

**REMARKS BY U.S. CONGRESSMAN MIKE KELLY (R-PA)**

**“THE U.S.-KOREA ALLIANCE AND THE THREE PILLARS OF  
COMMITMENT”**

**THE ASAN INSTITUTE**

**SEOUL, KOREA**

**Tuesday, November 24, 2015**

**Final Version — For Delivery**

Thank you for the kind introduction. I am deeply honored to be here with you today at the Asan Institute.

Let me begin by saying that I am first – and foremost – a Hyundai/Kia man. And on that note, it is my understanding that tomorrow will mark the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday of the founder of Hyundai, Chairman Ju-Yung Chung. This is an incredible milestone in the lasting legacy of a true global visionary. I wish to extend my sincere and heartfelt regards to all in the Hyundai family, all around the world.

I want to also take a brief moment to thank the Korean Government and Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the generous invitation to visit Korea through the Congressional Member Exchange Program. It has been a robust, meaningful and edifying past three days here and I’ve thoroughly enjoyed the policy discussions in addition to deepening old friendships while forging new ones. It is evident to me that the U.S.-Korea alliance has never been stronger.

Chairman M.J. Chung, Dr. Chaibong Hahm, Fellows and Staff of the Asan Institute, Distinguished Guests and Ladies and Gentlemen:

I wish to speak to you today on the topic of “The U.S.-Korea Alliance and the Three Pillars of Commitment.” I identify these three pillars to be: Excellence, Confidence, and Care. To give you some background on what I mean, these guiding principles were born from my family’s car dealership business that started in Verona, Pennsylvania, in 1953. My father instilled these commitments into every transaction with every customer. It was our family’s pledge, and our loyal customers trusted us because we lived by our word.

By extension, and now as a Member of the United States Congress, I have carried these values with me into public life. This also includes a clear application in foreign policy where I hope to elaborate on how our family's core values transcend borders and strengthen our friendship. And a commitment to the principles of excellence, confidence, and care are nowhere more emblematic than in the Republic of Korea.

To start, I define a Commitment to Excellence as “enjoying the challenge of meeting and exceeding the standards of high expectations each and every time.” With respect to the U.S.-Korea alliance, we have continually exceeded expectations and have grown and consolidated our relationship into a comprehensive and dynamic partnership. At every turn, no matter the challenge, we forged ahead – together – and have contributed hand-in-hand to peace and stability around the world.

I am an ardent defender of our alliance and I am proud and honored to serve as a Co-Chairman of the Congressional Caucus on Korea. It's not only because I love to sell Korean cars, but rather it's also because of what the alliance means to the United States Congress and America as a whole. Without question, Korea is one of our greatest foreign policy success stories in the post-World War II era and the level of excellence among the Korean people continues to exceed everyone's expectations.

Out of the ashes of war when the armistice was signed on July 27, 1953 – the same year my father opened his dealership – Korea has emerged into a global powerhouse and a leader. For 60 years, the United States and Korea have stood shoulder to shoulder in defense of peace and freedom in the Korean Peninsula, and for 60 years, the Republic of Korea has survived and flourished.

Simply put, our alliance keeps ablaze the flame of liberty in the shadow of tyranny. The strength of our bond is rooted in our shared devotion to the democratic principles which define us as a nation and has benefited the security and prosperity of both of our nations tremendously. More than a partner, Korea is our friend, and more than ever our friendship must be upheld, enriched, and celebrated. No matter how much time passes or what challenges arise, the United States will always meet its moral duty to support the Republic of Korea. Our alliance is truly a “Blood Alliance.”

Our commitment to excellence is reflected in the facts. The U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement (KORUS) has brought economic growth and productivity to both our countries. Our bilateral trade volume reached \$116 billion in 2014 and Korea now ranks as America's sixth largest trading partner. American exports to Korea reached a record level of \$44.5 billion last year.

When we stand up for free trade, we stand for the fundamental American principle of economic liberty — the most powerful producer of jobs and prosperity history has ever known. With our monumental FTA in place, the results have been more capital for our job creators and more jobs for our citizens. As a Member of the House Ways and Means Committee and the Trade Subcommittee, I will do all I can do to champion the benefits of the KORUS FTA and to work to resolve issues in the course of the implementation of KORUS in a constructive manner. Further, as we look to the future of trade in Asia-Pacific, I will continue to engage in a thorough review of the recently completed text of the Transpacific Partnership (TPP) and to engage in an equally thorough dialogue with my constituents regarding the TPP. Should the TPP be approved by the Congress and enter into force, I would look at potential participation on the part of Korea with great interest.

Additionally, I look forward to the entry into force of the U.S.-Korea Civil Nuclear Energy Agreement. I have been an ardent proponent of the renewal of the 123 Agreement because it will create good jobs for Americans in a key industry. I'm talking about red, white, and blue jobs and leveling the playing field for American energy companies to maintain our global leadership in nuclear energy production, export, research, safety, and nonproliferation.

The 123 Agreement will uphold the reputation of the U.S. as a stable and reliable trading partner, in light of the energy industry's long-lead items and use of long-term contracts for nuclear components, fuel and services. This is also about jobs for U.S. companies such as Westinghouse, which is headquartered in Cranberry, Pennsylvania, with a footprint of just over 100 acres in the heart of my district. Westinghouse, which employs about 9,000 employees in the U.S., has been a leader in energy cooperation with Korea for nearly four decades. We want that synergy to continue well into the future.

In turning now to our alliance and a Commitment to Confidence, I define this principle as "standing strong, resolute and reliable in the face of adversity or any challenge." Taken as a whole, I firmly believe that Korea is the linchpin of America's foreign policy in Northeast Asia. Our alliance through the Mutual

Defense Treaty of 1953 anchors peace, stability, and prosperity in the region. We accomplish this through strength and vigilance as well as the 28,500 American soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines that serve to defend the Republic of Korea.

This center of gravity continues to be tested by the menacing dictatorship in North Korea. They have a brutal and inhumane world view and so we must always be ready to counter any and all provocations and acts of aggression. To this point, let me be clear. The United States stands firmly and confidently with the Republic of Korea. Any attempt by North Korea to create instability – whether through a missile or nuclear test or even a cyberwarfare attack – on the Peninsula or in the region will be met with an equally rapid and firm response. The U.S. and the Republic of Korea stand together, stand united, and stand strong.

I have also been following with great interest, the events unfolding in the South China Sea. The massive land reclamation, construction, and militarization by China of disputed islands in the Spratly Islands are destabilizing and of grave concern. Freedom of navigation and of flight in and over those waters must be fundamentally respected, in accordance with international law. The South China Sea contains major trade routes and critical sea lines of communication for a host of nations, including the United States and the Republic of Korea. We must all work cohesively and diplomatically to resolve these complex disputes peacefully without provocations, threats or the use of force.

Let me finally turn to the third and final pillar in our alliance that is embodied by a Commitment to Care. In this, we must be guided by our core values to foster trust and mutual cooperation. It is why I support President Park's Dresden initiatives that she boldly outlined early last year. Her efforts aimed at "Trustpolitik" are to be commended. A concrete and measurable trust-building process has the potential to yield important results aimed at reducing tensions on the Korean Peninsula.

These efforts will not be realized overnight and cannot come at the expense of our vigilance with respect to the overall security situation on the Peninsula. However, where we can make inroads to convey our values to the North Korean people, we ought to do so with patience and intentionality.

I applaud President Park Geun-Hye for her vision in seeking new initiatives to apply our shared values throughout Northeast Asia. And as we continue to work on building that mutual trust, it is also important that we not forget the pains of history. Specifically, it's my hope that we will soon realize closer and deeper ties between Korea and Japan which is critical to America's national security interest.

Let me close my remarks by reiterating that as a Co-Chairman of the Korea Caucus in the Congress, I share a deep and abiding commitment to excellence, confidence, and care when it comes to the stewardship of the U.S.-Korea alliance. We owe that commitment to our esteemed Korean War veterans – the 1.8 million Americans who fought and sacrificed so much in that awful conflict to help birth one of the greatest alliances in the history of civilization. Our alliance will surely be tested and challenged but our faith and determination will never falter or waiver. For these are not only the pillars of commitment to our alliance itself, but to the rest of the world.

Chairman Chung, Dr. Hahm, distinguished guests, thank you again for the opportunity to address you this afternoon. I am honored by the setting and for the opportunity to share with you some personal thoughts and observations on the U.S.-Korea alliance. This has been an incredible visit to Korea and I always come away amazed at the vigor and vitality of the Korean people. We need to continue to find more ways to further people-to-people exchange between our two countries. I know I look forward to doing my part in this regard as I hope to have regular interactions with my counterparts at the Korean National Assembly through our newly reinvigorated U.S.-Korea Inter-Parliamentary Exchange.

When President Park visited Washington in mid-October, she shared a Korean proverb at a gala dinner she hosted that I think bears repeating here this afternoon. The proverb says that “when the roots of a tree grow deep into the earth, its branches do not sway when the wind blows.” It is abundantly evident that the roots of the U.S.-Korea alliance are firm and deep and this in turn translates into an unfaltering and unwavering commitment to promoting peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula, in Northeast Asia and beyond.

THANK YOU.

//END//