

11. The Korean War - another Civil War in the Cold War

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A. Origins

(a) Early Background

The following account is based largely on the studies of American historian Bruce Cumings of the University of Chicago, one who has devoted some decades to the study of Korea, including its colonial and more recent history.(see BC1; BC2) As in the case of Vietnam, long before the Korean War as we knew it broke out, Korea too had a *very* extended history of foreign interference and colonisation. Indeed, even before its formal Japanese 'annexation' in 1910, it had for over 200 years been subject to interference from its neighbours, China, Russia and Japan.

From the time of its intended permanent occupation by Japan in 1910, despite ruthless attempts at crushing all opposition, there was always a very active 'guerilla' resistance, one persisting to the very end of WWII. However, along with this popular resistance there were also, within a section of Korea's population 'collaborators', largely former 'elites' - large land owners and other power-brokers - striving to retain at least some of their former privileges. And, like the resistance itself, such collaboration persisted to the very end of the Second World War.

Notwithstanding all of this, there was throughout most of Korean society an intense

desire for true national *independence*. Yet, given the above background, when liberation from the Japanese at the end of WWII finally came in August 1945, the stage was set for a showdown between those representing the small minority of former elites, and the largely peasant, landless, and hitherto powerless majority. Indeed, already by September 1945 there were many ‘peoples committees’ throughout the countryside, along with a “Committee for the Preparation of Korean Independence” in Seoul, working towards a “Korean People’s Republic”(BC1,185) Understandably, there was serious disagreement between these popularly-based ‘district committees’ and the former power-based land owners and other collaborators. Now although it is highly likely that open conflict would soon have broken out, it never got to that because of Great Power intervention.

Firstly, having committed itself at the Allies’ Yalta meeting to assist in the final defeat of Japan, Russia began fighting Japanese forces in Korea on August 8, 1945, its troops rapidly advancing deep into Korea’s south. But once Japan surrendered on August 15, these troops were withdrawn to the north. However, even before the Japanese surrender, the United States had advocated a *joint Allied* occupation of Korea to replace that of Japan. This US proposal was to establish a combined US, Russian, British and Chinese Trusteeship to oversee Korea’s transition to independence. (As for Vietnam, national independence had always been Roosevelt’s plan, but of course by August 1945, he was no longer present to insist on its implementation.) And for the interim, the US proposed a north/south divide at the 38th. parallel, the Russians to administer the north half of the country, the US the south. The Russians agreed, maintaining their troops above the 38th parallel. (In contrast, when at about the same time, the Russians proposed a similar arrangement for Japan, to allow joint occupation of its northern island, Hokkaido, General McArthur refused.)(BC1, 186-7)

Sadly, though, for Korea there was no early move towards the joint trusteeship arrangement and in the event the separate occupations persisted. Moreover, the longer the US and Russian military authorities remained in control of their separate zones, each with their separately sponsored Korean administrations, the more definitely did these administrations come to be at odds with one another. So while both were, as ever, set on unification, each insisted the transition must be on *its* terms. Thus in a *de facto* way the divided administrations came to supplant the original Allied plan for an *independent unified* Korea. Indeed, these separate administrations were soon so far entrenched, they became the fore-runners of the ‘two Koreas’, something almost all Koreans had desperately wanted to avoid!

Thus the US Administration installed its nominee, expatriate from the US, strong-man Syngman Rhee to rule the south, while the Russians endorsed the ‘people’s committee’ nominee, Korea’s war-time resistance leader, Kim Il Sung, for the north.(BC1,190) And while throughout the north district committee leaders removed Japanese collaborators and instituted urgently-needed land reforms, Rhee in the south retained the former Japanese collaborators as his administrators, - along with the old land ownership system. As a result, in the south most of the leaders were lacking in what might be called nationalist credentials, this detracting from their popularity. And that lack of popularity was greatly accentuated when the south’s administration indulged in the same sort of

harsh repressive actions so recently experienced during Japan's occupation. Korea, after all, had had no liberal democratic tradition whatever, and even with American leadership it was not about to become a liberal democracy as we understand it.(BC1, 192-4)

(b) 'South Korea'

In any case the American priority was to ensure that Korea, or at any rate its south, remained firmly anti-communist, this requiring considerable political suppression, a task greatly aided by the Korean National Police, some 85% of whom had served with the Japanese. And to assist in establishing a national defence force, - a southern 'Korean Army', - the US brought in 20 officers from the former Japanese 'Kwantung Army' (which had occupied Manchuria) along with 20 others which had been fighting in China.(BC1, 200-1) Indeed, according to a CIA report of the time, the southern bureaucracy was "...*substantially the old Japanese machinery*". And yet the popular resistance to this 'machinery' was such that the US military occupation remained, not only to support it, but to restrain it whenever it threatened to 'unify' the country by marching north. So things continued along these lines until 1948 when, contrary to the war-time trusteeship/unification commitment, moves were made to call *separate* elections in the south.

Thus, destined to replace the US military government, the South's first 'National Assembly' of the 'Republic of Korea' was elected on May 10, 1948, the US withdrawing its troops on June 30, 1949.(BC1, 212) Needless to say the repression of popular movements across its countryside continued, large numbers of dissidents being killed and tens of thousands filling the south's jails.

(c) 'North Korea'

In Bruce Cumings' view, North Korea's political development post WWII can fairly be likened to that of Roumania and Yugoslavia rather than to states under tight Soviet control such as East Germany, an opinion supported by a mid-1948 British Foreign Office report. Soviet influence had to compete with Chinese influence and both were countered by strong indigenous determination towards independence. Indications of this are that the number of Russian advisors was never high (a mere 30 by 1947) and that the Soviets never succeeded in getting their long-cherished warm-water port on the Korean peninsula.(BC1, 224-6)

Important links with China enabled Korea to manouvre between the two communist 'giants'. Kim Il Sung's almost legendary status as guerrilla hero in the war against Japan gave him a Tito-like status both at home and abroad. Moreover, having been more pre-occupied with Europe, the Russians had withdrawn their troops from Manchuria in early 1946 and were willing to see Kim establish a government and get on with the much needed land reforms.(BC1, 226-7) A North Korean Workers Party was set up in August, 1946 and soon after, major industries, - most of which had been owned by the Japanese, - were nationalised. Although a number of other (non-communist) parties existed, they were always subject to top-down control. Also in 1946, Kim began to form a northern

army what would, by February, 1948, become a northern 'Korean People's Army'(KPA).(BC1, 228-9)

The regime focused on controlling certain minorities - particularly Christians - even though these constituted a mere 2% of the population. Many pastors were imprisoned in the late 1940s and although churches remained open until the 1950 war began, all their political activities were ruthlessly stamped out. More generally, press freedom had ceased by the end of 1946, the intention being as in the south, to quash alternative centres of power. On the issue of violence, according to Cumings, "*Neither North nor South had qualms about using violence for political ends, but the North tended to be more discriminating, in part because its enemies were numerically small classes and groups, and also because of a political practice, perhaps growing out of the Korean leaderships experience with Chinese communism, of seeking to re-educate and reform political recalcitrants.*" The principal targets of the regime, the former landlords were allowed to flee to the south or, if wanting to remain in the north, to themselves work small plots of land. (BC1, 230-2)

The police, much smaller in numbers than in the south, were encouraged to do away with the old attitudes of 'high-handedness, arrogance, selfishness, and self-aggrandizement' and to 'respect human rights', etc., but as Cumings emphasised, no matter how virtuous these police might try to be, their functions were to institute a thorough system of thought control and surveillance "...*that would horrify a believer in basic political freedoms.*" (BC1, 232-3)

(d) War Getting Closer: North and South - 1948-1949

The south's 'Republic of Korea' was formally proclaimed on August 15, 1948 and the north's 'Democratic People's Republic of Korea' just 3 weeks later. Soviet forces were withdrawn at the end of the year but in 1949, following the end of China's Civil War, tens of thousands of Korean soldiers who had fought in that war, having returned home, were integrated into the new Korean People's Army (KPA). Both Kim and Rhee planned to unify Korea by force, according to their own 'philosophies', but as Cumings points out, in 1950 only Kim had an army capable of such a task.(BC, 235-6) By then up to 100,000 'Korean unit' troops (returned from China) were believed to have joined the KPA. Indeed, according to US Army G-2 sources, upwards of 80% of the KPA troops had served in China's Civil War.(BC1, 240-1)

That aside, the facts are that 'the war' between north and south *began* long before June 25, 1950 (the usually-quoted 'start date') in the form a numerous skirmishes and larger actions emanating from *both* sides, actions which increased significantly from early 1949. Although there had been widespread rural protest, as well as much urban political turmoil in the south between 1945 and 1948, it did not reach the level of 'unconventional warfare' until November 1948 when more than 1,000 Yosu guerrillas joined with similar fighters already in the Chiri mountains of South Cholla province. By early 1949 the CIA estimated the total guerrilla numbers at between 3,500 and 6,000. At the same time the US embassy was reporting of this region that "...*the government has lost control outside*

the cities and large towns.” (BC1, 243) To deny the guerrillas cover, the Rhee government carried out extensive tree-cutting, prohibited all travel at night and introduced a night curfew in the city of Taegu. And to further deny the guerrillas local support, the populations of many villages were ‘displaced’, thereby greatly contributing to the estimated 100,000 refugees(BC1, 244)

Walter Sullivan, a NY Times journalist, distressed by the violence against police and guerrillas alike, noted the prevailing extremes of wealth and poverty, rural tenants having to provide some 30% of their produce plus additional taxes and other contributions, anything from 50 to 70% of their annual crops. Despite all of Rhee’s police and Republic of Korea Army (ROKA) interventions, guerrilla strength within the south grew throughout 1949.(BC1, 244-5) And whereas the US continued to play a central role in organising the ROKA, with James Hausman (self-proclaimed ‘father of the Korean Army’) coordinating the activities of US advisers in the south, the Russians gave little other than moral support to north Korea.(BC1, 245-6) Not only that, but by March 1949, the US’s KMAG’s (Korea’s Military Advisory Group’s) General Robert’s felt confident in reporting ROKA’s success in its “...*all-out mopping-up campaign*...”, - some 6,000 guerrillas killed over the previous 5 months.(BC1,246) And although by May 1950 guerrilla ‘incidents’ had been greatly reduced, reportedly reaching “...*a new low*” early in June, Walter Sullivan put this down to cold weather rather than genuine success in the campaign.(BC1, 247)

In short, the Korean war (said to have begun in June 1950) was in fact preceded by numerous border conflicts involving literally thousands of troops along the 38th parallel throughout most of 1949, - from May to late December.(BC1, 247) As Cumings commented, “*The reason war did not come in 1949 is at once simple and essential to grasping the civil origins of the Korean conflict: the South wanted a war then, the North did not, and neither did the United States or the Soviet Union. A year later this had changed.*” (BC1, 247) During 1949 the strength of Rhee’s army had been greatly augmented, from 81,000 in July to 100,000 by September, - that is, to numbers seemingly significantly greater than that of the north. But the ongoing return of the north’s soldiers from China made such comparisons extremely doubtful.

As indicated, the initiation of border conflicts came from both sides. The most severe fighting occurred in August when some 4-6,000 north Korean troops attacked ROKA units which had occupied a small mountain above the 38th parallel. The northern troops retrieved their land, the south’s forces being completely routed, but costs were high with hundreds killed.(BC1, 248-9) In the follow-up, both Muccio, the US Ambassador, and KMAG’s General Roberts ordered southern commanders not to attack northwards, but in fact both sides persisted in their strategies aimed at forcefully re-uniting the country.(BC1, 250) Indeed, both persisted despite the fact that their big-power backers would *not* support them if they launched an *unprovoked* general attack. Thus by 1950, the logic followed by both sides was: wait for the other to move first, since that would provide the ‘authorisation’, the backer’s go-ahead for the much-desired all-out civil war. For the south that was essential, since otherwise they could not count on US help - without which they had no hope of winning.(BC1, 251) However, if it was clear that the

north had launched an all-out attack, then the American attitude was not only that the south should resist, but that it should advance north beyond the 38th parallel - notwithstanding the risk of a far wider, even a world war.(BC1, 254)

The north's expectations of civil war turned very much on the China example, that of the victorious Chinese revolution, the civil war 'next door' in which with popular support Mao had prevailed over Chiang Kai-shek - and that result despite billions of dollars of American arms and other financial support to Chiang. And perhaps with that China example so fresh, the north may have expected the US not to become directly involved. Of course this was *before* the US's direct military engagement in Vietnam. In any case, if that was the thinking, - the hope, - it turned out a very sad miscalculation indeed. And while the north received some aid from both the USSR and China, this was minuscule compared to the overwhelming level of US aid to the south,.

By 1950, American influence in the south was very great indeed, penetrating into every branch of administration, supplying expertise in many fields and financing over \$100 million of the south's total budget of \$120 million. Economic aid through ECA and the military advisory group (KMAG) were the largest anywhere in the world. Indeed KMAG's training of the ROK Army was said to be highly successful. As its head, General Roberts told a journalist, "*KMAG is a living demonstration of how an intelligent and intensive investment of 500 combat-hardened American men and officers can train 100,000 guys to do the shooting for you.*" He then claimed that the countryside, which had been in 'perpetual uproar', was now under control thanks to American advisers at every level. And as in reassurance, he went on "*...the American taxpayer has an army that is a fine watchdog over the investments placed in this country and a force that represents the maximum results at minimum cost.*" Seemingly unconcerned as to any possible invasion from the north, the *NY Herald Tribune* reported him as saying, "*At this point we rather invite it. It will give us target practice.*" (BC1, 255-6)

At the same time the UN Commission on Korea (UNCOK) was very concerned that full-scale civil war, coming from either direction, could occur at any time. Yet, curiously, UNCOK military observers were not posted to the 38th parallel until May 1950, but were on the Ongjin peninsula where the war began on June 25. A few weeks earlier, in the South's National Assembly elections, Rhee's regime had suffered major losses, a strong collection of 'middle-of-the-roaders', set on unification, being returned. On June 18 that brought President Truman's adviser, John Foster Dulles, already on his way to see MacArthur in Tokyo, to visit Korea.(BC1,256-7) At their meeting, Rhee wanted an American alliance, direct US military involvement, and the OK for an attack on the north, - he appearing unconcerned should that result in a general war. According to Cumings, Dulles failed to give Rhee more than 'some pro-forma reassurances of US support.'(BC1, 258)

B. War in Earnest

(a) Overt War - June 25, 1950

According to US sources, the war began in an isolated peninsula, that of Ongjin, where at 3am on June 25, north Korean forces crossed the 38th parallel, and some hours later invading across the parallel further eastwards - towards Kaesong and P'anmunjom. The north made counterclaims, stating the south had invaded 2 days earlier.(BC1, 260-1) The charges and counter-charges are confusing, but Cumings states that the claim that the south had made "*...a general attack across the parallel is false: the North attacked, and all along the parallel, by 6 A.M. at the latest.*" (BC1, 262) And as he further comments, "*To say that this was the culmination of previous struggles and that Rhee wanted to do the same thing is true, but does not gainsay Kim's responsibility for the horrible consequences.*"(BC1, 263)

On June 26, US air and ground forces were committed and increased military aid provided to the South. That was through an executive decision by Dean Acheson, supported by President Truman, made before any consideration by the US Congress. The decision was then taken to the UN Security Council which (with the USSR and China both absent due to UN Security Council refusal to admit Mao's China) ratified the American stand. So that he did not need to gain Congressional approval, Truman termed the US moves "*police action*", rather than a declaration of war.(BC1, 264-5) Other member states of the UN were slow to commit forces, the British providing the largest with 12,000 troops, then Canada (8,500), Turkey and the Philippines (both 5,000) plus 11 other nations (including Australia) each with 1,000 or less.(BC1, 265) However the Soviets made clear their determination not to become involved, even pulling out their military advisers. While the Chinese too indicated their intention of avoiding hostilities, they were incensed at the turn of events, particularly when the US Seventh Fleet began patrolling the Taiwan Strait.(BC1, 266-7)

Throughout the summer of 1950 the North's forces made far-reaching advances, by mid September capturing Seoul, later reaching to within 100 km of Pusan. But American forces stood firm at this 'Pusan Perimeter'. At that stage American and South Korean forces totalling 92,000 (47,000 US) outnumbered the North's 70,000. However, besides these 70,000, the North's efforts were aided by large numbers of local partisans, southern guerrillas. Although the numbers of these are uncertain, their casualty rates were very high, some 67,000 killed in August alone - more than double the total American deaths for the whole three years of the war. Present everywhere local peasants, dressed in their 'white pyjamas', would suddenly take up arms and join in the fighting. Apparently they felt they had a stake in the outcome, for just as in the north, the setting up of local decision-making committees together with programmes for land redistribution were promptly instituted. By early July, all Japanese property along with that of the ROK government had been confiscated. Administration of justice was left to local 'peace preservation groups' which distributed accumulated stocks of rice to the poor and sometimes reacted brutally to former police.(BC1, 268-9)

Although since 1949 the Americans had wanted Rhee to implement land reforms, to undo the wide economic and social divide which had ruled Korea for centuries, their response to this popular armed uprising, with its obvious socialist intensions, was to treat all Koreans, men women and children, as hostile. This included burning villages suspected of harbouring guerrillas.(BC1, 268, 270) As Harper's journalist Eric Larrabee argued, while it was a limited war for Americans, for Koreans it was a peoples' war which should not be fought with senseless brutal displays of technical superiority. Obviously the young American soldiers could not understand or sympathise with what they were told to combat. British war correspondent, Reginald Thompson, author of *Cry Korea*, remarked that GIs "...never spoke of the enemy as though they were people, but as one might speak of apes. every man's dearest wish was to kill a Korean. 'Today, I'll get me a gook.' " Thompson believed Koreans were called gooks because "...otherwise these essentially kind and generous Americans would not have been able to kill them indiscriminately or smash up their homes and poor belongings." (BC1, 270-1)

Charles Grutzner of the *New York Times* said that, "...fear of infiltrators led to the slaughter of hundreds of South Korean civilians, women as well as men, by some US troops and police of the Republic.". Reginald Thompson was sickened by the carnage from the air war which, opposed by no more than a few rifles and carbines, "...brought down upon those resisting, along with all the inhabitants, the appalling horror of jellied petrol bombs. Every village and township in the path of war was blotted out spreading an abysmal desolation over whole communities"(BC1, 271-2) The determination to put a stop to what was obviously a popular Korean transformation to socialism or communism was so great that the use of atomic weapons was seriously considered. Indeed it was strongly favoured by General MacArthur in the following terms put before the US Joint Chiefs of Staff: "*I would cut them off in North Korea. In Korea I visualize a cul-de-sac. The only passages leading from Manchuria and Vladivostok have many tunnels and bridges. I see here a unique use for the atomic bomb - to strike a blocking blow - which would require a six months repair job. Sweeten up my B-29 force....*".(BC1, 272)

At the end of August the northern army made a determined effort to penetrate the Pusan perimeter but it was unsuccessful, by then being badly outnumbered, 98,000 facing 83,000 GIs plus 57,000 Korean and British soldiers. Moreover, in mid September MacArthur, using some 261 ships and 80,000 troops, made a tactically brilliant amphibious assault at Inchon which resulted in the retaking of Seoul. Overwhelmed, the North Koreans undertook what their historians have since termed 'the great strategic retreat'. As a result, its date, September 30, 1950 marked the end of the so-called 'first Korean War'. The costs were high, 111,000 South Koreans killed, 106,000 wounded, 57,000 missing; 314 homes destroyed plus similar numbers damaged; in comparison, 2,954 Americans killed, 13,659 wounded, 3,877 missing in action; North Korean casualty figures, doubtless extremely heavy but unknown.(BC1, 275-6)

Since on September 30, ROK army units, following the retreating Northerners, crossed the 38th. parallel, that date also marked the beginning of the 'second Korean war' - as a

march towards the Yalu river, Korea's northern border. For US propaganda purposes, that parallel had become an 'international border' once the north Koreans crossed it going south; but it reverted to its original concept of a 'temporary line pending unification' when, with unification in mind, American forces crossed it going north. As outlined in Cumings' discussion, the moves and convenient shifts in attitude were all part of the post-WWII 'Cold War' public-relations rhetoric. (BC1, 277)

By mid October the North's 'Red capital', P'yongyang, had been captured. That encouraged Supreme Command officers to claim the war was over, the *New York Times*' banner headline proclaiming "*UN Troops Race Unopposed towards the Manchurian Border.*" However in retreating so fast the northern troops, some 12 divisions, had simply melted away into the hills, preparing to engage in guerrilla warfare, a well-understood Chinese Communist strategy fully understood by those Koreans who had so recently fought in China. Indeed, the KPA continued its withdrawal until late November, the claim being that all along it had been a deliberate plan to lure the opposing forces deep into the north, there to envelop them. However, as Cumings points out, the north had in fact suffered a very serious defeat from the US Inchon landing, its heavy losses of men and equipment seriously damaging morale.(BC1, 281) The rapid retreat simply represented making the best of that defeat - rapidly falling back and so luring the enemy deeply towards the Chinese border, the Chagang region, a mountainous zone which included both strong natural defences and good links to China.(BC1, 280)

As the North had for a time occupied the South, so then the South occupied most of the North. According to Cumings, who cites both American and British Foreign Office sources, the record of the South's army (ROKA) and its National Police during this occupation was truly brutal.(BC1,281-3) It was widely assumed that the Chinese would not intervene directly in the war. However, when from November 24-27, MacArthur implemented his general offensive close to the Yalu, 'all along the line', - a massive pincer movement designed to trap north Korean forces, - these by-then re-grouped KPA units supported by guerrillas and CCF units (Chinese forces), made very effective counter attacks which forced the UN forces into far-reaching withdrawals. By December 7, P'yongyang had been retaken and the front was just 20 miles from the 38th parallel. And by the end of December Seoul was about to fall once again. Cumings' estimates that some 200,000 Chinese (CCF) troops had been involved. (BC1, 284-8)

Since the turnaround was so unexpected there was quite some panic in Washington where in its 'Cold War' mind-set there were serious contemplations of general war. As Truman wrote on December 9, "*I've worked for peace for five years and six months and it looks like World War III is here.*" When Truman indicated he might use the atom bomb, alarmed British Prime Minister, Attlee, promptly flew to plead with Washington. Also fearing a global war, Stalin was so concerned that he favoured the US occupying all of Korea. And although the Chinese and North Koreans would not completely back off, the Chinese made no attempt to maintain their forces below the 38th parallel. The result was that within a few months the borderline was more or less stabilised at what still, today, is known as the 'demilitarised zone' which spans the 38th parallel, the 'DMZ'.

(b) More Years of Tragic War to ‘Encourage Successful Negotiation’

Notwithstanding that stalemate situation, reminiscent of what would later happen in Vietnam, the war went on for another two years, a further two years of bloody fighting, another two years during which the US used many of its ‘hi-tech’ weapons, most of which were delivered from the air. Indeed, again there was serious consideration to use atomic weapons.(BC1, 288-9) Britain’s PM, Attlee, remained concerned, for at this time the US had a virtual nuclear monopoly, it having some 450 atomic bombs, the USSR, the only other nuclear power having a ‘mere’ 25.(BC1, 290) MacArthur wanted a ‘commander’s discretion’ to use 26 of the US’s, as needed, - 4 to drop on ‘invasion forces’. In an interview (published after his death) he had claimed his plan would have won the war in 10 days: *“I would have dropped between 30 and 50 atom bombsstrung across the neck of Manchuria.”* Coupled to the introduction of 500,000 of Chiang Kai-shek’s Chinese Nationalist troops at the Yalu, that would have provided *“...a belt of radioactive cobalt ...”* from the Sea of Japan to the Yellow Sea, meaning that for at least 60 years there could have been no land invasion of Korea from the north.(BC1, 290-1) In May, 1951, General Mathew Ridgeway, MacArthur’s successor, renewed the request, this time for 38 atomic bombs. Fortunately these requests were not approved, but it remained the case that these weapons, delivered to Okinawa, were kept ‘on hand’ ready lest more traditional measures failed.(BC1, 291-2)

But atomic weapons aside, there were ample numbers of more conventional weapons of mass destruction to devastate the country and its people. Indeed, from early November 1950, MacArthur ordered that a ‘wasteland’ be created between the 38th Parallel front and the Chinese border, that every *“...installation, factory, city, and village”* be destroyed. On November 8, B-29’s dropped 550 tons of incendiary bombs on Sinuiju, *“...removing it from off the map..”* and by the end of the month much of the north-west, - up to the Yalu river was burning.(BC1, 293-4)

Accordingly, incendiary bombs, including the terrifying jellied-petrol ‘Napalm’ canisters, were widely employed to set alight not only villages and their inhabitants, but, as in Japan, whole cities. These incendiaries, together with high-explosive and delayed-action demolition bombs, were used to destroy many Korean cities. Even before the major Sino-Korean offensive, P’yongyang had been hit with 700 500-lb Napalm canisters plus 175 tons of delayed-fuse bombs designed to delay and destroy would-be rescuers. And as the American forces retreated below the 38th parallel, a ‘scorched earth’ policy of ‘torching’ Korean cities before the enemy’s forces got close to them continued.(BC1, 294)

Indeed, to combat the widespread guerrilla activity whole areas were designated ‘free fire zones’ this allowing attacks on ‘suspect’ villages and their occupants. As US General Barr, flying over T’anyang on January 18 reported, *“...Methodical burning of dwellings is producing hostile reaction. People cannot understand why US troops burn homes when no enemy is present.....burning out the homes of poor farmers when no enemy present is against the grain of US soldiers. From house burning we already have estimated 8000 refugees and expect more. These are mostly the old, crippled, and*

children.”(BC1, 293-4)

In a village north of Anyang, George Barret of the *New York Times* found “...a macabre tribute to the totality of modern war The inhabitants throughout the village and the fields were caught and killed and kept the exact postures they held when the napalm struck - a man about to get on his bicycle, fifty boys and girls playing in an orphanage, a housewife strangely unmarked, holding in her hand a page from a Sears-Roebuck catalogue crayoned at Mail Order No.3,811,294 for a \$2.98 ‘bewitching bed jacket - coral.’ ” Unsurprisingly, Secretary of State, Dean Acheson wanted to stop this kind of “sensationalized reporting”. But, as quoted in his papers, even General Ridgeway was concerned enough to proclaim that the policy should not “...extend to the wanton destruction of towns and villages, by gun-fire or bomb, unless there is good reason to believe them occupied.”(BC1, 295)

Yet, as Cumings commented, “This did not seem to make much difference in policy. By 1952 just about everything in northern and central Korea was completely levelled. What was left of the population survived in caves, the North Koreans creating an entire life underground, in complex dwellings, schools, hospitals and factories. As Robert Lovett later put it, ‘If we keep on tearing the place apart, we can make it a most unpopular affair for the North Koreans. We ought to go right ahead.’ The Americans did go right ahead and in the final act of this barbaric air war hit huge irrigation dams that provided water for 75 percent of the North’s food production.” (BC1, 295)

Cumings goes on to quote from US Air Force reports on the highly ‘successful’ results of such attacks, many coming as late in the war as the spring of 1953. For example, the rush of water from bombed dams at Kusong and Toksan destroyed roads, railways, bridges and extensive areas of rice paddies. As the official Air Force report indicated, “The subsequent flash flood scooped clean 27 miles of valley below, and the plunging flood waters wiped out..... The Westerner can little conceive the awesome meaning which the loss of (rice) has for the Asian - starvation and slow death.” (BC1, 296)

Following such attacks, many many villages were inundated. There are no records to register the number of people lost. At all events it seems clear that such losses were ‘justified’ on the grounds that all were part of the ‘enemy force’ since, as peasant farmers, they were providing “.....direct support to the Communist armed forces.” And as the report further indicated, the lesson to be gained was that it, “...gave the enemy a sample of the totality of war Embracing the whole of a nation’s economy and people.” Yes, indeed, it was for all Koreans a total war, even if for Americans it was still a mere side-show, a limited war despite the fact that as Air Force General Curtis LeMay put it, “...over a period of three years or so ... we burned down every town in North Korea and South Korea too....” (BC1, 296-8)

The human cost to all concerned was extremely high, especially to both north and south Koreans. Not only the terrible devastation of their countryside, the destruction of their economy and normal ways of life, but the awful physical and mental injuries suffered by unknown numbers of survivors, besides a death toll estimated at ‘over two

million civilians'. To that must be added the military casualties, those of North Korea and China estimated as 'at least 1,500,000, those of 'the UN 450,000'

As Cumings, writing in 1997, concluded "*When the war finally ended on July 27 1953, the North had been devastated by three years of bombing attacks that hardly left a modern building standing. Both Koreas had watched as a virtual holocaust ravaged their country and turned the vibrant expectations of 1945 into a nightmare. The point to remember is that this was a civil war, and, as a British Diplomat once said, 'every country has a right to have its War of the Roses.'* The true tragedy was not the war itself, for a civil conflict purely among Koreans might have resolved the extraordinary tensions generated by colonialism, national division and foreign intervention. The tragedy was that the war solved nothing: only the status quo ante was restored, only an armistice held the peace. Today the tensions and the problems remain." (BC1, 298)

(c) Australia's Involvement

On June 29, 1950, Robert Menzies, Australia's Prime Minister, announced that Australian warships, would be placed at the disposal of the United Nations forces in Korea. Subsequently, Australian government support was increased to 3 infantry battalions, a fighter squadron, an aircraft carrier, 4 destroyers, and 4 frigates. For Australians, who knew little of the background and origins of the war, our support was not a controversial issue.

As indicated above, the formal part of the war dragged on until the 'Armistice' was signed on July 27, 1953. However, Australia's third battalion was not withdrawn until the following year and the last of its troops did not return home until 1958. The cost to those young Australians was 339 deaths and a further 1216 wounded.(A,E&P, 167-180)

C. Armistice in 1953 - yet Still no Peace Today!

(a) Post Korean War: 1953 to the New Millenium

Although the war was brought to an end in the sense that finally an armistice, a cease-fire, was agreed, there was not then nor to this day, a peace settlement. The result is that there occurred and remains but an armed 'stand-off' across the heavily-fortified, so-called demilitarised zone, the infamous 'DMZ'. Until the break-up of the old USSR, this stand-off was all part of the Cold War. For the North-East Asian region, that meant bilateral defence treaties between the US and Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and the Philippines: 100,000 US troops occupying Japan and South Korea (the US controlling its forces), the US Seventh Fleet patrolling the Taiwan Strait, and all of these countries' foreign policies compliant with those of the US.(BC1, 458)

In the mid 1960s the US encouraged a link between the Japanese, South Korean and Taiwan economies such that the latter two began serious industrialisation aimed at export-led development, a process which soon took off. And in 1971, President Nixon, putting the former total ostracism by the US behind him, established political and

economic ties with Communist China. North Korea sought to take advantage of this improvement in Sino-American relations and in response the Nixon Administration withdrew one third its troops from the DMZ - without any increase in tension. North and South even held secret talks which in 1972 led to an announcement of possible 'peaceful unification', an idea not subsequently advanced.

Then, during the Carter Administration (1977-81) plans were announced for a gradual but eventually complete withdrawal of US troops from Korea - only air and naval forces to remain. The North's response was positive, Kim, looking forward to the opening of diplomatic relations and trade, describing President Carter as 'a man of justice'. However in 1979, 'on advice', Carter dropped his idea of troop withdrawal and by 1981 the Reagan Administration was again building up US force levels, 4,000 troops added to the 40,000 already there, large military exercises were undertaken, and advanced F-16 fighters sold to the South.(BC1, 460-1)

In 1984, for the first time, the DPRK called for 3-way talks between themselves, the South and the US. However as a terrorist bombing in Rangoon the previous October (which had killed many of South Korea's visiting Cabinet) was blamed on the North, such talks were ruled out. And relations were also undermined not only by the US military build up of the South but by the North's developing arms export trade to 'friendly' countries like Zimbabwe and Iran - the latter willing to trade oil for such arms, - arms used for its war with Saddam's Iraq.(BC1, 462)

In 1990 'Prime Ministerial talks' between North and South were held. Then in 1991 both Koreas joined the UN under two separate flags and by December, their Prime Ministers had signed in Seoul an '*Agreement on Reconciliation, Nonaggression, Cooperation, and Exchange*', which called for concerted efforts to turn the Armistice into a durable peace. Included was agreement to make all of Korea nuclear-free. And, dear to the hearts of so many, it also promised free travel throughout the peninsula for some ten million Koreans desperate, - ever since the war, to visit families separated by the DMZ, an opportunity promptly taken.(BC, 463)

But even with the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 (this confirming the end of the Cold War - since the USSR could no longer be claimed as a threat to the Free World) the tensions over North Korea were made to persist. Indeed, despite its very small size and obvious military weakness (c.f. the US or Japan), over succeeding years North Korea has continued to be portrayed by the US as a threat not only to its immediate neighbours, but to Japan and even the US itself! The excuse is as follows. From the early 1990s, following the example of South Korea and Japan (as well as the US and so many other Western powers) the North Koreans sought to build a nuclear reactor that would utilise their substantial deposits of Uranium. Indeed, since 1962 they had a small (4-megawatt) reactor from the USSR which from 1977 was placed under UN-sponsored, IAEA safeguards. In 1979 N.Korea began building a 30-megawatt (British Calder Hall-style) gas-graphite reactor which began operating in 1987. Again the IAEA was invited to inspect. Then in 1989 the US claimed its spy satellites were picking up evidence of a 50- to 200-megawatt capacity reactor which might come on-stream by the early 1990s.

It seems likely the North decided about 1991 that (like Israel) it should develop a small 'deterrent' nuclear weapon, and thus to appear to be armed with a trump card (or 'equaliser') - or at least to keep all guessing as to when it might become available. That interpretation fits with the knowledge that, *unlike* many of its other facilities (and Israel's Dimona complex, 80 feet under) this was built *above ground*, clearly visible to spy satellites. Notwithstanding the uncertainties and, in any case, the undoubted weakness of the potential 'adversary', the US findings and suspicions led to outbursts of hysterical publicity, 'crises' which, coinciding always with the Pentagon's bilateral talks in Seoul every November, - arose throughout the 90's. In November, 1991, just before George Bush senior's Secretary of Defence (Dick Cheney) arrived, Cheney told reporters that if North Korea 'missed Desert Storm', there was always the 'chance to catch a rerun', the *Chicago Tribune's* editorial responding by calling for 'pre-emptive strikes' on Yongbyong.(BC,1 467-9)

When George Bush visited the DMZ in January 1992, his officials, uncertain as to what the North really had up its sleeve, told reporters they wanted a mandate to roam the North's heavily-guarded military sites at will. By November 1993 it seems they were none the wiser for when Defence Secretary Aspin asserted northern troops were massed along the DMZ border, the US State Department reported to the *New York Times* (Nov. 4) that it had no such knowledge and knew of no evidence that North Korea was "...*producing or reprocessing plutonium.*" Despite that, by the week-end of November 5-7, TV and radio reports in the US (CBS, Fox, even PBS) claimed North Korea was not only concentrating its troops along the 38th parallel, but was readying an atomic bomb. And on Sunday 7th November, President Clinton told 'Meet the Press' that "...*any attack on South Korea is an attack on the U.S., ...*". As Cumings commented about all these unsupported provocative assertions and predictions - none of which came to pass:

"The disturbingly mimetic quality of print and TV stories on North Korea could be found across the spectrum of American journalism, from right to left, from the worst to the best. Over and over again the same unexamined facts and assumptions intruded every article." (BC1,470-1)

Cumings soon goes on to warn Americans as to their susceptibility to being 'conned' by this sort of 'information' since 'one day' they may wake up to find their sons and daughters embroiled in an unnecessary war, a war the true causes of which they are totally ignorant, all totally obscured by what he terms "Pentavision".(BC1, 474) He was referring to Korea which of course even today remains for the US an issue on the table so to speak, but we have only to think of the information beat-up that claimed to 'justify' the illegal unilateral on-going attack on Iraq in 2003 to realise the more general truth of his warning.

(b) Some US Nuclear Background

There is no doubt that power goes to the head of the 'all powerful' today, (just as it did in the late 19th and early 20th century - culminating then in the 1914-18 'First World Catastrophe') - the 'all powerful' forever making the claim that 'it', or rather, its power

preponderance was ‘threatened’ by some much less powerful nation. Thus in 1993, Chairman of the US House Appropriations on Defense Committee, John Murtha, proclaiming that North Korea was “*America’s greatest security threat*”, was calling for the US to knock out its nuclear facilities with ‘smart weapons’ should it refuse to have them inspected.(BC1, 474) As was later to occur with Iraq, there were frequent calls for forceful ‘regime change’, and in that same year, General Lee Butler, head of the US Strategic Air Command announced that he was re-targeting ‘strategic nuclear weapons’ (i.e., hydrogen bombs until then targeted against the USSR) onto North Korea (among other places)! (BC1, 473) When in March 1993 the US carried out its ‘Team Spirit’ war games in South Korea, complete with B-52s, B-1B bombers and ship-based Cruise missiles, the North announced its intention to pull out of the Non-Proliferation Treaty because that Treaty disallows nuclear threats by any nuclear power NPT signatory.

However, once Team Spirit was over, the North, suspending its withdrawal from the NPT, agreed to high-level talks with the US. But then when the IAEA demanded special inspections of undeclared sites, the North refused, *inter alia*, on the grounds that it understood the IAEA would pass on its military intelligence to the US. It also expected (without success) that the IAEA should have been attending equally to what the US might be doing in its many installations in South Korea.(BC1, 475-6) Not only that, but of course the US (along with *all other* established nuclear powers) was failing to honour *its* commitment under the NPT (Article 6) to move expeditiously towards the *complete* abolition of *ALL* nuclear weapons.

(c) 1956 - Nuclear Weapons Transferred to Korea

The background to the US’s nuclear activities in South.Korea is that in September 1956, the United States’ Defence and State Departments had stated the “*..intention to introduce atomic warheads into Korea.*” Although the Armistice agreement clearly prohibited either side from introducing new types of weapons, the US went ahead, its National Security Council approving their transfer to Korea in August 1957. But they were to be kept under strict US control. In 1958 the US added various forms of tactical (i.e., battlefield) nuclear weapons, as well as Cruise missiles with a range of up to 1,100 km. Indeed by the mid 1960s the defence strategy was to use nuclear weapons early in any new war.(BC1, 478-9) And by the mid 1970s, to the above remarkable range of nuclear weapons, ‘Atomic Demolition Mines’ (ADMs) with a 20-kiloton explosive forces designed “*...to contaminate an advance area and to stop an armored attack,*” were added, ‘*just to make sure*’ ! (BC1, 480)

Of course the resort to use ADMs, tactical and other nuclear weapons would guarantee a *very* great deal of ‘friendly fire’, devastating casualties on *the home side*, Americans as well as South Korean troops - not just those on the North. But clearly the thinking by planners was that no cost (to others) would be too high. Obviously afraid of the ever-possible nuclear onslaught, the North responded by building many munitions factories and other facilities *underground*. And while determined to defend itself, it was of course well aware of the overwhelming dominance of US military strength.

(d) The 1993 Promise of a Real US - North Korea Settlement

But going back to 1993, when Clinton became US President, attempts were made to de-fuse tensions in Korea. Defence Secretary Aspin admitted the US's long lack of any real certainty as to the North's nuclear activity; the US opened high level talks on that and other matters; offered to end the 'Team Spirit' war games with the South; pledged it would not use force against the North; upgraded diplomatic relations; and offered the North types of nuclear power generation that were 'less threatening'. Responding in July the North offered to replace their Uranium-based graphite reactors, - providing the US would supply instead the less-prone-to-weapons-proliferation light-water reactors and (to supplement their energy needs) liquid heating fuels. These negotiations proceeded until (following an intervening serious 'nuclear crisis' over the North withdrawing some 8,000 fuel rods) an agreement along these lines was finally concluded in October 1994. A consortium of nations, including the US, South Korea and Japan, would supply the light-water reactors to solve the North's energy problems, together with some \$4 billion long-term loans and credits to cover the costs. The US would supply the necessary heating fuels. Included also was an agreement, under the NPT, for the IAEA to conduct regular inspections of the North's nuclear facilities. All to be followed by improved commercial relations with foreign firms, including those in the South and Japan.(BC1, 484-5)

However, as Cumings, in his study of Korea (published in the mid 1990s) commented, "*The framework agreement is predicated on mutual mistrust, and therefore both sides must verify compliance at each step toward completion of the agreement, which will not come until the early part of the next century, since constructing the reactors and bringing them on-line will take years.*"(BC1, 486) At that stage the 'nuclear crisis' seemed to have been resolved, Cumings crediting Pyongyang's sincerity in offering to give up its nuclear program in return for better relations with the United States - as well as Selig Harrison of the Carnegie Endowment for Peace, for playing a key role in bringing the North Koreans and the US to such a promising beginning. Indeed, as Cumings later went on, this "...*agreement represented the first time since the Korean War that diplomacy has resolved any important problem in Korea;*"(BC1, 486-7)

(e) Fallback!! -Korea in Current Times

In an essay which appeared in the *London Review of Books* of December 4, 2003 (Vol.25, No. 23,) (see BC2) Cumings gives us a concise (12-page) up-date on the above.

Sadly it is not a story with a sensible, let alone happy resolution. As Cumings' essay relates, following the early promise of the mid-90's turnaround agreement, the Clinton Administration had to contend with six years of thoroughly negative criticism from 'the Republican Right'. And, predictably, when George W.Bush brought many of the Agreement's critics into his Administration, they set about fulfilling their own prophecies by dismantling it, thus setting up a further dangerous confrontation with Pyongyang. As Cummings commented, "*The same folks who brought us the invasion of Iraq and a menu of hyped-up warnings about Saddam Hussein's weapons have similarly*

exaggerated the North Korean threat; indeed, the second North Korean nuclear crisis began in October 2002, when 'sexed-up' intelligence was used to push Pyongyang against the wall and make bilateral negotiations impossible."(BC2,1)

Most unfortunately *very* few American journalists critically examined the 'intelligence' claims of this Administration. Seymour Hersh of the *New Yorker* is an accomplished exception. In his article of October 27, 2003, Hersh explains the source of much of what I will call 'malintelligence', 'intelligence' designed to mislead the American public along with the rest of the world. It comes about like this. 'Senior Officials' of the Bush Administration demand raw intelligence data *before* it has been sifted and its validity assessed by the CIA and other Agency sources. They, Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, Paul Wolfowitz, etc., the 'Neo-Con' 'brains' who have set up a special 'intelligence unit' within the Administration, decide what is 'good intelligence' for their purposes. This then guides their further policy formulations and actions, military and otherwise, including public announcements. As Cumings related, they "*...then rush the most damning reports into speeches, such as those intended to make the case for war in Iraq. Cheney has been particularly active, visiting the CIA, browbeating analysts and demanding access to raw information. In August 2002 he claimed publicly that Saddam 'continues to pursue a nuclear weapon'.*"(BC2,4)

This, of course, was a powerful argument to 'justify' attacking Iraq. Indeed, that motivation was such as to *suppress* intelligence indicating that North Korea might have a second nuclear programme. You see, for more than a year after assuming office, George W Bush had avoided holding high-level talks with Pyongyang. Moreover, when eventually Bush did send an emissary (James Kelly) there, and heard of the North's own claims that they were developing not only 'an enriched-uranium bomb' but 'more powerful weapons as well', Bush *delayed* releasing that intelligence until after he had got his resolution which backed the war on Iraq through Congress. Instead, the Administration simply revealed that they had cut off the heavy heating fuel supplies to North Korea. In response, the North Koreans announced the collapse of the Agreement, their withdrawal from the NPT, the dismissal of NPT inspectors (along with their seals and closed-circuit cameras) and the re-starting of their old graphite reactor. Clearly the North intended to give the impression of a new determination to develop nuclear weapons.

The Bush Administration had wanted to give the impression that the CIA-derived information of 1997-8, - information received from the Carter Administration indicating that the North's acquisition of uranium enrichment technology (which could have been necessary for the promised Light Water Reactors) - had been discovered only 18 months *after* Bush had come to office.(BC2, 5) Now, aside from the need to gain time for Congressional approval for the invasion of Iraq, we have to ask what else motivated the ultimate revelation of this years-old 'vital intelligence' in October 2002? Well, the Bush neo-conservatives had only just come up with their 'doctrine' of 'pre-emptive strikes', the idea that the US had the right to attack any state it considered *might* threaten it (or its interests) either then, - or any time in the future! Indeed, that new doctrine had only recently (September, 2002) been announced to the American public and the world.

It was directed towards weak powers which were *not* in orbit around the United States, those which sought to *remain* independent by becoming militarily stronger. Not stronger than the US, of course, since that was out of the question, simply strong enough to withstand US pressure towards total compliance. For some States this meant attempting to develop the capacity to make and deliver a few nuclear weapons. Indeed, that very point was made by the North Koreans on April 18, 2003 in a statement which read, “*The Iraqi war teaches a lesson that in order to prevent a war and defend the security of a country and the sovereignty of a nation it is necessary to have a powerful physical deterrent force*”.(BC2, 10)

Here I'd like to interpose a few paragraphs of general comment. After the tragedy of the First World War, a tragedy followed by the scandalously mismanaged 1920s and 30s which culminated in the even greater catastrophe of the equally-unnecessary *Second* World War, it was agreed by all States that since the use of military power in pursuit of unprincipled greed could only produce more and more of the same, there simply *had* to be a radically new approach to security if our children (and theirs) were to be given any prospect of living useful, peaceful, happy lives. Indeed that is precisely why the United Nations Charter had been created and universally agreed on immediately following WWII. Since an arms-based approach to international security had always led to *greater* tension, instability and wars, it of course *had* to go. Instead *all* would abide by the rules of *International Law* (both Customary and Treaty); *all* would strive to protect the weak, especially to assist (rather than exploit) them economically. And (as abundantly clear from the lessons of the 1930s) the strong States would *never* engage in unilateral attack on the weak for economic or other gain.(for text of the Atlantic Charter see Churchill (WC4iii, 393), and of the United Nations Charter see <http://www.un.org/en/documents/charter/index.shtml> , or simply ask ‘google’!)

Most unfortunately, however, the above grave commitments were frequently side-stepped, especially by the major powers. Nevertheless, from 1968, under the *Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty* (the NPT) the most powerful, the Nuclear States, - claiming their real concern was for a more secure (safer and saner) world, - solemnly undertook (to the non-nuclear states) that in exchange for *their* strict undertakings to *remain non-nuclear*, they, the nuclear states would dismantle *their* nuclear weapons - all with the necessary controls and safeguards. That condition is clearly spelt out in NPT's Article 6. Thus, by faithfully following through on these mutual commitments, the world was to become nuclear-free. But, sadly as we have seen, on one pretext and another this undertaking has been flouted by the nuclear powers, - scandalously side-lined - along with the United Nations Organisation itself.(IKB)

To take the prime example, not only has the militarily most powerful nation of recent times, the United States, opted to remain nuclear in defiance of its obligations under the NPT, but totally ignoring its commitments under the Atlantic and United Nations Charters (the very Charters it co-authored) like the pretentiously vain Empire Powers of the late 19th Century, it has lauded the supposed ‘virtues’ of its military power. Thus we have learned of the United States’ intention to attain ‘*Full Spectrum Dominance*’ through its ‘*Revolution in Military Affairs*’, including the dominance of space. And remember,

such space dominance relates closely to its nuclear dominance which is more than simply retaining ten thousand or so older nuclear weapons and their delivery systems. Indeed, as proudly announced from time to time, it is about developing new nuclear weapons, not just the ‘big bangers’, but a range of smaller special-purpose ones such as the bunker-busters designed to reach far underground. And if we put all this together with the ‘doctrine’, the ‘right’ to make ‘pre-emptive’ attacks on small powers ‘of our choice’, we face through the years ahead a very unpleasant, unjust, and extremely scary prospect indeed.(IKB)

Related to the above thoughts and what Cumings then writes, is his description of Rumsfeld’s ‘war plan’ of early 2003 to deal with North Korea. Among other things, it involved the use of ‘low-yield’ nuclear weapons with depleted uranium-hardened casings designed to give sufficient earth-penetration. This was just before the US attack on Iraq when the justification claimed for nuclear weapons’ use on N Korea was that such weapons could destroy that country’s chemical or biological weapons installations “...without scattering deadly agents into the atmosphere”.(some hope!) Such attacks were contemplated, even in the lead up to the war on Iraq, because a successful outcome of that war on an already greatly sanctions-weakened country, was simply taken for granted. A military ‘piece of cake’, as indeed, it was - except for the aftermath, - its lack of acceptance by Iraqis in general, including the many who hated the long-known-to-be-evil Saddam! (BC2, 9)

So then the necessary pause until the defeated Iraq ‘settled down’. The other caution was to wait long enough to make sure of South Korea’s cooperation. This was because, unexpectedly, they had recently (Fall, 2002) elected a new leader, Roh Moo Hyun, a courageous lawyer who clearly stood both for greater independence and for the continuation of his predecessor Kim Dae Jung’s policy of reconciliation with the North. Indeed, following his inauguration, Roh’s advisers informed US officials that if the US attacked the North without the South’s consent, their alliance with the US would be terminated.(BC2, 10-11)

Another worrisome factor for the Bush ‘neo-cons’ was that Japan’s Prime Minister Koizumi was also aiming at reconciliation with North Korea. In mid September 2002, contrary to US wishes, he had flown to talks with Kim Jong Il aimed at (though not accomplishing) a better understanding. Yet the signs were there that almost all of North-East Asia would be thoroughly opposed to any unilateral attack on North Korea. And, fortunately, there were signs of opposition from within the US itself since although Bush and his neo-con buddies favoured ‘toppling’ Kim Jong Il’s regime, the absurdity of the case for war (based on former Defense Secretary William Perry’s claim that North Korea might soon have nuclear warheads to export to terrorists - such leading to nuclear detonations in American cities) was effectively countered by Secretary of State Powell who emphasised that it would be well understood that in retaliation the US would turn North Korea into a “*charcoal briquette*” .(BC2, 13)

Thus the needed pause on N Korea occurred, with Iraq still having to be brought under control, ‘rehabilitated’ for its vast oil resource. Yet, notwithstanding the ‘victory’ and

Iraq's oil reserves - those being second only to those of the currently wayward Saudi Arabia, - what chance was there of that? It may have *seemed*, such a 'piece of cake', the most powerful nation in the world versus one of the weakest, but was it? You see, although the war was 'won' (declared so by President George W. on May 1, 2003) and although very many Iraqis (perhaps most) may well have been glad to see the last of the monster, Saddam, it would appear that these people are extremely unhappy to have their country 'liberated' by the very country that since WWII has dominated the region's oil resources, the country that (towards this very end) *supported* Saddam in his war against Iran throughout the 1980s (AF) and then, again to the same end, turned not only on *him* but, for a full ten years, on *them* via the cruelest of anti-civilian sanctions, sanctions which caused the deaths of tens of thousands of their children.

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