

Women Peace Activists Peace Treaty Initiative To End Korean War

Request to UN Secretary General Ban ki-Moon

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Global Research, October 21, 2016

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On Tuesday, September 27, women peace activists held a press conference at the Interchurch Center across from the United Nations Headquarters building in NYC. They announced that they had delivered a [letter](#) signed by more than 100 women asking UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon to initiate a peace process which will lead to a peace treaty between the US and the DPRK by 2020.

They explained that with 100 days left before the UN Secretary General completes his second five year term at the head of the UN Secretariat, he has an obligation to fulfill on a promise he made in a speech in 2007 where he stated: “Beyond a peaceful resolution of the nuclear issue with North Korea, we should aim to establish a peace mechanism, through transition from armistice to a permanent peace regimen.”

In their letter the peace activists reminded the UN Secretary General, “We look to you to leave behind a legacy of diplomacy for peace in Korea, Northeast Asia and the World.”

In the past few weeks, journalists who are part of the UN press corps have asked the Secretary General if he has any intention of using his little time left as Secretary General to do something to work toward a peaceful resolution of the tension on the Korean Peninsula. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon’s term in office will expire on December 31, 2016.

In response to the questions posed by these reporters, the Secretary General replied that he has no special plans.

It is to the credit of these women peace activists that they continue to call on the Secretary General to fulfill on the obligation of his office to work to lessen the tension on the Korean Peninsula. But whether their efforts will lead to any action on the part of the Secretary General or not does not detract from the importance of such efforts on the part of journalists and peace activists.

The peace activists holding the press conference pointed out that currently tensions are especially high on the Korean Peninsula. The combination of military exercises by US and South Korea, the US bringing B1 bombers to South Korea, and the North Korean nuclear tests leave the situation on the Korean Peninsula as one with no obvious means of lessening the tension.

During the press conference, one of the speakers, Suzy Kim, described a meeting held by the peace activists in February 2016 in Bali, Indonesia.

The International peace activists group Women Cross the DMZ (WCDMZ) had invited a South Korean women peace delegation and a North Korean women peace delegation to meet with them to discuss how to work toward the signing of a peace treaty between the US government and the North Korean government that would end the Korean War. In order to make the arrangements for their meeting, there was a need to get permissions from the South Korean government and the North Korean government for the women from their respective countries to meet with each other. While the delegation of WCDMZ peace activists got the needed permission from the North Korean government for the proposed meeting, the South Korean government would not approve such a meeting. Therefore, the international peace activists decided to hold separate meetings with the North Korean women and the South Korean women.

The WOMENCROSSDMZ.org web site includes a [summary](#) which describes the Bali meetings and includes a statement of principles created by the North Korean women and the international peace activists. Following is the statement:

MEETING AGREEMENT,
Bali Indonesia February 10, 2016
(Between WCDMZ International Delegation and DPRK Delegation)

“1. We will make active efforts for public education and awareness raising regarding the situation on the Korean Peninsula, and the need for an end to military action that further aggravates the situation.

2. We will work together as Korean and international women, in efforts to improve inter-Korean relations and achieve peaceful reunification of Korea, in the spirit of prior inter - Korean agreements such as the June 15 North and South Joint Declaration, 2000.

3. We will carry out work toward the achievement of lasting peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula. This includes the removal of various political and physical hindrances to peace and reunification, replacement of the Armistice Agreement with a peace treaty, and the eventual denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and the entire world.

4. We will promote women’s leadership at all levels of peacebuilding, including preventing armed conflict and participating in peace negotiations. International women will actively work to urge each government to support women’s involvement in the Korean peace process, as provided for in UN Security Council Resolution 1325.”

Such a statement provides a guide for a transnational peace building campaign. The statement is an expression of the need for peace negotiations toward replacing the Korean War Armistice Agreement with a peace treaty and the eventual denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula and the rest of the world.

The summary of the February Bali meeting offers a demonstration of the value of including women in line with UN Security Council Resolution 1325 in peace negotiations for the Korean Peninsula.

The importance of implementing UN Resolution 1325 in the conflict on the Korean Peninsula was also raised at an October 3, 2016 press conference at the UN marking the Russian Federation assuming the October 2016 rotating presidency of the UN Security Council. On the agenda for the October 2016 schedule is a UN Security Council meeting on October

25 which will be an open debate on UNSC Resolution 1325.

A question raised by a journalist and the response from Ambassador Vitaly Churkin at the October 3 press conference helps to support the need for women peace activists to be part of the peace process in difficult conflict situations like the Korean conflict:

Following is the slightly edited transcript of this question and Ambassador Churkin's response:

(Journalist): "Yes, I have a question about (Security Council Resolution-ed) 1325. There are women, international women peace activists who went from North Korea and South Korea, and met with women in both countries. And now they sent a letter to Ban Ki-moon asking him for a process towards a peace treaty (between the US and North Korea-ed) and also to involve women in the process. And here we have the situation with North Korea where the Security Council has not made any progress. And they (the international peace activists-ed) are saying we need women involved in doing this, women working for peace.

Is there any way you see of doing this, any way you see to have 1325 actually implemented so you get some help toward having a peace development?"

Response from Ambassador Churkin:

"Well, You know what we believe is that, this is an extremely difficult situation. And the cycle of action and counter action which we have seen in the past few years, actually since 2005 when this deal of September 19 fell through, it is not working.

So we do believe we need to try some creative thinking. We don't have some specific immediate proposals, but certainly, DPRK testing and then US and others conducting some higher level military maneuvers there, you know, beefing up their military presence, that does not help at all.

In that creative thinking, it may well be the greater involvement of women could be one of the elements that might move the situation forward." (1)

By recognizing the need for and importance of contributions for the peace process mandated by UNSC Resolution 1325, Secretary General Ban Ki-moon would do well to favorably respond to the letter from the international women peace activists.

Notes

1) See webcast for Oct 3, 2016 press conference with Ambassador Churkin:

http://webtv.un.org/media/watc_h/ambassador-vitaly-churkin-of-the-russian-federation-president-of-the-security-council-of-october-2016-press-conference/5153898747001

(at 33:08-33:58, and 33:59-34:42)

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