

**STATEMENT OF  
GENERAL JAMES D. THURMAN  
COMMANDER, UNITED NATIONS COMMAND;  
COMMANDER, UNITED STATES-REPUBLIC OF KOREA COMBINED FORCES  
COMMAND;  
AND COMMANDER, UNITED STATES FORCES KOREA  
BEFORE THE  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY CONSTRUCTION, VETERANS AFFAIRS, AND  
RELATED AGENCIES  
29 MARCH 2012**



<b>I.</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>II.</b>	<b>NORTH KOREA.....</b>	<b>3</b>
	LEADERSHIP TRANSITION.....	3
	MILITARY CAPABILITIES.....	5
	NUCLEAR PROGRAM.....	6
<b>III.</b>	<b>MY PRIORITIES.....</b>	<b>8</b>
	READINESS.....	8
	STRENGTHENING THE U.S.-ROK ALLIANCE.....	10
	OPERATIONAL FOCUS.....	12
	<i>Repositioning of U.S. Forces in the ROK.....</i>	<i>13</i>
	<i>Tour Lengths in Korea.....</i>	<i>14</i>
<b>IV.</b>	<b>UNITED NATIONS COMMAND.....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>V.</b>	<b>SUMMARY.....</b>	<b>16</b>

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the Committee, it is an honor to provide this statement to you. As the Commander of United Nations Command, United States (U.S.) – Republic of Korea Combined Forces Command (CFC), and United States Forces Korea (USFK), it is a privilege to represent the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, Department of Defense Civilians, and their Families, who serve our great nation in the Republic of Korea (ROK). On behalf of these outstanding men and women, I want to thank the Committee for the support it has provided to American forces stationed in the ROK.

The Korean Peninsula is at the nexus of U.S. interests in Northeast Asia. Northeast Asia is host to four of the world's six largest militaries, a quarter of the world's population, and the fastest growing segment of the global economy. U.S. trade with the region exceeds \$750 billion annually, and U.S. direct investment amounts to over \$270 billion. As China rises in importance in diplomatic, informational, military, and economic spheres, it maintains an ambiguous relationship with an isolated North Korean regime in pursuit of a robust nuclear program. Our allies in the region look to the U.S. as the key partner to maintain regional stability and prosperity while upholding international norms and a commitment to democratic values.

Significant leadership change is underway in Northeast Asia this year. This change includes the transition of power to Kim Jong-un in North Korea, recently completed elections in Taiwan, Russia, Japan, and upcoming elections in the ROK as well as expected leadership changes in the People's Republic of China later this year. The uncertainty associated with these changes, compounded by lingering historical animosities, territorial disputes, and competition over access to resources, places us in a dangerously uncertain period as we maintain the 1953

Armistice and remain prepared to defend the ROK, as well as the United States, from North Korean aggression.

The defense of South Korea is enabled by a strong U.S.-ROK Alliance. Born on Korean War battlefields 60 years ago, the Alliance is as solid as ever, serving as the foundation for today's combined military readiness. Combined readiness requires mutual trust, transparency, and close working and training relationships at every level of our military organizations. My former deputy at CFC is now the Chairman of the ROK Joint Chiefs of Staff. My new deputy commander was the former J3 Operations Officer for the ROK Joint Chiefs of Staff. These two men are among the most capable military leaders I have had the honor to serve with. Together, we are guiding U.S. and ROK military leaders and units to work and train closely with one another on a daily basis, and that effort builds combined strength, faith and trust – qualities that are essential for us to successfully accomplish our mission in Korea.

This Alliance commitment to security has been rewarded by sustained economic growth and the opportunity to enhance capabilities for the combined defense of the Korean Peninsula as the ROK increases its regional and international role. Examples of the increased role of the ROK – part of President Lee Myung-bak's *Global Korea* vision – include hosting the 2010 G20 Summit, hosting the Nuclear Security Summit, and providing growing levels of foreign developmental assistance. At the same time, the ROK is challenged by a declining birth rate that puts pressure on its ability to sustain a manpower-intensive conscripted military. For both demographic and economic reasons, and in response to North Korean violent provocations in 2010, the ROK military is proposing fundamental military reforms. These reforms are being discussed within the ROK government and will likely be acted on in the coming year.

As the ROK wrestles with these challenges, and against a backdrop of political change and economic uncertainty, it is imperative we remain steady in our commitment to regional stability through vigilant maintenance of the Armistice and unquestioned military readiness. Our combined, joint team provides the trained, ready, and disciplined forces that are prepared to fight and win on the Korean Peninsula, providing a strong deterrent to North Korean aggression.

## **II. NORTH KOREA**

I believe we are in a very uncertain period on the Korean Peninsula with the possibility of unexpected events leading to miscalculation. North Korea remains the greatest threat to stability in Northeast Asia. Upon the death of Kim Jong-il in December 2011, power transferred to his youngest son, Kim Jong-un, who is believed to be 28 years old. North Korea is economically backward, unwilling to operate as part of the global community, and led by an unpredictable regime that controls a large conventional force and a lethal arsenal of asymmetric capabilities, including weapons of mass destruction.

### **LEADERSHIP TRANSITION**

North Korea is currently undergoing its first leadership transition in 17 years and only the second leadership change in its history. We are watching this transition closely. Two to three years prior to Kim Jong-il's death, Kim Jong-un began a grooming process that included naming him to important posts, giving him the rank of general in the Korean People's Army (KPA), and transferring responsibility to him for management of the country. This transition was cut short by the sudden death of Kim Jong-il. However, prior to his death, the elder Kim had assigned senior members of the KPA and the Korean Workers' Party to Kim Jong-un's inner circle. This group, consisting mostly of regime elites in their 70s and 80s, represents earlier generations of leadership with firm commitments to the state's basic ideology and loyalty to the Kim family.

Having these key figures positioned within Kim Jong-un's inner circle strengthens the new ruler's hand and serves to ease his succession to the regime's top leadership role.

It also appears that the regime is making a concerted effort to capitalize on Kim Jong-un's remarkable resemblance to his late grandfather, Kim Il-sung, North Korea's revered ruler from the post-World War Two era until his death in 1994. State-controlled media images have shown Kim Jong-un with swept-back hair and dressed in Maoist suits very similar to those popularized by Kim Il-sung—a carefully stage-managed effort to help the relatively inexperienced Kim Jong-un garner the same adulation the populace had bestowed upon his grandfather.

To date, the leadership transition appears to be proceeding without discernible internal challenges and with significant Chinese political and economic support. With the Kim Jong-un regime focused on continuity and consolidation of power, there are no indications the regime will depart significantly from Kim Jong-il's policies. In particular, the leadership remains committed to continuing its "military first" policy, which places the country's military in the premier position for resources and maintains its status as the world's most militaristic state. North Korea continues to maintain robust conventional forces vastly disproportionate to its population and defensive security requirements. Even in the face of enormous economic hardship, the regime maintains the fourth largest army in the world. The KPA is over one million strong, with over 13,000 artillery systems, over 4,000 tanks, 2,000 armored personnel carriers, 1,700 aircraft, and 800 surface combatants. More than 70% of its combat power is arrayed within 90 miles of the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ).

North Korea continues improving its ability to attack the ROK's center of gravity, the capital city of Seoul, the world's 4th largest city with 24 million residents in the greater

metropolitan area accounting for roughly half the population of the country. This is a population larger than New York City living and working within artillery range of North Korea – including approximately 50,000 private U.S. citizens. North Korea threatens Seoul with a mix of conventional artillery, multiple rocket launchers, and ballistic missiles, a significant percentage of which are positioned in protected positions dispersed across the western half of the peninsula. These systems are capable of ranging Seoul without moving, and can deliver both high explosive and chemical munitions with little or no warning. If employed in a provocation, even a limited attack with these systems could cripple the ROK's economy and panic the populace. These same forces threaten outposts along the DMZ and the Northwest Islands. A North Korean attack on these targets, especially if civilian casualties occur, could lead to an escalating series of North Korean and ROK actions and reactions with the potential to lead to broader conflict. North Korea is quick to capitalize on this concern by frequently threatening to launch such attacks.

## **MILITARY CAPABILITIES**

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union, North Korean forces have been in relative decline compared to ROK and U.S. forces in the south. The economic and demographic breakdown accompanying the severe famine of the 1990s, particularly the rapid decline in the number of healthy military-age males, has made it difficult to maintain the personnel and equipment readiness of the North's large ground forces. To compensate for this decline and continued improvements in alliance capabilities, North Korea is investing heavily in asymmetric capabilities such as cyber-attack, ballistic missiles, and special operations forces that actively train to infiltrate into the ROK to attack civilian and military targets.

North Korea continues to improve the capabilities of the world's largest special operations force, which includes 60,000 soldiers trained in a variety of infiltration methods such

as overland, undersea, and airborne entry into the ROK. Well trained, well resourced, and extremely loyal to the Kim regime, these forces could cause significant disruptions to ROK governance, utilities distribution, infrastructure operations, and mobilization. North Korea's willingness to employ these forces is well documented, with examples of their use dating as far back as the 1960s and as recently as 2011. Last year's attempted infiltration of an assassination team into the ROK highlights the nature of this threat and North Korea's willingness to use it.

The newest addition to the North Korean asymmetric arsenal is a growing cyber warfare capability. North Korea employs sophisticated computer hackers trained to launch cyber-infiltration and cyber-attacks against the ROK and U.S. Such attacks are ideal for North Korea, providing the regime a means to attack ROK and U.S. interests without attribution, and have been increasingly employed against a variety of targets including military, governmental, educational, and commercial institutions.

North Korea's chemical and biological weapons program is a cause for significant concern. We assess North Korea maintains the capability to manufacture, transport, and deliver a variety of both persistent and non-persistent chemicals, to include nerve, blood, choking, and blister agents. Delivery systems include virtually all North Korean artillery and missile systems. If North Korea employs biological weapons, it could use highly pathogenic agents such as anthrax or plague. In the densely populated urban terrain of the ROK, this represents a tremendous psychological weapon.

## **NUCLEAR PROGRAM**

North Korea continues to expend significant resources in its pursuit of a robust nuclear strike capability despite opposition from the international community. The regime believes nuclear weapons would provide legitimacy, power, and prestige, and we assess the regime will



strongly resist efforts to curtail its nuclear weapons and associated delivery platforms. Coupled with a reliable delivery platform, nuclear weapons would enable the Kim regime to hold South Korean, Japanese, and US interests at risk. In addition, such a capability likely would embolden the regime to act more aggressively with its conventional and asymmetric capabilities. Emboldened by its nuclear program, North Korea has already demonstrated its willingness to conduct lethal provocations using conventional capabilities, such as the 2010 sinking of the ROK naval ship Cheonan that resulted in the deaths of 46 ROK Navy sailors, as well as the shelling of Yeongpyong Island (Y-P Do) that killed two ROK Marines and two ROK civilians in November 2010.

North Korea continues to invest heavily in enhancing its already-robust ballistic missile forces, which represent a growing threat and provide a potential delivery capability for nuclear weapons. North Korea's missiles can strike the ROK and Japan, making the deployment of reinforcements and supplies for U.S. forces difficult in the event of hostilities. North Korea remains focused on enhancing these capabilities, as demonstrated by the 2009 launch of a multi-stage rocket and continuing research and development of systems with increased range and lethality.

For the foreseeable future, we expect North Korea to remain an isolated and dangerous nation, with a large conventional force and significant asymmetric capabilities. North Korea threatens the stability and security of the region and U.S. interests in other parts of the world. Although North Korea is currently focused on efforts to engage the ROK and the U.S., history tells us Pyongyang will shift from diplomatic to provocative behavior when conventional diplomacy has run its course and the North Korean leadership perceives coercive diplomacy offers a better chance to realize its objectives. Currently, the greatest threat remains instability in

North Korea or a provocation that culminates in a broader conflict which could, at its extreme, result in the use of weapons of mass destruction.

### **III. MY PRIORITIES**

The Command mission is to deter external aggression against the ROK and U.S.-ROK Alliance and to promote stability on the Korean Peninsula and in Northeast Asia. If deterrence fails, we will decisively defeat external aggression and restore stability on terms favorable to the Alliance. The Command vision is to maintain trained and ready U.S. joint and Alliance combined forces, strengthen the U.S.-ROK Alliance, and provide an operational focus in order to maintain the Armistice in Korea and support the transition to a ROK-led combined defense on the Korean Peninsula in accordance with the Strategic Alliance 2015 plan.

### **READINESS**

Readiness is a key factor in deterring aggression by North Korea and defending the ROK. Trained, ready, and disciplined U.S. joint and Alliance combined commands must be prepared to fight and win, if required to do so. U.S. and ROK forces must be prepared to counter provocations, defeat a North Korean attack on Seoul and the ROK, conduct humanitarian assistance operations, and do so under threat of weapons of mass destruction.

Combined Forces Command and USFK have developed and continue to refine contingency plans that guide the conduct of tough, realistic, combined, and interagency exercises and training. The CFC and ROK military conduct several major exercises every year. The CFC has also added considerable training into its exercise scenarios to improve our ability to defend against North Korean weapons of mass destruction. The CFC and ROK also train to counter North Korean provocations.

Three annual joint and combined exercises warrant special mention: ULCHI FREEDOM GUARDIAN, KEY RESOLVE, and FOAL EAGLE. ULCHI FREEDOM GUARDIAN and KEY RESOLVE are computer-simulated, theater command post exercises conducted by CFC that focus on ensuring readiness for response to provocations, attacks, and instability on the Korean Peninsula. As we approach 2015 and the transition to ROK-led defense of South Korea, these exercises will train the new command and control structure. FOAL EAGLE consists of a series of joint and combined unit tactical level field training events that exercise ground maneuver, air, naval, expeditionary, and special operations capabilities. These events are conducted throughout the Korean Peninsula by off-peninsula units deploying to Korea in order to train with ROK forces.

Force readiness has been strengthened through a significant upgrade to land combat vehicles. New M1A2 Abrams Main Battle Tanks and M2A3 Bradley Infantry Fighting Vehicles now equip the U.S. 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division and replaced older systems. While this equipment rotation did not increase the number of U.S. combat vehicles on the Korean Peninsula, it did significantly upgrade the combat capability of systems used by the Division. The new vehicles are fitted with improved tracking and fire control systems as well as enhanced armor protection.

The ROK military's posture and capabilities are another key component of readiness that supports the Command's deter and defend mission. Numbering over 600,000 active duty personnel and a large reserve force, it is a modern, capable force that fields an array of advanced weapon systems. The ROK military is led by a professional officer corps and has gained valuable operational experience through deployments to Iraq, Afghanistan, the Gulf of Aden, Lebanon, and participation in a host of United Nations peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance operations. ROK leaders understand the requirements for military readiness. The ROK military

also conducts a realistic and tough exercise program that includes the annual TAEGEUK, HWARANG, and HOGUK exercises.

## **STRENGTHENING THE U.S.-ROK ALLIANCE**

A strong U.S.-ROK Alliance is essential for maintaining combined readiness and warfighting capabilities. As stated in the January 2012 Department of Defense Strategic Guidance document, American relationships with Asian allies and key partners are critical to the future stability and growth of the region. A strong U.S.-ROK Alliance helps ensure a peaceful, secure, and prosperous future for the Korean Peninsula and stability in the Asia-Pacific region. Creating and maintaining a strong Alliance comes from building teamwork, mutual trust and confidence. A key element for building teamwork in the Alliance and shaping its future development is the Strategic Alliance 2015 plan.

At the U.S.-ROK Foreign and Defense Minister's Meeting in July 2010, agreement was reached to transition to a ROK-led Alliance defense of the Korean Peninsula. Called Strategic Alliance 2015, the plan synchronizes multiple U.S. and ROK transformation efforts that are designed to build adaptive and flexible capabilities to deter aggression against the ROK and to defeat aggression should it occur. Key elements of the plan include: refining and improving combined defense plans; defining and developing the new organizational structures required for ROK lead during war time; conducting realistic exercises based on the North Korean threat; transition to ROK-led alliance defense on the Korean Peninsula under the ROK Joint Chiefs of Staff in December 2015; and repositioning and consolidating U.S. military forces in the ROK under the Land Partnership Plan and Yongsan Relocation Plan.

As agreed to in Strategic Alliance 2015, the Commander of CFC will transfer wartime operational control to the ROK Joint Chiefs of Staff and the CFC will be disestablished in

December 2015. The U.S. and ROK will activate complementary commands where the U.S. is in a supporting role to the ROK military. During the transformation process, the U.S. will provide bridging capabilities until they can be replaced by the ROK as it transforms its military from a large, ground-centric conscripted force to a leaner and more advanced and professional force with enhanced capability for operations in Korea and globally. U.S. bridging capabilities are vital to enabling the success of this transformation as the ROK accommodates a declining birthrate that puts pressure on sustaining a manpower-intensive conscripted military. The U.S. will also provide enduring capabilities to the Alliance for key mission areas that include extended deterrence, intelligence/surveillance/reconnaissance, precision strike, space operations, and combating weapons of mass destruction.

Existing Alliance structures that ensure unity of effort and planning should be maintained and strengthened as we transition to a ROK-led Alliance defense. Key among these structures is the Military Committee Meeting and Security Consultative Meeting processes that inform and provide guidance to U.S. and ROK warfighting commanders.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, we need to sustain existing Alliance maintenance structures, including the Korea Integrated Defense Dialogue (KIDD) and ROK-U.S. Status of Forces Agreement Joint Committee and associated subcommittees. These Alliance structures provide a whole-of-government approach to addressing Alliance issues.

The ROK continues to provide financial and in-kind support to help offset the cost of stationing U.S. military forces on its territory.<sup>2</sup> Known as burden sharing contributions, the

---

<sup>1</sup> Formal members of the Military Committee include the U.S. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, ROK Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, U.S. Pacific Command Commander, ROK Joint Chiefs of Staff J5, and the Combined Forces Command Commander. Participation in the Security Consultative Meeting includes the U.S. Secretary of Defense and the ROK Minister of National Defense.

<sup>2</sup> USFK manages the receipt and expenditure of burden sharing contributions according to provisions established in 10 U.S.C. 2350(g), 10 U.S.C. 2350(j), the Special Measures Agreement, and the Special Measures Agreement Implementation Arrangement.

annual value of these contributions is dictated by terms established in a five-year (2009-2013) Special Measures Agreement (SMA) currently in effect. During calendar year 2012 the ROK will provide USFK with 836 billion won (\$765 million) of support under the SMA. This support will be distributed between three categories: labor (\$307 million; pays salaries and benefits of USFK's Korean national employees); logistics (\$119 million; covers supplies and services); and ROK Funded Construction (\$339 million; used for USFK's military building design and requirements). Contributions help to ensure the Command maintains readiness to deter North Korean aggression. These contributions also build and maintain the infrastructure needed for the long-term U.S. military force presence in the ROK. Burden sharing expenditures also stimulate the ROK economy through the payment of wages to Korean national workers, Korean supply and service contracts, and Korean construction contracts, serving as a source of economic growth for communities that host USFK facilities.

## **OPERATIONAL FOCUS**

Due to the change occurring in Northeast Asia, U.S. military forces located in the ROK must be adaptive, agile, well trained, and ready to satisfy multiple operational demands. USFK is transforming its posture on the Korean Peninsula to maintain a capability optimized and mission focused force. The transformation process is centered on enhancing readiness to successfully accomplish the mission. Our plan is designed to enhance force capability at best value and within cost constraints while simultaneously adhering to existing agreements with the ROK. Further, the plan maintains appropriate quality of life for service members, Department of Defense civilians, and their families stationed in the ROK. During my confirmation hearing last year, I was asked to report back to the Congress on two key Command initiatives: force repositioning and service member tour lengths in Korea.

### ***Repositioning of U.S. Forces in the ROK***

Congress expressly asked for my assessment of the two major USFK repositioning plans underway. These plans are the Land Partnership Plan (LPP) and the Yongsan Relocation Plan (YRP) which are designed to provide improved readiness at best value to the Alliance. The relocation decision by both the U.S. and ROK governments was prompted by several factors, the foremost of which was better posturing U.S. forces on peninsula. This re-posturing will help accomplish our warfighting mission by improving facilities and consolidating U.S. forces that were previously spread across camps and bases occupied since the Korean War. The plans strengthen mutual trust within the U.S.-ROK Alliance by signaling enduring American commitment. U.S. consolidation of bases contributes to enhanced force protection, survivability, and lower cost for overall force maintenance in Korea as USFK transitions from camps and bases in 107 locations to ultimately less than 50. Upon completion of YRP and LPP, the annual cost for sustainment of U.S. forces in Korea will be reduced from our Fiscal Year 2011 baseline costs. Lastly, and important to our ROK allies, these initiatives will return scarce land, particularly in the city of Seoul, back to the Korean people.

The Land Partnership Plan consolidates most U.S. forces currently in locations north of Seoul to areas south of the capital city and expands infrastructure at Osan Air Base and Camp Mjuk on the East Coast. U.S. Army forces will be concentrated at U.S. Army Garrison (USAG) Humphreys and garrisons in Daegu. Costs associated with the LPP are being shared between the U.S. and ROK.

The Yongsan Relocation Plan will move most forces currently stationed in and around Seoul and Headquarters United Nations Command activities to USAG Humphreys (about 40 miles south of Seoul). Under the YRP, a forward Command element remains in Seoul to

maintain necessary and habitual relationships with the ROK government, U.S. Embassy, and other key organizations and leaders in the capital area. The composition of this command element is under study. This relocation plan was initiated by request of the ROK Government and, as such, the majority of costs associated with this relocation plan are being paid by the ROK. My intent is to posture U.S. forces in a way that ensures the optimal defense of the ROK. I continue to assess the LPP and YRP programs and will carefully coordinate any changes with all stakeholders.

### ***Tour Lengths in Korea***

At my confirmation hearing, I was asked to report on my assessment of Tour Normalization in Korea. The Department is not able to afford Tour Normalization at this time and I am content to remain at the currently authorized 4,645 Command Sponsored Families. I am convinced, however, that a change in personnel policies will improve the readiness of USFK by reducing turbulence. We are working with the Department of Defense to examine how individual tour length extensions and unit rotations could help address this readiness issue.

## **IV. UNITED NATIONS COMMAND**

This year marks the 59th year of a continuing cease fire under the Armistice Agreement in Korea. United Nations Command's (UNC) Armistice enforcement responsibilities, authorities, and ties to 16 UNC Member Nations greatly enhance regional stability and security on the Korean Peninsula.

As commander of UNC, I have significant authorities and responsibilities to maintain the Armistice. I am responsible under the Armistice Agreement for determining all access to, and authorizing the activities within, the UNC controlled southern side of the demilitarized zone between the North and South Korea. One example of this is the direct review, authorization, and



supervision, by a multinational UNC team, of the hundreds of personnel and vehicles crossing the DMZ each day between the ROK North-South Transit Office and the Kaesong Industrial Complex in North Korea.

I also institute regulations and procedures as UNC commander that maintain separation of opposing forces to ensure Armistice compliance. Further, I establish uniform Armistice Rules of Engagement applicable to all forces on our side that define the use of force when required. These rules of engagement preserve the inherent right of self-defense while preventing escalation and ensure a rapid return to armistice conditions.

In addition to overseeing DMZ Guard Post inspections, as the UNC commander I also direct special investigations of all suspected Armistice violations, provide UNC observers for ROK live fire exercises on the Northwest Islands, and enforce Armistice compliance and adherence to international standards of conduct. To ensure international transparency and credibility I also invite Swiss, Swedish and Polish observers from the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission to observe and report their findings on these same Armistice maintenance activities.

Another important role of the UNC Commander is to lead, maintain, and strengthen participation of the 16 Member Nations that make up the UNC. This multinational coalition, established under a United Nations Security Council mandate, continues to provide international legitimacy and transparency to the U.S.-led UNC activities that preserve stability in Korea. In addition, the UNC (Rear) Headquarters in Japan oversees seven UNC-flagged bases in Japan for the transit of UNC aircraft, vessels, equipment, and forces upon notification to the Japanese government. During 2011, Headquarters, UNC (Rear) played a key role in contingency

operations, including Operation TOMODACHI, the disaster relief operation that followed the March 2011 earthquake and ensuing tsunami disaster in Japan.

## **V. SUMMARY**

The Korean Peninsula is a keystone in Northeast Asia, a dynamic region whose global influence is growing and where significant U.S. national interests lie. Uncertainties surrounding leadership changes throughout the region in 2012, and North Korea's nuclear and missile programs, accentuate the security challenges in this region. By maintaining ready U.S. military forces in the ROK, strengthening the U.S.-ROK Alliance, and improving operational focus, the UNC, CFC, and U.S. Forces Korea commands provide a stabilizing presence, promoting stability on the Korean Peninsula and in Northeast Asia as a whole. I am extremely proud of the Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, Department of Defense Civilians, and their Families serving our great nation in the ROK. Your support for them and the U.S.-ROK Alliance is both critical and greatly appreciated. I look forward to continuing to work with the Congress to address the security issues we face on the Korean Peninsula. Thank you.