



world without wars and violence

International Humanist Organisation
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Position regarding the rising tensions caused by the Iranian nuclear programme

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Since the International Atomic Energy Agency report into the current status of the Iranian nuclear programme¹ was issued in November 2011, Israel, the USA and her allies have been quick to step up their criticism of the Iranian government and their real intentions in the face of Tehran's repeated denial of any attempt to develop nuclear weapons. According to the IAEA report Iran's nuclear programme could have a military purpose.

The discourse around the world is being heated up to the point where an attack on Iran is a distinct possibility. Similarities with the build-up to the war against Iraq in 2003 can be seen. In the latter case the USA and her allies went to war on the basis of a UK government report that was roundly condemned when the invasion failed to find any evidence of a nuclear or any other weapon of mass destruction programme even though the report claimed that such weapons could be launched within 15 minutes of the signal being given by Saddam Hussein. Given the cynical manipulation of western populations by the governments of the UK and the USA in the lead up to the Iraq War, any evidence used to justify a military intervention against Iran should be made available for independent verification. Without this there is no guarantee that what we are being told is not a pack of lies designed to lead an unwilling population into another war that we can ill afford, either in terms of the economic costs or in terms of the human costs.

Now more than ever before, the Middle East is a very unstable region and many analysts warn that an attack on Iran could grow into a serious conflict involving other countries that have nuclear weapons. The consequences of such a conflict are unthinkable.

Therefore **World without Wars and Violence calls on all countries in the world:**

1. **to not support a military strike against Iran by any means**, and to officially denounce any such attack on all possible levels, in the UN and in military alliances, and not to initiate an attack and to not join an attack if started by another country or coalition;
2. **to support the establishment of a Middle East Weapons of Mass Destruction Free Zone²**, to help set up a conference on this topic which was agreed at the 2010 NTP Review Conference, to hold it as soon as possible, and to make all diplomatic effort at the conference to bring it to a successful conclusion;

In the Non-Proliferation Treaty from 1970, non-nuclear states agreed not to pursue nuclear weapons in exchange for a promise of nuclear states to rid themselves of their nuclear arsenals. Now, more than 40 years later, the five nuclear states within the NPT still enjoy their privileged status and plan to invest hundreds of billions of dollars in modernisation of their nuclear arsenals in the near future³. For every

¹ <http://s3.documentcloud.org/documents/265501/iaea-iran-report-nov-2011.pdf>

² Including but not restricted to nuclear, biological and chemical weapons

³ http://www.defencemanagement.com/news_story.asp?id=17882

report that the IAEA could write regarding the non-compliance of Iran, there could be five more about the cynical non-compliance of the USA, Russia, the UK, France and China and their commitment to nuclear disarmament. Given this situation there is no wonder that India, Pakistan, Israel and North Korea decided to stay out of the NPT and develop their nuclear arsenals.

Until serious talks on nuclear abolition begin, it is likely that international tensions will keep rising hand in hand with nuclear proliferation to other countries, especially those that believe that their best insurance policy for their survival lies in the possession of nuclear weapons.

With an aspiration to avoid similar crises arising in various regions of the world and to prevent nuclear proliferation World without Wars and Violence calls on:

1. **all nuclear weapons countries to show good faith in their pursuit of nuclear abolition** by giving up first-use policies, by decreasing the significance of nuclear weapons in their military doctrines, by de-alerting their nuclear weapons and by cancelling their plans to invest in modernisation of their nuclear arsenals;
2. **all countries of the world to support a ban on nuclear weapons**, to make diplomatic efforts to commence negotiations of a Nuclear Weapons Convention or a similar treaty or set of treaties that would prohibit the production and use of nuclear weapons and provide mechanisms to abolish existing nuclear arsenals;
3. **all countries that produce nuclear energy to review their energy policies** and explore possibilities of clean and sustainable energy sources that will gradually replace their dependence on nuclear programmes that go hand in hand with nuclear proliferation.

Nuclear weapons and a potential nuclear conflict are undoubtedly among the biggest threats to today's world. An Iran with nuclear weapons would increase this risk even further. World without Wars and Violence struggles against proliferation of nuclear weapons and strives for progressive nuclear abolition. History has shown us that the best way to disarmament comes through diplomacy rather than military intervention.