



## The Korean War Armistice: Still waiting for peace

On 27 July 1953 an armistice was signed in Korea which promised that it '*will insure a complete cessation of hostilities and of all acts of armed force in Korea until a final peaceful settlement is achieved*'. The armistice was signed by General Nam II of the Korean People's Army (KPA) on behalf of the KPA and the Chinese People's Volunteers (CPV) and US General William K. Harrison, purportedly on behalf of the United Nations. In fact the UN had no control over the US-led expeditionary force in Korea, which labelled itself the United Nations Command (UNC) nor does it to this day. The South Korean Syngman Rhee regime refused to sign the agreement hoping that the US would continue to fight on its behalf.

Although the Armistice Agreement envisaged a subsequent peace treaty, this was never achieved. The CPV withdrew from Korea in 1958 but the US forces are still there, and the US still has effective '*wartime*' control over the South Korean military.

The United States sees its military presence in South Korea as an essential component of its forward military position in East Asia, which is designed to encircle China and threaten the Far Eastern flank of the Russian Federation. Accordingly it needs to pursue a policy of hostility towards the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK, or North Korea) in order to keep tension high. This policy combines military threats and political and economic warfare. Various ostensibly peace-keeping moves, such as the summits between President Donald Trump and Chairman Kim Jong Un, are easily scuttled by hawks within the US government, such as John Bolton.

The US hostility policy imposes a great burden on the people of the DPRK, and the resulting tension presents great danger to the region and further afield, including New Zealand. Ironically it also puts the people of the United States in danger since it has compelled the DPRK to develop a nuclear deterrent. If war breaks out, either by design or accident, the American people would be imperilled.

The United States government could drop its hostility policy, and live in peaceful coexistence with the DPRK, and with China and Russia. This, of course, would be of immense benefit to the people of the Korean peninsula, North and South, to the region and to the great majority of the American people outside the military-industrial complex.

Peace is achievable but it requires an historic decision by the American government, currently led by President Joe Biden.

If he were to choose peace, he would achieve an honourable place in history. Continuation of the present course blights the lives of millions in Korea and endangers the whole world.

Tim Beal  
Chairman NZ DPRK Society

Peter Wilson  
Secretary NZ DPRK Society

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