

Fifty-five Years of Armistice

Fifty-five years have passed since the Korean Armistice Agreement was concluded on July 27, 1953.

The armistice can never be the end of war; it only means a temporary cease of war or suspension of hostile acts. The armistice agreement is no assurance for permanent peace.

According to any interpretation of the given international laws armistice, which is a temporary agreement between supreme military commanders, pertains to a state of war in all respects and does not mean a state of peace. Common international practices are that the warring sides conclude the agreement of peace to recover the state of peace within months or at most years after the conclusion of the armistice agreement.

Article IV Paragraph 60 of the Korean Armistice Agreement stipulated that in order to rehabilitate a peaceful state both sides, "within three months after the Armistice Agreement is signed and becomes effective, shall hold a political conference of a higher level" to settle the questions of the withdrawal of all foreign forces, etc.

But because of the deliberate default by the US, the armistice system has failed to turn into a stable state of peace. It is rare in all ages and countries that the armistice remains as it is. So far no other region in the world has suffered the precarious armistice, that is, the technical state of war, for over 50 years, than the Korean peninsula.

The Korean Armistice Agreement became a mere scrap of paper as soon as it was concluded.

Within three months, the time-limit to call a political meeting of a higher level, the US concluded the "mutual defence treaty" with south Korean authorities in October 1953 to legalize its armed forces' permanent stationing in south Korea. In addition, it abrogated or ignored unilaterally the paragraphs which it felt troubling in pursuing its military strategy including paragraph 13 that' inhibited the introduction into Korea of war outfits and operational materials. Thus, south Korea turned into a large arsenal and the biggest nuclear outpost in the Far East already in the early 1970s.

The armistice has been in a precarious state, for the US violated the agreement on hundreds of thousands occasions, which gave rise to hundreds of meetings of the

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Military Armistice Commission called. Both the Military Armistice Commission that was the

machine to implement the armistice agreement, and the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission that was the watchdog of the cease-fire lost their worth of existence long ago due to the unilateral acts of the US. As the inspection team of the NNSC exposed more and more of its violations of the agreement, the US banished the team unilaterally from their region, thus crippling the supervisory function.

According to the agreement, the senior delegates to the MAC should come from the DPRK and the US respectively, but the US appointed as the senior delegate of its side a general of the south Korean military that is not possessed of effective command of the armed forces in south Korea. The armistice structure of the Korean peninsula was destroyed as much as it could be.

Today an urgent problem in preventing the recurrence of war and ensuring stable peace in the Korean peninsula is to conclude a peace agreement that will substitute the armistice agreement.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea has been compelled to suffer the unending danger of war as well as the tragedy of national division for more than half a century due to the US. It has made strenuous efforts to build a solid peace mechanism to replace the unstable and dangerous armistice system in the Korean peninsula. It has proposed various sorts of peaceful initiatives far more than 300 times.

Contrastingly, the US has never made a peaceful initiative, but denied and rejected persistently the fair and reasonable overtures made by the DPRK. It, as a direct party concerned, has shunned the responsibility in turning the armistice agreement into a peace agreement and used the armistice agreement only as a tool for the implementation of its strategy to control the whole of the Korean peninsula and block the inter-Korean relation.

This year marks the 55th anniversary of the conclusion of the armistice agreement, and the issue of sealing a peace pact is posing as a more urgent and practical task. Now, the DPRK and the US are jointly engaged in dialogue aimed at settling the nuclear issue of the Korean peninsula. The US has expressed several times that it has no intention to invade the DPRK, and hinted at its willingness to build a peace mechanism in the Korean peninsula. President

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Bush once declared publicly that he will, put an end to the Korean war.

The declaration, adopted at the inter-Korean summit meeting on October 4, 2007, specifies the issue of arranging a meeting, in a region of the Korean peninsula, of the heads of 3 or 4 of the parties immediately concerned to declare the end of the Korean war, which will be a substantial

and effective measure to put an end to the existing armistice mechanism and build a lasting peace mechanism. Under these circumstances, if the US really means it when it expresses its desire to build confidence and co-exist peacefully with the DPRK, there would be no reason or condition for it not to conclude a peace agreement to replace the armistice agreement.

The US is strongly required to work for declaration of an end to the Korea war and conclusion of a peace agreement.