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Statement of protest in response to North Korea's nuclear tests and missile launches

Japanese Medical and Dental Practitioners for the Improvement of Medical Care

On September 3, North Korea conducted its sixth nuclear weapons test. The Korean Central Television announced that “The test of a hydrogen bomb designed to be mounted on our intercontinental ballistic missile was a perfect success.”

North Korea's nuclear weapons test goes directly against global opinion in favor of the establishment of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons. As an organization representing doctors of medicine and dentistry in Japan, where many hibakusha are still suffering from the aftereffects of exposure to radiation from the atomic bombs, we condemn the tests in the strongest possible terms.

In addition to conducting its sixth nuclear weapons test, in July and August it also launched ICBMs and, despite warnings and criticism from the international community, it is strengthening its nuclear missile capabilities. This behavior is a clear violation of United Nations resolutions, the Japan–North Korea Pyongyang Declaration and joint statements from the six-party talks, and represents a serious challenge to the international community. No matter what reasons may be given, we cannot condone these actions by North Korea.

The Presidents of the United States of America and North Korea have traded threats and provocations, and fear of military conflict has escalated rapidly due to policies, including military exercises by Japan, the US and South Korea, that increase military tension.

If military conflict arises due to a first strike, it is envisaged that this would escalate to general war on the Korean Peninsula. Not just the northern and southern parts of the Korean Peninsula, but Japanese and US bases and nuclear power plants in Japan could become targets for attack leading to immense human suffering. Furthermore, both leaders are escalating the crisis by mentioning the use of nuclear weapons, calling to mind the potential for nuclear war and creating an extremely dangerous situation.

Thus, the 'peace' based on nuclear deterrence hitherto promoted by nuclear weapons states and their allies can be seen for the illusion it is, while the danger of accidental use of nuclear weapons is increasing.

In order to find a solution to the situation, instead of relying on force, it is essential to employ diplomatic means and for the parties involved to engage in direct dialogue. Without this it will be impossible to achieve a breakthrough.

In the 'Desire for Peace' section of our Declaration of Private Medical and Dental Practitioners, based on the stance that 'doctors, whose task is to defend human life, reject wars of any kind', we stated, 'Learning from history and acting on the principles of the Constitution of Japan, we shall oppose all moves to threaten peace and confirm that it is the social responsibility of all doctors today to work for the prevention of nuclear war and the elimination of nuclear weapons.'

To North Korea we strongly demand that it strictly adhere to rules of the international community aimed at ensuring the right of people to live in peace. To the leaders of the United States and North Korea, we demand that through direct dialogue they resolve the problem of North Korea's nuclear and missile development. To the Japanese government, we demand that it avoid military responses and instead make the utmost effort through diplomacy to promote direct dialogue between North Korea and the United States. We also demand that it contribute to the denuclearization of north east Asia by ratifying the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons.