

Joint Communiqué of the 48th U.S.-ROK Security Consultative Meeting

Washington, D.C., October 20, 2016

The 48th United States (U.S.) and Republic of Korea (ROK) Security Consultative Meeting (SCM) was held in Washington, DC today . U.S. Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter and ROK Minister of National Defense Han Minkoo led their respective delegations, which included senior defense and foreign affairs officials. On Oct. 13, the U.S. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Joseph F. Dunford Jr., and the Chairman of the Republic of Korea Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Lee Sun-jin, presided over the 41st U.S.-ROK Military Committee Meeting (MCM).

The secretary and the minister reaffirmed the commitment of the U.S. and ROK presidents to continue to build a comprehensive strategic alliance of bilateral, regional, and global scope based on common values and mutual trust, as set forth in the June 2009, “Joint Vision for the Alliance of the Republic of Korea and the United States of America,” and reiterated in the May 2013, “Joint Declaration in Commemoration of the 60th Anniversary of the Alliance between the Republic of Korea and the United States of America,” and the 2015 Joint Fact Sheet, the “Republic of Korea-United States Alliance: Shared Values, New Frontiers.” They also reaffirmed that the scope and level of alliance cooperation should continue to broaden and deepen by strengthening the combined defense posture on the Korean Peninsula and enhancing cooperation for regional and global security in the 21st century, as reflected in the “U.S.-ROK Defense Cooperation Guidelines” signed at the 42nd SCM in 2010. Against this backdrop, the secretary and the minister noted that the efforts of the Korea-U.S. Integrated Defense Dialogue (KIDD) significantly advance alliance objectives by providing high-level policy oversight and coordinating and integrating various defense consultative mechanisms between the United States and the Republic of Korea. At the conclusion of the SCM, the secretary and the minister signed a revised KIDD terms of reference (TOR) that supports existing crises coordination and decision-making mechanisms, such as the SCM and MCM, as appropriate.

The secretary and the minister condemned in the strongest possible terms North Korea’s unprecedented level of nuclear tests and ballistic missile launches this year—including its fourth and fifth nuclear tests, as well as its short-range, medium-range, intermediate-range, long-range, and submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) launches—as destabilizing to the region and clear violations of numerous United Nations (UN) Security Council resolutions. The secretary and the minister reiterated the firm view of the United States and the Republic of Korea that North Korea’s policies and actions, including its UN Security Council-proscribed nuclear and ballistic missile programs and proliferation activities, pose an increasingly serious threat to regional stability and global security, as well as to the integrity of the global nonproliferation regime. In this regard, the secretary and the minister reaffirmed the commitments set forth in the “2015 Republic of Korea and United States of America Joint Statement on North Korea.” The secretary and the minister reaffirmed that North Korea should fulfill its commitments under the Sept. 19, 2005, joint statement of the Six-Party Talks and abide by its obligations under UN Security Council resolutions 1718, 1874, 2087, 2094, and 2270. They also urged North Korea to cease all activities related to its nuclear and ballistic missile programs immediately and to abandon all nuclear weapons and

existing nuclear programs as well as other existing weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and ballistic missile programs in a complete, verifiable, and irreversible manner. The secretary and the minister also reaffirmed that the United States and the ROK would continue to cooperate closely to implement fully all UN Security Council resolutions concerning North Korea and lead active international efforts to create an environment in which North Korea has no other choice but to denuclearize.

The secretary and the minister reaffirmed the two nations' mutual commitment to the fundamental mission of the alliance to defend the ROK through a robust combined defense posture, as well as to the enhancement of mutual security based on the U.S.-ROK Mutual Defense Treaty. The secretary and the minister expressed their great confidence in the strength of the U.S.-ROK alliance and of the U.S. extended deterrent to continue to deter North Korean aggression and preserve stability on the Korean Peninsula and the region. The secretary and the minister reaffirmed the need to continue to conduct combined exercises on the Peninsula to demonstrate alliance readiness, particularly given the security environment following North Korea's fourth and fifth nuclear tests, and the multiple ballistic missile launches under the Kim Jong Un regime. In light of North Korea's continued provocations, the secretary and the minister agreed, within the context of the 2+2 Extended Deterrence Strategy and Consultation Group, to examine options to take additional steps that further strengthen extended deterrence capabilities to ensure that North Korea has no doubt about alliance resolve. They further expressed their determination to maintain close alliance coordination in responding to any potential further provocation.

The secretary and the minister reaffirmed that any North Korean aggression or military provocation is not to be tolerated and that the United States and the ROK would work shoulder-to-shoulder to demonstrate our combined resolve. They also reaffirmed that the U.S.-ROK alliance remains vital to the future interests of both nations in securing peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula and in Northeast Asia, and stressed their determination to ensure sufficient capabilities of the combined forces for the security of the ROK. The secretary reiterated the firm and unwavering U.S. commitment to the defense of the ROK using U.S. forces and capabilities postured on the Korean Peninsula and globally available. The secretary also reiterated the commitment to maintain the current level of U.S. military personnel in the ROK and to enhance combat readiness.

The secretary reaffirmed the continued U.S. commitment to provide extended deterrence for the ROK using the full range of military capabilities, including the U.S. nuclear umbrella, conventional strike, and missile defense capabilities. The secretary also reiterated the long-standing U.S. policy that any attack on the United States or its allies will be defeated, and any use of nuclear weapons will be met with an effective and overwhelming response. The secretary and the minister committed to ensuring that extended deterrence for the ROK remains credible, capable, and enduring by continuing to enhance alliance deterrence measures and capabilities in response to the increasing North Korean nuclear, WMD, and ballistic missile threat and continuing to promote information-sharing and interoperability. The minister also highlighted the increased understanding and confidence in U.S. extended deterrence based on the multiple deployments of strategic assets to the Korean Peninsula this year, as well as the B-52, Ground-Based Interceptor (GBI) Launchpad, and Minuteman III

intercontinental ballistic missile demonstrations earlier this year at Vandenberg Air Force Base, California. The secretary and the minister also praised the work of the Deterrence Strategy Committee (DSC) in signing the 4D (detect, defend, disrupt, and destroy) Concepts and Principles Implementation Guidelines (CPIG), which will strengthen the alliance's counter-missile strategy in the wake of a growing North Korean ballistic missile threat. The secretary and the minister committed to continue to develop policies and procedures to increase the execution capabilities of both the 4D CPIG and the tailored deterrence strategy (TDS). The United States and the Republic of Korea are committed to maintaining close consultation on deterrence matters to achieve tailored deterrence against key North Korean threats and to maximize its deterrent effects.

The secretary and the minister reaffirmed their commitment to the deployment of the Terminal High-Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) battery to U.S. Forces Korea (USFK) on the Korean Peninsula. They noted that North Korea's nuclear tests and ballistic missile launches reinforce the necessity of the alliance decision to enhance its missile defense capabilities significantly. The secretary and the minister emphasized the military effectiveness of THAAD and reaffirmed that the system is aimed solely at defending against North Korean missile threats and would not be directed towards any third party nations. The secretary and the minister pledged to take appropriate measures to ensure that the THAAD deployment process continues to move forward without delay.

The secretary and the minister also decided to enhance information-sharing on North Korean missile threats. The United States and the Republic of Korea are committed to maintaining close consultation to develop comprehensive Alliance capabilities to counter North Korean nuclear, other WMD, and ballistic missile threats. The minister reaffirmed that the Republic of Korea is seeking to develop its own kill-chain and Korean Air and Missile Defense (KAMD) systems by the mid-2020s. These systems represent a critical military capability for responding to North Korean nuclear and missile threats and are to be interoperable with alliance systems, including Patriot and THAAD. To this end, the Republic of Korea will continue to invest in capabilities to detect, defend, disrupt, and destroy North Korean nuclear and missile threats.

The secretary and the minister praised the close coordination between the United States and the Republic of Korea in response to the evolving North Korean threat. Both countries remain committed to responding jointly and firmly to any future North Korean aggression or military provocation. The secretary and the minister noted that the two militaries are continuing to develop military plans related to a range of crisis situations on the Korean Peninsula to ensure an effective alliance response. The secretary and the minister reaffirmed the need to continue promoting combined exercises and training events and to enhance combined capabilities in order to be prepared for any North Korean provocation in the vicinity of the Northwest Islands and the Northern Limit Line (NLL). Moreover, noting that the NLL has been an effective means of separating the Republic of Korea and North Korean military forces and preventing military tension for more than 60 years, the secretary and the minister urged North Korea to accept the practical value of and abide by the NLL. Additionally, the secretary and the minister reaffirmed that the Armistice Agreement and the United Nations Command remain crucial instruments in maintaining peace and stability on

the Korean Peninsula. The secretary and the minister decided to increase U.S.-ROK naval cooperation to respond to increased North Korean maritime provocations, including the submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) test launches. To this end, the secretary and the minister committed to consider various cooperation measures to expand the scope and execution of U.S.-ROK naval training events, including combined ballistic missile defense and anti-submarine exercises, and to increase information-sharing through strengthened staff coordination.

The secretary and the minister pledged that the United States and the Republic of Korea would continue to enhance close alliance cooperation to address wide-ranging global security challenges of mutual interest, including through peacekeeping activities, stabilization and reconstruction efforts, regional security cooperation initiatives, and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. The secretary praised the ROK's efforts to promote peace and stability around the world, including the ROK's \$255 million pledge for capacity building in support of socio-economic development in Afghanistan and the Afghan National Security Forces, subject to domestic procedures, and through the ROK's contributions to the global efforts to counter the Islamic State of Iraq and Levant (ISIL), to counter-piracy efforts in the Gulf of Aden, and to UN peacekeeping operations (PKO). The secretary also praised the ROK commitment to increase humanitarian contributions by \$100 million, subject to domestic procedures, and expressed appreciation for the ROK Government's continued active participation in the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI). The secretary and the minister applauded the efforts of the U.S.-ROK Counter Proliferation Working Group (CPWG) to enhance the alliance's combined capability to prevent the acquisition of WMD, prevent the use of WMD, and if necessary respond to mitigate the threats of WMD.

The secretary and the minister reaffirmed the need to strengthen cooperation in the space and cyberspace domains, and to promote the security of critical infrastructure, including information and space systems. The secretary and the minister reaffirmed the importance of strengthening mission assurance for space capabilities and enhancing cooperation in Space Situational Awareness and the Space Cooperation table-top exercise (TTX). The secretary and the minister affirmed the importance of greater cooperation in cyberspace to improve the Alliance's capacity to address challenges in this domain. They noted the significance of the U.S.-ROK Cyber Cooperation Working Group (CCWG) and its efforts to create a U.S.-ROK Cyber Task Force to study how the United States and the Republic of Korea can better synchronize and enhance our combined cooperation in cyberspace within the alliance construct. They decided that both countries would continue to receive updates on the progress of this study through regular bilateral engagements and continue to explore new opportunities to strengthen our ability to respond to cyber threats. The secretary and the minister also committed to advance U.S.-ROK cooperation in science and technology under the auspices of the Defense Technological and Industrial Cooperation Committee (DTICC) to identify new and innovative means of countering the North Korean threat, including collaboration in robotics and autonomous technologies.

The secretary and the minister received a report on the results of the U.S.-ROK Military Committee Meeting from the commander of the U.S.-ROK Combined Forces Command

(CFC), Gen. Vincent Brooks, which highlighted that the combined defense posture is capable and ready to “Fight Tonight” and is prepared to respond effectively to any provocation, instability, or aggression.

The secretary and the minister affirmed that preparation for the conditions-based operational control (OPCON) transition is progressing according to the “Conditions-based OPCON Transition Plan” (COT-P), which was signed at the 47th SCM. They pledged to continue implementing the COT-P faithfully in order to ensure a stable wartime OPCON transition at a proper time.

The secretary and the minister reaffirmed that U.S. Forces Korea (USFK) relocation and camp returns are in the interests of the United States and the Republic of Korea and pledged to work together closely to complete these efforts successfully. The secretary and the minister reaffirmed their commitment to strive together for the timely completion of the Yongsan Relocation Plan (YRP) and Land Partnership Plan (LPP). The secretary and the minister applauded the progress made in the force relocation process, noting that the first move of U.S. combat forces to U.S. Army Garrison Humphreys (USAG-H) occurred this year and that both USFK and 8th Army Headquarters at USAG-H are planned to be in place there in 2017. The two also decided to continue efforts to consult closely on camp return issues through the joint environmental assessment procedure (JEAP).

The secretary and the minister shared the understanding of the importance of trilateral defense cooperation among the United States, the Republic of Korea, and Japan in the face of North Korean nuclear and missile threats. The secretary and minister concurred that the missile warning exercise, PACIFIC DRAGON, conducted in June 2016, contributed to increased information-sharing capabilities against the North Korean nuclear and missile threat. The secretary and the minister lauded the trilateral diplomatic and defense coordination that took place swiftly after multiple North Korean provocative actions this year, including the January and September nuclear tests. The secretary and the minister reaffirmed the need to continue to promote and expand practical trilateral defense cooperation through regular trilateral defense consultations, such as the defense trilateral talks (DTT).

The secretary and the minister assessed that defense cost-sharing contributes to strengthening combined defense capabilities on the Korean Peninsula. Secretary Carter offered his appreciation for the ROK’s contributions to a stable stationing environment for USFK.

The secretary and the minister praised the inaugural meeting of the Defense Technology Strategy and Cooperation Group (DTSCG) in July 2016. The DTSCG enables the two sides to work together to advance policy and strategic discussion on technology security, foreign policy, and defense technology cooperation in support of the U.S.-ROK alliance.

Minister Han expressed sincere appreciation to Secretary Carter for the courtesy and hospitality extended to him and his delegation by the U.S. Government, and for the excellent arrangements that contributed to the success of the meeting. The secretary and the minister affirmed that the discussions during the 48th SCM and the 41st MCM contributed

substantively to strengthening the U.S.-ROK alliance and further enhanced the development of the bilateral defense relationship into a comprehensive strategic alliance. Both sides expect to hold the 49th SCM in Seoul at a mutually convenient time in 2017.