

## NEED TO CONTINUE IMPETUS OF SINGAPORE SUMMIT

Written by John Hallam

Sunday, 24 June 2018 16:43 - Last Updated Sunday, 24 June 2018 16:45

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MON 25 JUN 2018

PEOPLE FOR NUCLEAR DISARMAMENT  
HUMAN SURVIVAL PROJECT

COULD WE ALREADY BE SLIPPING BACK INTO CONFRONTATION WITH NK?  
NEED TO CONTINUE IMPETUS OF SINGAPORE SUMMIT  
TIME TO CONSIDER GRADUATED EASING OF SANCTIONS?

With the gains of the Singapore Summit (and there are very real gains for both the DPRK and for the US and its allies) – still fragile, and with threats of apocalyptic confrontation and phrases like 'fire and fury'(Trump) and 'a sea of fire'(Kim), still fresh, it will be all too easy to slip back into the confrontational rhetoric (and actions) that lead to the slippery slope to the abyss.

We absolutely do not want to go there.

Donald Trumps yesterday renewal of US sanctions, so soon after the summit (actually there is just NO good timing for this), sends precisely the opposite signal to that which needs to be sent.

And it comes as the DPRK is preparing to repatriate the remains of US Korean War soldiers, and to re-unite family members with their kin from the south.

Suspending US-RoK military exercises was absolutely the right thing to do. As a significant part of those exercises has been to practice decapitation strikes against the DPRK, it is absolutely correct to describe them, as Trump has done, as 'provocative'. That is precisely what they are, or were. No matter 'whose language' this is.

At the current delicate stage of US-DPRK relations, the primary aim of US, Rok, and for that matter Australian, diplomacy must be to establish a stable and positive relationship with the DPRK. The end – state that is aimed for should be one in which the US and its allies especially the RoK, and China, have to compete for influence on the DPRK, rather than one in which the DPRK is continually forced back into a Chinese embrace.

Re-emphasizing sanctions is not going to do this. Reiterating the threatening nature of the DPRK helps to create the very threat it points to.

The momentum set up by the Singapore summit was the right direction. That momentum needs to be maintained. Instead of a continuation of sanctions, a gradual modest easing of them on an 'action for action' basis – in return for peaceful developments in other words – is surely the direction in which we should be travelling.

And if we are to talk of DE-nuclearisation of the DPRK, still by far the world's smallest nuclear arsenal, shouldn't we also be talking about the DE-nuclearisation of the nuclear arsenals of the US, not to mention Russia, China, France, the UK, India, Pakistan and Israel all of whom have nuclear arsenals many times the size of the DPRK's?

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