

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 18, 2019

President Donald Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As we approach the end of the year and the “deadline” set by Kim Jong Un to break the deadlock in the stalled denuclearization talks, we write to express our grave and growing concern that your efforts to advance the goals outlined at the Singapore summit of a “lasting and stable peace regime on the Korean peninsula” and the “complete denuclearization of the peninsula” appear to be stalled and on the brink of failure.

While we understand that significant gaps remain between the two sides – and that North Korea has yet to take sufficient steps to meet its stated commitment to diplomacy and denuclearization – we are disturbed that almost two years after the Singapore Summit your administration has yet to develop a workable diplomatic process to structure real, serious and sustainable negotiations with North Korea.

We appreciate that American negotiators cannot and should not rush into an agreement with an adversary simply for the sake of an agreement. In 2018, North Korea declared a moratorium on nuclear and long-range ballistic missile testing and agreed to a useful confidence-building arrangement along the DMZ. But you and your diplomatic team have failed to reach an agreement that secures a permanent ban on such testing, and over the past six months North Korea has conducted at least 15 ballistic missile tests, including what open source imagery suggests was an ICBM static engine test at its Sohae facility on December 7, and another similar test on December 14.

In reality, over the past three years North Korea’s nuclear weapons and ballistic missile capabilities have advanced and continue to pose a threat to the United States and to our allies. Meanwhile, the United States has altered critical alliance military exercises with the Republic of Korea, accepted continued North Korean short and medium-range ballistic missile tests without consequence, struggled to effectively enforce sanctions against Pyongyang, and, just this past week, apparently abandoned efforts at the UN to hold North Korea accountable for its human rights abuses.

While time is short, and Special Representative Stephen Biegun is in the region this week, we reiterate our hope that you will execute a serious diplomatic plan before it is too late, which includes a sequenced process to verifiably freeze and roll back North Korea’s nuclear weapons and missile programs in conjunction with continued appropriate sanctions and other pressure; a robust deterrence posture; strengthened alliances; intensified diplomatic engagement; and a deepening of the North-South dialogue that can provide a pathway to full denuclearization and a

durable peace agreement. In our view, this should include a phased process to verifiably dismantle the Yongbyon nuclear complex and other nuclear facilities.

While such an interim agreement would of course only be a first step in a longer process, it would nonetheless be an important effort to create the sort of real and durable diplomatic process that is necessary to achieve the complete denuclearization of North Korea. Key bank and trade sanctions included in the FY20 Defense Authorization bill are designed to help maintain economic pressure on Pyongyang toward these broader ends.

We continue to support the pursuit of a serious diplomatic plan, based on the simultaneous and in parallel implementation of steps toward the commitments that you and Kim Jong Un made in the joint statement at Singapore last year. We also believe that US-led efforts to move denuclearization forward, and ROK-led efforts to deepen the inter-Korean dialogue, can and should move forward in a coordinated way that provides reinforcing leverage to influence North Korea's calculus. We also urge you to take every necessary measure to deepen and strengthen our alliances with the Republic of Korea and Japan, as well as our other regional partners. At the end of the day, our strategy in the region does not rise and fall on North Korea alone, but on our relationships with our allies and partners, and the Indo-Pacific community that we are seeking, together, to build, support and sustain.

It would be a severe miscalculation to believe that a resumption of "fire and fury" threats and other attempts at nuclear coercion against North Korea, which can increase the risk of a catastrophic war, can lead to better results than the negotiating table.

We would appreciate an update on any engagements with North Korea officials and a fuller picture of your diplomatic strategy going forward.

Sincerely,



Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator



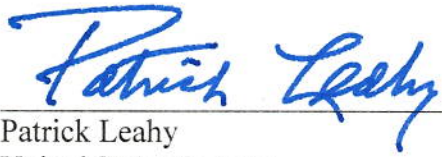
Robert Menendez
United States Senator



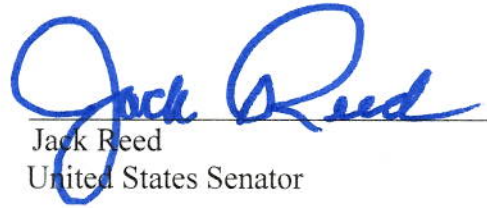
Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



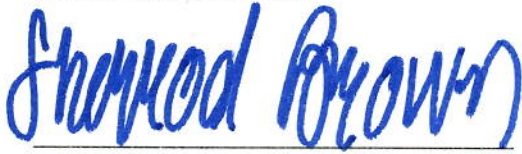
Mark R. Warner
United States Senator



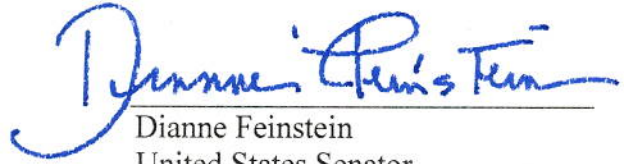
Patrick Leahy
United States Senator



Jack Reed
United States Senator



Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator