

August 10, 2017

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We are a group of Korean American elected officials who serve at the state and local levels of governments throughout the United States. Like all Americans, we are unnerved by North Korea's continuing display of military actions and saber rattling rhetoric, and we fully recognize the threat that this regime presents to its own citizens and to the entire world.

There are more than 1.8 million Americans of Korean ancestry living in the United States today, many of whom we represent as constituents. While we agree that measures must be taken to reduce or end the tensions on the Korean peninsula, we respectfully urge you to reconsider the way you and your Administration are reacting to this situation by avoiding dangerous language that could end up unnecessarily escalating the conflicts even more.

The Republic of Korea is one of the world's great democracies and a strong economic and military partner for the United States. It is also one of the most populated regions of the world, with 51 million people living in South Korea and 25 million people living – mostly unwillingly – under authoritarian rule in North Korea.

South Korea's capital city, Seoul, has a population of 10 million living just 35 miles from the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). Among them are nearly 30,000 American military service members and civilians who work closely with the Republic of Korea's government to protect our mutual interests. There are also over 130,000 American citizens who live, work or study in Korea today.

On a peninsula this small in geography, it is clear that no military action involving "fire and fury like the world has never seen" can be targeted solely at the North Korean regime. Any such attack will be absolutely devastating to the entire peninsula and surrounding regions, not to mention the longterm effects of destabilized international relations, destroyed communities, and depressed economies.

Mr. President, this is not a time for any side to escalate the language of warfare and to introduce the threat of nuclear weapons.

As Korean Americans, we have clear and deep memories of the last time military conflict arose on the Korean peninsula. Over 36,000 Americans gave their lives to fight against communism. Millions of Korean families live with collective memories of both the American and Korean bloodshed and the unending yearning for those loved ones who were lost or separated during the three year war.

As Asian Americans, we are also painfully aware of the unspeakable tragedy and destruction from weapons of mass destruction deployed in a small region, as we reflect upon the 72nd anniversary of Hiroshima and Nagasaki this week.

If we have learned any lessons from WWII, it is that the cost of maintaining peace may be difficult, but it is always a better deal than paying the ultimate price of war. And when it comes to atomic or nuclear weapons, we must collectively say, “Never Again.”

That is why we ask you to pursue all diplomatic options and strategies and to fully staff your State Department with policy experts who understand the Korean peninsula, so that, working with all stakeholders, we can find a workable and permanent peaceful resolution.

Sincerely,

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Philadelphia, PA

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