

Statement of Philip S. Goldberg
Nominee to be U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Korea
Before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations
April 7, 2022

Chairman Murphy, Ranking Member Romney, and distinguished members of the committee, I am deeply honored to be here today as the President's nominee to serve as the United States Ambassador to the Republic of Korea. I am grateful for the confidence shown by President Biden and Secretary Blinken in entrusting me with this important responsibility and, if confirmed, I look forward to working closely with this committee to advance U.S. priorities in the ROK, and further strengthen our nearly seven decades-long Alliance. I am honored to be sitting before you for the fifth time as a presidential appointee of both parties asking for your advice and consent to serve, and deeply appreciate the crucial role Congress plays in the foreign policy process.

Since 1953, our alliance with the Republic of Korea has been the linchpin of peace, security, and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region and beyond. Forged during the Korean War and the 1953 Mutual Defense Treaty, the U.S.-ROK Alliance has evolved into a partnership that is comprehensive and global in nature. If confirmed, my top priority will be to strengthen our ironclad alliance even as we expand the relationship's regional and global reach.

Over the past few years, we have seen Korea act as an important partner in several crises, including in working with the international community to condemn the military coup in Burma, and Vladimir Putin's unprovoked and unjustified war against Ukraine. The ROK has also joined with the United States in addressing other global challenges, such as COVID-19, global democracy and our shared climate agenda. The United States needs and welcomes a "Global Korea," not only to tackle the most pressing challenges of the 21st century, but also to seize this century's greatest opportunities.

Even as the U.S.-ROK relationship has become a pivotal global partnership, we remain focused on our commitment to protect the ROK from external aggression. The U.S. military personnel stationed in the ROK work closely with the Korean military and United Nations Command member countries to deter and defend against the threat from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and maintain the Armistice Agreement. If confirmed, I will continue to pursue the President's calibrated approach to achieve our goal of the complete denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. To that end, I would also ensure we continue to consult closely with our Korean, Japanese and other allies and partners for the full implementation of UN Security Council resolutions while exploring the potential for diplomacy.

Our deep economic relationship makes the U.S.-ROK relationship unique. The KORUS Free Trade Agreement, which just celebrated its 10-year anniversary, remains the bedrock of our economic relationship, and today Korea is our 6th-largest trading partner. Korean investments in the United States create thousands of high-paying jobs and if confirmed I will work to continue attracting investment to the United States to create jobs and prosperity for the American worker.

A keystone of our relationship is our longstanding people-to-people ties. There are now more than two million Americans of Korean descent, and they are members of Congress, senior officials in our military, U.S. diplomats, and business and civil society leaders. More than 1.7 million Koreans have studied in the United States and approximately 26,000 Koreans have participated in U.S.-sponsored exchanges. The American people benefit from and celebrate Korea's rich culture—everything from traditional hallmarks like the hanbok and kimchi, to recent culture phenomena like BTS and Squid Games. If confirmed, I will work to ensure the bonds of trust and affection between our people remain strong and vibrant.

On March 9, the ROK held its eighth presidential election since its transition to democracy in 1987. I admire the Korean people's commitment to democracy, and congratulate President-elect Yoon Suk-yeol [Yoon Sung-yuhl] on his election. The U.S.-ROK relationship has blossomed thanks to President Biden and President Moon's leadership, and if confirmed, I will work with President-elect Yoon's administration and the Korean people to continue to push forward our shared vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific, and a world committed to the international rules-based order, democratic principles and respect for universal human rights.

Chairman Murphy, Ranking Member Romney, I would be honored to lead the outstanding men and women of U.S. Mission in Korea and to work with our military to strengthen our historic alliance. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress to continue shepherding our ever-increasing bonds with the ROK to rise to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

I look forward to answering your questions.