

**Northeast Asia
Security and the Trump Administration**

**International Leadership Conference, co-sponsored by the Universal Peace
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Parliamentarians, ladies and gentlemen,

Congratulations to the UPF for creating this international network of Parliamentarians for Peace.

On this year's 70th anniversary of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the world should remind itself both that Japan is one of Our strongest advocates for nuclear disarmament and that the U.S. nuclear umbrella paradoxically remains a primary guarantee of East Asian security. North Korea's pursuit of a nuclear arsenal is placing major new strains on regional and world peace.

American Election

Here are some thoughts on the surprise election of Donald Trump as president-elect. Like most Canadians and reportedly most Japanese and others around the democratic world, I was strongly hoping for a Hillary Clinton victory.

There are of course many explanations of what happened on Nov. 8. Here are four from a Canadian perspective:

- Sexism remains a major barrier for the U.S. presidency, but, as Secretary Clinton has said, the glass ceiling will be shattered soon,
- Mr. Trump's campaign statements concerning NATO, NAFTA, relations with Muslim-majority countries, and other important issues must be quickly reversed,
- Since Mr. Trump's Republicans will have control of both the executive and legislative branches of government, Americans face four years of withdrawal from the Paris Climate Change Convention, probably no 'Obamacare', no national

gun control, and much more. At 70, Mr. Trump is likely to be a one-term president.

- As Canadian commentator Nick Rost van Tonningen observed, “The (election day) exit polls told the following story: Trump won the white vote by a record margin among both men and women. There was no surge of female or Latino voters. Education mattered: while in 2012, Obama attracted votes from 50% of those who had graduated from college and 51% of those who hadn’t, this time around Hillary got the votes of 52% of the former but trailed Trump by 8 points among the latter. The economy was a big issue: 52% of all voters said the economy was the most important facing the country; Hillary led Trump by ten points among them. This was a change election: 39% of voters said ‘bringing needed change’ was what mattered most and the Trump-Hillary split among them was 83-14. Obamacare was a wind in Trump’s sails: 47% believed that Obamacare had gone ‘too far’ and 83% of those voted for Trump. Only 38% of voters had a favorable impression of Trump. 63% of Americans said the Clinton email issue bothered them a ‘lot’ or ‘some’. And finally, this was a deeply pessimistic electorate: only one in three voters said that the country was ‘generally going in the right direction’ and two-thirds that it wasn’t, with Hillary getting the support of 90% of the former and Trump 69% of the latter”.

President Obama and Secretary Clinton have been most gracious since the votes were counted. Obama noted in the Rose Garden: “It is no secret that the president-elect and I have some pretty significant differences... I have instructed my team to follow the example that President Bush's team set eight years ago ... Because we are now all rooting for (Trump's) success in uniting and leading the country.”

Northeast Asia Tensions

Will Donald Trump as President leave U.S. allies in Asia to fend for themselves in the face of an aggressive China, or will he join them to curb Beijing’s illegitimate acts? As a candidate, he sent out conflicting signals. As president-elect, he should deliver a message of reassurance and resolve, starting with his meeting with prime minister Abe this week in New York.

Last spring, Mr. Trump alarmed both Japan and South Korea by reportedly saying they “would in fact be better off if they defend themselves from North Korea” with their own nuclear weapons. In today’s *Japan Times*, he denies saying it. Both nations were probably already doubtful about the U.S. commitment to retaliate in the event of a nuclear attack by the North.

Japan is now spending more on defense, although in the current geopolitical atmosphere it probably needs today to go well beyond its current one percent of GDP . Mr. Trump’s criticism of Japan as an ally no doubt offended Prime Minister Abe, who supports greater defense spending. To his credit, Mr. Trump is now mending fences. He called President Park to say that the U.S. will continue to honour its treaty obligations. He will doubtless do the same when he meets Mr. Abe.

Trump advisers Alexander Gray and the well-known academic and former Democrat Peter Navarro offer a vision for his Asia policy in the current *Foreign Policy* magazine. They criticize President Obama's 'pivot to Asia' as "talking loudly but carrying a small stick." His inaction when China seized Scarborough Shoal from the Philippines in 2012, they assert, led to President Rodrigo Duterte's courtship of Beijing. They say that President Trump will push back against China's efforts to bully its neighbors. Most critically, he will defend the right of free navigation through the South China Sea, which China claims as its historical waters contrary to the recent law of the sea decision of the International Tribunal in the Hague.

To back up its Asian alliances, Gray and Navarro say, the U.S. should return to the Reagan-era mantra of "peace through strength". That requires in part a larger defense budget. To be sure, *Pax Americana* must also promote continued Asian prosperity.

North Korea

Despite a wide range of "sticks and carrots" for more than a decade, Pyongyang has pushed forward with nuclear weapons and delivery capability. It is now, admitted it or not, a certified nuclear power probably with the capability to strike targets throughout Asia. Moreover, it is reaching both ICBM missile capability and the ability to construct hydrogen bombs.

The current situation in summary:

- North Korean nuclear capability does not appear to be deterrable. Those concerned were not sufficiently concerned (or fearful of consequences) to take direct military action against Pyongyang's nuclear program in its embryonic stages. Unfortunately, the current North Korean leader appears less stable than his predecessors.
- Repeated efforts to engage Beijing directly or the United Nations through implementing sanctions against Pyongyang have proved ineffective. China's party-state simply does not appear to believe that North Korean weapons threaten it and, if they disconcert Washington and allies in the region, it doesn't bother China's regime.
- For Japan and the ROK, the U.S. "nuclear guarantee" still exists, but would it be operationally valid in a crisis? When Pyongyang develops reliable ICBMs and threatens the ROK and/or Japan with demands, will Washington be willing to sacrifice Los Angeles to save Seoul or Tokyo? One suspects that Japanese and South Koreans doubt that level of commitment to sacrifice American cities for Asian ones. Hence, the temptation will grow increasingly to develop their own nuclear weapons.

The U.S. under President Trump appears likely to offer "more of the same" to Seoul, For decades, successive U.S. administrations hoped that "something will turn up." It can continue to push sanctions, but Pyongyang has shown no sensitivity to any level of suffering inflicted on its people. Washington could seek to initiate an internal coup against Kim Jong-un, but Kim could survive a coup attempt and become even more dangerous. Trump could take the direct gamble of an attack on all Korean nuclear

facilities with the associated risk of a terrible war on the peninsula. No fail-safe answers come to mind; encouragingly, the outgoing Secretary General of the United Nations now appears likely to be next president of South Korea.

No-one at this conference needs to be told that North Korea remains a Maoist/Stalinist monarchy and an ongoing risk to Japan and other neighbours. Permit me to quote from an address given in Tokyo on October 20th by Australian Justice Michael Kirby, former chair of the UN Commission of Inquiry (COI) on human rights violations in DPRK (North Korea) 2013-2014:

“Amongst the many serious human rights violations of North Korea were those relating to the abduction of Japanese civilians, most of whom were seized from their peaceful lives in Japan and forced to disappear into the isolation of detention and capture in North Korea. Their forced disappearances, including even children and young persons, were described by the COI as cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment...The exact number of Japanese nationals who were abducted in this way is not known. In 2002, the then Supreme Leader of North Korea (Kim Jong-Il) admitted to 13. However there were many more...”

China

A fairly recent Nanos opinion survey across Canada indicated that 76 per cent of Canadians distrust the government in Beijing. I wonder what a similar survey would indicate today in the U.S., Japan, South Korea and among other east Asian peoples?

In the current issue of *Diplomat & International Canada* magazine, academic Charles Burton of Brock University and formerly a counsellor at the Canadian embassy in Beijing, makes three important points about the party-state in Beijing, including noting its “Leninism without Marxism” in current domestic and foreign policy:

- The Party continues to use high-volume propaganda to engender a sense of crisis of national sovereignty “by a discourse of extreme hostility of the west and one suggesting Japan is conspiring to derail China’s virtuous rise to power. Both aspects resonate strongly with the very deeply felt nationalistic sentiments of ordinary Chinese citizens.”
- Under President Xi Jinping, China “has assertively expanded its area of control by occupying disputed uninhabited islands strategically situated in surrounding seas. Most of these islands are far from China’s coastal waters, but close to the borders of Japan and the Southeast Asian nations that have traditionally claimed them.” These initiatives, he adds, fall just short of the threshold that would provoke the United States and its allies in the Asia-Pacific to engage in military action to stop it.
- China’s expansionist ambitions have led East Asian nations to “strengthen their defensive alliance with the United States”. Under Xi, it can be expected that there will be even more emphasis placed on “rejecting international norms as defined by the UN’s covenants on human rights and national sovereignty...As its

economy continues to falter, it can be anticipated that there will be more emphasis placed on pursuing China's interests through cyber-espionage and by security agencies seeking to influence critical foreign decision makers to speak for China's interests in western nations and throughout the world."

On August 31, Canada's ambassador to China, Guy Saint-Jacques, criticized President Xi's human rights record during prime minister Justin Trudeau's visit to Beijing. "In the last three years we have seen, I think, things going backward, unfortunately," Saint-Jacques told reporters. "And that's why Canada has used opportunities to express its views to China." Many human-rights advocates and China observers have used much stronger language to describe how Mr. Xi is changing the country.

Benedict Rogers, for example, a human rights advocate in the UK, was blunt in a recent piece in the *Huffington Post UK*: "As long as lawyers are harassed, intimidated, monitored, followed, detained, locked up; as long as Christian crosses and churches are torn down; as long as Uighur Muslims are told crudely that they can't grow beards or fast during Ramadan; as long as Tibetan Buddhists find their culture decimated; as long as Falun Gong practitioners are beaten, jailed, slaughtered;... and as long as there is no international, independent scrutiny of China's organ transplant system, and no international inquiry into China's crimes against humanity, I do not trust what (the party-state in) China says.

James Mann, author of *China Fantasy* and former Beijing bureau chief of the Los Angeles Times, says "...What we can do is to keep expressing as forcefully as possible the values of political freedom and the right to dissent. Democratic governments around the world need to collaborate more often in condemning Chinese repression — not just in private meetings but in public as well...Why should there be a one-way street in which Chinese leaders send their own children to America's best schools, while locking up lawyers at home? The Chinese regime is not going to open up because of our trade with it. The "China fantasy" amounted to both a conceptual failure and a strategic blunder. The next president will need to start out afresh".

The U.S. lost about 54,000 manufacturing facilities and 24 million related jobs during the past several decades, creating a merchandise trade deficit last year alone with China of a surreal \$367 billion. The Trump administration should listen to people like Dan Dimicco, who headed Nucor, the largest American steel company and steel recycler in North America. Evidently, none of Nucor's 22,000 has been laid off in 40 years even when many other U.S. steel companies were under bankruptcy protection. Like many Americans, Dimicco wants manufacturing restored to its former important role in the American economy. He stresses that the No.1 job killer in manufacturing is currency manipulation, providing massive cost advantages to predatory foreign competitors like China.

Fair trade is a well-known international peace-builder. With the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) now effectively doomed by the results of the recent U.S. election, many Canadians hope Prime Minister Abe's government will move toward a bilateral trade pact with Canada and perhaps other TPP parties. Japan is the world's largest importer of liquefied natural gas and third-largest consumer of oil and oil products. Most of your imported oil comes from the Middle East. Canadian products would be welcome new sources from a stable, democratic trading partner.

Conclusion

Unfortunately, there is no simple conclusion to these remarks. The democratic/rule of law nations have entered a difficult period. Prudence and courage in equal measure will be required from leaders to maintain peace and security in the years ahead.

Thank you.