

**Written Statement of Harry B. Harris, Jr.,
Nominee to be U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Korea
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
June 14, 2018**

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Menendez, Distinguished Members of the Committee.

I'm honored to be with you today as President Trump's nominee to serve as the U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Korea. I'm humbled the President has entrusted me with this opportunity to work with the White House and our dedicated officers at the State Department and the 15 other departments and agencies that make up Mission Korea to lead our engagement with such an important ally. Few nominees are fortunate enough to testify before their own senators, and I'm privileged to be here before Chairman Corker of Tennessee and Senator Rubio of Florida. I'm also grateful that Senators Nelson and Hirono took the time to formally introduce me. Knowing that I've not journeyed here alone, let me take a moment to express my love and gratitude to my wife, Bruni Bradley – herself a 25-year Navy veteran. A personal thanks as well to the many former Ambassadors who helped me these past months – nominees of both parties. Finally, to the men and women of U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, it's been a privilege and a joy to have served with you these past three years.

President Trump and his Administration have made clear that our alliance with Korea is one of our top priorities. The President hosted President Moon just last June and again last month. The President also visited Korea last November in the first state visit by a U.S. president in 25 years. Following this, there have been a number of other senior-level visits, underscoring the strength and importance of our bilateral relationship. In fact, Secretary Pompeo is in Seoul today meeting with President Moon.

Mission Korea is staffed by over 600 dedicated men and women, all working hard to advance U.S. interests in Korea and throughout the Indo-Pacific. If confirmed, I'm excited to serve with this team. Importantly, the alliance and the larger partnership it undergirds enjoy strong bipartisan support. This committee and your staffs play an active and vital role in guiding this relationship and I'd like to underscore my deep appreciation for the leadership and engagement that go into maintaining our strong bond with South Korea.

I've experienced this relationship first-hand through my experiences with Korea across an almost 40-year career in uniform, including as the former Indo-Pacific Command commander overseeing the military side of the U.S.-Korean alliance. These personal connections began even before I was born, as my father was a Sailor who fought in World War II and the Korean War and helped teach Korean Sailors at Chinhae. His stories propelled me to a career in the Navy. Bruni's personal connections started during her first tour of duty when she accompanied her boss to Seoul on many occasions. These experiences afforded us lasting friendships and a deep appreciation of Korean culture and history, with their profound linkages to the United States.

Everywhere I traveled -- whether on ships, in jungles, or to embassies -- I saw first-hand the dedication and hard work of men and women committed to making our nation and our world a better place. Along the way, I was reminded again and again of the tremendous diversity of our

great country. If confirmed, I'll carry with me these many voices of America, along with an abiding commitment to strengthen the shared values that lie at the heart of our relationship with the Republic of Korea.

I'm acutely aware that our relationship with Korea is not one-dimensional. Economically, Korea is our sixth-largest trading partner and the fifth-largest market for U.S. agricultural goods. Korean foreign direct investment is already the second largest Asian source of investment into the United States. As a fellow champion of the rule of law and market principles, Korea has shown its willingness to work with the United States to ensure free, fair, and reciprocal trade. Last year, our countries enjoyed a \$153.7 billion trading relationship, including goods and services.

The United States and Korea also share deep people-to-people ties. Almost 200,000 American citizens live, work, or are visiting in Korea at any given time. About 1.7 million people of Korean descent reside in the United States. Academic exchanges are an important part of our relationship with Korea, including the longstanding bi-national Fulbright program.

As good as our economic relationship is, we can do even better. If confirmed, I'll support U.S. efforts to tap additional export opportunities and what I see as nascent opportunities in the energy, medical technology, and information sectors. I would support enhanced access for U.S. firms in the Korean market, and more Korean direct investment into the United States. Finally, if confirmed, I'll strive to further deepen our cultural exchanges, scientific collaboration, and cooperation on global issues.

Ladies and gentlemen, the U.S. - Republic of Korea alliance has served as a pillar of peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific and the world for 65 years, cooperating closely on a wide range of global priorities. Our relationship is anchored by a shared commitment to democratic values and the rule of law. America could not ask for a better friend, partner, and ally than Korea.

I fully appreciate I will have to come up to speed quickly. As is obvious to all of you, I've spent my life in uniform and that's where my expertise lies. But I promise I'll work hard to learn the language and skill sets of diplomacy. I'll even forswear acronyms. I have a lot to learn, indeed, but I do understand the importance of diplomacy as an instrument of national power. As Chief of Mission of a large Embassy with hundreds of U.S. government employees, I pledge to this committee to do my utmost to keep them safe as they carry out their official duties, and similarly commit to keeping the American community in South Korea informed of anything that could affect their safety and security. I testified last March to your colleagues on the Armed Services Committee that a fully resourced State Department is as important as a fully resourced Defense Department. Robust diplomacy increases our chances of solving problems peacefully. I'll also draw heavily on my experiences a few years ago when I was assigned as the Assistant to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, where I accompanied the Secretary of State abroad. In two years, I travelled to over 80 countries and saw up-close the business of diplomacy and the hard, often dangerous, work of our diplomats abroad.

In sum, drawing on the strength of the entire U.S. government, I would, if confirmed as Ambassador, endeavor to deepen our partnership and alliance with the Republic of Korea. I'm

honored to be considered for this critical post and grateful for the opportunity to continue serving our great Nation. I look forward to your questions.