

Dear Senator Donnelly / Senator Young:

As religious leaders we write to let you know of our grave concern about the risk of war with North Korea. We ask you to fulfill your Constitutional responsibility to prevent this catastrophe.

Our congregations are by no means all pacifist, but we are united by our horror at the human and moral, as well as economic, costs of war and our steadfast opposition to unnecessary and ill advised war.

If Senator Lindsey Graham says that it is time to pull American families out of South Korea, then surely it is time for Congress to debate whether it wishes to authorize or forbid President Trump to launch a war of choice. Such a war would cost hundreds of thousands if not millions of lives. North Korea would be sure to use its nuclear and chemical weapons in what the regime saw as a final battle for survival. It is unlikely the U.S.. could preempt all of these in a first strike and unlikely it could finally disarm North Korea short of invasion and occupation.

No one has shown that war is indeed necessary or that deterrence and containment cannot work for North Korea, as they did for the Soviet Union and China. Then, as now, some called for nuclear wars of "prevention," only to be overruled by sane Presidents. It is not clear that President Trump has President Truman's wisdom (when he fired Navy Secretary Francis Matthews in 1950 for calling for a strike on the U.S.S.R.).

Unless Congress acts, President Trump may take silence for assent. Having named North Korea a state sponsor of terrorism, he may claim the 2001 authorization to fight al Qaeda as authority enough, or he may even go back to the Korean War itself, which has never finally been settled. But surely even a legislator who favored war would think it her or his responsibility to debate and vote on a decision that the Constitution vests in Congress, especially when there is a high risk of nuclear war and the deaths of millions.

We ask you to cosponsor Senator Chris Murphy's "Preventing Preemptive War in North Korea Act," S.2047. Please, at your earliest convenience, let us know your response.

Very respectfully yours,