

Joint Communiqué of the 49th ROK-U.S. Security Consultative Meeting

Seoul, October 28, 2017

1. The 49th Republic of Korea (ROK) and United States (U.S.) Security Consultative Meeting (SCM) was held in Seoul on October 28, 2017. ROK Minister of National Defense Song Young-moo and U.S. Secretary of Defense James Mattis led their respective delegations, which included senior defense and foreign affairs officials. On October 27, 2017, the Chairman of the ROK Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Jeong Kyeong-doo, and the U.S. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Joseph F. Dunford Jr., presided over the 42nd ROK-U.S. Military Committee Meeting (MCM).
2. The Minister and the Secretary noted that the ROK-U.S. partnership—which is built on mutual trust as well as shared values of freedom, democracy, human rights, and rule of law—has never been stronger. The two sides will make an effort to develop the Alliance in a mutually reinforcing and future-oriented manner to respond effectively to common security threats. The Minister and the Secretary noted the Korea-U.S. Integrated Defense Dialogue (KIDD) advances Alliance objectives by providing a high-level policy venue to coordinate between the ROK and the United States. In addition, they confirmed the necessity of strengthening close communication and decision-making mechanisms to respond most effectively to changes in the security environment and to advance Alliance priorities.
3. The Minister and the Secretary strongly condemned North Korea’s unprecedented level of provocative behavior—including the recent sixth nuclear test and multiple launches of ballistic missiles—as reckless, disruptive, and clear violations of numerous United Nations (UN) Security Council resolutions. The Minister and the Secretary reiterated that North Korea’s UN Security Council-proscribed nuclear and ballistic missile programs, as well as its proliferation activities, are profound challenges to the international community and pose an increasingly serious threat to the stability of the Korean Peninsula, and the region, as well as to global security and the global nonproliferation regime. The Minister and the Secretary strongly urged North Korea to fulfill its commitments under the September 19, 2005, Joint Statement of the Six-Party Talks and to abide by its obligations under UN Security Council resolutions 1718, 1874, 2087, 2094, 2270, 2321, 2356, 2371, and 2375. They also called on North Korea to cease activities related to its nuclear and ballistic missile programs immediately, and to abandon its nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs, other existing weapons of mass destruction (WMD) programs, and ballistic missile programs in a complete, verifiable, and irreversible manner. Moreover, they emphasized that denuclearization and the cessation of all provocations are the only path for the survival of the regime. The Minister and the Secretary reaffirmed that the ROK and the United States would continue to cooperate closely in pursuit of these goals, expressed their support for the

diplomatic efforts as the most preferred path, and concurred that such diplomatic efforts must be backed by a robust and credible combined defense posture.

4. The Minister and the Secretary reaffirmed the two nations' mutual commitment to the fundamental mission of the Alliance—which is to defend the ROK through a robust combined defense posture, and to enhance the mutual security of both nations under the ROK - U.S. Mutual Defense Treaty. The Minister and the Secretary expressed their confidence in the strength of the Alliance and in the U.S. extended deterrence commitment. They resolved to continue to strengthen the Alliance to remain postured to defend against and respond to North Korean aggression and preserve stability on the Korean Peninsula and in the region. The Minister and the Secretary reaffirmed the need to continue to conduct combined exercises on the Peninsula to strengthen Alliance readiness against North Korean nuclear and missile threats, particularly given the security environment following North Korea's sixth nuclear test and continuous ballistic missile launches. The Minister and the Secretary highlighted that the ROK and the United States approved a new framework for an Extended Deterrence Strategy and Consultation Group (EDSCG), based on the decision by President Trump and President Moon, and decided to hold an EDSCG meeting in the near future. The EDSCG mechanism contributes to improving the Alliance's deterrence posture against the DPRK through deeper coordination on diplomatic, information, military, and economic actions. The Minister and the Secretary expressed their determination to maintain close Alliance coordination to respond effectively to any provocation. In addition, the Minister and the Secretary reaffirmed that any North Korean aggression or military provocation will not be tolerated and that the ROK and the United States commit to work together shoulder-to-shoulder to demonstrate their combined resolve to make North Korea understand that it cannot achieve the ends it seeks through its provocative behavior. The Secretary also committed to maintain the current level of the U.S. military personnel in the ROK and to enhance combat readiness.
5. The Secretary reiterated the longstanding 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 a response that is both effective and overwhelming. The Secretary reaffirmed the 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 Minister and the Secretary 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, weapons of mass destruction (WMD), and ballistic missile threat, and continuing to promote information-sharing and interoperability. The Minister and Secretary highlighted the increased frequency and intensity of deployments of U.S. Navy and Air Force assets, consistent with the Presidents' commitments to enhance rotational deployments of U.S. strategic assets in and around the

Korean Peninsula. The Minister and the Secretary pledged to continue to develop extended deterrence-related policies, procedures, and consultative mechanisms under the auspices of the Deterrence Strategy Committee (DSC) and Extended Deterrence Strategy and Consultation Group (EDSCG), and to increase the execution capabilities of the Tailored Deterrence Strategy (TDS) and the 4D (Detect, Defend, Disrupt, and Destroy) Concept and Principles Implementation Guidelines (CPIG). The Minister and the Secretary shared the understanding that it is necessary to enhance the Alliance deterrence posture, and to this end, pledged to explore ways to expand the scope of cooperation.

6. The Minister and the Secretary highlighted the Alliance decision to operationalize the Terminal High-Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) battery to protect ROK citizens and U.S. Forces Korea (USFK) from the increasing North Korean nuclear and ballistic missile threats. The two reaffirmed that the deployment is provisional pending completion of the related Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), consistent with ROK domestic law. The Minister and the Secretary 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 toward any third party nations.
7. The Minister and the Secretary also decided to enhance information-sharing on North Korean missile threats. The ROK and the United States are committed to maintaining close consultation to develop comprehensive Alliance response capabilities to counter North Korean nuclear, other WMD, and ballistic missile threats. The Minister conveyed that the ROK is seeking to develop expeditiously its own “Kill Chain,” Korean Air and Missile Defense (KAMD), and other Alliance systems to enhance the ROK-U.S. combined defense posture. 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 the Patriot and THAAD. To this end, the ROK commits to continue to invest in capabilities to Detect, Defend, Disrupt, and Destroy North Korean nuclear and missile threats. In this regard, the Minister and the Secretary pledged to implement at the earliest opportunity the decision by the two Presidents to remove limits on missile payload under the Revised Missile Guidelines (RMG).
8. The Minister and the Secretary noted that the ROK and U.S. armed forces are continuing to develop military plans related to crisis situations on the Korean Peninsula to ensure an effective Alliance response. They reaffirmed the need to continue promoting combined exercises and training events and to enhance combined capabilities to prepare for any North Korean provocations in the vicinity of the Northwest Island and Northern Limit Line (NLL). Moreover, the Minister emphasized to the Secretary that the NLL has been an effective means of separating the ROK and North Korean military forces and preventing military tension for

more than 60 years, and urged North Korea to accept the practical value of and abide by the NLL. The Secretary respected the Minister's position on the matter. Additionally, the Minister and the Secretary reaffirmed that the Armistice Agreement and the UN Command remain crucial instruments in maintaining peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula. The Minister and the Secretary committed to continue ROK-U.S. naval cooperation, which would bolster Alliance response capabilities against increasing North Korean maritime provocations. In particular, the two officials lauded previous ROK-U.S. combined naval exercises, such as carrier strike group exercises, ballistic missile warning exercises, and anti-submarine warfare exercises and pledged to continue them. Both sides highlighted that ROK-U.S. naval cooperation improved following the February 2016 relocation of Commander, Naval Forces Korea (CNFK), to the Busan operational base, which also hosts the ROK Naval Operations Command. They also praised U.S. ship port calls to major ROK Navy operational bases, including in Busan, Jinhae, and Jeju.

9. The Minister and the Secretary pledged that the ROK and the United States would address wide-ranging global security challenges of mutual interest, including through peacekeeping operations (PKO), stabilization and reconstruction efforts, regional security cooperation initiatives, and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. The Secretary praised the ROK contributions to various global efforts, including efforts against the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), counter-piracy in the Gulf of Aden, and UN peacekeeping operations. The Minister applauded the leadership demonstrated by the United States in its response against global security challenges, such as its efforts against ISIS. The Secretary expressed appreciation for the ROK Government's continued active participation in the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI). The Minister and the Secretary applauded the ROK-U.S. Counter WMD (CWMD) efforts to enhance the Alliance's combined capability to prevent the acquisition and use of WMD, and to mitigate its threats. Additionally, the Minister and the Secretary assessed that the Adaptive Shield exercise has contributed to Alliance response capabilities against various chemical, biological, and radiological threats, and resolved to strengthen cooperation on this front.
10. The Minister and the Secretary reaffirmed the need to strengthen cooperation in the space and cyberspace domains, and to promote the security of critical infrastructure of information and space systems. The Minister and the Secretary lauded the inaugural Space Cooperation table-top exercise (TTX) in Washington, D.C., in September 2017, and pledged to expand bilateral space coordination in response to security threats in the space domain, to enhance mission assurance for space capabilities, and to strengthen cooperation in Space Situational Awareness. The Minister and the Secretary discussed the increase in cyber threats and the elevation of U.S. Cyber Command to a unified combatant command. They recognized cyber capacity as a core security issue and decided to expand bilateral defense cooperation in cyber-

related areas. Through regular bilateral engagements and the ROK-U.S. Cyber Cooperation Working Group (CCWG), both sides plan to continue to explore new opportunities to enhance cooperation. The Minister and the Secretary praised advances in ROK-U.S. science and technology cooperation since the last SCM, highlighting successes in robotics and autonomous technologies cooperation, and establishing task objectives and schedules at the Defense Technological and Industrial Cooperation Committee (DTICC). The Minister and the Secretary assessed that such defense science and technological cooperation contributes greatly to defense capabilities and the interoperability of the Alliance, and resolved to seek measures to deepen and expand cooperation.

11. The Minister and the Secretary received a report on the results of the ROK-U.S. MCM from the Commander of the ROK-U.S. Combined Forces Command (CFC), General Vincent Brooks, which highlighted that the combined defense posture is capable and ready to “Fight Tonight” and is prepared to respond effectively to any North Korean provocation, instability, or aggression.
12. The Minister and the Secretary pledged to make joint efforts to implement steadily the decision by President Trump and President Moon in June 2017 to enable the expeditious conditions-based transfer of wartime operational control (OPCON). The Minister emphasized the ROK commitment to complete the preparations necessary to exercise OPCON in accordance with the signed Conditions-Based OPCON Transition Plan (COTP), such as acquiring critical capabilities, in conjunction with the ongoing defense reform. The Minister and the Secretary were updated on the draft organization of the future Combined Forces Command from the MCM and decided to continue to refine the draft through combined exercises and certifications. They also committed to develop Alliance Guiding Principles for the further enhancement of combined defense posture post-OPCON transition. The two sides also decided to reexamine the implementation plan for OPCON transition, such as the Alliance capability acquisition plan, Terms of Reference – Relationship (TOR-R) and Operation Plan, and combined exercises and certification plan, and to jointly update COTP by the 50th SCM.
13. The Minister and the Secretary reaffirmed that USFK relocation and camp returns are in the interests of the United States and the ROK and pledged to work together closely to complete these efforts successfully. The Minister and the Secretary reaffirmed their commitment to strive for the timely completion of the Yongsan Relocation Plan (YRP) and Land Partnership Plan (LPP). The Minister and the Secretary noted the force relocation process is being advanced, including the relocation of the 8th Army Headquarters to U.S. Army Garrison Humphreys (USAG-H). They also noted that the relocation of most remaining units to USAG-H, such as USFK and the 2nd Infantry Division Headquarters, is planned for 2018.

The Secretary expressed appreciation for the ROK's support of the outstanding construction of USAG-H and the smooth relocation process. The two sides intend to continue to cooperate closely to enable seamless progress of the remaining USFK base relocation. The two also decided to continue efforts to consult closely on camp return issues through the Joint Environmental Assessment Procedure (JEAP).

14. The Minister and the Secretary recognized that the United States, the ROK, and Japan face common security challenges in the Asia-Pacific region, and declared that North Korea's development of nuclear and ballistic missile capabilities—including intercontinental and submarine-launched ballistic missile development—threatens the security and prosperity of the three countries. They also committed to continue exercises including those for missile warning and anti-submarine warfare, and lauded trilateral efforts to expand information-sharing on North Korea's nuclear and missile threats and enhance response capabilities, including the execution of multiple combined flight training missions with U.S. bomber aircraft. Accordingly, the two pledged to take necessary steps to improve trilateral information-sharing and strengthen response posture through robust consultations. Additionally, Minister and the Secretary committed to promote security cooperation among the United States, the ROK, and Japan to contribute to peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region.
15. The Minister and the Secretary confirmed that defense cost-sharing contributes to strengthening combined defense capabilities on the Korean Peninsula. The Secretary offered his appreciation for the ROK's contributions in providing a stable stationing environment for USFK and for the ROK's comprehensive and equitable security burden-sharing efforts.
16. The Minister and the Secretary praised the inaugural meeting of the Defense Technology Strategy and Cooperation Group (DTSCG) in July 2016 and committed to hold the next round of DTSCG meetings in the near future to advance policy and strategic discussions on defense technology security, foreign policy, and defense industrial technology cooperation in support of the Alliance.
17. The Minister expressed encouragement and gratitude for the 2nd Infantry Division (2ID) for its contribution to the defense of the Korean Peninsula and peace in Northeast Asia, and congratulated 2ID's 100th anniversary on October 26.
18. Minister Song and Secretary Mattis expressed appreciation for the courtesy, hospitality, and work by both sides that contributed to the success of this year's SCM. The Minister and the Secretary affirmed that the discussions during the 49th SCM and the 42nd MCM contributed

substantively to strengthening the ROK-U.S. Alliance and further enhanced the development of the bilateral defense relationship into a mutually reinforcing Alliance. Both sides expect to hold the 50th SCM in Washington, D.C., at a mutually convenient time in 2018.

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