The sound and fury sabre-rattling over the People’s Democratic Republic of Korea last week reached a crescendo that involved a flaccid attempted bullying of China, accompanied by a flexing of military might in the region. Acting Prime Minister Barnaby Joyce committed Australia to the backing of US-imposed sanctions against China, apparently for China’s continued economic and trade engagement with North Korea.

The Talisman Sabre war preparation games involve air, land and sea personnel from Australia and the US during the month of July at sites across the Northern Territory and Queensland. (Northern Australia is host to a growing foreign military base in violation of Australia’s sovereignty.) As US Pacific Command Admiral Harry Harris put it, with an eye to China: “The US-Australia (war fighting) alliance matters more today than ever before.”

The object of the military exercises is to “improve training and interoperability between the Australian and US Armed Forces at the operational and tactical level”, that is, to increase the combined capacity of the two nations to project military power beyond their shores. With this objective, and in the context of the US/Australian military alliance and the aggressive defence policies of both nations, Talisman Sabre affords no benefit to Australia’s national security: The exercises are a display of military power meant to provoke and intimidate other nations.

Such displays increase the likelihood of war and undermine urgently needed international cooperation to curtail escalating war and threats of widening conflict.

Last March Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi proposed a deal to end the long-running standoff between the US and North Korea. Mr Wang proposed a compromise whereby Pyongyang would end its nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programmes in return for an end to huge annual US-South Korean military exercises.

“Our priority now is to flash the red light and apply the brakes on both trains.” His comments came two days after a ballistic missile test by North Korea, timed to coincide with military exercises between South Korea and the US.

The following day the first components of the US Thaad anti-ballistic missile system arrived in South Korea, which China and Russia rightly see as directed at undermining their own nuclear deterrents.

Background

At the conclusion of the war in the Pacific in 1945 and the withdrawal of Japanese forces from China, the Korean Peninsula and Manchuria, the Peninsula was divided into North and South at the 38th parallel. Soviet troops occupied North Korea and US forces occupied the South. The Soviet forces were soon withdrawn from the North, but the US forces did not withdraw from the South.

In 1950, the United States, with the participation of the South Korean puppet Syngman Rhee, launched the Korean War. The US aim was to destroy the people’s government of the North and to roll on to attack and overthrow the Chinese revolution as well.

General Douglas (“I will return”) MacArthur, the commander of the US forces at the time, called for the nuclear bombing of China but was over-ruled by US President Truman. The US and the South Korean armies were finally defeated by the heroic struggle of the Korean people with the assistance of Chinese forces. An Armistice Agreement was signed on July 27, 1953 which, however, left Korea still divided at the 38th parallel into North Korea (Democratic People’s Republic of Korea) and South Korea (Republic of Korea).

Continued on page 2
### Child care workers gain

United Voice Early Childhood Education and Care members have welcomed progress in the case for equal pay. The preliminary decision handed down by the Fair Work Commission allows United Voice’s application for an equal remuneration order to proceed.

Helen Gibbons, assistant national secretary of United Voice, the early childhood union said, “While progress in the case is welcome – and long overdue; it is outrageous that in 2017 early childhood professionals are paid as little as $21 per hour and have been forced to seek legal resolution to this unfair position.”

“The current process to resolve equal pay matters is far too slow, onerous, complex and expensive. Forcing educators to take a complicated legal pathway to achieve what we all know is the right outcome is infuriating.”

“Early Childhood Educators need a pay increase now and a responsible government would have fixed this already.”

The union says that the issue could be resolved if the federal government had the will. And that PM Turnbull needs to understand that the issue is not going away and the government needed to take responsibility and fund professional pay for educators.

“IT is outrageous that in 2017 female-dominated early childhood educators are still fighting to receive equal pay,” said Gibbons.

“Educators have been left with no choice but to escalate their campaign for equal pay and to win the professional pay they deserve.”

The recent ballot of 3,000 early childhood educators returned a 95 percent yes vote in favour of national walk-offs. These will be taking place in the coming months.

### Casuals break through

A Fair Work Commission (FWC) decision will allow casual workers who can prove they have worked regular hours for a year to request conversion to permanent employment. It will apply to 85 of 120 modern awards.

Thousands of casual workers may be positively affected by this decision which is an outcome of the ACTU common claim on casual and part-time employment, which formed part of the four yearly review of modern awards.

The ACTU claim, was for a six month qualifying period, for four hour minimum shifts and for a deeming (automatic conversion) clause in awards, which already have conversion provisions. The FWC did not agree to these claims.

The Higher Education (General Staff) Award 2010 is in this latter category.

The National Tertiary Education Union was party to the case for the very purpose of advocating for automatic conversion after a qualifying period. The NTEU argued that whilst conversion clauses are included in most enterprise agreements, university management regularly rejected applications and staff were deterred from pursuing applications.

The FWC unfortunately, but not surprisingly, accepted the university management arguments that the system worked and did not require the force of a change to the award. This occurred despite the universities’ evidence showing that they simply do not know where or how their casual staff are employed.

### QUOTE OF THE WEEK

Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed. This world in arms is not only unsound economics. It is a辦ment of the human spirit. The world must know that we will deal with them in the spirit of neither triumph nor destruction.

Dwight D Eisenhower, 33rd US President
Restricting citizenship

Bilal Cleland

The politics of exclusion proceeds apace. Just recently we were informed that Australian citizenship would become harder to acquire: “The new measures would see migrants face a tougher citizenship test which will assess their commitment to Australia and their attitudes to religious freedom and gender equality.” [ABC News 2017-04-21].

Not only “values” will be emphasised; there will be a much tighter English language requirement. Immigration Minister Peter Dutton made it clear that a “significant change” would be made. Henceforth an English proficiency equivalent to IELTS Level 6 would be needed.

As Henry Sherrell, Research Officer in the Development Policy Centre at the Australian National University commented: “This is not just a significant change; it is a fundamental break.” [27 April 2017 Inside Story]

He reported that in 2015, ACIL Allen Consulting evaluated the Adult Migrant English Program, or AMEP. Its report is the most up-to-date assessment of the English literacy of recent migrants. Just 7 percent of clients exit the Department of Immigration and Border Protection’s Adult Migrant English Program, or AMEP. Its report is the most up-to-date assessment of the English literacy of recent migrants. Just 7 percent of clients exit the Department of Immigration and Border Protection’s Adult Migrant English Program, or AMEP. Its report is the most up-to-date assessment of the English literacy of recent migrants. Just 7 percent of clients exit.

Men who had worked in Australia for over a decade would never be acceptable as citizens. One case study is that of Jan Mahomet, a 35-year-old Afghan storekeeper and camel-driver, who had worked in South Australia for nearly four years. He闻言raine for over a year, and then in Murchison, near Geraldton WA, for eleven years. He received his rejection of naturalisation from the Department of External Affairs in Melbourne in October 1906, about three weeks after submitting his papers. The only sign in the archives of his response is a curt telegram to the Department on 25 October asking for the return of all his papers. He was not European, not white enough. Such non-acceptable residents were excluded from the age pension and other social welfare benefits which were gradually introduced over time. There is a discernible trend in Australian government policy towards excluding refugees and non-English speaking immigrants from national life. This is a break with the non-discriminatory immigration policies that have dominated since the election of the Whitlam government in 1972, continued by the Fraser government in 1975.

Our country has commenced a decline into what could well be a very unpleasant, undemocratic and culturally exclusive future, at the same time as we seem to be permitting the intrusion of foreign-sponsored political corruption into national life. The Beacon

From the archives

The Guardian, December 1987

A non-citizen underclass

That is not a new situation for this country. First there was the 1901 Immigration Restriction Act, enforced by a dictation test which did not openly proclaim racial superiority in order not to offend non-British subjects of the empire and the Japanese ally. Then came the 1903 Naturalisation Act which provided that applicants for naturalisation could not be natives of Asia, Africa or the Pacific Islands (except for New Zealand).

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Philippines

NO to martial law

Many Filipinos in Australia have been disappointed and outraged by President Duterte’s decision to impose martial law in Mindanao. While alleged attacks by the ISIS-supporting Abu Sayyaf and Maute Group are affecting a small part of Mindanao, we know that martial law will not solve the root causes of terrorism or the armed conflict in the region.

Only the United States and its supporters stand to gain from martial rule. For the United States, martial law means securing the Philippines as a neo-colony and gives the necessary justification for establishing military bases and unhindered movement throughout the archipelago. Yesterday a US P3 Orion surveillance aircraft was seen flying over Marawi City. This is a violation of Philippine sovereignty. For big business and oligarchs, martial law secures their investments and the colonial trade. For big landlords, it is the protection and preservation of their landholdings.

This will only fuel the armed insurrections in the country by threatening the rights of activists and other citizens engaged in normatively legal activities. It is important to note that even 10 percent of the armed forces being located in Mindanao, none of the issues of poverty and injustice have been solved.

It is instead simply a repeat of the 14 years of martial law under Marcos that only worsened the situation of joblessness, unrest and poverty in the country. Much worse, corruption flourished and many Filipinos suffered gross human rights violations and injustices.

Instead of these false solutions we demand the continuation of peace negotiations between the Government of the Philippines (GRP) and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP). We demand that the social and economic reforms being proposed by the NDFP be taken seriously by the government of the Philippines and the suppression of civil liberties.

We ask your readers to support our call for President Duterte to lift the martial law in Mindanao by raising the issue with your local MPs and asking them to call for Australia to stop its military support to the Philippines.

We also ask your church and your readers to write letters to the President of the Philippines and to the Chairperson of the Commission on Human Rights in the Philippines. The addresses are stated below. We thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely yours

May Kotsakis
Convenor,
Philippine Caucus for Peace

Addressess & contact details:
HE Rodrigo Duterte
President of the Republic of the Philippines
Malacanang Palace,
Manila, Philippines
Voice: (+632) 564 1451 to 80
Fax: (+632) 742-1641
E-mail: corre@dpp.gov.ph

Philippines
PNG Immigration and Australia’s Border Force are stepping up the pressure on Manus refugees and asylum seekers in an effort to force them out of the detention centre. Detainees are being told that the detention centre will close on October 31, but they have nowhere safe to go. Only a minority have been interviewed by US officials and none have been told if they have been accepted for resettlement in the US.

Now there are moves to evict refugees who had moved out of Fostorto Charlie Compound (also near Oscar compound) three weeks ago. They were told they had to leave because of bad behaviour.

The 10 refugees, from Myanmar, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh, moved from Fostortot when the intended closure was first announced. Charlie had been cleared of refugees, but classes stopped as part of the moves to force people out of the detention centre.

They were promised that they would be homeless. They told refugee leaders to try to force people with positive refugee determinations to move to East Lorengau, outside the detention centre. Conditions there are no better – people are hungry, with no activities and no support. They have been told to leave the buildings and on June 29, PNG immigration began demolishing the building, forcing the people back to Fostortot.

On June 23, all gym equipment was removed from Fostortot and Charlie and Oscar compounds. A new notice has announced that Fostortot Compound will be closed and that asylum seekers should move from Fostortot to Mike compound.

At the same time PNG Immigration and Australian Border Force began trying to force refugees to move out of the detention centre to East Lorengau Transit Accommodation – a gated complex closer to the Lorengau settlement.

The number of points that people can use in the canteen had already been reduced from 50 to 39. But all canteen items were removed, except for phone cards, pens and cigarettes.

But refugees are fearful of being forced to East Lorengau where a Bangladeshi man had his arm so savagely hacked off in a mob attack that he was robbed of his phone, money and belongings. He had to be evacuated for emergency treatment in Port Moresby. Refugees in East Lorengau are vulnerable to such attacks and the attacks on refugees are increasing.

“Some are being moved from Fostortot compound to East Lorengau while and Afghan refugees pressuring them to move to East Lorengau while there were still rooms there. When it came to this point about moving, the refugees walked out of the meeting, saying, “We won’t go to East Lorengau”."

The $70 million pay-out they recently won from the Australian government for their illegal imprisonment and physical and mental harm will not buy their future.

“The detainees do not want to stay in PNG,” said Ian Rintoul, spokesperson for the Refugee Action Coalition. “There is no resettlement plan and there is no safety. The government is stalling, trying to buy time, buying off the detainees to stay on and on they won’t win. The government must bring them here.”

Meanwhile, just days after agreeing to pay refugees and asylum seekers and refugees $70 million in damages for unlawful imprisonment and for physical and psychological damage, the government stepped up its punitive program to forcibly relocate the detainees.

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“No one is going to voluntarily move to East Lorengau when they face such danger there. The government has no concern for the welfare of the detainees. The attempt to drive them out of the detention centre is being driven by the fact that the contract for running the detention centre ends in October,” said Rintoul.

Border Force says that moving from the detention centre to East Lorengau won’t interfere with any resettlement in the US, but as yet, there is no indication of how many will ever get to the US or how long people will have to wait. The first interviews in Nauru were held seven months ago, and still no-one has gone from Nauru to the US.

On June 24, a generator was removed from Fostortot compound in what could be the first step to cutting the electricity from the compound to increase the pressure on detainees to move out of Fostortot.

The government has a duty of care for the people they put on Manus Island. Increasing the punitive measures against them, can only make the already intolerable conditions, even worse,” Rintoul pointed out.

“Leaving them in danger is not an alternative. Last Good Friday, they were shot at inside the detention centre. Outside the detention centre they were attacked and robbed. The government has also robbed them of four years and their future. They must be brought to Australia.”

Vigils calling for Manus and Nauru to be evacuated are being held around the country on July 19, the four-year anniversary of Prime Minister Rudd’s declaration of the current version of offshore detention.

In Sydney, the vigil will be at Hyde Park North at 6pm.

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Andrews was laying the groundwork for his Liberal government to recommend a reversal of the onus of proof for terror suspects, the dumping of fundamental principles of justice, and what sounded like arbitrary execution. He declared: “... round them up, whether the evidence is there or not, Intern them somewhere remote and leave them there or get rid of them.”

The public certainly has a right to expect that it will be protected by government from terrorist attacks, and that applications for bail from criminals with a history of mental illness and persistent violence will be treated with the utmost caution by the courts. But that doesn’t mean that prisoners should lose the right to apply for bail or to have their cases heard by judges experiencing genuine, not ideological, reservations. The public certainly has a right to expect that it will be protected by government from terrorist attacks, and that applications for bail from criminals with a history of mental illness and persistent violence will be treated with the utmost caution by the courts.

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North Korea

US blocks diplomatic path

Martin Hart-Landsberg

US-North Korean relations remain very tense, although the threat of a new Korean War has thankfully receded. Still the US government remains determined to tighten economic sanctions on North Korea (Democratic People’s Republic of Korea) and continues to plan for a military strike aimed at destroying the country’s nuclear infrastructure. And the North for its part has made it clear that it would respond to any attack with its own strikes against US bases in the region and even the US itself.

This is not good, but it is important to realise that what is happening is not new. The US began conducting war games with South Korean forces in 1976 and it was not long before those games included simulated nuclear attacks against the North, and that was before North Korea had nuclear weapons. In 1994, Pyongyang began threatening a military attack on North Korea with the aim of destroying its nuclear facilities. In 2002, President Bush talked about seizing North Korean ships as part of a blockade of the country, which is an act of war. In 2013, the US conducted war games which involved planning for pre-emptive attacks on North Korean military targets and “deception” of the North Korean leadership and even a first strike nuclear attack.

I don’t want to use the verbiage of a new Korean war, but the cycle of belligerency and threat-making on both sides is intensifying. And it is always possible that a miscalculation could in fact trigger a new war, with devastating consequences. The threat of war, perhaps a nuclear war, is nothing to play around with.

But – and this is important – even if a new war is averted, the ongoing embargo against North Korea is a clear threat. It is costly because it is self-inflicted: they promote/legitimise greater military spending and militarisation more generally, at the expense of needed social programs, in Japan, China, the US, and the two Koreas. They also create a situation that complicates relations with South and North Korea and worsens already difficult economic conditions in North Korea.

There is a choice for peace

We don’t have to go down this road – we have another option – but it is one that the US government is unwilling to consider, much less discuss. That option is for the US to accept North Korean offers of direct negotiations between the two countries, with all issues on the table.

The US government and media dismiss this option as out of line. We are told that (1) the North is a hermit kingdom and seeks only isolation, (2) the country is ruled by crazy people hell-bent on war, and (3) the North Korean leadership cannot be trusted to follow through with its promises. But none of this is true.

A hermit kingdom means nothing to negotiate with, then North Korea is not a hermit kingdom. North Korea has been asking for direct talks with the United States since the early 1990s. The reason is simple: this is when the USSR ended and Russia and the former Soviet bloc countries in Eastern Europe moved to adopt capitalism. The North was dependent on trade with these countries and their reinstatement left the North Korean economy isolated and in crisis.

The North Korean leadership decided that it would seek to abandon the old system and connect the North Korean economy to the global economy, to normalise its relations with the United States. Since then, they have repeatedly asked for unconditional dialogue and for US sanctions on North Korea to be lifted. This approach seeks to bring the two countries back to negotiations. But exactly one day after signing the Agreed Framework, the US government refused talks and the US and Japan have worked to block that investment.

So, it is not the North that is refusing to talk or broaden its engagement with the global economy; it is the US that seeks to keep North Korea isolated.

Out-of-control militarism

Second, the media portray North Korea as pursuing an out-of-control militarism that is the main cause of the current dangerous situation. But it is important to recognise that South Korea has outspent North Korea on military spending every year since 1976. International agencies currently estimate that North Korean annual military spending is $4 billion, while South Korean annual military spending is $40 billion. And then we have to add the US military build-up.

North Korea does spend a high percentage of its budget on the military, but that is because it has no reliable military ally and a weak economy. However, it has largely responded to South Korean and US militarism and threats, not driven them. As for the development of a nuclear weapons program, it was the US that brought nuclear weapons to the Korean peninsula. It did so in 1958 in violation of the Korean War armistice and threatened North Korea with nuclear attack years before the North even sought to develop nuclear weapons.

Third, North Korea has been a more reliable negotiating partner than the USA. Here, we have to take up the nuclear issue more directly. The North has tested a nuclear weapon five times: 2006, 2009, 2013, and twice in 2016.

Critically, North Korean tests have large- ly been conducted in an effort to pull the US into negotiations or fulfil past promises. And the country has made numerous offers to halt its testing and even freeze its nuclear weapons program if only the US would agree to talks.

North Korea was first accused of developing nuclear weapons in the early 1990s. Its leadership refused to confirm or deny that the country had succeeded in manufacturing nuclear weapons but said that it would open up its facilities for inspection if the US would enter talks to normalise relations. As noted above, the North was desperate, in the wake of the collapse of the USSR, to draw the US into negotiations. In other words, it was ready to end the hostilities between the two countries.

Out failures

The US government refused talks and began to mobilise for a strike on North Korea nuclear facilities. A war was averted only because Jimmy Carter, against the wishes of the Clinton administration, went to the North, met Kim Il Sung, and negotiated an agreement that froze the North Korean nuclear program. The North Korean government agreed to end their country’s nuclear weapons program in exchange for aid and normalisation. And from 1994 to 2002, the North froze its plutonium program and had all nuclear fuel observed by international inspectors to assure the US that it was not engaged in making any nuclear weapons.

Unfortunately, the US did not live up to its side of the bargain; it did not deliver the aid it promised or take meaningful steps toward normalisation.

In 2001, President Bush declared North Korea to be part of the “axis of evil” and the following year unilaterally cancelled the agreement. In response, the North restarted its nuclear program.

In 2003, the Chinese government, worried about growing tensions between the US and North Korea, convened multiparty talks to bring the two countries back to negotiations. Finally, in 2005, under Chinese pressure, the US agreed to a new agreement, in which each North Korean step toward ending its weapons program would be matched by a new US step toward ending the embargo and normalising relations. But exactly one day after signing the agreement, the US asserted, without evidence, that North Korea was engaged in a program of counterfeiting US dollars and tightened its sanctions policy against North Korea.

The North Korean response was to test its first nuclear bomb in 2006. And shortly afterward, the US agreed to drop its counterfeiting charge and comply with the agreement it had previously signed.

In 2007, North Korea shut down its nuclear program and even began dismantling its nuclear facilities – but the US again didn’t follow through on the terms of the agreement, falling behind on its promised aid and sanctions reductions. In fact, the US kept escalating its demands on North Korea, calling for an end to North Korea’s missile program and improvement in human rights in addition to the agreed-upon steps to end North Korea’s nuclear weapons program. And so, frustrated, North Korea tested another nuclear weapon in 2009.

And the US responded by tightening sanctions.

In 2012, the North launched two satellites. The first failed, the second succeeded. Before each launch the US threatened to go to the UN and secure new sanctions on North Korea. But the North asserted its right to launch satellites and went ahead. After the December 2012 launch, the UN agreed to further sanctions and the North responded with its third nuclear test in 2013.

War games

This period marks a major change in North Korean policy. The North now changed its public stance: it declared itself a nuclear state – and announced that it was no longer willing to give up its nuclear weapons. However, the North Korean government made clear that it would freeze its nuclear weapons program if the US would cancel its future war games. The US refused and its March 2013 war games included practice runs of nuclear equipped bombers and plans for occupying North Korea. The North has therefore continued to test and develop its nuclear weapons capability.

Here is the point: whenever the US shows willingness to negotiate, the North responds. And when agreements are signed, it is the US that has abandoned them. The North has pushed forward with its nuclear weapons program largely in an attempt to force the US to seriously engage with the North because it believes that this program is its only bargaining chip.

It is not the DPRK that is refusing to talk or broaden its engagement with the global economy; it is the US that seeks to keep North Korea isolated – Kim Jong-un
People's World

US hatched 1953 Iran coup

John Wright

Of the many crimes committed by Washington and its faithful British satrapy around the world, the coup that toppled the democratically-elected prime minister of Iran, Mohammad Mossadegh, in 1953 is among the most grievous.

The recent release of a tranche of declassified CIA documents, including memos covering the period, are a timely reminder not only of the staggering mendacity of both countries in asserting the right to lecture the world about democracy and human rights, but the extent to which they have wrought so much damage and devastation throughout their respective histories.

Operation Ajax, the name by which the sordid plan to undermine and topple Mohammad Mossadegh’s government is known, was undertaken in response to Mossadegh’s decision to nationalise Iran’s oil resources with a view to husbanding the revenue for the benefit of the Iranian people, rather than allow it to continue to be sucked out of the country by the then British state-owned Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (AIOC) – forerunner of today’s global oil conglomerate BP.

Britain had been in control of Iran’s oil since 1908 when the country was known as Persia. London set up AIOC specifically with the development and exploitation of this energy bonanza in mind. The UK government taking over a controlling share of the concession that had been granted to English mining entrepreneur William Knox D’Arcy by Persia’s monarchy in 1901. It came at a point when Britain’s large navy was shifting from coal to oil-powered engines, thus making a secure oil supply of critical strategic and military importance for a large navy was shifting from coal to oil-powered engines, thus making a secure oil supply of critical strategic and military importance for a country with extreme brutality and corruption that was so unabashed it would make a low-rent celebration of the opportunity for enrichment.

Oil was also needed to maintain troops on the Asian mainland and support the ongoing build-up of the military. The tension also allows the US military to maintain troops on the Asian mainland and support the ongoing build-up of the military. The tension also allows the US military to maintain troops on the Asian mainland and support the ongoing build-up of the military.

And it is desperate to end the US embargo on its economy.

We lost the opportunity to negotiate with a non-nuclear North Korea when we cut off negotiations in 2001, before the country had a nuclear arsenal. Things have changed. Now, the most we can reasonably expect is an agreement that freezes that arsenal. However, if relations between the two countries truly improve it may well be possible to achieve a non-nuclear Korean Peninsula, an outcome both countries profess to seek.

Next possibilities

So, why does the US refuse direct negotiations and risk war? The most logical reason is that there are powerful forces opposing them. Sadly, the tension is useful to the US military industrial complex, which needs enemies to support the ongoing build-up of the military budget. The tension also allows the US military to maintain troops on the Asian mainland and support the ongoing build-up of the military. The tension also allows the US military to maintain troops on the Asian mainland and support the ongoing build-up of the military.

However, the outcome of the recent presidential election in South Korea might open possibilities to force a change in US policy. Moon Jae-in, the winner, has repudiated the hard-line policies of his impeached predecessor, Park Geun-Hye, and declared his commitment to a policy toward the North. The US may well be forced to moderate its own policy toward the North.

What is clear is that we in the US have a responsibility to become better educated about US policy toward both Koreas, to support popular movements in South Korea that seek peaceful relations with North Korea and progress toward reunification, and to work for a US policy that promotes the demilitarisation and normalisation of US-North Korean relations.
Barbaric tools of death

Graham Peebles

Sustainable security is not created through threats and the cultivation of fear, but by building relationships, cooperation and a premise of trust. As long as nuclear weapons exist there is a risk of them being used. Even the most distant – and there have been many close shaves since 1948 – and subsequent annihilation. As the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) rightly states: “Prohibiting and completely eliminating nuclear weapons is the only guarantee against their use”.

The rational thing to do is to move towards a nuclear free world and with some urgency; this necessarily entails the nuclear powers disarming, either unilaterally or bilaterally. Someone has to begin the process; by taking the moral initiative others will be under pressure to follow.

Clearing the world of these monstrous mood would not only be a major step in safeguarding humanity and the planet, it would reverse one of humankind’s most profound violations of goodness – cooperation, trust, unity – over hate, suspicion and discord.

Towards the end of 2016, the United Nations general assembly adopted a landmark resolution to begin to “negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination.” Talks began in February this year, when the first of two stages conference was held in New York; 123 nations voted to outlaw them, while the nine nuclear powers (USA, China, Russia, France, Britain, India, Pakistan, Israel and North Korea), rather predictably stood in opposition, but even against the proposal, as did nuclear host and alliance countries such as Belgium, Italy, Croatia and Norway, among others.

It is interesting to note that the countries that possess nuclear weapons seem to believe it is justifiable to maintain these tools of destruction, but not for other nations, particularly those that have a different world view. Between them, there exist approximately around 15,000 nuclear weapons; America and Russia own 93 percent of the total of which some 1,800 are reportedly kept on “high-alert status”, meaning they can be launched within minutes. Just one of these warheads, if detonated on a large city, could kill as many as 600,000 people and cause destruction for decades.

Modern nuclear weapons are a great deal smaller and many times more powerful than the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, which, far from ending the war, was completely unnecessary, and caused death and destruction on a scale hitherto unseen. As Admiral William D Leahy, the highest-ranking member of the US military at the time, wrote in his memoirs, the atomic bomb “was of no material assistance” against Japan, because “the Japanese were already defeated.”

General Dwight D Eisenhower echoed this view, saying, “Japan was at the moment seeking some way to surrender with minimum loss of ‘face’. It wasn’t necessary to hit them with that awful thing.”

In dropping the bombs, Leahy said, the US “had adopted an ethical standard common to the barbarians of the Dark Ages. I was not taught to kill millions of people, with the effects persisting for centuries with composure and suppressed irritation, saying that he would do all he could to prevent conflict in the first place and that every effort should be made to rid the world of these ultimate weapons of mass destruction.

He is right and should be applauded for taking such a sane, common-sense approach, but the collective imagination has been poisoned to such a degree that advocating peace, and engaging in dialogue with one’s enemies is regarded as a sign of weakness, whereas sabre rattling and intransigence are hailed as displays of strength.

In addition to the risk of human and planetary death, the financial costs of producing, maintaining and developing these instruments of war diverting and diverting resources from areas of real need – health care, education, dealing with the environmental catastrophe and eradicating hunger.

Globally, ICAN reports that the “annual expenditure on nuclear weapons is estimated at US$105 billion – or US$12 million an hour”. Unsurprisingly the US spends the largest amount by far; equivalent, in fact, to the other eight nuclear-armed nations combined.

While 50 million of its citizens live in grinding poverty, America can afford to spend US$179 billion and probably more, while 50 million of its citizens live in grinding poverty.

In 2002 the World Bank forecast that “an annual investment of just US$40–60 billion, or roughly half the amount currently spent on nuclear weapons, would be enough to meet the internationally agreed Millennium Development Goals on poverty alleviation by the target date of 2015.”

But the powerful and tooled up prefer to invest in an arsenal of total destruction. It makes no sense; it is another example of the insanity that surrounds us.

The irrational political choice of maintaining a nuclear arsenal is justified by duplicitous politicians as a means of establishing of peace; it is, they claim, a necessary deterrent against aggression. This is not only dishonest, it is totally false logic: far from making the world a safer place, the very possession of nuclear weapons as a so-called deterrent, would just as likely as not, increase the risk of their being used, or accidentally detonated.

If retaining nuclear weapons is not to deter would be invaders what is the reason for the massive financial investment and the dangers that are inherent in patrolling the Earth with these weapons of total destruction?

In its detailed report Don’t Bank on the Bomb ICAN relates that in America, Britain, India and France private companies are given contracts worth billions to develop “new, more useable, and more destabilising nuclear weapons.” If peace is the collective objective, nuclear weapons must be regarded as a major obstacle and those connected in their construction, including inventors, seen as collaborators in the creation of an atmosphere of mistrust and conflict, facilitators of fear and insecurity.

The contemporary threats to national security come not from potential armed invasion, but from terrorism, cyber-security issues, poverty and the environmental catastrophe and an unprecedented worldwide refugee crisis. In the light of such threats, nuclear weapons as a so-called deterrent are irrelevant.

It is by negating the causes of conflict that peace will be achieved. Such causes are rooted in social injustice, community divisions, prejudice and discrimination, competition and inequality, and must be countered by demonstrations of tolerance, the cultivation of cooperation and expression of compassion.
In the wake of the G20 summit, police were beating on aggressive-ly against the demonstrators, most of them peaceful, unarmed; but some of them violent and hooded, as old tradition dictates. They will not be recognised as police themselves or patries of the police. Many people were hurt, several to the point of hospitalisation. And the meeting had just begun.

At the onset of the summit, Donald Trump, the chief-psychopath, is running amok declaring with echo, “America First” – “America First” – trying to justify his decision for the US to quit the Paris Climate Accords. In a cheap attempt to hit Russia under the belt, he offered Europe gas sales, so Europe would no longer be “hosp-ite” to Russia. How arrogant, again. It remains to be seen to what extent the psychopaths-in-chief will have on his European, Australian and Canadian vassal-psychopaths lined up and dancing to his tune.

Before the summit, “infor-mal” talks between the odd couple, Donald Trump and Angela Merkel, took place. They focused on North Korea, Syria, and Ukraine – all coun-tries where the US is intent to desta-bilise and push for “reign change” the sort of interference in sover-eign nations’ affairs Trump promised – the sort of interference in sover-eign nations’ affairs Trump promised during his campaign he would aban-don as President.

Nobody has elected the G20, nor the G7. Everybody takes them for granted, the self-appointed meg-als. Nobody seems to question their legitimacy. People only protest against what they stand for. The G20 are side-lining the official body, the United Nations. The G7, embedded in the G20, are a directing driving force for wars, destruction, merciless killing and perpetual chaos.

The G7 – Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, UK and the US – all western nations (Japan fol-lows the western game plan), are also the main creators of terrorism. They fund, feed, train and arm such repute-d Islamic terror groups as Al-Qa’ida, Al-Qaeda, Al-NUsta – and others that fit the model of their war strategy.

What and who?

The G20 are the G7 enlarged and disguised in their intentions, by 13 other economic power brokers, also often referred to as “threshold countries”, including Russia, China, Brazil, India, Indonesia, Argentina, Mexico, South Africa, Australia, South Korea, Turkey and the EU – Spain is a permanent observer. Of course, the (western) world’s key financial enables and political insti-tutions, like the IMF, World Bank, Federal Reserve and the UN with its regional sub-hubs, are not missing in Hamburg.

The G20 control two thirds of the world population, 90 percent of the globe’s economic output and 80% of world trade. Their agenda in Hamburg is semi-secret, except for the items that might interest the populace at large, like fighting ter-rorism. But certainly, under the guise of “security and terrorism”, they will also discuss, led by the Trump team, how to subdue renegoties, such as Iran, Venezuela, Bolivia and, of course, the eastern most link of the new axis of evil, North Korea.

NATO, economy and terrorism go hand-in-hand. Without terror no wars. Without wars no production of weapons, and without military-secu-rity industrial complex, the western world’s economy has reached a dead-end. The US depends for more than 50 percent of its economic output on the war and security machinery with its associated services. Europe, if it continues the status as a US vassal, will in no time march along the same footsteps. Hence, terrorism is a must. Peace is a no-go.

Soon NATO forces facing the Kurds – NATO, the alliance of the willing – led by Washington, hiding behind the NATO emblem. In the land of the lawless, impunity is borderless.

Never mind that NATO has nothing to do with South America, or with Asia, or the Middle East, for that matter. The atrocious NATO kill-ing machine will do their work in the process of subjugation anywhere in the world, while most people just close their eyes and ears, and remain mute.

Be aware – it is a criminal insti-tution made for killing societies and subordinating sovereign nations. Washington’s current plan is con-trolling Russia, via NATO’s east-ern European border aggressions, and China, by constantly provok-ing and threatening North Korea’s sovereignty.

What’s left is the enslavement by debt. To survive, people may commit to the “debt-row”, gradually converting into the death-row. As mis-behaving countries are forced to do – swallowing debt against being fed minimal rations for survival. Greece is the epitome of this razors-sharp knife that slashed throats as well as the last goblet of the lifetime to sur-vivial. Solidarity is nowhere.

The dying beast is lashing out, right and left and above and beneath. It is desperate; itself on death-row, but if it must die, then dying we must all – the deadly grip of the rabies-diseased dog that won’t let go. And won’t let go. And won’t let go to the last minute – or until death reigns over us all. That’s the risk we are running. A nuclear holocaust where, as Vladimir Putin has said already on a number of occasions, nobody will survive.

The oppressive police in Hamburg to suppress dissent, is but a forewarning for what is to come when Europe is being fully militarised. For those who are not aware, there is currently a “ghost town” being built by the Bundeswehr in collaboration with NATO, for hundreds of millions of euros, in one of Germany’s most modern military training camps, in Sachsen-Anhalt, not far from Hamburg. Starting in 2018, the artificial town will be ready for training NATO and EU military forces for urban warfare, to suppress possible upheavals and protests in the wake of neo-fascist economic measures – à la Greecce – being forced upon Europe.

We are witnessing how this is done, and has been done for the last seven years to an entire nation – beautiful Greece, the land that has given us the philosophers, math-ematicians and scientists we still acknowledge, – and the true con-cept of democracy which the west has used and abused for its trickery and deceit.

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Combing homophobia and transphobia

In 2013, I travelled to Cuba as a part of a study abroad program on the history of Cuban socialism in the context of economic reforms that allowed for limited free enterprise. The financial changes were certainly discernible on the streets of Havana: an enormous public art market sat in the shadow of La Cabana, the old Spanish citadel at which Che Guevara oversaw the trials of Batista war criminals in 1959. But there was also another profound change occurring in Havana when we arrived in mid-June, at the height of Pride Month.

Havana was frequented by parades and public displays of LGBTIQ+ pride during our time there. Rainbow flags flew next to Cuban and July 26th flags and marchers chanted “Respect! Include! Accept!” as they made their way through Old Havana. Those marches were the aftereffects of the massive International Day Against Homophobia March in May of that year.

These open displays of pride were spearheaded by Mariela Castro Espin, daughter of Raúl Castro and Vilma Espin, and head of the Cuban National Centre for Sex Education. The reactions of onlookers to the march reflected the conflicted past on which Cuba is building. Fidel Castro openly acknowledged in his autobiography My Life that Cuba had mistreated LGBTIQ+ populations during its revolution and socialist construction, something he called “a great injustice.”

As in many other sectors, though, Cuba’s struggle for LGBTIQ+ rights proceeds dialectically. Same-sex marriage is illegal, yet sex reassignment surgeries are covered under Cuba’s outstanding national healthcare service, a transgender woman sits on the National Assembly of People’s Power, and Cuba has strong codes against discrimination based on sexual orientation (though gender identity is not mentioned in the code, something for which Mariela Castro continues to fight).

In this environment of great change on the streets and in the halls of Cuban government, our group had the privilege to meet with Mariela Castro at a newly built CENESEX clinic providing sexual health services to the surrounding neighbourhood. She spoke briefly on what CENESEX was doing, particularly its sponsorship of those marches we had seen a few days before.

Castro acknowledged at the end of her talk that we as Americans faced challenges she did not, particularly the corporate influence on the American pride movement. She suggested in our circumstances “tangible support to your communities,” referencing the educational seminars, informal discussion/support groups, and material support offered by CENESEX. Several communist organisations including the American Communist Party of Labor have pursued such an approach in Serve the People campaigns since 2013, and the concept of material support continues to garner multidimensionality.

The floor was then opened for questions. Several in the group asked about the history of Cuban machismo and that “great injustice” mentioned earlier. Castro did not hide from the realities of the Cuban past, calling it “terrible and uncivilized.” She did seek to contextualise the history, though, underlining that “revolutions are popular events – they cannot transcend the minds of revolutionaries.”

The Cuban Communist Party in the past failed to incorporate LGBTIQ+ narratives into its decision making, and in doing so limited its ability practically and intellectually to agitate against homophobia and transphobia. “That has changed,” she concluded, highlighting that the PCC now plays a central role in CENESEX’s work.

Given what she had just highlighted, I asked her how she countered anti-LGBTIQ+ bigotry within the Communist Party, how she had, in her words, changed the minds of revolutionaries. Her answer was significant then, in a year that saw several incidents of sexism, rape-apologism, homophobia, and transphobia in various left groups, and remains relevant today as these issues and debates continue.

“My job as a leader is to establish a society in which all people can prosper, no matter who they are,” she said with a laugh, before highlighting the similar barriers her mother, Cuban revolutionary icon Vilma Espin, faced in the early 1970s during the push for a domestic labour equality law that eventually passed. The answer then as now for Castro was not in suppressing Marxism but appealing to it. “Challenge those people in your parties to consider why they are socialists. What is the goal of socialism?”

Answering these questions made bigotry against LGBTIQ+ an untenable position for Marxists according to Castro, as the goal of socialism “is to establish a society in which all people can prosper, no matter who they are. Socialism and prejudice are contradictory.”

Castro thus attacked homophobia and transphobia in Cuba in two ways. First, her organisation reached out at the local level to support the LGBTIQ+ community with practical, legal, social and medical support. Second, she and like-minded Communists agitated in the Cuban Communist Party by challenging the coherence of a Marxist society and thought system coexistent with base prejudices.

In building a movement for LGBTIQ+ liberation and equality, Castro asserted that the most important concerns for Communists lay first in the community they are serving and second amongst themselves. The focus in each case is not on conversion or confrontation with reactionaries, but on building a revolutionary cadre that serves the people, is ideologically disciplined, and is capable of winning converts and confrontations.

Developing and educating a cadre is a daunting yet increasingly important task in the era of resurgent fascism, but the challenges do not exceed those of 1959, 1949, or 1917. Following Castro’s lead through establishing campaigns for community support and having difficult debates within the confines of a democratic centralist organisation provides a useful foundation from which to move forward for those working in what Che Guevara called “the heart of the beast.”

Castro herself was optimistic as our session came to an end, bidding us goodbye with a not entirely sarcastic “si se puede” before heading to another CENESEX clinic for another speaking engagement.
Mark Maxey

When Oklahoma Governor Mary Fallin signed HB 1124 into law in May, 2017 it was yet another strike against Native Americans and the entire nationwide working class of which they are a part – a strike against the 99 percent.

At heart is the Plains All American Pipeline which has been protested several times in Norman, Oklahoma. The law is designed to harshly penalize protesters. The protest movement uses hashtag #NoPlainsPipeline to document their concerns.

Oklahoma’s law is just another part of a trend toward punitive legislation directed towards grassroots protesters. It clearly denies first amendment rights.

This year alone anti-protest legislation was introduced in over 20 states. In Oklahoma reports reflect that the fossil fuel industry has donated over half a million dollars to state legislators. ALEC (the American Legislative Exchange Council), the notorious right-wing think tank, is reportedly behind these anti-protest legislative initiatives.

Members of several federally recognised Oklahoma tribes will be impacted by the project. That list includes the Absentee Shawnee, Citizen Potawatomi, Kickapoo, Sac and Fox, and Chickasaw nations. Some tribal members have pointed out that Plains All American failed to consult their tribal councils, which they note is a violation of federal law. A June 3 press release states that sacred tobacco has been planted along the trail of the proposed pipeline.

Ashley McCray, founder of #NoPlainsPipeline and an Oklahoma University graduate student, and Absentee Shawnee member says, “The people who have to live with that land and rely on those water sources will be the most impacted. We know with each of these pipeline companies and projects that the people who are most directly impacted are Black people, are Indigenous people and are poor white farmers. This is a case of environmental racism.”

“Water is life,” she said. “Everyone needs water to drink. Beyond that, resource extraction is rape of the earth. As an Indigenous woman, I feel a strong connection to the earth. We’re both givers and sustainers of life. It’s important for me to protect her, because she sustains me.”

The Absentee Shawnee mailed a letter to all tribal members outlining how the tribe would be impacted. In the letter they say, “Increasingly, tribes across this nation are faced with environmental concerns as the oil and gas industry’s processes for extracting and moving oil and natural gas are directly affecting the wellbeing of both the environment and the tribal people who live in those communities.

“In Oklahoma there has been a major increase in earthquakes and other scientific attributes this to oil and gas hydraulic fracking procedures during the drilling process.” The letter also brings up the potential impact of the fracking wastewaters.

The underground water tables contain, as a result of the fracking, highly caustic chemicals, used in fracking.

Many of the federally recognised tribes feel the pipeline is illegal due to the tribes never being properly consulted. The Nations recognise that the location of the pipeline falls within economically depressed communities that often lack financial options to even protest the pipeline.

The law would allow penalising individual trespassers a minimum $10,000 fine and upward to $100,000 or 10 years of imprisonment. Organisations found to be “conspirators” could be fined ten times as much up to $1 million in fines.

An American Indian Movement (AIM) chapter in Oklahoma is actively still protesting the Plains All American Pipeline in Oklahoma.

Mike Casteel, director of AIM-Indian Territory said, “We cannot sit idly by – our ancestors died along this trail, and we have many unmarked graves there,” Casteel said in a media release. “We no longer accept poisoning for profit by any government or private corporation.”

University of California, Berkeley’s Institute for Data Science, finds that protest violence tends to be provoked by aggressive police tactics – not the other way around. By contrast, when police stand down, protests tend to persist, but with lower rates of arrest and a lower incidence of violence.

The individual worker and local citizens should manage the means of production for their local area. It is when local workers unite that progressive and even socialist values begin to appear in our communities. Clearly the original citizens of this area, the American Indians do not want the Plains All American Pipeline in their native area.

When our right wing legislators begin to take away our first amendment right to protest, something is very wrong with the fabric of democracy we hold so dear. It is more important now than before to unite and work together for our socialist beliefs.

Stand up and resist, the time is now. Join with other leftist grassroots organisations to stop fascists. Defeating the fascist stronghold necessitates uniting together with other leftist groups to show a strong solidarity while still building a strong Communist Party. People’s World

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74 Buckingham St, Surry Hills, 2010
Ph: 02 9699 8844 Fax: 02 9699 9833
Email guardian@cpa.org.au
Editor: Tom Pearson

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*July 12, 2017*
Festival of Youth and Students

Dedicated to the values of humanity

Harry Warren

Upon arrival at the Black Sea, one is met with mild weather. Russian courtesy and, this October, the World Festival of Youth and Students. For 70 years, the World Festival of Youth and Students has been a great congregation of the young left, where delegates meet to attend seminars and learn of socialist practice.

This year the festival takes place in Sochi, Russia, 100 years after the revolution, and every single one of its festival mottoes. It is absolutely fitting that Russia hosts this event 100 years after the revolution.

Today, there may be differences between individuals on how to achieve a socialism internationally but we do what we must to form the international socialist revolution. The differences are what define us; the similarities are what bring us together.

The Russian Revolution had a key goal of finding jobs for all of Russia’s – at the time disillusions – young people, something that to this day the WFDY works for. The revolution bought about, although not communism, profound socialism. Among the topics and discussions at the World Festival of Youth and Students will be conferences on the goals and achievements of the Great October Revolution; the legacy of Ché Guevara, the great anti-imperialist Mohamed Abdelaziz, and the role of the WFDY as the main youth anti-imperialist organisation.

Other conferences will focus on specific regions of the world. A special seminar will be held on the role and the contribution of the student movement in the struggle against imperialism for peace and solidarity in the Americas, and another focusing on embargoes and sanctions. This will be crucial for both Cuban and Venezuelan solidarity.

Africa forms much of the discussions too. There will be talks concentrating on rights and equality as well as the struggle against the rise of fascism and against anti-communism, racism and xenophobia – a struggle not only relevant to Africa, but to all nations of the international.

Part of the festival will be dedicated to the Middle East and the struggle for the youth to have universal and free access to health, education, science, culture and information. This is a huge issue in the region in which there are significant bridges to be built.

The Asia-Pacific region will also see its discussion focusing on the consequences of capitalist crisis, and particularly people’s rights, unemployment and the precarious situation of youth.

We will also get to celebrate Russia’s own socialist achievements of the last century – perhaps some of the greatest around the world.

There is sure to be more on the Great October Revolution, how the USSR “destroyed the invader,” and many aspects of socialism in Russia today.

The festival concludes with a spectacular closing ceremony, and will be a fitting conclusion to what is set to be a wonderful week. I, for one, am very excited to attend the festival, to celebrate peace, to aim to end imperialism, and to learn more of the heroes of my life.

Meeting others of the WFDY will be a privilege; learning more of their countries and their struggles. In words and song; the internationale will unite the human race.

The 2017 World Festival of Youth and Students will be held on October, 14 to 22 in Sochi, Russia. For more info visit: www.russia2017.com/en

Guardian

July 12, 2017