United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 8, 2018

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write urging you to continue to vigorously implement the maximum pressure campaign against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), concurrent with any possible discussions with the DPRK with the explicit aim of denuclearization. This should include imposing additional unilateral sanctions against the regime and conducting regularly scheduled military exercises with our allies in the region, until such time that there is complete, verifiable, and irreversible dismantlement of the DPRK's nuclear and ballistic missile programs. We must also continue to coordinate our DPRK policy closely with Seoul and Tokyo.

We are encouraged by reports that during a visit this week by a delegation from the Republic of Korea, the DPRK has allegedly agreed to talks with the United States regarding the denuclearization of the DPRK. The DPRK has violated numerous United Nations Security Council Resolutions with their illicit nuclear and ballistic programs, including by conducting six nuclear weapons tests, and has violated all previous agreements with the United States that sought to peacefully end these programs.

We believe that the U.S.-led sanctions campaign against the DPRK is essential to building the necessary leverage to incentivize the regime to peacefully relinquish its weapons of mass destruction. Congress has played a leading role in constructing the sanctions regime against the DPRK, including the passage of the landmark North Korea Sanctions and Policy Enhancement Act (NKSPEA), which was signed into law in February 2016 and was the first standalone legislation to impose mandatory sanctions against the DPRK and its enablers.

The DPRK must know that the U.S. and the international community can significantly ramp up sanctions pressure. According to the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, since the passage of NKSPEA, the DPRK went from being the 8th-most sanctioned nation by the United States to being only the 4th-most sanctioned. We must continue to close every avenue of commercial activity with the regime, including by targeting businesses, financial institutions, and third-country nationals for secondary sanctions. These businesses must know that the cost of doing business with the DPRK is global financial isolation.

The DPRK must also know that while the United States and its partners are seeking to solve this crisis peacefully, we will not hesitate to defend the U.S. homeland, our troops in the region, and our treaty allies, with overwhelming military force. The military option must remain on the table, it must be robust, and DPRK must be made fully aware of the consequences of their actions.

The regime also routinely and grossly violates the human rights of its people, including by holding up to 200,000 of its citizens in brutal labor camps, akin to the Soviet GULAG system. The DPRK is directly responsible for the death of Otto Warmbier, an American citizen abducted and tortured to death by the regime. We commend Vice President Pence for inviting Mr. Fred Warmbier, Otto's father, to the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games in PyeongChang last month. We ask that you continue to raise the human rights of the North Korean people with full vigor in appropriate fora.

Mr. President, when it comes to the North Korean regime, we must verify before we trust. While we must take any credible opportunity to talk with Pyongyang about denuclearization, we must also never forget that the DPRK continues to represent a grave threat to the United States, our allies, and global peace and stability.

We ask that you respond to Congress in a timely manner regarding the Administration's strategy to engage the DPRK and your plan for a robust implementation of the maximum pressure campaign against this heinous regime.

Sincerely,

Cory Gardner
United States Senator

James M. Inhofe
United States Senator

James E. Risch
United States Senator

Marco Rubio
United States Senator

Todd Young
United States Senator

Ron Johnson
United States Senator