

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 18, 2018

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

Dear President Trump:

We write to request the reestablishment of military-to-military communication between the United States (U.S.) and North Korea. The U.S. should do all in its power to avoid misunderstandings that could escalate to a greater conflict, including nuclear war. Given your recent comments that are supportive of dialogue with North Korea, and the potential that you have established a relationship with the North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, we strongly urge you to prioritize this form of communication as the first step that our two governments could take towards averting conflict.

North Korea is the only nuclear-armed country in the world with which we do not have a military-to-military exchange of information, which we also maintained with the Soviet Union for decades up until its collapse. One potential approach is to prioritize meetings of the Military Armistice Commission, which was created when the Korean War Armistice was signed. Historically, this mechanism allowed military-to-military exchange of information and reduced the possibility of miscalculations. If North Korea refuses to take part, we would urge pursuit of a military-to-military exchange of information moderated by a third-party country.

We also write to express our strong support for recent developments that provide hope for a peaceful resolution to the escalation in tensions between the U.S. and North Korea. We are encouraged by recent talks between North and South Korea at the border truce village of Panmunjom, their first talks in over two years. While these are tenuous and evolving developments, the progress made thus far is encouraging. Among the very first points of agreement in the talks were for both sides to immediately reestablish a military-to-military communication hotline to reduce the potential for accidental military escalation.

Going forward, the U.S. should make every effort to avoid actions that could contribute to a breakdown in talks, and continue to search for confidence-building measures that are conducive to dialogue. We are encouraged that you have honored the request made by South Korean President Moon to reschedule routine, non-pressing U.S.-ROK military exercises until after the 2018 Olympics and Paralympics (Feb. 9 to Mar. 19). This gesture, which will pose no harm to our national security, provided momentum for the ongoing diplomatic discussions between North and South Korea that can hopefully progress towards the critical discussion of a freeze in the North Korean missile and nuclear testing programs. While denuclearization of the Korean peninsula remains an important goal, it can only be achieved through an ongoing, longstanding process that involves making incremental progress while building trust.

In the late 1990s, former Defense Secretary William Perry led such a diplomatic effort that sought a long-term resolution to the conflict. An agreement was crafted together with regional allies that included normalization of relations with North Korea in exchange for abandoning its pursuit of nuclear weapons and plutonium production. We urge you to study the example set by former Defense Secretary Perry and pursue the diplomatic path that has shown promise in recent decades.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

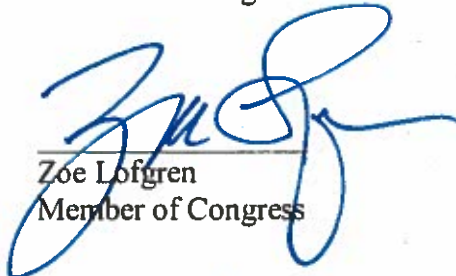
Sincerely,

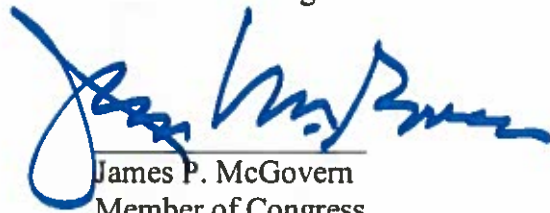

Ro Khanna
Member of Congress


Barbara Lee
Member of Congress


Mark Pocan
Member of Congress


Raúl Grijalva
Member of Congress


Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress

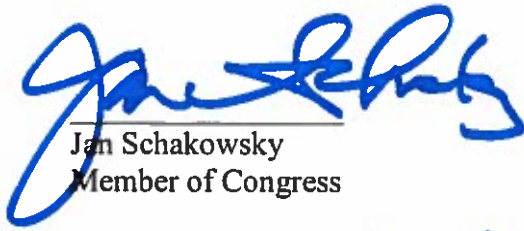

James P. McGovern
Member of Congress


Lloyd Doggett
Member of Congress

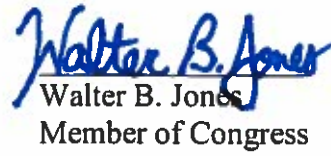

Richard M. Nolan
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Earl Blumenauer
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Keith Ellison
Member of Congress



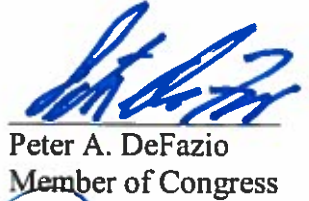
Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress




Walter B. Jones
Member of Congress



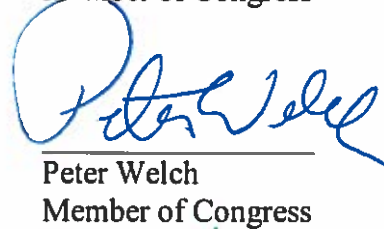
Sheila Jackson Lee
Member of Congress



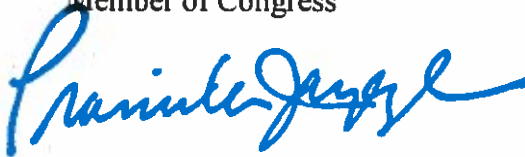
Peter A. DeFazio
Member of Congress



Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



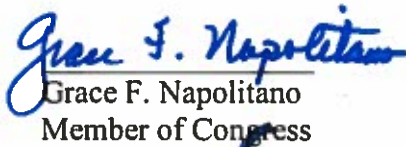
Peter Welch
Member of Congress



Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress



Gene Green
Member of Congress



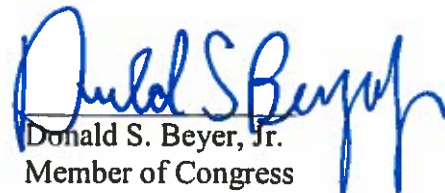
Grace F. Napolitano
Member of Congress



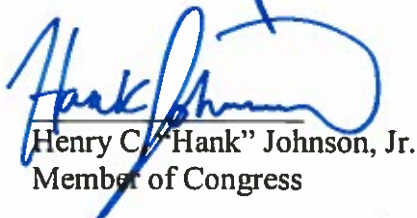
Jamie Raskin
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Colleen Hanabusa
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Donald S. Beyer, Jr.
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Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
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David E. Price
Member of Congress


David Scott
Member of Congress


Bobby Rush
Member of Congress


Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress


Jerry McNerney
Member of Congress

**cc: The Honorable Rex Tillerson, Secretary of State of the United States
The Honorable James Mattis, Secretary of Defense of the United States
The Honorable Nikki Haley, United States Ambassador to the United Nations
Lieutenant General H.R. McMaster, Assistant to the President for National
Security Affairs**
