

**STATEMENT OF
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COMMANDER, UNITED STATES-REPUBLIC OF KOREA COMBINED
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**BEFORE THE
HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE**

27 MARCH 2019



INTRODUCTION

Chairman Smith, Ranking Member Thornberry, and distinguished Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to report on the posture and readiness of our forces in the Republic of Korea (ROK). Thank you as well to the Congress, and in particular this committee's leadership, for delivering the FY19 National Defense Authorization Act and related Appropriations on time.

Predictable, stable resourcing, more than any other factor, allows us to sustain the military readiness we have rebuilt over the last few years. In 2018, the Services, under the leadership of Chairman Dunford and former Secretary Mattis, made significant strides to improve the overall readiness posture of United States Forces Korea (USFK) and our ability to "fight tonight." We are grateful for their continued support.

I have had the distinct honor to command the United Nations Command (UNC), the Combined Forces Command (CFC), and USFK for just over 120 days. During that short time, I have prioritized firsthand visits and a personal review of the posture, readiness, and character of the warriors and organizations of these three commands. My assessment is that the ROK-US military Alliance is stronger than ever, and that our combined force stands as a strategic deterrent, postured to respond to potential crisis or provocation and, if called upon, ready to "fight tonight" in the defense of the Republic of Korea. The alliance between South Korean and American forces is ironclad – forged in blood, shaped over 65 years of combined military operations and training, and hardened by the crucible of war. Shared sacrifice and mutually agreed principles underpin our Alliance and ensure it endures the winds of change.

This posture statement, along with my testimony before the Committee in open and closed session, is my first opportunity to provide you my personal assessment and measurement of progress within our four enduring priorities:

sustain and strengthen the Alliance, maintain the armistice, transform the Alliance, and sustain the force. To that end, this statement provides a summary of the changes in our operating environment, an assessment of our posture and readiness, an overview of our exercise planning and conduct, a discussion of how we take care of our warriors and their families, and a review of our current resourcing priorities. The continued support of this Committee for the incredible men and women of UNC/CFC/USFK is appreciated. We are a better postured force because of your unwavering commitment to military readiness on the Korean peninsula.

OPERATING ENVIRONMENT

Ongoing diplomatic engagement and summitry among the leaders of the ROK, US and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) in 2018 led to a palpable reduction in tension when compared to the recent years of missile launches and nuclear tests. The inter-Korean Comprehensive Military Agreement (CMA) has produced a number of nascent confidence-building measures: demilitarization of the Joint Security Area (JSA), demining small areas of the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) in preparation for ROK-DPRK joint remains recovery operations this spring, mutually-verified removal of select guard posts along the DMZ, and increased interaction between UNC forces and Korean People's Army (KPA) forces operating within the JSA. All of these measures support improved military-to-military communications among the ROK, DPRK, and UNC, and some have sparked limited cooperation. These steps, regardless of size or scope, are positive indicators of the impact sustained diplomatic efforts have begun to bring about. Current modifications in atmosphericics, however, do not represent a substantive change in North Korea's military posture or readiness. The North Korean military remains formidable and dangerous, with no discernable

differences in the assessed force structure, readiness, or lethality my predecessor reported in 2018.

While Kim Jong-un's (KJU) 2019 New Year's speech called for South Korea to halt joint military exercises with the United States, the KPA's Winter Training Cycle this year commenced as it has for the past five years – with a force of over one million engaged in individual and unit-level training throughout the country. Notably, the size, scope, and timing of training events are consistent with recent years. The only observable change has been a reduction in the attention and bellicosity the regime layers onto its military activities. Since the end of 2017, Pyongyang has reduced its hostile rhetoric and halted media coverage of KJU attending capstone events such as large-scale, live-fire training or special operations raids on mock-up Alliance targets. It is, however, too soon to conclude that a lower profile is indicative of lesser risk.

The hard work of diplomacy continues to reduce tensions and create the environment necessary for North Korea to choose the path of denuclearization, forge a lasting peace, and create a brighter future for its people. The recent Hanoi Summit keeps us on this path through a frank exchange of detailed positions and narrowing of the gaps toward possible agreements. Diplomacy is challenging, but remains the mechanism underpinning the transformation we have witnessed over the past 14 months as we've moved from provocation to détente. Still, I am clear-eyed about the fact that little to no verifiable change has occurred in North Korea's conventional and asymmetric capabilities that continue to hold the United States, South Korea, and our regional allies at risk. For these reasons, the security situation continues to demand an appropriately postured and ready force.

Amid shifting atmospherics, 2018 was also a seminal period for all three commands as initiatives for setting the force matured, dramatically changing the geography of three headquarters. The USFK and UNC Headquarters relocated to

Camp Humphreys, joining Eighth Army and 2nd Infantry Division in new state-of-the-art facilities on the largest US Army facility outside of continental United States. The headquarters for CFC remains in Seoul at Yongsan and the combined ROK-US staff is redefining normal operations based upon this change in geography. While distance will not erode the strength of the Alliance, it has forced, and will continue to require, deeper thought about how to sustain operational readiness across the components and at each echelon. For any Member of Congress who has not been to Korea in the past 24 months, we have reset the force significantly and consolidated tremendous capability in Pyeongtaek – the conditions for the development and sustainment of combat readiness have changed.

THE ARMISTICE AGREEMENT AND UNITED NATIONS COMMAND

The significantly changing environment along the DMZ, and within the JSA specifically, is proving the inherent utility, adaptability, and importance of the UNC. Over the past 14 months, we have evolved as the CMA and inter-Korean dialogue birthed several of the confidence-building measures summarized above. CMA-related activities are important to the development of the confidence and trust necessary to diplomatic progress and are proving to be value-added reinforcements to the tools which have helped ensure the security of Korean peninsula for the last 65 years – the 1953 Armistice Agreement and the command that fulfills it. UNC was formed to organize and operationalize the international community’s defense of South Korea during the war and has, since 1978 when South Korea assumed armistice operational control, endured as the body explicitly tasked with “ensur[ing] a complete cessation of hostilities and of all acts of armed force in Korea until a final peace settlement is achieved.” The events of 2018 highlight UNC’s critical role as the home for international commitments on the

Korean peninsula while simultaneously driving the command toward a marked increase in activity, exposure, and international engagement.

While enforcing the Armistice Agreement, securing the JSA as a place for diplomacy, and acting as a principal partner with ROK and KPA in the trilateral military talks, the UNC Military Armistice Commission (UNCMAC) approved 13,066 border crossings in 2018 (compared with five in 2017), passed 152 official messages (56 in 2017), and participated in several staff-level and General Officer-level negotiations. UNC staff met the dramatic increase in requirements while simultaneously continuing the work of evolving the command by increasing UN Sending State staff and senior officers and simultaneously executing the move from the legacy facilities at Yongsan to a new facility on Camp Humphreys. Today, UNCMAC is a vital participant in the ongoing negotiations and it provides international legitimacy and validation to all of the ongoing confidence building measures. UNCMAC has adapted to new conditions and remains the vital tool envisioned in the 1953 agreement. UNC as a command, enabled during armistice by the UNCMAC, the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission, and UNC-Rear in Japan, also remains prepared to be the critical link between the international community and the other two commands during periods of crisis or contingency as the home for Sending State force contributions.

POSTURING AND SUSTAINING A READY FORCE

Fielding a ready force requires establishing a foundation of support and sustainment capable of meeting the warfighters' needs in the dynamic and uncertain environment of the 21st century. On the Korean peninsula, we operate at the distant edge of our military's global logistics chain. Our position requires tight integration with our South Korean ally, meticulous planning, and organized efforts to forward-position adequate capabilities and the materiel essential to power

projection and contingency response. Today, that foundation is sound and serves as the bedrock from which we deter aggression and are prepared to defeat, if necessary, any adversary. Moreover, our posture supports this period of détente and negotiation by permitting our diplomats to speak from a position of unquestioned strength and capability.

Sustaining a combat-ready force requires focused investments, and South Korea is an exemplary ally in that regard. President Moon's administration is committed to resourcing the Republic of Korea's defense and has increased annual spending by bringing total outlays to 2.7% of GDP. Further, the Moon Administration has pledged to raise ROK defense spending to 2.9% of its GDP by 2022. South Korea's 2019 Defense Budget increased 8.2% from the previous year and it apportions funds to programs necessary to advance the Conditions-Based OPCON Transition Plan and the Defense Reform 2.0 initiative. The ROK has invested more in its defense over the past 15 years than it had in the previous 50, increasing foreign military procurements from the United States such as the KF-16 and PATRIOT battery upgrades, AH-64E Apaches, the F-15K, RQ-4 Global Hawk variants, and the F-35A Joint Strike Fighter. This level of investment funding traditionally exceeds the commitment of other allies and regional partners. In 2018 alone, the ROK signed \$2.160 billion in Foreign Military Sales cases (including a purchase of P-8A aircraft) in support of our shared security commitments as allies.

Since 1991, a key element of sustaining the force has been the Special Measures Agreement (SMA), whereby the South Korean government shares the cost of sustaining the USFK force posture. The SMA assures essential readiness-related personnel and activities, such as the contributions of 9,000 Korean National employees serving in crucial roles of public safety, health care, emergency response, and quality-of-life delivery operations. As of this writing, the United States and the Republic of Korea have reached an agreement on the 10th SMA, and

we anticipate ratification by the ROK National Assembly soon. USFK appreciates the considerable support our ROK ally provides, including the SMA contributions which defray a portion of the cost of maintaining US forces in Korea.

Similarly, South Korea's continued investment in military construction and modernization helps ensure our forces are postured, prepared, and properly set for the future. The Land Partnership Plan (LPP) and the associated Yongsan Relocation Plan (YRP) are two bilateral agreements that provide the foundation for streamlining USFK's footprint while returning facilities and valuable land to the South Korean government for future development. USFK and UNC took a major step forward in 2018 by relocating both commands from US Army Garrison Yongsan, a legacy cantonment in the heart of Seoul, to Camp Humphreys, a large, modern base, which serves as the fulcrum for the enduring US presence in Korea. In total, USFK has returned 49 sites to the ROK since 2003 while simultaneously moving the majority of our forces and families away from the DMZ and closer to centralized support hubs located near major air and sea ports.

With the support of this Committee, the Secretary of Defense, and INDOPACOM, in 2018, USFK improved its posture by forward-locating onto the peninsula certain capabilities, improving others, and increasing the capacity of the most crucial warfighting functions. Significant gains in posture during 2018 include essential munitions, ballistic missile defense systems, and pre-positioned wartime stocks. Our efforts, with assistance from the Services, have reduced stocks of forward-positioned, outdated munitions by over 214,000 tons. We are on track to complete the required retrograde by December 2019. The Department continues to apply the \$784M appropriated since 2017 towards resolving our joint emergent operational need statement related to improving the posture, sustainment, and integration of our missile defense systems. The recent draw, operational testing, and turn-in of 14 M1A2 tanks from our prepositioned stocks was the first in a

series of exercises validating the concept and improving our preparedness to rapidly execute similar activities during contingency conditions. Additionally, rotational forces augment the 28,500 member baseline, bringing with them high-end systems and leaving with invaluable experience in the theater operating environment and combined interoperability.

The aggregate result of seven decades of committed partnership under our Mutual Defense Treaty is our ironclad Alliance and capable forward presence, the elements directly responsible for creating and sustaining an environment conducive to both deterrence and diplomacy. As we sustain readiness for any potential provocation or conflict, we support those working toward enduring peace and denuclearization.

EXERCISING THE FORCE FOR JOINT AND COMBINED COMPETENCY

Last year we commemorated the 40th Anniversary of the establishment of the CFC, which has played a central role in deterring war on the Korean peninsula and defending the ROK since November 7, 1978. During 2018, the CFC made significant advances to ensure the long term relevance of our combined warfighting capability. The Alliance Guiding Principles, a framework to ensure a unified, ready defense posture following OPCON transition, was bilaterally developed and endorsed by our two governments. Progress in operational concept refinement, military plans, and strategic documents has further enhanced our combined defense capabilities. Advances across CFC, the heart of the ROK-US Alliance, serve as evidence of the ironclad nature of the ROK-US Alliance and reinforce my view that our combined force relationship is stronger than ever.

Planning is regarded as an indispensable element of military readiness, and in 2018 the Joint Staff and INDOPACOM worked diligently with USFK to assess

and refine plans for potential contingency operations on the Korean Peninsula. A bottom-up review of force requirements, unit-level readiness, and global mission impact has been accomplished. In accordance with the National Defense Strategy, we stand prepared to rapidly receive and integrate the personnel and materiel necessary to buttress the forward-deployed force in Korea during periods of crisis or conflict.

Combat readiness is perishable. This fact is especially true of forces in Korea due to the high-turnover among our service members, American and Korean alike, across the spectrum of missions and roles. The benchmark for readiness is demonstrating the competencies necessary to plan and execute joint and combined operations under the strain of crisis or wartime conditions. Tactical training sharpens the baseline skills essential to success on the modern battlefield for our Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines. Exercises provide the venue to coordinate and synchronize operational-level headquarters like CFC (the warfighting command on the peninsula) and the combined service Components across time and space in a dynamic environment – a critical operational competency during times of crisis. This is true for militaries the world over, all of whom strive to exercise under conditions anticipated in potential conflict. To succeed in war, we must train hard in peace. To succeed in Korea, we must train the CFC in the essential tasks necessary to credibly deter aggression and readily deliver victory if challenged.

However, we must continuously strike a balance between the clear need to train and exercise military capability and the requirement to create space for and support strategic diplomacy. To help achieve this equilibrium, we are innovating and evolving our approach by tuning 4 dials that adjust exercise design and conduct – size, scope, volume, and timing. Adjustments to these dials allows exercise design to remain in tune with diplomatic and political requirements without sacrificing the training of essential tasks. Additionally, such fine tuning

allows for the mitigation of impacts inherent to rapidly switching from our traditional large-scale exercise program to one of more targeted events.

USFK and CFC work closely with our South Korean partners and INDOPACOM to routinely conduct training, both joint and combined, which test the preparedness and resiliency of our foundation, refine operational concepts, and sustain high levels of proficiency for mission essential tasks. Recently, we completed a significant step in our evolution by conducting the first of our combined command post exercises (CPX) planned and executed in accordance with the fine tuning previously discussed. This CPX, DONG MAENG (DM) 19.1 (Dong Maeng translates to “Alliance”), exercised the tactical, operational, and strategic competencies related to military operations on the Korean peninsula. Additionally, DM builds upon the relationships, lessons learned, and staff interactions derived from the many small-scale training and exercise events conducted by our components throughout the year – our air, ground, naval, and marine forces train habitually with their ROK counterparts on the fundamentals of warfighting. We continue to aggressively pursue innovative approaches to joint and combined training and are committed to demonstrating that creating space for diplomacy need not impede military readiness.

TAKING CARE OF OUR WARRIORS AND THEIR FAMILIES

Service members, civilians, and families are our most precious resource, and I am committed to providing the best possible quality of life for them as they serve their nation while stationed in South Korea. Among my priorities of effort are sexual assault prevention and response, command sponsorship, high quality medical care, and providing safe, quality housing options which meet or exceed requirements.

United States Forces Korea is committed to strict compliance with all Secretary of Defense and Service Chief Requirements and is working toward the goal of eliminating sexual assault by fostering a culture of dignity and respect across the Command. Our approach is prevention-focused with an uncompromising adherence to commander involvement and victim assistance guided by five critical focus areas: prevention, victim assistance, investigation, accountability, and assessment.

My personal philosophy is ensuring personnel understand they are responsible for fostering a climate where sexist behavior, harassment, and assault are not tolerated. Additionally, victims' reports are to be treated with the utmost seriousness and bystanders are expected to intervene – offensive or criminal conduct is neither tolerated nor condoned.

I continually assess the wellbeing of the 7,600 Department of Defense dependents living in Korea. The Command Sponsorship Program enables 24-36 months accompanied tours for service members. These tour lengths are far superior to 12-month unaccompanied tours and benefit our service members, our families, and the commands. Serving in Korea accompanied by one's family improves quality of life and morale while simultaneously increasing continuity and heightened levels of theater-specific competency. I fully support our Command Sponsorship Program and assess South Korea to be among the safest locations for service members and their families to serve abroad.

Among the most important quality of life issues in South Korea is access to high quality medical care for service members and their families. TRICARE beneficiaries in South Korea have access to the entire spectrum of healthcare services through Department of Defense hospitals and clinics plus a TRICARE network of 30 first-class host nation hospitals. In addition, the construction, validation and certification of the new, state-of-the-art Brian Allgood Army

Community Hospital at Camp Humphreys, once delayed by as much as 8-months, has now been placed on track for completion by November 2019. Before year's end, we will deliver a new facility for our families, one that meets or exceeds all US medical requirements and standards.

Lastly, we are committed to ensuring all government provisioned or funded housing meets or exceeds the standards and expectations of our service members and their families for safe, high-quality residences. We are addressing this specific issue during town halls at every camp, post, and installation on the peninsula, implementing aggressive work plans to address existing problems and developing a sustainment campaign in order to assure service members of our commitment to their quality of life and provide them the forum and empowerment to speak up when something is not right.

RESOURCING READINESS

I wish to thank the Committee for their continued commitment to the readiness of UNC/CFC/USFK and for supporting the development and fielding of capabilities critical to sustaining our edge and mitigating asymmetric threats. To further harden our posture and improve our readiness to act, my prioritized areas of concentration for future investment are: the network, situational awareness, lethality, and interoperability.

The dynamic nature of conflict, particularly in a combined setting, applies unique stress on the networks upon which command and control, communication, computers, and intelligence rely. Our networks must remain impervious to cyber intrusion or effect; the DPRK demonstrates increasing cyber capacity that must be matched and thwarted. Intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) assets along with sensors capable of detecting a broad array of threats and activities provide the situational awareness that informs decision-making during both

armistice conditions and crisis. We require persistent ISR that overcomes the inherent challenges of geography and allows for reliable operational indications and warning that prevents strategic miscalculation. Increasingly lethal capabilities, from the tactical to operational, are required for unquestioned power projection in a region with rapidly advancing competitors and adversaries. Our superiority in the air remains vitally important; our ability to rapidly counter aggression and defend South Korea relies upon dominant air power. Lastly, interoperability remains essential if we are to derive the benefits of joint and combined warfighting.

We are making progress in each of these areas by working in close coordination with the Department of Defense, INDOPACOM, our South Korean ally, UN Sending States, the interagency, industry, and academic partners. I look forward to answering your questions concerning these initiatives and providing you with all relevant information required to inform this Committee's work.

CONCLUSION

I remain confident that our four enduring priorities are correct in the short term: sustain and strengthen the Alliance, maintain the armistice, transform the Alliance, and sustain the force. The central themes of my 120-day personal assessment will underpin my continued review of readiness in an ever-changing strategic environment and will help us remain focused on these priorities.

The men and women, military and civilian alike, who serve within the UNC, CFC, and USFK have the tools required for success. They are highly motivated, capably armed, and well supported by their parent service, the Department of Defense, and this Committee. The force is sufficiently postured to deter aggression and defeat any adversary, if necessary. We continue to train at echelon to maintain the readiness required to translate a strong military posture into decisive victory on short notice.

Our Alliance with the Republic of Korea remains ironclad and stands as a testament to our shared history of service and sacrifice. The combined strength of that alliance is formidable as our warriors embody our slogan – *Katchi Kapshida* (*We go together*)! As Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines of both nations make the daily sacrifices inherent to uniformed service, we strive to ensure we provide for them and their families. A well postured, ready, and nurtured force strikes fear in the heart of those who would challenge it.

We are in a historic period on the Korean Peninsula. While the near-term future is unclear, the significance of this moment cannot be overstated. In the midst of dynamic change, UNC/CFC/USFK stands as a steadfast, stabilizing presence in the region. This has been the case for over 65 years and will continue into the decades ahead. I am proud to lead the men and women who carry on the noble work of generations past. I am confident that our actions – our readiness – directly contributes to the defense of the United States and the security of South Korea, while providing the credible military strength from which our distinguished diplomats can negotiate and advance lasting peace for the Korean peninsula and the region.