



**One Hundred Sixteenth Congress**  
**U.S. House of Representatives**  
**Committee on Foreign Affairs**  
2170 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515  
[www.foreignaffairs.house.gov](http://www.foreignaffairs.house.gov)

September 20, 2019

President Donald J. Trump  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We are deeply concerned by the deteriorating relations between Japan and South Korea, particularly as escalating tensions have impacted economic and security dimensions of the relationship.

At a time when the United States, Japan, and South Korea should be working together to address regional security threats ranging from North Korea's provocative ballistic missile tests to Chinese aggression in the South China Sea, the ongoing dispute between Tokyo and Seoul undermines our shared interests in a peaceful, secure, and prosperous Indo-Pacific region. Not only this, but recent tensions in the relationship have now spilled over into the economic and security domain, which have a real implications for America's security and American businesses.

With the advent of the 74<sup>th</sup> Session of the United Nations General Assembly later this month, we urge you to take the opportunity to engage with both Prime Minister Abe and President Moon directly to facilitate a path forward for Tokyo and Seoul to resolve their differences, or at least constrain them in such a way that does not have further negative implications for our shared security and economic interests.

Although we appreciate the Department of States' efforts thus far in promoting dialogue between the two nations, we believe more sustained, high-level U.S. leadership is required to resolve the ongoing dispute between two crucial U.S. allies. While we agree with Assistant Secretary Stillwell that the United States should not take sides in this dispute, which originates from long-standing historic grievance, it is imperative for the United States to engage leaders in both capitals and to help both sides find an "off-ramp" to further escalation, and to facilitate the resolution of existing tensions.

President Donald J. Trump  
September 20, 2019  
Page Two

In July, the House Foreign Affairs Committee adopted H.Res.127, a bipartisan resolution reaffirming the vital role of the alliances between the United States and South Korea and United States and Japan in promoting peace, stability, and security in the Indo-Pacific region. The House will vote on that measure during the U.N. General Assembly meetings next week, which we hope will add additional support to U.S. efforts in this regard.

Allowing relations between Tokyo and Seoul, two economic powerhouses, to deteriorate not only endangers regional security, but also risks hurting the U.S. economic interests. We encourage the administration to proactively mediate between Japan and South Korea and provide a platform for both countries to resolve their differences.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

  
ELIOT L. ENGEL  
Chairman

  
MICHAEL T. McCAUL  
Ranking Member

cc: Secretary Pompeo