

“Opportunity and Hope in Time of Global Crisis: Interdependence,  
Mutual Prosperity and Universal Values”

Universal Peace Federation International (UPF) Leadership Conference  
Webinar

Panel from North America, Latin America and Caribbean: Dra. Rosalia Arteaga Serrano-President, Ecuador, 1997; Dr. Charles Yang, Central America/Caribbean UPF Chair; H.E. Jocelerme Privert, President of Haiti, 2016-17; Hon. John Doolittle, US House of Representatives, 1991-2009; Moderator: Dr. Franco Famularo, president UPF Canada.); Dr. Michael Jenkins of UPF in United States.

Remarks by Hon. David Kilgour

Sept. 11, 2020 11.30-1pm

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Most of us remember well what happened in New York City and elsewhere on this date in 2001. Cabinet ministers from across the Americas were then in Lima to enact a Democratic Charter for the Organization of American States (OAS). Despite the tragedy, our meeting re-convened and we voted unanimously to pass the Charter.

Congratulations to the UPF on its 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary; thanks to the founders, Mrs. Moon and the late Rev. Moon, for the honour of participating today.

The three pillars of UPF-interdependence, mutual prosperity, universal values-are timely as our global family passes through a pandemic, which my WW2 veteran friend Alex Polowin, 95, terms the most disruptive event of his life.

Globally, COVID-19 continues to wreak havoc on our health, food resources, and economies. Its only good feature is that it has improved global hygiene against other illnesses.

Amazing people have stepped forward during the crisis. This "rare season of human solidarity", as Slovak/American filmmaker Anabela Zigova puts it, has been seeing which institutions, countries and fellow human beings really care:

- Front line health workers everywhere carry the heaviest burdens and risks from COVID-19. One I know works in the intensive care unit of a large hospital and has three young children at home.
- Another who cares is foodbank volunteer Glen Pearson of Canada, who quotes the UN predicting that 265 million people could face food

insecurity worldwide. When hotels, restaurants etc. close, the need for produce diminishes, leaving some growers no choice but to eliminate their surplus. Fully 3.7 million gallons of milk are dumped daily and 750,000 eggs smashed weekly in the U.S. (1)-a tragic waste when 30 countries are facing famine.

#### Women leaders

The national leaders whose respective citizens are emerging from the pandemic fastest and least damaged are women, who place health before the economy and have assertive leadership styles. One of our panelists today - Dr. Rosalía Arteaga Serrano, Former President of Ecuador - notes that these women are successful because of their empathy, sensitivity and ability to multi-task. They listen to health experts and scientists and then take decisive action on the best available evidence.

New Zealand's Prime Minister, Jacinda Ardern, imposed early self-isolation on all entering her country. She didn't take the WHO's advice not to close airports to foreigners and moved to lockdown when New Zealand had fewer than 150 confirmed cases. As of Sept 5, there've been 24 deaths.

Taiwan's President, Tsai Ing-wen, stopped the spread of COVID-19 by speedily closing her country to visitors from Wuhan and later from all of China, and accessing citizen travel records for health checks. Enhanced hygiene/public disinfection measures allowed a lockdown to be avoided.

If the WHO and its member-nations had adapted Taiwan's practices in confronting COVID-19 in early 2020, many of the 26.6m confirmed cases and 875K deaths worldwide to date (Sept 5) could have been avoided. With just 492 Covid-19 cases and seven deaths, Taiwan's schools, offices, shops, and transportation have remained open for its almost 24 million residents.

Barbados under Prime Minister Mia Mottley has had just 7 deaths. It recently launched a new "Welcome Stamp"-an invitation to work remotely from the island paradise.

South Korea is also a model to emulate in slowing its epidemic without lockdowns or taking authoritarian measures, although it's currently bracing for a resurgence. It has the best-organized testing program in the world, combined with extensive efforts to isolate infected people and trace and quarantine their contacts.

Germany, led by Angela Merkel, was one of the first in Europe to begin fast-track tests for antibodies. Terming the virus Germany's "greatest challenge" since W.W.2, she's been able to keep fatalities to 9,401.

Simon Tisdall notes that authoritarians make the worst leaders in a pandemic by mishandling their responses and placing political interests ahead of public safety and health. (2)

China's Xi Jinping, for example, not only purposefully miscommunicated on Covid-19 from the get-go, but also blatantly is using the pandemic to advance his totalitarian goals - as evidenced by the so-called sedition legislation now applicable in Hong Kong and beyond. If Chinese authorities had acted three weeks earlier, a UK university study concluded, the number of coronavirus cases could have been reduced by 95% and its geographic spread limited.

Since 2001, the Beijing party-state has directed a network of organ-pillaging from prisoners of conscience—primarily Falun Gong, but also Tibetans, Christians and Uyghurs. From 1-3 million Muslim Uyghurs are currently confined to concentration camps and have been blood-tested as if for organ transplant purposes. Fortunately, a UK independent tribunal, headed by Geoffrey Nice, will soon probe Uyghur genocide allegations against the Xi government.

In May, Premier Li Keqiang noted that 600 million people in China live on a monthly income of 1,000 yuan (\$190) or less. Economist Thomas Piketty's book *Capital and Ideology* [2020] reveals that in 2015, China's top 10 per cent had 41 per cent of all income, while the bottom half dropped to 15 per cent.

Autocrats have so failed the COVID-19 challenge that the world might hopefully begin to reverse a trend towards authoritarian governance. Overall, democracies have responded well because their citizens feel that such governance works for them. They trust it and rally around a national effort to cope. This lesson should hold true long after the virus has been contained.

Hopefully, we aren't entering another cold war with China and Russia. There's still a great deal of two-way trade, although the pandemic has taught us not to be dependent on China.

At a recent UPF conference, Prof. Nancy Wei suggested re China “contentious co-existence” as a likely near-term future. U.S. Ambassador Chris Hill stressed the importance of good global citizenship. Francis Fukuyama, formerly of the National Endowment for Democracy, notes: “We (aren’t) dealing with the China of the 1990s or even the 2000s, but a completely different animal (representing) a clear challenge to our democratic values and that “we need to hold it at bay ...”

We might issue at this conference a call for global unity to confront the issues of the pandemic and China. The UPF can make a difference in fostering multi-sector international co-operation at a new level.

### Conclusion

Let me end on a faith and values note: Faith is the power to lift with words and belief without needing a visible hand to hold it up.

A friend referenced a quote from the Rockefeller family creed:

I believe in:

- the supreme worth of the individual and in (their) right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

I believe that:

- truce and justice are fundamental to an enduring social order
- love is the greatest thing in the world; that it alone can overcome hate; that right can and will triumph over might.

These are principles for which good people stand, and for which many of them suffer and die. These are universal values which help (our) post-pandemic world to recognize the interconnectedness of all humans and the need for peace on our planet.

Thank you.

### Sources

1 Yaffe-Bellany, David and Corkery, Michael “Dumped Milk, Smashed Eggs, Plowed Vegetables: Food Waste of the Pandemic” April 11, 2020 The New York Times

2 Tisdall, Simon “From Trump to Erdoğan, men who behave badly make the worst leaders in a pandemic” April 26, 2020 The Guardian