

The 1994 Agreed Framework – a squandered opportunity for peace in Korea

On this day, twenty-seven years ago in October 1994, the United States and North Korea signed a document entitled the 'Agreed Framework'.

Had the agreement been implemented, in all likelihood, North Korea would not have subsequently developed its nuclear arms deterrent, diplomatic relations between the United States and North Korea would have been normalised and peace could have been restored to the Korean Peninsula.

None of this happened.

North Korea faithfully followed their obligations to the letter.

The United States deliberately did not.

| Terms of Agreed Framework October 1994 | What Actually Happened |
|---|---|
| Provision to the DPRK of a Light Water reactor project with a total generating capacity of approximately 2,000 MW(e) by a target date of 2003. | First pouring of concrete at the construction did not take place until August 2002. The program was abandoned in 2005. |
| The U.S., representing the consortium, will make best efforts to secure the conclusion of a supply contract with the DPRK within six months of the date of this Document for the provision of the LWR project. | Instead of six months, invitations to bid for construction of the LWRs were not issued until four years later in 1998. |
| Alternative energy will be provided in the form of heavy oil for heating and electricity production. Deliveries of heavy oil will begin within three months of the date of this Document and will reach a rate of 500,000 tons annually, in accordance with an agreed schedule of deliveries. | Instead of three months the first shipment was made four years later in 1998. Irregular shipments were made through until terminated in 2003. |
| Within three months of the date of this Document, both sides will reduce barriers to trade and investment, including restrictions on telecommunications services and financial transactions | The USA took no action |
| Each side will open a liaison office in the other's capital following resolution of consular and other technical issues through expert level discussions | The USA took no action |
| As progress is made on issues of concern to each side, the U.S. and the DPRK will up-grade bilateral relations to the Ambassadorial level | The USA took no action |

In 2003, under George W. Bush, the United States abandoned all pretence at implementing the Agreed Framework.

The best opportunity for peace in 50 years was wantonly quashed.

Currently we are being informed by the media that U.S Secretary of State Antony Blinken is keen to reach out to Pyongyang for dialogue, offering to *meet "anytime, anywhere without preconditions"*.

This sounds good, but it is an illusion. Blinken, nor any of his predecessors, have ever had any intention of sitting down and entering in to a genuine two-way discussion aimed at achieving peace on the Korean Peninsula.

Unfortunately, as the sad history of the Agreed Framework exemplifies, the United States is unwilling to take any concrete steps in this direction.

If Blinken was genuine in seeking to defuse the Korean peninsula tinder-box, he could, to use former President Jimmy Carter's words, "*sort it in half a day*". Both North and South Korea want an end to the war.

Speaking to the General Assembly last month North Korea's Permanent Representative to the United Nations summed up the situation with these words:

"The successive U.S. administrations have repeatedly expressed their intentions, both in verbal and written forms, that they had no hostile intent towards the DPRK, advocating dialogue with us. But as can be seen in reality, all of those were nothing more than flowery words to cover up their hostile policy.

The current U.S. administration should prove its policy stand that "they have no hostile intent towards the DPRK" by practical actions instead of words".

NZ DPRK Society

21st October 2021



US Ambassador Robert Gallucci and DPRK Vice Minister Kang Sok-ju

sign the Agreed Framework. 21st October 1994

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