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War Prevention Initiative: “There is no military solution to the rising tensions on the Korean peninsula. De-escalate!”

The successful July 4, 2017 test of an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) by the North Korean regime prompted U.S. President Trump to publicly state that North Korea was “behaving in a very very dangerous manner” and that he had “some pretty severe things that we are thinking about”. The latter referred to military action against North Korea. Both sides are escalating tensions with military options taking a more central role. The War Prevention Initiative strongly argues that there is no military solution to the rising tensions on the Korean peninsula and that entertaining such options is detrimental to everyone involved and beyond.

War Prevention Initiative Executive Director Patrick Hiller stated: “Everyone should be troubled by the test of an ICBM. It is a worrisome military maneuver that can provoke military responses with disastrous consequences. That is why it is time for the public and its servants – our elected officials – to get away from the pretense that there are no alternatives to projecting and using military force, when indeed there are many constructive responses. Instead of publicly threatening and debating different war scenarios, pre-emptive strikes and other military measures - all of which might lead to a catastrophic war - we need to relentlessly discuss and implement continued nonviolent approaches to address the conflict on the Korean peninsula.” Options include, but are not limited to:

- Talk with North Korea without preconditions (see letter by top former U.S. officials at <https://s3.amazonaws.com/north-korea-open-letter/Experts-letter.pdf>).
- Engagement with the adversary through multiple levels of diplomacy.
- Move away from the tit-for-tat mentality and towards problem-solving approaches through recognition and respect, even in an adversarial relationship.
- Look back at what has worked in the Iran nuclear agreement, procured through hard diplomatic efforts.
- Engage conflict resolution experts in policy-making and the media.
- Acknowledge the fears and need for security in all parties involved.
- Initiate citizen-diplomacy efforts to humanize “the other”.

These options represent some of the initial steps toward de-escalation. They can build the basis for necessary long-term diplomatic processes. State leaders, military officials, experts, intellectuals, and many more have agreed that there is no military solution, only to abandon this thinking to make way for military options and include war as a tool to achieve peace. We need to focus on real war prevention and set out on a path that is not informed by naïve pacifism, but by rigorous analysis of nonviolent alternatives without a so-called military option as part of the picture. We urge the Trump administration to recognize that it is time to shift from military responses toward the existing, tested and proven nonviolent alternatives to prevent a nuclear war. “Most of the world has no desire to live under the threat of nuclear war,” says Patrick Hiller. “While we are working toward de-escalating the tensions between two nuclear armed nations, 122 United Nations member states adopted a legally-binding treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons. Hope and fear sometimes are very close together.”

The War Prevention Initiative informs and educates about viable alternatives to war and violence.

For further comment or questions, please contact Patrick Hiller, War Prevention Initiative’s Executive Director at patrick@jubitz.org or 503 505-5721.