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Before the

**House Foreign Affairs Committee
Subcommittee on Asia and the Pacific and
Subcommittee on Terrorism, Nonproliferation, and Trade**

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Next Steps in the U.S. - Republic of Korea Alliance

Chairman Chabot, Chairman Poe, Mr. Faleomavaega, Mr. Sherman, and Members of the Subcommittees, I am pleased to appear before you today to discuss this important topic. The U.S.-Republic of Korea (ROK) alliance is a linchpin of security and prosperity in Northeast Asia, and our bilateral ties have never been stronger. This year marks the 60th anniversary of the U.S.-ROK Mutual Defense Treaty, the foundation of our alliance and a force for peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula. Over the past six decades, our close cooperation has evolved into an increasingly global partnership, and our economic and people-to-people ties are as robust as ever. Today, while our alliance continues to counter the threat from North Korea, we are expanding our cooperation to meet 21st-century challenges on the Korean Peninsula, in the Asia-Pacific region, and beyond.

A Future-Oriented Alliance

During her May 8 address to a joint meeting of Congress, Republic of Korea President Park Geun-hye said: “Along our journey, we have been aided by great friends and among them, the United States is second to none.” Our alliance was forged in shared sacrifice in the Korean War sixty years ago, and it continues to provide an anchor for peace and security in the region. Today, we continue to strengthen and adapt our alliance to meet existing and emerging security challenges.

As stated by Presidents Obama and Park in their May 7 joint declaration, we have made significant progress on the goals outlined in our 2009 Joint Vision for the Alliance statement. The blueprint for the future of our alliance includes our

Strategic Alliance 2015 plan, which outlines the conditions for the transition of wartime operational control (OPCON) to a Republic of Korea-led defense in December 2015. Our two countries continue to improve our interoperability and readiness through annual joint and combined exercises, and through a bilateral Extended Deterrence Policy Committee that focuses on improving the effectiveness of extended deterrence against threats posed by North Korean nuclear and weapons of mass destruction programs.

Cooperation on Global Issues

Presidents Obama and Park on May 7 highlighted recent successes and publicly committed to deepening our cooperation on global challenges, an increasingly important pillar of the U.S.-ROK alliance. The Republic of Korea hosted the November 2010 G-20 Summit, the November 2011 Fourth High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, and the March 2012 Nuclear Security Summit. The Republic of Korea is currently a non-permanent member on the UN Security Council and our cooperation at the UN and in other multilateral fora has been excellent. We also have outstanding cooperation on countering biological threats, and just last week the Republic of Korea hosted our third bilateral, whole-of-government biopreparedness “Able Response” exercise.

U.S. and Korean soldiers serve side by side in Afghanistan, where the Republic of Korea is a major donor to reconstruction and stabilization efforts. The Republic of Korea has been a leader in supporting international efforts to resolve the Iranian nuclear issue, including by supporting Iran sanctions and significantly reducing imports of oil from Iran. We are working together on Syria, where the Republic of Korea is providing assistance to address the humanitarian needs of the Syrian people. In April, we held the second U.S.-ROK Africa Dialogue, to share views and advance our cooperation on economic development and political and security issues in Africa.

A Strong Economic Partnership

The engine of our alliance is our deep economic cooperation. The Republic of Korea is Asia’s fourth-largest economy and our seventh-largest trading partner; our two countries have one of the most vibrant trading relationships in the world, one that topped over \$100 billion in 2012. The year 2013, in addition to marking the 60th anniversary of our alliance, also marks the first anniversary of the entry into force of the U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement (KORUS FTA). The KORUS FTA is increasing trade and investment between our two countries, is providing

significant new opportunities for U.S. exporters, businesses, workers, and farmers, and reflects the depth and maturity of our strategic relationship. Our two countries continue to work together closely to fully implement the KORUS FTA, and we look forward to even more economic benefits as more provisions of the agreement are implemented.

The landmark KORUS FTA is not simply focused on strengthening trade ties, but also deepens the political and strategic partnership with our key Asia-Pacific ally and demonstrates to Americans and Koreans alike that our relationship brings them real, practical benefits. Our commitment to the KORUS FTA enhances our credibility as a Pacific power and tells the world that we will remain engaged in the Asia-Pacific region. As President Park said before Congress last month, the KORUS FTA “helps underpin Washington’s rebalancing toward the region.”

On the topic of economic development, there is no better example than the Republic of Korea, which has made extraordinary progress, from a recipient of foreign aid and Peace Corps volunteers in the past, to a thriving economic powerhouse and international aid donor today. The ROK example shows the benefits of investing in development aid and people-to-people ties, and we plan to further expand our development partnership with Korea on a global basis. Building on the development cooperation memorandum of understanding (MOU) we signed in 2011, the Peace Corps and the Korea International Cooperation Agency will sign an MOU to collaborate on global development and international volunteer programs. This type of cooperation not only advances our shared interests, but will help forge closer ties between future generations of young Americans and Koreans.

Strong Science and Technology Ties

Our substantial ties also include strong cooperation in science and technology, on cyber space and cyber security, and on climate change and energy. The United States and Republic of Korea are also global leaders and partners on peaceful nuclear energy. We both recently decided to seek an extension of our existing civil nuclear cooperation agreement which has benefitted our two countries for over four decades and are in the process of negotiating a successor agreement to continue and expand this longstanding and fruitful cooperation in the future. As President Obama said, “I believe that we can find a way to support South Korea’s energy and commercial needs even as we uphold our mutual commitments to prevent nuclear proliferation.” The Administration is ready to work with Congress to achieve an early extension of the existing agreement, and we are grateful for

your efforts on the related pending draft legislation. We are confident that our two governments can produce a successor agreement that advances both our shared nonproliferation and nuclear cooperation policy objectives.

Deep People-to-People Ties

The foundation of our alliance and our sixty years of partnership and shared prosperity rests on our people-to-people ties and our shared values—a commitment to freedom, democracy, and the rule of law. Ties between Americans and Koreans are deeper and tighter than ever: Last year more than one million South Koreans visited the United States. The Republic of Korea sends more university students to the United States per capita than any other major economy, over 72,000 per year—a strong vote of confidence in the U.S. education system and the future of U.S.-ROK ties. The United States is the clear top choice for Korean entrepreneurs and scientists seeking to create businesses and develop new technologies, and we support efforts to facilitate such exchanges.

Our countries are working to reinvigorate exchange programs between Americans and Koreans. In May, we jointly announced our intent to renew the Work, English, Study, and Travel (WEST) program, which provides an opportunity for qualified university students from Korea to study English, participate in internships, and travel independently in the United States. We are also expanding the U.S.-Korea Fulbright Program through the creation of two new Fulbright scholarships focused on U.S.-ROK alliance studies. Our International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP), which brings promising young Korean leaders to the United States on professional exchanges, has had notable successes—over 100 current and former ROK legislators and multiple cabinet ministers have been IVLP alumni.

Perhaps the most important example of our close ties is the proud legacy of Korean-Americans—over two million strong—who have made crucial contributions to America’s prosperity, defended America’s freedom, added their own unique qualities to America’s culture, and distinguished themselves in academia, science, medicine, business, and athletics. Korean-Americans increase the strength and vitality of our strong partnership.

DPRK

Let me turn now to perhaps the greatest challenge our alliance faces—North Korea. Many of the DPRK’s provocations in recent months—from its missile

launch in December to its third nuclear test in February and subsequent bellicose rhetoric —have directly targeted the United States and the Republic of Korea. Let me be clear: the United States remains fully committed to the defense of the Republic of Korea, and we will continue to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with our ally in the face of these North Korean provocations, including through extended deterrence and the full range of U.S. military capabilities, both conventional and nuclear.

Despite the DPRK's recent overtures in the region and outreach to counterparts in the Six-Party process, we have yet to see concrete steps suggesting that North Korea is prepared to negotiate on the key issue of paramount concern: the verifiable denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. We continue to coordinate closely with the ROK, as well as other Six-Party partners, on North Korea policy. The United States remains committed to authentic and credible negotiations to implement the September 2005 Joint Statement of the Six-Party Talks and to bring North Korea into compliance with its international obligations through irreversible steps leading to denuclearization. We will not accept North Korea as a nuclear-armed state, nor will we reward the DPRK for the absence of bad behavior, or compensate the DPRK merely for returning to dialogue. We have also made clear that U.S.-DPRK relations cannot fundamentally improve without sustained improvement in inter-Korean relations, which we support.

Like the Republic of Korea, the United States remains gravely concerned about the deplorable human rights situation in the DPRK and about the well-being of the North Korean people. With the co-sponsorship of the United States, Republic of Korea, Japan, the European Union, and others, the UN Human Rights Council in March established an independent one-year Commission of Inquiry to investigate and report to the international community on North Korea's widespread, systemic human rights violations. Ambassador Robert King and Department of State Bureau of Democracy, Labor, and Human Rights Deputy Assistant Secretary Dan Baer recently organized the latest in a series of face-to-face consultations with the ROK and other key partners on ways to enhance pressure on Pyongyang to improve its human rights record.

The Future of the U.S.-ROK Alliance

Our sixty-year-strong alliance is rooted in our legacy of sacrifice, our shared interests in the Asia-Pacific region and around the world, our deep economic ties, and most importantly, our shared values and strong personal friendships that have developed from extensive people-to-people ties. The alliance has never been

stronger and both our countries are actively working to prepare our alliance for the years to come. As President Park said to Congress in May, our efforts portray a “forward-leaning alliance” and “point to a 21st-century partnership that is both comprehensive and strategic.”

President Park’s landmark visit to Washington this past May—a visit by Northeast Asia’s first modern-day female head of state—opens a new chapter in our alliance and partnership. We welcome the Republic of Korea’s growing leadership on the world stage and the United States is fully committed to this alliance, which is a force for peace and security not just on the Korean Peninsula, but in the region and around the globe. We are heartened that support for the alliance from the American and Korean people is at an all-time high: recent polls show that over 80 percent of Koreans support the alliance. Strong and enduring Congressional support for the Republic of Korea and for our alliance and partnership has been critical to the success of our relationship for the last six decades, and will be even more important in the decades to come.

Thank you for inviting me to testify on this important topic. I am happy to answer any questions you may have.