

Lieutenant General (Retired) Dan “Fig” Leaf, U.S. Air Force



Dan “Fig” Leaf is the Managing Director of [Phase Minus 1, LLC](#) (PM1), a company he formed in 2017. His focus areas include peace on the Korean Peninsula, the US-Viet Nam relationship, conflict resolution, effective governance, and strategic leadership. He also provides independent consulting services on cyber security solutions, adaptive learning systems, and AI-enabled defense planning tools.

A decorated combat fighter pilot, Fig has over 3,600 flight hours, including F-15 and F-16 combat missions. His 33-year USAF career culminated in duties as the Deputy Commander of U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM) 2005-2008. Other Air Force assignments included Vice Commander of Air Force Space Command, USAF Director of Operational Capability Requirements, and command of six different organizations. His regional experience includes his time at PACOM, a tour of duty at Headquarters Pacific Air Forces, four years of duty assignments in both the Republic of Korea and Japan, and temporary military duty across the region.

Following military retirement, Fig worked in the defense industry as Vice President for Strategic Initiatives at Northrop Grumman Information Systems from 2008-2012. He returned to public service as the Director, Daniel K. Inouye Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies (DKI APCSS) in Honolulu from 2012 to 2017. He continues to serve the community in several pro bono roles, including as Viet Nam’s [Honorary Consul in Hawaii](#).

Fig has worked with leaders of every nation in the Indo-Asia Pacific region except North Korea. He delivered guest lectures at Syracuse University, King’s College London, the Vietnam Academy of Social Science, China’s PLA Political Academy in Xian, Sun Yat Sen University School of International Relations in Zuhai, China, and the Pakistan National Defense University among others.

His civilian and military decorations include the Secretary of Defense Medal for Outstanding Public Service, Defense Distinguished Service Medal, Distinguished Service Medal, Legion of Merit, Bronze Star, and the Air Medal. He graduated with honors from the Air Force Reserve Officers Training Corps, Undergraduate Pilot Training, the US Army Command and General Staff College, and the Air War College (where he earned the Secretary of the Air Force Leadership Award). In 2017, Fig earned the Oslo Forum’s first-ever “Peacewriter Prize” for his essay, *An Urgently Practical Approach to the Korean Peninsula*.

His podcasts *Figments: The Power of Imagination* and *Figments: On Reality*, are available on the [Phase Minus 1 YouTube channel](#). A prolific author, his essays (E), opinion pieces (O), and interviews (I) include:

- 2024: [Only inefficient bureaucrats should worry about Gabbard](#), (O) Washington Times
- 2024: [Advice for the incoming commander of US Forces Korea](#), (O) Responsible Statecraft
- 2024: [Dan Leaf and Christine Ahn: The next president must defuse the Korean crisis to avoid nuclear catastrophe](#), (O) Chicago Tribune.
- 2024: [Sue Mi Terry: Sometimes you get whacked by the revolving door](#), (O), Responsible Statecraft.
- 2024: [It’s Time to Resolve the Korean War](#) (E), US Institute of Peace.
- 2023: [‘One bad decision away’ from nuclear annihilation: The case for peace with North Korea](#) (I), CNN.

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- 2023: [I Know How Nuclear War Is Waged, So I’m Calling for Peace With North Korea](#) (O), New York Times.
- 2023: [North Korean missiles continue to cause tensions](#) (I), Honolulu Star-Advertiser
- 2022: [Former PACOM deputy commander questions F-15 withdrawal from Okinawa](#) (I), Stars & Stripes
- 2022: [Countering Collective Nuclear Blackmail](#) (O), with Howard Thompson, Real Clear Defense
- 2021: [Missile defense for Guam, Hawaii and beyond](#) (O), Honolulu Star-Advertiser
- 2020: [Biden must focus early on North Korea](#) (O), Honolulu Star-Advertiser
- 2018: [Japan’s risky Aegis Ashore radar choice](#) (O), The Japan Times
- 2018: [Four Steps Towards Peace in Korea](#) (O), Honolulu Star-Advertiser
- 2018: [This Former US General Says The Only Way Forward With North Korea Is To Talk About The War](#) (I), BuzzFeed News
- 2018: [The One Thing Trump Should Ask of Kim Jong Un](#) (O), Politico
- 2018: [U.S.-North Korea summit: Meeting of minds?](#) (O), Honolulu Star-Advertiser
- 2018: [Diplomacy, sanctions, missile defense: Use this triad against North Korea](#) (O), Defense News
- 2017: [Comprehensive missile defense for the homeland](#) (O), Defense News
- 2017: [Keeping it real: Credible military options for the North Korean threat](#) (O), Defense News
- 2017: [Improve Hawai’i’s Missile Defenses – Now](#) (O), Defense One
- 2017: [An Urgently Practical Approach to the Korean Peninsula](#) (E), the Oslo Forum (recipient of the Forum’s first-ever “Peacewriter Prize”)
- 2017: [The US Army Urgently Needs a Modern Air-Defense Control System](#) (O), Defense One
- 2017: [A viable military option: Countering North Korea’s weapons program](#) (O), Defense News
- 1994: *Acceptable Risk Planning Factor* (E), Air-Land-Sea Applications Agency Bulletin
- 1993: *Unity of Command and Interdiction* (E), Air University Press
- 1988: *Establishment and Evolution of Air-to-Air Weapons System Evaluation Programs* (E), Army Command and General Staff College
- 1988: *The Future of Close Air Support* (E), Military Review