

Summit for Peace Assembly and One Million Rally: Reaffirm Important Truths

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President of the United States 2017–2021



It is my tremendous honor to address this World Summit and to speak to each of you as we continue our shared pursuit of a beautiful goal, a very, very beautiful goal, bringing peace, unity and harmony to the Korean Peninsula. Let me begin by expressing my sincere gratitude to the Universal Peace Federation. I especially want to thank Dr. Hak Ja Han Moon for her outstanding commitment to the cause of peace. Her extraordinary story of escaping from North Korea as a young girl is an inspiration to countless people all around the world.

I also want to thank Dr. Moon for founding with her late husband, Reverend Moon, *the Washington Times* which has made a priceless contribution to the defense of truth, faith and freedom, both here in America and all over the globe. It is terrific the job they've done. In addition, I want to congratulate Dr. Moon on the work she is doing for peace. As I have been hearing, the new global initiative you have launched, Think Tank 2022, is bringing together the best and brightest to focus on challenges facing those on the Korean Peninsula.

Let me also share our thanks to co-chairmen of this event Prime Minister Samdech Hun Sen of Cambodia and former UN secretary general, Ban Ki-Moon, as well as the hundreds of dignitaries, diplomats and distinguished leaders gathered today. It's a great privilege to speak with you all about a cause I care so very deeply about.

As president, I was proud to lead a historic effort to forge a more hopeful future for the peace of South Korea, North Korea and the entire world. When I took office, the so-called experts thought the situation on the Korean Peninsula was absolutely hopeless. Weakness, indecision and the old ways of thinking had only produced danger, conflict and hatred. I rejected those tired approaches of the past. I threw out the stale ideas that had failed repeatedly -- again and again for decades. They just got nowhere. I pursued a bold new diplomacy. And above all, I pursued peace through strength.

Working with our allies, including my friends, Prime Minister Abe of Japan and President Moon of South Korea, we put in place the strongest ever measures to confront the situation on the Korean Peninsula. Our tough approach was unprecedented, diplomatically, militarily and economically. Yet, even as we made clear the full measure of America's power and might, we never lost sight of America's true interest and ultimate goal, ensuring a better future for our people, and for the people of the world.

Risk or Opportunity?

To put it simply, I understood that strength was not the obstacle to peace, strength created the opening for peace. It's as simple as that. Working together with our allies, we made extraordinary progress. Four years ago, Chairman Kim and I became the first leaders of our two countries to sit down face to face, and we got along. In fact, we liked each other a lot. In historic meetings in Singapore, Hanoi, and the DMZ, Chairman Kim expressed his wish for better relations.

I made clear that the United States and our allies shared that same wonderful hope. And I told him very frankly, that to achieve that vision, North Korea had to denuclearize. Although North Korea was not yet ready to take that step at our last summit in 2019, Chairman Kim and I nonetheless succeeded in building trust, making history creating the foundation for a future breakthrough, and it can happen. Chairman Kim returned our hostages and sent home the remains of our fallen heroes to rest in American soil. And he pledged to me that he would cease all long-range missile and nuclear testing.

Over the past several months, we have seen a concerning return to escalation, including a number of missile tests. Chairman Kim does not respect or trust the leaders of the United States. Everyone knows that this would never have happened if I were president. I would urge North Korea not to make any decisions or take any actions that could endanger the unique opportunity that we worked so hard to create together over the past four years, and we did indeed work together.

We have planted seeds of peace and cooperation and now we must let them bloom and grow just like a giant tree. To waste that chance would be a profound tragedy. Like so many other nations, North Korea has had a challenging few years. North Korea has also seen horrible food shortages that are projected to last for years to come.

As president, I always pursued America's national interest, and I urge other leaders to pursue their own nation's righteous interests as well. As I have said many times, I strongly believe the best path for North Korea lies down the path of greater cooperation, integration and economic development. But for that to happen, there can be no threat of nuclear weapons. It just can't work.

Denuclearization is not the greatest risk for North Korea. Denuclearization is the greatest opportunity and an opportunity it will be. Meanwhile, not only on the Korean Peninsula but all around the world. We are seeing mounting dangers. China is threatening Taiwan, tensions are growing with Russia and Eastern Europe, Iran is rapidly advancing toward a nuclear bomb.



Core truths

In the face of these challenges, I want to reaffirm some important truths. Americans cherish our alliances, including with South Korea, Japan, Australia, India, and many others. We oppose expansion and aggression in all of its forms. We seek stability, commerce and cooperation with all nations on the basis of shared interests and shared goals.

In addition, in light of the events of the past year, let me make one message very, very clear to other nations, friends and foe alike: do not mistake the weakness of our current leaders in the United States for the weakness of the United States of America. They are not the same. That would be a terrible mistake. Career politicians come and go. But Americans are the same strong, proud and confident people we have always been. We are the fiercest and most loyal of all friends.

The incompetence we have witnessed in the Afghan withdrawal and the way it was handled, and other places may have weakened the poll numbers of certain current politicians. But it has only strengthened the spines of the American people. They could not stand what they watched. They are angry, they are upset, and they want to do something about it. It has only steeled the resolve of the tough and hard working citizens of our country. America will be back and we will be back stronger and greater than ever before.

Today, I ask every person who shares our hope of a brighter tomorrow, to be united in our mission, faithful in our vision, and above all, to be confident in our values. We believe that every life is sacred. And we believe that every person is blessed with rights, liberty and dignity, given to them not by government, but by the hand of Almighty God.

We believe in protecting freedom of speech, freedom of expression and freedom of assembly. We know that religious freedom is the foundation of all freedoms. And we remember that strong sovereign and independent nations are the greatest vehicles for peace, liberty, and justice in human history. These are the values, principles and convictions that can bring together people of all different cultures and backgrounds all over the world.

So to everyone reading this, to every person of goodwill, please join me in working, striving and praying for a Korea that is safe, prosperous, flourishing, united and finally at peace. Koreans are great people. They are brilliant people. They are loving people. We want to help.

Thank you. And God bless you all.