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THE WHITE HOUSE

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT
AT THE
KIMPO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

10:20 A.M. SOUTH KOREA TIME

Mr. President, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen:

I am very pleased to return to the Republic of Korea, our faithful ally, on a mission of peace. Twenty-one years have elapsed since I was last here in Korea. I was then a Congressman, a Member of our House of Representatives.

Now I return as the third American President to visit you while in office. President Eisenhower came here in 1952 and again in 1960. President Johnson came in 1966. Those visits as well as mine demonstrate a close involvement of different American Administrations over a quarter of a century. They reflect the same reality -- our long and friendly ties to the Korean people.

When I came to Korea in 1953, I saw a heart-rending scene. The Republic of Korea had been ravaged by war. You had made great sacrifices to repel aggression. Your economy was in ruins. I was deeply saddened by what I saw, but I was inspired by the determination of the Korean people to rebuild.

Today I am very happy to return. I want to see the great progress that so many have described so very vividly. I want to see for myself what you have built upon the ashes of war.

I am here, Mr. President, to reaffirm our friendship and to give it new life and meaning. Nothing binds nations together closer than to have fought side by side for the same cause. Two times we have stood together here as well as in Vietnam to preserve the peace, to preserve the stability of Asia and the world. We can never forget this.

Though we have been together with you in war, America's deepest hope is for a world of peace. Let us now join to preserve peace and to prevent any recurrence of hostilities. That is our continuing commitment which I today reaffirm.

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I thank you very much, Mr. President, for this heart-warming welcome. My only regret is that my wife, Mrs. Ford, is not here at my side. She sends her greetings to the great Korean people. She looks forward to hearing in detail from me personally about this visit.

You were most gracious, Mr. President, to invite me. I am proud to come here on this, my first, overseas journey as President of the United States.

I thank you very, very much.

END (10:24 A.M. KOREA TIME)