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SUBCOMMITTEE ON EUROPE**HOUSE SELECT COMMITTEE ON STRATEGIC**COMPETITION BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND
CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY**Congress of the United States****House of Representatives**

Washington, DC 20515

WASHINGTON OFFICE2439 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
PHONE: (202) 225-4111**ANAHEIM HILLS OFFICE**180 N. RIVERVIEW DR., STE. 150
ANAHEIM, CA 92808
PHONE: (714) 984-2440**MISSION VIEJO OFFICE**200 CIVIC CENTER
MISSION VIEJO, CA 92691
PHONE: (949) 268-6706www.youngkim.house.gov

@REPLYOUNGKIM

The Honorable Kang Kyung-wha
Ambassador of the Republic of Korea
Embassy of the Republic of Korea
2450 Massachusetts Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20008

August 13, 2026

We write on behalf of an American citizen unable to return home. We have significant concerns regarding the Republic of Korea's continued prohibition on the departure from the ROK of Morse H. Tan, an American citizen and former U.S. Ambassador-at-Large for Global Criminal Justice.

Ambassador Tan came to the ROK in late May as part of a privately organized effort to monitor the country's June elections. After arriving in the ROK, Tan faced remarkably unfair treatment from the ROK government over statements he made while in the United States. Ambassador Tan was banned from leaving the country, and last month he was indicted for alleged defamation of the ROK President. Ambassador Tan now awaits trial.

This treatment raises serious concerns about freedom of expression and due process. The case regards statements Ambassador Tan made as a private American citizen while in the United States. Mr. Tan's First Amendment rights as an American citizen must be respected.

The U.S.-ROK alliance extends far beyond protecting the security of the Korean Peninsula and ensuring the stability of the Indo-Pacific. We have a shared commitment to representative government, individual liberty, freedom of expression, and the rule of law. The treatment of Mr. Tan, an American citizen and public servant, could affect perceptions of the Republic of Korea's adherence to those shared values.

Members of a Congressional delegation last month met with Ambassador Tan, who thankfully remains in good health and positive spirits. We respectfully urge the ROK government to lift the exit ban on Ambassador Tan to let him return home.

Thank you for your urgent attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Young Kim
Chairwoman
Subcommittee on East Asian and
Pacific Affairs
House Committee on Foreign Affairs



Brian Mast
Chairman
House Committee on Foreign Affairs



Michael Cloud
Member of Congress



Christopher H. Smith
Member of Congress