

Joint Statement of the 2012 United States – Republic of Korea Foreign and Defense Ministers’ Meeting

Preamble

The U.S.-Republic of Korea (ROK) Mutual Defense Treaty remains the foundation of the U.S.-ROK security relationship, and the Ministers reaffirmed our two countries’ commitment to our mutual security. The U.S.-ROK Alliance is a linchpin of stability, security, and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region and increasingly around the world.

Our comprehensive strategic Alliance was born out of the Korean War and is a constant reminder of our shared sacrifice, common values, and mutual interests. The common values of commitment to freedom, democracy, human rights, and the rule of law, along with the close ties between our peoples, are the foundation of this increasingly global Alliance between our two great nations. This year marks the 59th anniversary of our Alliance. On this occasion, U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton and Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta met with Republic of Korea Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Kim Sung-Hwan and Minister of National Defense Kim Kwan Jin in Washington, D.C. on June 14, 2012, to coordinate our common efforts to address challenges on the Korean Peninsula, in the region and across the globe, and discuss ways to advance the Alliance further.

The Ministers noted the important strides made toward fulfilling the 2009 Joint Vision for the Alliance set forth by Presidents Barack Obama and Lee Myung-bak, as well as the Joint Statement from the 2010 U.S. and ROK foreign and defense ministerial meeting in Seoul. The U.S.-ROK Alliance provides an anchor for peace and security on the Korean Peninsula and in the region. In this regard, the Republic of Korea welcomes the United States’ increasing focus and commitment towards Asia, and the United States welcomes the Republic of Korea’s growing contributions to regional and global peace and security far beyond the Korean Peninsula. The Alliance is working to bolster regional initiatives, including constructive efforts made by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and other regional mechanisms such as the East Asia Summit (EAS), the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation forum (APEC), and the

ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). The growth of bilateral economic and people-to-people ties continues to strengthen and deepen the Alliance. The entry into force of the ROK-U.S. Free Trade Agreement (KORUS FTA) in March 2012 has set a milestone for the Alliance, deepening our bilateral economic partnership, spurring growth in both countries, and putting our two nations at the forefront of high-standard regional economic integration in the Asia-Pacific.

U.S.-ROK Alliance

Shared sacrifice, common values, and mutual interests are the core of the Alliance. To meet existing and emerging challenges, the Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to strengthen our joint civilian and military planning efforts, thereby modernizing and deepening the Alliance. We are working to address challenges posed by an increasingly uncertain and evolving strategic environment, including North Korea's nuclear and missile programs and its provocative behavior. These challenges also include the increase of military investments, capabilities, and activities in the region, the emergence of non-traditional security concerns, and other evolving threats, such as in space, the maritime domain, and cyberspace.

The Ministers assessed that the transition of wartime operational control (OPCON) to the Republic of Korea in 2015, supported by an enduring and capable U.S. military force presence on the Korean Peninsula, is on schedule. The United States is determined to provide specific and significant bridging capabilities until the Republic of Korea obtains full self-defense capabilities, and to contribute enduring capabilities for the life of the Alliance. The United States also reiterates its commitment to maintain the current U.S. troop level in the Republic of Korea.

The Ministers also discussed ways to strengthen Alliance capabilities to counter emerging threats. In response to North Korea's growing missile capabilities, they decided to explore ways to strengthen comprehensive and combined defenses against the missile threat.

The Ministers also stressed the need to enhance cooperation related to cyberspace, space, and technology security measures. The Ministers

acknowledged that a proactive and whole-of-government approach is needed to address the increasing threats in cyberspace, which may put the infrastructure of both our nations at great risk. To this end, they decided to establish a cyber issues dialogue involving relevant ministries and agencies, which will help coordinate our government, military, and commercial security policies.

Sharing grave concern over recent provocative behavior by North Korea, the United States reaffirmed its continuing commitment to the defense of the Republic of Korea through the full range of U.S. military capabilities, both conventional and nuclear. The Ministers reaffirmed the need to continue strengthening extended deterrence, through the full range of Alliance nuclear and non-nuclear capabilities, against any and all nuclear and WMD threats from North Korea. To this end, the Ministers expect the U.S.-ROK Extended Deterrence Policy Committee (EDPC) to continue its current efforts for developing a practical and tailored bilateral extended deterrence policy as decided upon at the 43rd U.S.-ROK Security Consultative Meeting (SCM), which will lead to concrete and effective extended deterrence measures against North Korea.

North Korea

The Ministers urged North Korea to cease its provocative behavior, live up to its obligations and commitments, and abide by the terms of the 1953 Armistice Agreement. North Korea's pattern of defiance and provocative actions, combined with its pursuit of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles, constitutes a serious threat to the Alliance, Northeast Asia, and international peace and security. This behavior will be met with solidarity from all threatened countries. The Ministers underscored Alliance solidarity in the event of a North Korean provocation against the Republic of Korea. The United States re-emphasized its steadfast and determined commitment through the Alliance to defend the Republic of Korea against any aggression.

The Ministers welcomed the United Nations (UN) Security Council's clear determination to take action in the event of another North Korean missile launch or nuclear test. They reinforced the April 16 Presidential Statement of the UN Security Council, calling on North Korea to abide by the will of the international community by complying with its obligations under UN Security

Council Resolutions 1718 and 1874 and abandoning all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs, including its uranium enrichment program (UEP). The Ministers called on North Korea to fulfill its commitments under the 2005 Joint Statement of the Six-Party Talks and choose a path toward peace. The Ministers noted that a path for North Korea to rejoin the international community remains available if it refrains from provocations and complies with its international obligations and commitments, which include taking concrete actions toward denuclearization. The Ministers reaffirmed that progress will require North Korea's actions, not assurances. Noting international unity against North Korea's continued development of nuclear and missile programs, the Ministers vowed to continue to coordinate closely with Six-Party Talks partners and to strengthen cooperation with the international community to faithfully implement the sanctions and other measures set forth in UN Security Council Resolutions 1718 and 1874.

The Ministers expressed deep concern about the well-being of the North Korean people and the human rights situation in North Korea. The Ministers called on North Korea to respect the human rights of its citizens. The Ministers declared that North Korea must improve its human rights record in order to improve its relations with the international community. The Ministers also emphasized the need for North Korea to address humanitarian issues and invest in the welfare of its people, including nutrition and education.

Regional Cooperation

The Ministers affirmed the importance of trilateral security collaboration with Japan for regional peace and stability. The Ministers committed to expand the scope of U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral cooperation to include humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, maritime security, freedom of navigation, and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The Ministers further committed to strengthening mechanisms for trilateral security cooperation and coordination, including through the Defense Trilateral Talks.

The Ministers welcomed a stable and prosperous China that plays a constructive role in world affairs. The Ministers undertook to encourage sustained and substantive military-to-military relations with China that can lead to greater confidence building and a stable security environment in the region.

The Ministers recognized China's special role in using its unique relationship to push North Korea to live up to its commitments and obligations. The Ministers emphasized the importance of our common goals of denuclearization and preserving peace and security on the Korean Peninsula and reaffirmed their commitment to work with China, as Chair of the Six-Party Talks, to encourage North Korea to choose a different path.

The Ministers welcome Russia's renewed engagement in the Asia-Pacific region, as Russia is an important Asia-Pacific nation. The Ministers positively note that Russia will host the next Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Leaders Meeting in Vladivostok.

The Ministers promised to work together to support continued progress toward democracy, development, the protection of human rights, and national reconciliation in Burma/Myanmar. The Ministers underscored the importance of Burma/Myanmar's full compliance with all of its international obligations, including UN Security Council resolutions on nonproliferation.

The Alliance continues to play a key role in the broader Asia-Pacific regional security architecture. The United States and the Republic of Korea underscored the importance of ASEAN, and the United States welcomes the Republic of Korea's appointment of its first resident Ambassador to ASEAN. The United States and the Republic of Korea also highlighted the importance of an ASEAN-China Code of Conduct to help advance peace, stability and security in the South China Sea. The Ministers noted that our respective governments also co-chaired the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) Inter-Sessional Meeting on Maritime Security with the Indonesian Government in San Francisco today. The Ministers also underscored the importance of India's "Look East" strategy and committed to identifying ways to increase dialogue, cooperation, and engagement with India.

Global Partnership

The Alliance has taken on a larger role to meet increasing global challenges. These growing challenges highlight not only the essential role of the Alliance in maintaining regional security and stability, but also the need for our two nations to deepen and broaden cooperation.

The Ministers affirmed their commitment to continue close cooperation on Iran, including maintaining pressure on Iran to comply with its international obligations and encouraging Iran to negotiate seriously on its nuclear program through the P5+1 process. The United States expressed appreciation for the Republic of Korea's faithful implementation of both UN Security Council-approved sanctions on Iran and its own national measures, which have been important in sending a clear signal to Iran that it must fully comply with its international obligations, including all relevant resolutions of the UN Security Council and the requirements of the International Atomic Energy Agency Board of Governors.

The Ministers concurred in the need for both countries to coordinate our efforts in the ongoing struggle against extremism in the Middle East as well as through the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan.

Stressing the need to support transitions in the Middle East, the Ministers discussed ways to work together. The United States welcomes the active role of the Republic of Korea in assisting the Libyan people in its reconstruction process, particularly in the identification of its missing persons. The Ministers expressed deep concern over the massive civilian casualties in Syria caused by the indiscriminate use of violence and called upon the Syrian regime and all other parties involved to cease immediately all violence and start a comprehensive political dialogue. The Republic of Korea Government will continue to work toward its deployment of engineers to South Sudan as part of the UN Mission in South Sudan. The Republic of Korea continues to increase its global influence, as evidenced by its peacekeeping missions in Haiti and Lebanon, and its participation in the International Security Assistance Force as one of more than 50 countries participating in that effort, particularly its provincial reconstruction team and development assistance in Afghanistan. We will continue our close cooperation to advance our common goal of a stable, peaceful, and prosperous Afghanistan. The Ministers welcomed the Republic of Korea's continued commitment to support Afghan security.

Alliance coordination on counter-piracy off the Horn of Africa is a testament to the progression of the U.S.-ROK Alliance to promote shared interests beyond the Korean Peninsula. The United States applauded the Republic of Korea for demonstrating its commitment to nonproliferation by hosting the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) Operational Experts Group meeting in September 2012. The President Lee-hosted Nuclear Security Summit (NSS) in March 2012,

which built upon the efforts of the first NSS hosted by President Obama in April 2010, demonstrated the Republic of Korea Government's nuclear security commitment at the highest level. The Ministers concurred that the Seoul NSS served as a meaningful opportunity to further bolster the cooperation between the two countries in the field of nuclear security.

In order to enhance cooperation on regional and global issues, the Ministers decided to strengthen bilateral consultation on Africa, South and Central Asia, the Pacific Islands, Southeast Asia, and development assistance. These consultations will expand our cooperation and enhance coordination of our existing efforts.

The Alliance is pursuing greater efforts on humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, and the United States affirmed that it looks forward to participating in and supporting the Republic of Korea as it co-hosts the ARF Disaster Relief Exercise in 2013. The United States and the Republic of Korea have decided to further strengthen their cooperation for the successful launching and operation of the Global Partnership, which was decided at the Fourth High-Level Forum on Development Assistance at Busan in December 2011. The two countries continue to coordinate their foreign assistance efforts through enhanced cooperation between the Korea International Cooperation Agency and the U.S. Agency for International Development. The Ministers jointly resolved to combat illicit activities such as terrorism, transnational organized crime, and narcotics trafficking, and to eliminate infringement on human rights, reduce poverty, and seek safe harbors for refugees. They reaffirmed their collaboration on efforts to prevent climate change, energy insecurity, and epidemic diseases. The Ministers vowed to strengthen coordination in multilateral mechanisms aimed at global economic recovery, such as the G-20.

Conclusion

The strong Alliance continues to benefit not only the United States and the Republic of Korea, but increasingly the Asia Pacific region and the world at large. Concurring that today's meeting was very productive and useful, the Ministers acknowledged the need to continue to hold consultations to deepen and intensify our cooperation in our areas of mutual interest.