



1 May 2017

Hon Julie Bishop MP
Minister for Foreign Affairs
PO Box 6022
House of Representatives
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Minister,

I write on behalf of Australian Quakers about the rising tension over North Korea's nuclear weapons program. We are deeply concerned that the Australian Government and Opposition have aligned themselves with the US Government in their public response so far. We believe our leaders should not take action or make statements that will add to the risk of escalation.

We are disturbed that military exercises continue to be held by US allies near the Korean peninsula, and that a missile shield is being deployed. These steps do not help in seeking a peaceful outcome. In addition, we are aware that South Korea is about to have a new president, and that the likely appointee has made it clear that he wants to have a significant influence on improving relations between the two Koreas.

We applaud the recent appeal by women leaders from 40 countries including North and South Korea to US President Trump urging that he negotiate a freeze of North Korea's nuclear program in exchange for a US security guarantee including suspension of US-South Korea military exercises, and that he initiate a peace process (involving a significant representation of women) with North Korea, South Korea and China to replace the 1953 Armistice Agreement with a binding peace treaty to end the Korean War.

We are reminded that the United Nations Charter contains, in Chapter 6, an Article 33(1) that emphasises:

first of all, seek a solution by negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement, resort to regional agencies or arrangements, or other peaceful means.

The Security Council has already imposed some economic and financial sanctions on North Korea, and can be the vehicle for constructive dialogue among all parties to the Korean conflict.

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Australia can use its diplomatic links with North Korea to encourage a reduction in tension and support for a negotiated settlement.

Australia can also urge the US to work through the United Nations to achieve a peaceful outcome.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J.R. Jordan".

Jo Jordan
Presiding Clerk
Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Australia

cc: Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs, Senator the Hon Penny Wong