



INTERNATIONAL PHYSICIANS FOR THE PREVENTION OF NUCLEAR WAR

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April 5, 2013

Kim Jong-un, Supreme Leader, Democratic People's Republic of Korea
Lee Myung-bak, President, Republic of Korea
Barack Obama, President, United States of America

Dear Presidents Kim, Lee, and Obama:

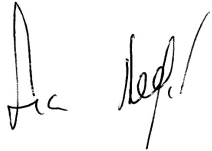
The use of nuclear weapons on the Korean peninsula must be prevented. Regardless of the reasons for the current escalation in tensions, the recent displays of nuclear force by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and by the US, on behalf of its ally the Republic of Korea, can have only one of two outcomes: either both sides will step back from the precipice or deterrence will fail and millions of people will suffer the fate of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The humanitarian consequences of the detonation of nuclear weapons, regardless of who might use them or where, were examined in depth only one month ago in Oslo, at a conference attended by 127 States. The sobering scientific and medical analysis presented in Oslo—millions dead; millions more suffering from injuries, burns, and radiation sickness without hope of medical treatment; social and economic collapse; and the potential for global climate disruption and nuclear-war-induced famine—compelled the participants to call for accelerated action to delegitimize nuclear weapons and to eliminate them from the world's arsenals. This has been IPPNW's core message since 1980. The current crisis only underscores the urgency of negotiating a comprehensive, global treaty to ban and eliminate nuclear weapons.

As long as nuclear weapons exist, adversaries who own them will be tempted to engage in nuclear threats and counter-threats calculated to make the other side back down. This is why nuclear deterrence is already a bankrupt policy. Should this be the moment when deterrence fails, as it eventually must, both North and South Korea will be devastated. Even if the use of nuclear weapons were confined to the Korean peninsula, unlikely as that would be, the repercussions for the rest of the world would be catastrophic.

Expressions of willingness—or even intent—to use nuclear weapons, either preemptively or in retaliation, provide security to no one and increase the risk of mutual self-destruction. IPPNW urges the DPRK, the ROK, and the US to refrain from further rhetorical provocations and inflammatory displays of force, and to reopen diplomatic channels where cooler heads can prevail.

Sincerely,



Ira Helfand
Co-President



Tilman Ruff
Co-President



Robert Mtonga
Co-President



Vladimir Garkavenko
Co-President

cc: President Xi Jinping, China
President Vladimir Putin, Russia
Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, Japan
Ambassador Cornel Feruta, Chair, 2013 NPT PrepCom