

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2021

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With President Moon Jae-in of South Korea and an Exchange With Reporters

May 21, 2021

President Biden. I am honored to have President Moon here at the White House today for the second foreign leader visit, head-of-state visit in my Presidency.

The United States and the Republic of Korea are allies with a long history of shared sacrifice. And in a personal note, I want to thank the President for being with me today as I had the great honor of presenting the congressional Medal of Honor to a Ranger in his mid-nineties who was—showed incredible acts of valor and bravery in Korea during the Korean war. The President was kind enough to come spend the entire time there and personally congratulate the—our honoree.

And I also want to point out that our history of shared sacrifice and our cooperation is vital to maintaining peace and stability in a critical region of the world. President Moon and I and our teams have had good meetings addressing our shared agenda. We had a private meeting in which my staff kept coming out and saying: "You're over time. You're over time." But I enjoyed our meeting so much that we caused us to move everything back.

But I look forward to continuing our discussion today here and in growing the U.S.-R.O.K. relationship further as we take on new challenges and we take them on together.

Mr. President, the floor is yours.

President Moon. Thank you, Mr. President. I'd like to express my deep gratitude to President Biden and the American people for extending such a warm hospitality to me and my delegation. And my congratulations on how the U.S. is becoming an example of the—for the world as it succeeds in overcoming COVID-19, achieving economic recovery, and uniting the Nation under President Biden's leadership.

Korea and the U.S. are strong allies, forged more than 70 years ago. America is our everlasting friend who helped us and led us in our times of direst need. And I'm very pleased to visit the U.S. as my first overseas trip destination since the spread of COVID-19 and meet President Biden and his new team.

Even in the midst of COVID-19 crisis, our two countries left the door open to each other, helped with each other's fight against the virus, and kept our people and goods flow. And we are seeing increasing cases of successful cooperation between our two countries' businesses and industries that will shape the post-COVID-19 era, such as semiconductors, batteries, and communication. An expanding cooperation between the U.S.—a center of global business—and Korea—a rising economic hub of East Asia—will be a breakthrough in economic recovery for not only the two countries, but the entire world.

In previous meetings with President Biden, we affirmed our joint commitment to strengthening the R.O.K.-U.S. alliance and bringing peace on the Korean Peninsula. I believe our peoples will be delighted to hear this a day shy of our 139th anniversary of our diplomatic relations. And Korea will closely work with the U.S. to achieve complete denuclearization and establish permanent peace on the Korean Peninsula.

The world is welcoming America's return and keeping their hopes high for America's leaders to do more than ever before. President Biden, himself, also underscored the importance of

building back better and expressed his willingness to solve common challenges of humanity with the power of example.

Although tricky challenges lie ahead of us, as allies that share core values, our two countries will actively work together to address global challenges such as COVID-19, economic recovery, and climate change. And we will usher in a new era.

Following our meeting today, I look forward to welcoming President Biden again in Seoul, the Republic of Korea, in not-too-distant future. Thank you very much.

Gaza Conflict With Israel

Q. Mr. President, do you think the cease-fire will hold in Israel?

President Biden. We'll—I'll have time to answer questions later. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:55 p.m. in the State Dining Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Col. Ralph Puckett, Jr., USA (Ret.). President Moon spoke in Korean, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Categories: Meetings With Foreign Leaders and International Officials : South Korea, President Moon; Meetings With Foreign Leaders and International Officials : Exchanges with reporters :: White House.

Locations: Washington, DC.

Names: Moon Jae-in; Puckett, Ralph, Jr.

Subjects: Armed Forces, U.S. : Servicemembers :: Service and dedication; Decorations, medals, and awards : Medal of Honor; South Korea : Defense relationship with U.S.; South Korea : President; South Korea : Relations with U.S.

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