

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Positive diplomatic overture between North, South Korea

To the editor:

As result of an Olympic diplomatic surge by South Korea, a remarkably positive diplomatic overture was reliably reported recently. North Korea offered to freeze its nuclear and missile testing, in conjunction with starting talks with the U.S. that include a goal of denuclearization.

Even more amazing, North Korea offered to begin negotiations with the U.S. without insisting that joint military exercises between South Korea and the U.S. be suspended; is scheduling a sum-

mit with South Korea's leader; and is opening a hotline between the two leaders.

This unexpected diplomatic initiative is a golden opportunity that could provide a peaceful way to resolve the Korean crisis.

However, the U.S. State Department has suffered major budget cuts, lost its most senior diplomats experienced in negotiation with North Korea, and has failed to present nominees for key positions, including U.S. Ambassador to South Korea. The U.S. Congress must demand that these deficiencies be urgently remedied so the U.S. can engage in robust,

sustained and effective diplomacy to make the most of this unexpected opening.

I urge readers to call their senators and U.S. representative at (202) 224-3121 to urge rapidly strengthening U.S. diplomatic capacity. Visit peacecoalition.org to learn more and/or get involved.

The Rev. Robert Moore
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The Rev. Robert Moore is Executive Director of the Princeton-based Coalition for Peace Action, the largest peace group in the region.

GUEST OPINION

NIKI VANALLER

Menendez must act to end unauthorized war in Yemen

In 1973, the U.S. Congress enacted the War Powers Resolution to ensure that the president could not order military action without approval from the legislative branch. Back then, Congress was admirably responding to President Richard Nixon's unauthorized bombing of Cambodia in the Vietnam War.

Today, they must respond again to firmly oppose the ongoing U.S. role in Yemen's civil war, where millions of civilian victims are fighting for their lives against indiscriminate bombing, disease, and hunger.

On Feb. 28, Senators Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.), Mike Lee (R-Utah), and Chris Murphy (D-Conn.) introduced a bill to invoke the War Powers Resolution and put an end to the devastation in Yemen. The bipartisan bill, S.J.Res.54, has gained six co-sponsors, including New Jersey Sen. Cory Booker. Booker is to be congratulated for his stance against this unconstitutional and inhumane war that continues without having ever been debated or voted on by Congress.

Notably missing, though, is the ranking member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee - New Jersey's Sen. Bob Menendez. Sen. Menendez needs to join his colleague and support S.J.Res.54. The resolution could be voted on as soon as early the week of March 12.

Many Americans are not aware of the plight of the Yemeni people, or the level

of U.S. culpability for their dire situation. The conflict began in 2015, when Yemen's Houthi rebels ousted the country's leader, and a Saudi-led coalition of Gulf nations intervened to fight the rebels and re-instate the government.

The coalition has carried out airstrikes on civilian homes, hospitals, water infrastructure, and farms - attacks that receive essential support from American planes conducting mid-air refueling for the coalition jets. The coalition has instituted a blockade of food and even medical supplies - a blockade enforced by American ships. The coalition has purchased tens of billions of bombs and other arms - from America.

More than 8 million people in Yemen are on the verge of starvation, 22 million people there need humanitarian aid, and more than 1 million people have contracted cholera, all resulting from American intervention, and all of this without ever being voted on in Congress.

As if that weren't enough, the war is contributing to the development of terrorist groups in Yemen, who can recruit new members simply by pointing out the shards of U.S.-made bombs lying in the ruins of a hospital or school.

In November 2017, the U.S. House voted 366-30 to declare that it never authorized military support of the Saudi-led war in Yemen. Surely, our senators cannot

ignore that declaration, or turn a blind eye to the plain truth of the matter: the U.S. has no business aiding the Saudi coalition in its ravaging of the Yemen people.

And the American people agree with the House: a reputable poll found that nearly 64 percent do not approve of the U.S. providing military aid to countries such as Saudi Arabia; and nearly 71 percent want Congress to pass legislation to cut back military action overseas.

It's up to our senators to mandate that the War Powers Resolution be adhered to. This resolution is urgently needed to protect the innocent people of Yemen, and to take back congressional authority over when and where the U.S. participates in military action, the Senate needs to vote in favor of S.J.Res.54.

I urge voters to call Sen. Menendez immediately at (202) 224-4744 and tell him to stand with Sen. Booker, and vote against unauthorized continuation of the American role in exacerbating the worst humanitarian crisis in the world. He should fulfill his Constitutional obligation by supporting S.J.Res.54.

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