



world without wars and violence

International Humanist Organisation
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Regarding the situation in the Korean Peninsula and the policy of nuclear deterrence

Members of World without Wars and Violence are extremely concerned about the escalating tension in the Korean Peninsula.

US provocation

The “state of war” declared by North Korea may be nothing more than rhetoric for domestic purposes to show how strong the young President is, as hoped for by South Korea. Or this might be the final madness of a North Korean regime which has kept its population impoverished and cut off from the outside world ever since the last shots of the Korean War were fired in 1953.

The USA and South Korea have been undertaking military exercises for years and the current round is due to last until the end of April. Recently, the USA has announced the use of stealth bombers simulating an attack which could be nuclear in nature.

In retaliation for threats from the USA and South Korea, North Korea has developed their own nuclear weapons. This has led to sanctions, increased tension and a strengthened resolve by North Korea to develop their nuclear capability even more.

Clearly **we condemn all threats of war**, especially between countries who possess nuclear weapons. The humanitarian consequences of such weapons have been shown in the recent Oslo inter-governmental conference to be devastating to humanity. Nothing can justify their possession or use.

But **mostly we condemn the provocation of the US** who has been bullying the world with nuclear weapons ever since the end of the Second World War. Their continued military presence in Japan and South Korea has contributed to rising tension in the region and left the leaders in North Korea feeling so nervous.

The USA, not content with being the only country to have used these horrifying weapons, continues to threaten their use on any country they take a dislike to.

Instead of complying with their obligations to disarm under the terms of the Non-Proliferation Treaty they spend tens of billions of US dollars on modernising their arsenals and make only modest reductions which still leaves them capable of destroying humanity several times over.

The myth of nuclear deterrence

US military strategy is based on a policy of nuclear deterrence which is a lie, built on the myth that Japan surrendered the Second World War after the bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. However, it has become clear to historians since the end of the Soviet Union, that it was the USSR declaration of war on Japan and invasion of their occupied territories in China that caused Japanese capitulation.

Nuclear weapons did not deter the USSR from stationing weapons in Cuba, they did not deter China from supporting North Korea in the Korea War, they did not deter the military dictatorship of Argentina from sending their armed forces to the Falkland Islands/Las Malvinas, and they did not deter Iraq from bombing Israel with scud missiles. How exactly does nuclear deterrence work?

Nuclear deterrence is nothing more than an excuse to maintain an economic model based on war.

It is time for the world to wake up to the fact that nuclear weapons create global insecurity instead of creating peace and absorb huge quantities of the globe's financial resources at the same time which could better be spent on developing health, education and infrastructure around the world: a much better way to ensure peace.

International Court of Justice¹ has already concluded that any use of nuclear weapons would be in contravention of international humanitarian law and we consider that any use of nuclear weapons, accidental or otherwise, would be a crime against humanity.

Conclusions

In conclusion, World without Wars calls on North Korea to exercise restraint in the face of threats from the USA and South Korea. We also call on any country with friendly relations with North Korea to use their influence to prevent any attack.

We call on the USA and South Korea to immediately stop their military exercises and we call for immediate resumption of the six-party talks to begin the creation of a nuclear weapons free zone in North East Asia.

The division for almost 60 years of a people with a history stretching back over 5000 years is absurd and the international community and civil society must do whatever it can to help mend this inhuman division of a country, a people and even families.

In this context we call for an end to finally be declared to the Korean War and for the demilitarised zone to be dismantled.

We finish this statement with words offered by members of World without Wars and Violence in a conference in South Korea on the occasion of the World March for Peace and Nonviolence on the 18th of October 2009, shortly after World March international observers became the first foreigners to visit inside the demilitarised zone:

"We urge those in power in the North and in the South to sit down to negotiate, to leave aside their personal selfish interests and let the people be the only protagonist of their care. And, we urge the Korean people to fight for their liberation through negotiation rejecting all forms of violence. Only with words can we find the way to break chains: chains that have until now prevented free circulation of the citizens of this beautiful country, sewing hatred, mistrust and discord."

¹ International Court of Justice, legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons, advisory opinion of 8 July 1996