family, belonging and community. Despite living in some of the worst conditions and most deprived areas in the UK, it is their faith that keeps that flicker of hope alive. I believe that faith sensitive public service delivery plays an important role in making the connection. Faith based groups are embedded in, have the ear of, and often speak for their communities. They are trusted and respected. Working closely with faith based groups would enable governments to build stronger foundations from which positive, confident individuals can emerge.

They can help David Cameron, Sarkozy and Merkel, who are all rejecting multiculturalism and are trying to rediscover their own distinct national values. For instance, Cameron is trying to create “the big society”. How can we create “the big society” in our nations when the world is changing so rapidly? How do we work towards lasting peace when our governments continue to spend exorbitant amounts on military spending? One question I would like to pose to my prime minister is, “What are the ethics of warfare, and how does one align interest with values?” I still cannot comprehend why there is often one set of values for some nations and another set of rules for others.

Recently, the Commons' Committee on Arms Export Controls said that successive British governments had misjudged the risk that UK arms exports to nations like Libya and Bahrain would be used for internal repression. The chair of the committee, Sir John Stanley, whilst welcoming the revocation of over 100 licenses to Libya, Bahrain, Egypt and Tunisia, said the government needed to find better ways to reconcile its values and its need to sell arms. Surely then, it cannot be right that the world's total military expenditure in 2009 amounted to 1.53 trillion dollars. Just 21% of this is the extra amount of money needed to achieve all the Millennium Development Goal targets.

So what does this mean in real terms? The eradication of extreme hunger and poverty, universal primary education, a significant reduction in child mortality, a significant improvement in maternal health and environmental sustainability.

Ladies and gentlemen, when the UN organization was created at the end of World War II, particular responsibility for the maintenance of peace was given to five permanent members of the Security Council. Today, they are responsible for 80 percent of the world's arms trade.

Today, citizens all over the world are demanding answers. They would like to know why it is that global military expenditure is increasing at a time when the world is facing a number of humanitarian crises and political upheavals. We have all witnessed on our TV screens the horrific results of the arms trade throughout the Middle East as autocratic rulers attempt to suppress the voices of their own people through violence.

[...] I as a woman believe I have a duty to promote peace and harmony in the world. Gandhi has been mentioned earlier today. And he said, “What is faith if it is not translated into action?” I, like many of you here today, have children, and I know that we all ask ourselves what kind of world we are leaving for our children and for their future.

I realize it is my duty as a British citizen, as a European citizen and most importantly as a global citizen to do whatever I can to make this a peaceful and sustainable planet. I want our future generations to have a world which is free from discrimination, abuse, the threat of terrorism, and the impact of climate change.

I believe faith communities have a moral compass. They understand the shared responsibility for mankind and this planet. Charitable giving and faith action is part and parcel of the DNA of faith communities.

In Islam one of the key words used for charity is sadaqah, often translated and understood to mean “donate some money to charity”. The prophet Muhammed (pbuh) broadened the concept of sadaqah to include most developmental issues. He said, “Every Muslim has to give sadaqah.” The people asked, “O, prophet of Allah, what about the one who has nothing?” He said, “He should work with his hands to give sadaqah.” They asked, “What if he cannot find work?” He replied, “He should help the needy who ask for help” (Bukhari). He once said, “Sadaqah is prescribed for every person every day the sun rises. To administer justice between two people is sadaqah. To assist a man upon his mount so that he may ride, is sadaqah. To place his luggage on the animal is sadaqah. To remove harm from the road is sadaqah. A good word is sadaqah. Each step taken towards prayer is sadaqah” (Ahmad).

On another occasion he defined sadaqah as removing thorns, bones and stones from paths of people, guiding the blind, listening to the deaf until you understood them, guiding a person to his object of need if you know where it is, hurrying with the strength of your legs to one in sorrow who is appealing for help, and supporting the weak with the strength of your arms. These are all the doors of sadaqah.

And, the charitable route we have taken at Faith Regen Foundation, is poverty alleviation through economic empowerment. This route for so many disadvantaged communities brings about a lot of benefits. We continue with our efforts because we believe we make a difference, and we believe there is a need for our interventions.

On a personal note, my desire for faith action and positive change and my passion for social justice come from my religious convictions as a Muslim. It is my religion which drives me to pursue positive change, to help people to get a job, to help people identify which direction to pursue for their education. My religion gives me the spiritual strength to overcome barriers and push boundaries. My religion gives me the moral grounding and ethical conduct towards all human beings. My religion makes tears roll down my face for the innocent victims of violence and hatred around the world. My religion makes my heart bleed for the young children all over the world who have nothing, who have lost their homes and families because of war or natural disasters.

My father helped me to connect to my spirituality at a young age through zikr – meditation. He would tell me stories about creation and prophets Mussa (Moses), Ibrahim (Abraham), Issa (Jesus) and obviously the prophet Muhammed (pbuh). There is much to be learnt by focusing on the character of the prophet Muhammed

(pbuh) and his teachings, sufferings and how he forgave even his bitterest enemies.

“We have not sent you, O Muhammed, except as a mercy to the worlds” (Quran 21;107). He brought to the world the teachings of underpinning principles in all aspects of life that would ensure a fair, just, productive and ethical image to societies and individuals. I am particularly inspired by the Prophet’s teachings on social integration and responsibility: “Feed the hungry and visit a sick person, and free the captive, if he be unjustly confined. Assist any person oppressed, whether Muslim or non-Muslim.”

I would suggest that we as Europeans begin to take action to better align our values with our interests. Indeed, the two should not be mutually exclusive. Playing realpolitik with military arms expenditure carries significant risks, as we can see today from events across the Middle East. We risk alienating large sections of the Muslim world, who become deeply suspicious of our motives. We are caught up in a situation where if we act to remove a leader who is killing his own people, it is increasingly viewed as neo-colonial imperialism. But if we stand by and do nothing, then we will not have learnt the lessons from Rwanda and Bosnia.

It is not naïve to speak of an ethical foreign policy; an ethical foreign policy that is not just a sweeping generalization, but follows very clear principles which is also pragmatic and consistent. It is not naïve to pursue an ethical foreign policy either; a foreign policy which does not just suit our interests, but one that reflects a genuine desire to create a world that has its priorities in order; priorities where the Millennium Development Goals are not undermined by the arms trade. Indeed every one of the MDGs is undermined by armed violence and the systematic misuse of armed force. This is

true both of direct effects such as deaths by armed violence, which can leave a family without any income, and indirect effects, such as when schools are closed, health care overburdened, or access to food or markets prevented. [...]

This is not to suggest that all military expenditure must come to a halt. I concur with Oxfam when they recognize the need for countries to maintain an arms supply for legitimate causes of self-defense, and to contribute towards multilateral peace-keeping operations.

Women have a key role to play in peace building, and the revolutions in the Arab world show us that Muslim women are willing to fight for social justice. Women are survivors; women are fighters; women are change-makers. We are the ones who pick up the pieces, we are the ones who hold the family together, and we are the ones who are looked up to by our children. [...]

Women have an innate sacrificial quality that makes them do whatever it takes to ensure the security of their own family even if it is at the risk of their own life. [...]

Women from ethnic minorities, particularly Muslim women, are affronted by multiple barriers. Muslim women suffer particularly from low employment rates and economic inactivity. Although, in the UK more than half of the Muslim women would like to be engaged in employment in order for their aspirations to be realized, barriers to employment remain to be tackled effectively.

In addition, Muslim women are a largely misunderstood and misrepresented body of society. As a result of skewed media spin, a lack of platforms and opportunities to represent themselves, a narrow

and close-minded view of Muslim women prevails. Being a positive person myself, I strongly believe that we can tackle discrimination and islamophobia through empowering women to believe in themselves and the ability to contribute positively to society and not accepting no for an answer. When barriers and obstacles come their way, they have to be overcome through the tools that organizations like Faith Regen Foundation and others can provide, and the inspiration that individuals like many of you here today, can instill in the hearts and minds of these women. We need to enable and empower all women of whatever faith and race to take their place in society and contribute effectively. This is the way we can make small steps towards lasting peace.

I think all of us have a role to play, even if it is a small one. I, for instance, lead a multifaith charity with a staff workforce which reflects the diverse faith and ethnicity of the UK. It gives me as a Muslim woman the best chance of achieving the dreams of the world I aspire to for my children and future generations. I wish to contribute towards making that dream a reality where there is peace and prosperity, and everyone can take their rightful place as active and respected citizens.

I truly believe that there is no way for any of us to realize the finest dreams of our faiths and the finest dreams of our political parties unless with increasing trust and understanding we work in partnership.

Finally, I would like to end with a verse from the Holy Quran: “If anyone slays a human being [...] it shall be as though he had slain all mankind; whereas, if anyone saves a life, it shall be as though he has saved the lives of all mankind” (Quran 5,32).

The United Nations and the Interfaith Dialogue



***Lenna Eilleen C.
De Dios-Sison,
Third Secretary and Vice
Consul at the Philippine
Embassy in Norway***

I have been asked to talk today on the UN and Interfaith Dialogue. I do not pretend to be an UN expert. Norway is my first posting. I have never been to our mission in New York. I have however worked for our Foreign Ministry's Office, which also handles the Philippines' interfaith initiative internationally, the UN included. I can however share with you about the Philippines' international interfaith dialogue initiative in the UN, particularly its introduction and successful championing of what is now "The UN Resolution and the Promotion of Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue, Understanding and Cooperation for Peace". I can also share with you how the latter and interfaith dialogue in general has been received in the global political sphere, and why interfaith dialogue can be an effective government tool in transforming cultures of conflict into cultures of peace.

The Philippines through its mission in New York formally introduced the concept of interfaith dialogue as a tool for peace during the 58th session of the UN in 2003. This was two years after September 11th and its tragic aftermath and how it effectively brought to the fore religion and its often-times overlooked or underplayed role in national and international security and foreign relations.

With the world employing traditional solutions to the emergent threat of terrorism and sectarian violence, but then seemingly coming up short in the process, the Philippines believed that it was time for the international community to acknowledge the role that religion and interfaith dialogue played in geopolitics, and how both were vital, yet missing components in the UN's peace building and peace keeping efforts.

The idea of creating an interreligious council or special committee in the UN was introduced by the Philippines in 2003. This was followed in 2004 by my country's introduction of the UN general assembly resolution titled "Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue for Peace, Harmony and Cooperation".

However, owing to the lack of precedence on the subject matter in the UN's then 62 years of existence, the said initiative was at first met with trepidation by the UN member states. This was compounded by the misconception that said initiatives were sectarian in nature. However, the Philippines has consistently contended that its interfaith dialogue initiatives were nonsectarian and do not delve in dogma or theological issues, but rather on the role of religions as secular partners in the promotion of peace and development throughout the world. It believes that the religious sector was an adept member of civil society, which had the moral high ground to persuade followers towards the path of peace.

Gradually, through the Philippines consistent lobbying in the UN with the help of its cosponsors, countries like Pakistan, and my country's active sponsorship and participation in other intergovernmental, interfaith fora outside the UN, the concept of interfaith dialogue as a tool for peace gained ground, and the number of cosponsors of the Philippine UN resolution increased. From an initial 25 UN member states cosponsoring our 2004 resolution, the current version of the Philippines' UN resolution and interreligious dialogue now has 54 cosponsoring states.

The latest Philippines-sponsored “UN resolution on the Promotion of Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue, Understanding and Cooperation for Peace” was adopted by consensus by the UN General Assembly last December 16, 2010. It builds on the previous resolutions on the same subject matter that were introduced and successfully championed by the Philippines in the UN since 2004.

What are the salient features of this resolution? One, it emphasizes the importance of culture and development in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. It also affirms the importance in sustaining the process of engaging all stakeholders, particularly women and the youth in the various interreligious and intercultural dialogue initiatives. It also welcomes the efforts made by the media to promote interreligious and intercultural dialogue, and encourages further promotion of dialogue among the media while at the same time emphasizing the right to freedom of expression and its attendant duties and responsibilities.

It also acknowledges the holding in Manila of the Special Non-aligned Movement Ministerial Meeting (SNAMMM) on interfaith dialogue and cooperation for peace and development. As a side note, the SNAMMM is the biggest intergovernmental gathering today that has highlighted the importance of enhancing efforts to promote respect for diversity, religions, beliefs, cultures and societies.

The last salient point of this resolution is that it calls on all UN member states to consider as appropriate and where applicable interreligious and intercultural dialogue as an important tool in achieving peace and the full realization of the Millennium Development Goals.

More than just being words on paper, the Philippines-sponsored resolution has opened the doors towards concrete action and cooperation between state and non-state actors. Moreover, aided by global events, interfaith dialogue has gained ground both within and outside the walls of the UN multilateral arena, influencing politics and policies as well as adding

freedoms to the work done by the role of the grassroots sector. Within or alongside the UN system the following are some of the accomplishments brought about by an increased awareness by UN member states about interfaith dialogue.

Here is a listing of meetings and other accomplishments made within the UN system by the introduction of the concept of interfaith dialogue in the Philippines. I will discuss them one by one.

We have The Informal Summit of World Leaders on Interfaith Dialogue and Cooperation. This was launched in 2005 and chaired by the Philippines at the sidelines of the UN World Summit. This informal summit of world leaders enabled 15 heads of state to discuss for the first time in recent history the importance of interfaith dialogue and cooperation in the formulation of state policy in relation to national security and peace efforts.

Next we have the establishment of The Tripartite Forum on Interfaith Cooperation for Peace (TFICP). It was initiated by the Philippines again at the sidelines of the UN World Summit and launched in March 2006. The TFICP is a secular and voluntary partnership among UN member states and UN organizations and over 100 international civil society organizations dedicated to coming up with practical interfaith dialogue applications or measures for peace building and peace keeping.

Last, we have The Ministerial Meetings and High-Level Conferences on Interfaith Dialogue and Cooperation for Peace. Both meetings provide a platform for foreign ministers and other high level government officials to discuss policy formulation and possible cooperation in fields or projects related to interfaith dialogue and peace. The high level conference includes UN agencies and leaders of international non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Outside the UN system, in passing are just some of the more popular annual regional conferences on interfaith dialogue attended by government representatives, agencies and civil society groups alike. So you have The Asia-Pacific Regional Interfaith Dialogue Conference and The Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) Interfaith Dialogue Conference. The Asia-Pacific conference includes countries like Australia and New Zealand which have hosted the latter and actively participated in consecutive conferences. The ASEM conference brings together the 27 EU members states and the European Commission with 19 Asian countries and the ASEAN secretariat.

Throughout my presentation I have constantly mentioned the Philippines' role in championing interfaith dialogue internationally, more particularly in the UN. And you might be wondering why my country feels so strongly about interfaith dialogue. The answer is simple. It is because the Philippines have experienced firsthand how interfaith dialogue efforts from the grass roots sector, especially when encouraged or supported by the government, can bring about a culture of peace.

The concept of interreligious and intercultural dialogue is not new to the Philippine experience. Philippine history has been molded by the reality of cultural and religious diversity. Like some of our neighbors in the Asia Pacific region, we continue to confront problems related to ethnic and religious minority populations. Thus, keeping the peace and achieving national unity have always been a priority concern of the Philippine government given the fact that we are a country that is home to 90 known ethnic groups further subdivided into over 150 ethno-linguistic communities scattered over 7107 islands.

Religious and grassroots organizations as well as our civil society groups particularly in the Muslim Mindanao in the southern Philippines have already been engaged as early as the 1960s in the practice of interreligious and intercultural dialogue as an effective tool for peace and development. The national government therefore saw it fit to enact laws and adopt

measures to strengthen and enhance the engagement of the civil society in promoting economic development and the peace process.

Today, the Philippine government is partner and coordinates its efforts with several interfaith and interreligious groups in its peace processes and development goals. Some of these groups are the Bishops-Ulamas Conference (BUC), and The Philippine Ecumenical Peace Platform (PEPP).

The BUC is composed of Christian bishops, Muslim ulamas and leaders of indigenous communities. The group links with peace centers, schools and NGOs in conducting community based Culture of Peace Workshops and mainstreaming peace education in the school curriculum. Since it is recognized by the government and supported by many NGOs, the statements and recommendations of BUC on these issues influence policy directions. An example would be the recent institution by the Philippine Department of Education on Basic Madrasah Education (BME) in all of our public elementary schools with Muslim pupils in predominantly Christian populated Manila. BME calls for the use of an enriched curriculum which stipulates the teaching of Islamic values and the Arabic language in addition to the regular subjects of English, science, mathematics, Filipino and Makabayan or civics.

The Philippine Ecumenical Peace Platform (PEPP) is the largest ecumenical formation of church leaders in the Philippines, which has played a role in reviving the peace talks between the government of the Republic of the Philippines and the National Democratic Front. Just last February both parties met here in Oslo for the first round of formal peace talks to take place since 2004.

Many other examples of how interfaith dialogue in the Philippines has helped to create cultures of peace in formerly conflict afflicted areas abound.

In closing, I wish to thank the organizers of this conference for giving the Philippines this opportunity to further promote its belief in interfaith dialogue, a belief that interfaith dialogue should complement or at least be an added component to any nation's peace and development efforts and policies.

I must admit however, that much still needs to be done, and European governments in particular need more convincing on the merits of interfaith dialogue. However, through increased support from the international civil society sector and likeminded states, interfaith dialogue might just one day become a mainstream tool or practice employed by national governments in their quest for sustained peace and development, national security and international amity.

An Update on UPF Initiatives in the UN



Taj Hamad,
International Secretary
General UPF

We can't claim anything for ourselves – that is the teaching of Father and Mother Moon – go with the heart of a parent and in the shoes of a servant. That is what we did at the United Nations. For many years we've been working silently without pointing things to ourselves, helping, working in partnerships with NGOs, with the diplomatic community, the Secretariat. We built relationships day in and day out.

Centering on that kind of relationship, we were called by the African Union (AU) to come and organize the Africa Day. That is basically one of the major dates in the African calendar. They were very happy. Three days after that they called us to come to the African Union headquarters. I went there. We signed a memorandum of understanding to work with them together in a project called *Sleeping sickness*. The disease sleeping sickness comes through the tsetse fly. It bites people and makes them sleep till they die. They asked us to work with them cooperatively to find a way through the international network we have in the world, to combat the disease in Africa. It actually costs Africa 4.2 billion dollars every year. Also, 50,000 people die every year from this disease.

In February 2011, there was a summit for African leaders. There were about 50 heads of state there. We went there and introduced our partnership with the business community to the AU, and they

committed for a big amount of money towards the eradication of this disease.

So, we work with the AU centering on governments. We work with the business community. We work with NGOs. We create inroads between these different entities to achieve the ultimate goal which is building God's Kingdom on the Earth. We are not there yet, but we keep trying. Nevertheless, we have found that everywhere we go, Rev. Moon and Mother Moon have created a foundation for us to stand upon, in Africa, China, South America, Europe, everywhere, wherever we go. This is a strong foundation for partnership and working together.

We are an NGO with consultative status at the UN and try to utilize that to create this partnership and advance the work of building God's Kingdom or creating peace on earth just like the UN is trying to do.

Speaking of the UN, one of the major contributions that Rev. Moon has given to the UN is the suggestion or proposal of the establishment of an interreligious council at the UN. To say it undiplomatically, he wants God to be the center of the UN. Are there any objections to that?

That's the bottom line. The UN talks about peace, but they could not create peace until now. From the reality which we see – although there are a lot, a lot, a lot of good things the UN has done, but peace is still far away in the distance – we have to call upon the origin of peace, which is God himself.

Father Moon in his ultimate wisdom on the 18th August 2000 proposed the establishment of an interreligious council at the UN. We

know the situation of the world, we know the past. We had two big world wars; the devastation was incredible. In World War I there were 19 million deaths. In World War II which involved 61 nations, there were 60 million deaths.

The UN was established to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war and to affirm human rights, the dignity of human beings. But still there is poverty and inequality in the world. There is the violation of human rights everywhere. At the beginning of the millennium, the largest gathering of heads of state issued the UN Millennium Development Goals. There are eight goals. Those are well known to those who are working in the area of peace. These millennium goals are to be achieved by 2015. There is some progress being done, but there is still a lot to be done because the instrument through which these millennium goals are supposed to be achieved, is still in need of reform, many people have recognized. The UN today, if you look at it, you'll find there are areas of concern. There is nationalism – every nation looking for its own benefits. There is anti-religion there, and there is also a redefinition of the family, which we believe is the cornerstone for building God's Kingdom of peace on earth.

I want to acknowledge that the UN is a great institution, has a great vision, but it is yet to be accomplished. It needs some push, and that push I believe Dr. Moon gave on 18th August 2000 when introducing the concept of the interreligious council at the UN. There is an understanding behind why we need religion to be part of the UN. It is not a religion which would hinder, but a religion which could bring wisdom and mend the political process – bring in, not take out from the political process – and work in partnership and cooperation.

That proposal of establishing an interreligious council at the UN was presented to one of our best supporters. In the Philippines, Jose de Venecia Jr. picked up that and said, "This is a great idea. We have to make this happen!" He talked to Condoleezza Rice; he talked to the Secretary General of the UN. The mission of the Philippines spearheaded this project which Father Moon had brought into existence. Since that proposal was presented at the UN, the face of the UN has started changing bit by bit. People have started talking about religion, about interreligious dialogue, and about coming together. Before that, when you spoke about religion, people would say, "What are you talking about?"

For NGO's to speak about religion, we created a caucus called The Values Caucus, so that we could just talk about values or universal values. When Father Moon came and presented this proposal, it really brought the debate into focus. People are now more aware of the importance of religion.

In the UN everything takes time and goes step by step. Many steps have been taken towards establishing an interreligious council. A lot of work has been done through partnerships and working with governments. The Founding Vision of an interreligious council was established in 2000. In 2004 there was the UN Resolution Promoting Interreligious Dialogue. Something like that never happened before in the UN. In 2006 the Tripartite Forum on Interfaith Cooperation for Peace was established, in 2007 the Focal Unit on interreligious dialogue in the Secretariat. Last year, on 20th October 2010, the World Interfaith Harmony Week was established. There was a resolution in the UN spearheaded by six nations – Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Jordan, Oman, Saudi Arabia and Turkey. That resolution encouraged nations to push their religious institutions so that

they may serve, work and amplify the goodness in other religions, not just in their own religion. That is basically what Father Moon has said from the beginning, “In the heart of a parent, in the shoes of a servant”. The parents work for the benefit of their children, and the children are all the children. The UN General Assembly Resolution on the World Interfaith Harmony Week encourages all states to support, on a voluntary basis, the spread of the message of interfaith harmony and goodwill in the world’s churches, mosques, synagogues, temples and other places of worship during that week, based on the love of God – or on love of the good – and love of one’s neighbor, each according to their own religious traditions or convictions.

The work of an interreligious council will be guided by the universal principles that affirm the sacred value and rights of all human beings, regardless of religion, nationality, ethnicity and race.

There is work in progress on the Interreligious Council. Of course, there are challenges to consider in front of us. Will the religious process inevitably become politicized? How can we get non-religious people to accept the importance of spiritual and religious values? Do you select religious leaders based on the office they hold or on their charisma? How do you ensure that women, young people, and minorities are represented? How do you ensure that faith communities have the necessary expertise to translate lofty ideas into practical policies? How do you ensure that religious leaders do not try to usurp the role of heads of state? How do you prevent nations from using religion to give a cloak of respectability to questionable policies?

There are consultations going on here in Europe and worldwide, and we definitely are working to meet those challenges and work with ambassadors of peace like you to bring this vision to pass.

Religion – A Key Force for Peace



Hyung Jin Moon

International Chairman UPF

We're so happy to be here in Europe, especially with Father and Mother Moon at this time. They will not only be travelling in Europe, but also to various countries in the Middle East, working with the Abrahamic faiths there, as you know in this time of change in that region. So, we're very excited, we're very thankful they are here. They decided to come and will be addressing all of you tomorrow at the main event.

In the study of religion, it is very common to look at religion in various lenses. We can look at religion from a social or sociological perspective and say that it is maybe an evolutionary need – or it is helpful to society – to believe in religions, i.e. it is beneficial for the human species as a society to believe and hold religious values and uphold traditions of religion.

We can also look at religion and analyze it in an economic dimension, which is also common in the study of religion, seeing that religion is really a move towards power or economic strength. Many times, nations, states, kings, monarchies have used religion in such ways.

We can also look at religion with a political analysis and see religion as a political entity, that can be used for various political means.

But during my studies, one thing I was grateful for in the study of religion, was the additional phenomenological approach, which is to say that within each type of religious organization – especially if it is a world religion – there are elements of sociology. There are elements of needs that need to be addressed in the human being within our society. There are also economic realities that every religion must address. And also there are political aspects and ecclesiastical aspects within all traditions that we see are very much alive.

But to limit religion to those spheres only, is to make the error of not understanding that religion also has a phenomenological aspect, that it has something beyond the political, something beyond the social, something beyond the economic needs of the human being. Religion is fundamentally connecting us with something that is transcendent of ourselves, and to our ultimate purpose.

For me it is always critical to remind ourselves when we do look at religions – and what Father and Mother Moon have initiated, counts as a religion at the UN – then we understand that religions are much more than political, social or economic entities. They are truly rooted in the principles – we believe – of God, the religions that have lasted their course of time, that have been able to persevere through the generations. Not only was Jesus a social activist. Nor was his group, his disciples and himself, trying to create an economic foundation or even a political foundation. Christ himself was much more than that; he was phenomenologically inspired. He was beyond those things. We could say the same of the prophets of the ages and the writers of the Biblical texts. They were not only motivated in political, social or economic ways. They were motivated in deep spiritual yearning and deep spiritual searching.

In the study of religion, there can be a tendency to go into the reductionist mode and see religion as simply a human entity. What Father

Moon is calling us to recognize, is that religion is not only a human institution, but that it is God himself who inspires the great faith traditions. That is why it is so essential for UPF and the Unification Church to always be engaged in religious dialogue and living.

I myself had a great experience when I was in college, and my brother, who was very close to me, passed away. It was the first time that I experienced the death of a loved one at a very young age. It was very shocking and very painful, but what I realized is that this was not an experience unique to myself.

I was attending a Catholic university at the time, but I wanted to study Buddhism, so I moved to Harvard and studied different faiths. I lived with Tibetan monks, lived with Korean monks, lived in Benedictine monasteries. I had a great time in spending time with the world's religions. In those experiences I have found a richness and treasures I hold until this day.

For us, in the main temple in the Unification Church, which is in Korea, we have enshrined the great faith traditions. All the faith traditions are represented. It is a very unique headquarters of any world religion to see the acknowledgement of Christ, Buddha, Confucius, and Islam recognized as children and movements that God has inspired throughout time. I think it is essential for us in order to have a deeper understanding of Father Moon, to understand also the Unificationist perspective. We do not only view Father Moon as a man. We do not only view him in the Unification Movement simply as a social activist or peace activist. We see him in a Messianic mission, i.e. the mission of the Lord of the Second Advent, where he is working as the Christ who has returned. I think this is fundamental to understand why he engages himself at the risk of bitter persecution, torture, imprisonment, immense opposition to continue to promote the values of God, the values of the family, the values of the ideal world, especially of inheriting the true love of God.

Whenever I reflect on Father and Mother Moon, it is absolutely essential to keep that framework in mind when I look at their worldwide activities and the lifelong course that they have walked.

I have a brief prepared speech that I would like to share with you all. I am very grateful to have the privilege to address you here today.

Distinguished parliamentarians, leaders from civil society, and ambassadors of peace, it's my high honor and privilege to have this opportunity to address you here today in the Norwegian Parliament, a place of rich history and a tradition of good governance.

I thank the members of parliament who made today's meeting in this venue possible. I also want to thank both the Universal Peace Federation of Europe and the Women's Federation for World Peace of Europe for convening this European leadership conference on building a world of universal peace at a time of global crisis. Our meeting here in this place devoted to public service and the public good, is, I believe, an expression of our mutual commitment to discover the path to lasting peace. And I am sure that God's blessing is here upon all of us today.

This evening I would like to share with you a few words on behalf of my parents, the Rev. Dr. Sun Myung Moon, Father and Mother Moon, who have embarked on a global tour to share this vision of peace centered on God's providence at this time in history. Tomorrow, we will all be attending Father and Mother Moon's main message at the Bristol Hotel here in Oslo.

As we reflect upon peace, we realize that peace is not simply the cessation of conflict. Rather, as we have learnt from the great teachers and prophets of the ages, peace is much more than a political, economic or military accomplishment. Peace is rooted in the quality of our own character, the quality of our relationships, and ultimately, and most importantly, our relationship with God, the Creator. The founders and

sages of the great religions have recognized that when we are lacking in spiritual discipline and wisdom, peace is not possible. Peace arises when we are in a right relationship with God, with our mind and body, with our family, and also with nature and the created world. If we are people of internal struggle, selfishness and sin, alienated from God, our efforts in this world will eventually lead to struggle and conflict.

Father Moon teaches us that the root of peace is the God-centered family. For this reason he has championed the International and Interreligious World Peace Holy Blessing Ceremonies, bringing together couples from every corner of the world calling each to dedicate their marriage and family to God's ideal of true love and universal peace. Father and Mother Moon teach that there is no better way to create a world of peace than by strengthening marriages and building God-centered families of true love.

The fall of Adam and Eve and the consequent murder of Abel by Cain illustrate the point that God's original ideal was to establish a family of true love. The fall was the violation of this ideal, passed down through the ages from one generation to the next. Restoration can only be achieved when this original ideal, the paradigm of the God-centered family is achieved. That is the mission the True Parents have taken up. Hence we refer to them as *True Parents of Heaven, Earth and Humankind*.

They teach that on the foundation of the God-centered blessed family the realm of peace can be expanded to an ever widening range of other levels, such as the tribe, society, nation and world, and thus naturally will emerge the Kingdom of God. Within the Christian tradition, the Kingdom of God is understood as a world of peace, a world that fulfills the hope of all ages and all religions for a united world of peace. Jesus prayed the Lord's Prayer and taught the Lord's Prayer with the words, "Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven." The emphasis is on "Thy Kingdom come, and Thy will be done." Jesus

also called his disciples to repent and to forgive their enemies, to work to deliver humanity from the bondage of sin.

And as important as political and secular movements have been and continue to be, God's central providence throughout history has been led by the founders of the great religions. That process continues today. If we ignore the central and necessary things of religion, we do so only at our peril and against the reality of history. Those who advocate atheism, moral relativism, selfish materialism, are leading humanity down a wrong path that leads to spiritual poverty and spiritual destruction. For this reason each of us, as citizens, professionals, and leaders, as mothers and fathers, sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, should seek to center ourselves on God's true love or His essence. God calls us away from selfishness and self serving behavior towards a life lived for the sake of others. This is the path to peace.

Knowing the importance of religion, my father has called even the UN to include the great faith traditions in its noble mission and establish an interreligious council within the UN system. Otherwise, as he has taught, the efforts of UN will fall short of their objectives, and humanity as a whole will suffer. Of course, we must also be watchful of the distortions of religion expressed in various forms of fanaticism and/or the promotion of violence. We must rather tap into the spiritual core of religion, which is rooted in the true love of the parent child relationship between God and human beings, truly learning to love and live for the sake of the other, sacrificing oneself.

My father has great respect for the UN. Had it not been for the UN Peace Force, comprised of 16 nations, not only would the nation of South Korea not exist as a free and democratic society where religion has flourished, but neither would my father have survived to carry out his providential mission, nor, needless to say, neither would I be here.

Almost exactly 60 years ago, on October 14, 1950, my father was about to be executed in one of the North Korean concentration camps, known as Heungnam prison. He had been imprisoned there for almost three years by the communist authorities, who viewed his bold ministry and strong faith as a threat to their atheistic regime. On that very day, miraculously the UN forces liberated my father from Heungnam prison. The late general Alexander Haig, former US Secretary of State and NATO Commander, and later in life a long time friend of Father Moon, was a close friend of Douglas Mac Arthur and a leader among the allied forces conducting the bombing raid that liberated my father and spared him and other prisoners from a certain death.

It was just over ten years ago, August 2000, that Father Moon outlined his vision for an Interreligious Council in a speech he delivered at the UN just prior to the millennium General Assembly. He explained that the UN would not be able to fulfill its mission without creating a council that would uphold the spiritual wisdom and heritage of humanity representing God's guidance for us all. This council would therefore function as a spiritual compass and a conscience. This council would include exemplary and mature representatives and learned advocates of the world's spiritual traditions.

While we most often hear the mainstream mass media speak negatively or pejoratively, even selectively, about the role of religion in society, those who are better informed recognize that this is only one part of the whole story. There are millions of people of faith working together for peace, society building, faith communities, etc. There are thousands and many thousands of faith based organizations as well as interfaith organizations that serve humanity as an expression of their love and obedience to God's will. People of faith everywhere share a strong desire for peace and realize that peace is an ideal that stands at the center of their sacred scriptures.

My father has referred to his ideal for a new UN system as the “Abel UN”. Like Abel in Biblical history the UN should seek God’s guidance. Lasting solutions to our global problems and a comprehensive peace cannot be realized without a spiritual awakening and a full participation of those who affirm and practice spiritual principles. I believe all of you can appreciate the value of Father Moon’s proposal for the world’s foremost political body. It is an idea whose time has truly come.

Recently, the UN General Assembly has passed a number of resolutions calling for interfaith cooperation. These resolutions derive from the vision of my father as advanced by the work of UPF.

Father Moon was called to his great Messianic mission by God in a direct encounter with Christ when he was only 15 years old, praying on a North Korean hilltop. In 1960 he established the position of True Parents together with my mother, Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon. They stand in the position of True Parents to fulfill the mission of Jesus and complete God’s providence at this time in history working hand in hand with God-centered people of all faiths.

At the Assembly of the World’s Religions convened in 1985, Father Moon gathered leaders from all faiths and he called for the production of an anthology of sacred texts showing the common values shared by all religions. This resulted in the publication of “World Scripture – An Anthology of Sacred Texts”, a volume that shows the universal spiritual values shared by the world’s religions. My father has canonized the World Scripture text as one of the essential texts in the canon of the Unification Church.

Recently, my father also published his autobiography entitled “As A Peace Loving Global Citizen”. It has been at the top of the best seller lists in Korea for almost two years and now in Taiwan. It has also been published in English and in other languages. I encourage all of you to read this fascinating, personal and inspiring book. I believe through it

you will learn about Father Moon's vision, his character, his life, his background, in what situation he grew up, and his mission at this time in history. Indeed, through this autobiography I invite each one of you to seek to understand the heart with which he has fervently and ardently pursued his mission to bring about lasting world peace and the Kingdom of God.

In conclusion, I want to thank each one of you who represent the people of this great nation, the world's great faith traditions and humanity. May your experience during this European Leadership Conference over the next few days and in the next lectures be enriching and enlightening. It is our prayer that it is so. Let us work together to build one family under God and a world of universal peace. We are all called to play a central role in God's providence at this time, and I know that True Parents pray about this each and every day.

I thank you once again for your attendance here and your respectful attention to my humble address. God bless you and thank you!

