

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

March 4, 2021

The Honorable Antony Blinken  
Secretary of State  
2201 C Street, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Blinken,

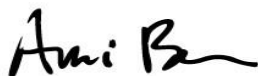
We are encouraged by reports indicating the Administration is close to concluding negotiations over a Special Measures Agreement (SMA) between the United States and the Republic of Korea (ROK). We write to offer our continued support for finalizing a mutually acceptable, comprehensive cost-sharing agreement, in a manner that supports the enduring nature of the relationship.

A robust U.S.-ROK alliance is the linchpin of our countries' approach to securing our shared interests in defending peace and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific. Forged through shared sacrifice, our alliance has blossomed over the past seven decades with the commitment exemplified by the words "katchi kapshida" – "we go together." We support negotiations towards an agreement that is mindful of the ROK's significant contributions towards our shared defense burdens, but also keeps pace with the developing needs of the alliance.

Members of Congress have consistently demonstrated bipartisan support for expeditiously concluding SMA negotiations to allow the alliance to jointly focus on key national security challenges in the Indo-Pacific, including COVID-19 response, North Korea's illicit weapons program, and China's increasing assertiveness across the region. In particular, we encourage your Administration to continue prioritizing the speedy conclusion of negotiations before April 1, lest U.S. Forces Korea would need to again furlough the South Korean nationals supporting the command. We thank you for tending to this urgent matter, and urge you to do so while ensuring the long-term health of the alliance and that the agreement reflects our shared view that Seoul can and should take on additional responsibilities and meet an increased share of the burden of maintaining that alliance.

We appreciate the classified briefing the State Department provided House and Senate staffers on this matter in early February, and the Administration's general willingness to consult Congress on matters of foreign policy. As negotiations progress, we look forward to engaging the Administration to better understand the specific terms of the agreement, your vision for further strengthening the U.S.-ROK alliance, and areas where Congress can support U.S. objectives on the Korean peninsula.

Sincerely,



Ami Bera, M.D.  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific,  
Central Asia, and Nonproliferation



Steve Chabot  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific,  
Central Asia, and Nonproliferation