



CANADIAN PEACE CONGRESS

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Stop The Drive to War in Korea! Peace Congress Calls for Diplomacy, Peace Negotiations

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As the political crisis in Korea deepens, the Canadian Peace Congress calls on Prime Minister Stephen Harper to immediately distance Canada from the war-mongering actions of South Korea and the United States, and to work toward a peaceful and diplomatic solution. Furthermore, the Congress reiterates its call for the Canadian government to work through the United Nations to normalize relations between the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), based on non-interference, cooperation and peace.

The history of the crisis in Korea is the history of imperialist interference and aggression, in which the United States has consistently employed a policy of military build-up, provocation and war. This policy has been implemented both directly and indirectly, through the South Korean government. In its pursuit of a protracted conflict, the United States has utilized outright provocations – such as the massive troop presence in the peninsula, and also deception – such as the Bush government's reneging on the agreement to supply the DPRK with oil to replace electricity production lost by abandonment of its nuclear energy program. The objectives of this policy are to prolong the Korean war and the attendant US military presence in the region, to prevent the re-unification of Korea, and to encircle and contain China.

Despite the well-rehearsed statements in the commercial media that ascribe full responsibility for the current flare-up to North Korea, there is much evidence suggesting that the provocation was from the South. Even the *New York Times* acknowledged in a November 24 editorial that, the DPRK's "attack on Yeonpyeong Island occurred after South Korean forces on exercises fired test shots into waters near the North Korean coast." Certainly, such a tense situation requires restraint by all parties; however, it is dangerously hypocritical for the United States or South Korea to demand restraint from the DPRK while continually subjecting it to aggressive postures and provocations.

The Canadian Peace Congress noted in a June 2009 statement regarding the crisis in Korea:

“The basic threat to peace in the Asia Pacific region is not from the DPRK, but stems from the continued provocative interference by US imperialism. The United States was the first state to develop nuclear weapons; it remains the only state to have used nuclear weapons against a population and is the only state to deploy nuclear weapons outside of its own borders. It is the United States which deploys 250,000 military personnel in the Pacific region, including nearly 30,000 who routinely practice ground invasions of the DPRK, in order to protect its economic and security interests. And, it is the United States who has refused to follow through with its commitment to dialogue with North Korea and instead raised the spectre of sanctions, regime change and now, military confrontation.”

As the danger of war continues to grow, it is fuelled by US and South Korean plans to conduct massive joint

military exercises in the Yellow Sea. These manoeuvres – which follow on the heels of NATO's Lisbon Summit – are also intended to demonstrate imperialist might to China, and are therefore doubly provocative. The United States and NATO both maintain policies of first strike with nuclear weapons, and the Korean conflict may very well be a pretext for a demonstration of this policy.

Furthermore, the United States has signalled its willingness to internationalize the conflict by noting that Canada and other countries could be drawn into a war against the DPRK, citing the absence of a permanent peace to end the ongoing United Nations military mission to Korea.

Against these aggressive and dangerous responses, the Canadian Peace Congress joins with the World Peace Council and its member organizations in condemning this US-NATO provocation. The Congress calls for:

- The cessation of military exercises and provocations, and for restraint and diplomatic talks to address the current crisis;
- The immediate withdrawal of all foreign troops and their weapons – in particular those from the United States – from the Korean peninsula, and the dismantling of all US military bases in the region;
- South Korea to demilitarize the four disputed islands;
- The United Nations to immediately engage in meaningful talks with the North and South Korean governments to establish a permanent peace – ending the armistice and formally ending the UN military mission to Korea;
- Concrete steps to bring existing nuclear arsenals – in particular that of the United States – onto the immediate agenda of the United Nations, with a commitment to dismantle those arsenals as a concrete prerequisite for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament;
- The immediate end to the sanctions against DPRK and for the provision of UN-sponsored assistance to the DPRK, in the spirit of international cooperation and respect for sovereignty and the right to self-determination.

Furthermore, the Canadian Peace Congress calls on all peace organizations and peace-minded people in Canada to demand that the Canadian government oppose the drive to war and pursue concrete, diplomatic and democratic efforts to bring peace to the Korean peninsula. The Canadian people have consistently and overwhelmingly rejected war as an option for settling international affairs, and the Canadian government must reflect this view to the United States and the international community.

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About the Canadian Peace Congress:

The Canadian Peace Congress was formed in 1949 as an organization of Canadian people that works for world peace and disarmament. We maintain that peace, not militarism and war, is the guarantor of democracy, human rights, and social and economic justice. The Congress is affiliated to the World Peace Council and is a founding member of the Canadian Peace Alliance.

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