

After the Singapore Summit: Real Denuclearisation and the Establishment of a Lasting Peace on the Korean Peninsula are Up to Us

Wednesday 13 June 2018, by [KPTU](#) (Date first published: 12 June 2018).

Real Denuclearisation and the Establishment of a Lasting Peace on the Korean Peninsula are Up to Us - KPTU will continue to work for a peaceful and equal Korea

On June 12 Kim Jong Un, Chairman of the State Affairs Commission of the Democratic People's Republic of the Korea and Donald Trump, President of the United States of America held the first ever summit between leaders of the two countries at the Capella Hotel in Singapore. Following the meeting, the two leaders signed a joint statement containing commitments to (1) establishment of a new U.S.-DPRK relationship for peace and prosperity, (2) joint efforts to build a lasting and stable peace regime on the Korean Peninsula, (3) North Korean reaffirmation of the Panmunjom Agreement and efforts to achieve complete denuclearisation, and (4) joint work to recover POW/MIA remains, including the immediate repatriation of those already identified.

The very fact that the top leaders of North Korea and the U.S., two countries whose relationship has been laced with hostility and mutual threats for the last seventy years, sat together in one place and shared dialogue is historic and signals a new era in which peace on the Korean Peninsula is possible. We therefore welcome the North Korea-U.S. Summit and joint statement.

Nonetheless, we cannot help but feel some disappointment and anxiety about the fact that the joint statement does not contained an agreement on concrete measures towards the establishment of a peace regime and the denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula. This is because this failure signals that many unresolved issues remain between the two countries. Up until the Summit the U.S. continued to assert the need for 'Complete, Verifiable and Irreversible Destruction' (CVID) of North Korean nuclear weapons, while North Korea demanded concrete security assurances and a staged action-for-action approach. Despite three months of negotiations prior to the Summit it appears the two governments were not able to reach a concrete agreement about how to bring their positions into alignment.

We must be careful not to adopt the overly optimistic attitude of the Blue House, which is already talking about the 'end of the Cold War era' and a 'great victory' for the U.S. and the two Koreas. Nor should we give credence to the extreme pessimism of the militaristic conservatives, who are disparaging the Summit for failing to achieve CVID as if in attempt to send us back to the era of open hostility. Through the Summit today we learned that leaving the fate of the Korean Peninsula up to President Trump's calculations ahead of the mid-term elections, or the goodwill of the governments of the countries in the region is not enough to build a real peace regime. We must understand the U.S.-North Korea agreement as a starting point and continue to work for advancement towards real peace.

As we made clear during the Candlelight Rally for Peace on June 9, a real plan for denuclearisation

of the Korean Peninsula has to include withdrawal of the U.S.' policies of nuclear pre-emptive strike and extended deterrence against North Korea. Conclusion of a peace treaty by all relevant sides and a non-aggression pact between the U.S. and North Korea are needed as steps towards creating a Korean peace regime. In addition, a reduction of conventional weapons by all sides and withdrawal of the U.S. troops station in South Korea are needed to remove the material conditions of war and overcome the roots causes of the nuclear conflict. All of these tasks remain before us.

During the press conference that followed the signing of the joint statement, President Trump reference measures North Korea is already taking towards denuclearisation, declared intention to end joint U.S.-South Korea military exercises and referred to the possibility of a declaration to the end of the Korean War. We take this opportunity to stress once again to the Trump and Moon Jae-in administrations that any continued joint military exercises go against the spirit of peace talks and must not go on. In addition, the U.S. and South Korea should respond in kind to North Korea's early steps towards denuclearisation with the removal of the THAAD missile defence system being illegally operated in the Soseongri village.

We must also state our concerns about the 'prosperity' mentioned in the joint statement. As was clear in Trump's comments about the development of North Korea during his press conference, this 'prosperity' is predicated on private investment and the capitalist opening of the North Korean economy. We are concerned that this process, which does not involve workers' participation, has the potential to lead to the expansion of labour rights violations and increase in economic and other forms of inequality. The labour movement must now seriously discuss a plan for peace and unification that furthers the living conditions and rights of all Korean workers and common people.

According to the joint statement, high level talks will be held very soon to discuss the concrete implementation of the commitments made. Given that many unresolved issues remain, it is likely that future negotiations will run up against many difficulties. We will continue to respond proactively to this process based on our desire and vision for a peaceful and equal Korean Peninsula.

2018. 6. 12

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P.S.

* Source: <https://goo.gl/TVtNAw>