

STATEMENT OF
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COMMANDER, UNITED STATES-REPUBLIC OF KOREA COMBINED FORCES
COMMAND;
AND COMMANDER, UNITED STATES FORCES KOREA

BEFORE THE
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON DEFENSE

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Introduction

Chair McCollum, Ranking Member Calvert, and Distinguished Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide you a written statement. I am pleased to update you on the great work done by our dedicated personnel who serve in the Republic of Korea (ROK), 7,000 miles away from Washington, D.C., professionally executing the missions of United Nations Command (UNC), Combined Forces Command (CFC), and United States Forces Korea (USFK). I appreciate your leadership and dedication in supporting our Servicemembers, Civilians, Contractors, and their Families who work with our Korean allies and United Nations Sending States (UNSS) and United Nations Command-Rear (UNC-R) elements in order to maintain a stable and secure environment on the Korean Peninsula.

The United States-Republic of Korea (U.S.-ROK) Alliance was forged in the crucible of combat. It is principled on our shared sacrifices, core values, and demonstrated commitment to deter any adversary who challenges the international rules-based order and may intend us harm. This Alliance is the linchpin of regional stability and has prevented a resumption of the hostilities that shredded the post-World War II peace on the Korean Peninsula almost 72 years ago. The U.S. commitment to the ROK remains ironclad, and our Servicemembers, along with ROK military, are trained and ready to respond to a provocation or crisis.

We must not forget, however, that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) continues to pose significant threats to regional and global security. We have not seen any indication that they have ceased research, development, and testing of capabilities that threaten the Korean Peninsula, our allies and partners in the Indo-Pacific region, and our collective security interest. The DPRK's recent missile launches validate this observation. As such, maintaining a high level of combat readiness, sustainment, and personnel remain priorities at the Commands so that we

can continue to preserve the regional peace that the U.S. and ROK, as well as our United Nations Sending States, fought hard to secure seven decades ago.

This Posture Statement provides an assessment of our security environment, a discussion of our enduring commitments to the U.S.-ROK Alliance, and an overview of our combined and joint training and teamwork. It also calls your attention to our resourcing needs and updates you on the no-fail task of strengthening our Force and Families.

The Security Environment Surrounding the Korean Peninsula

The Indo-Pacific is the priority theater for the United States. To effectively operate in this complex and dynamic environment, we must work with our allies and partners to increase awareness of the strategic ambitions of China and Russia. For this reason, we will continue to look to work with the ROK to align our Indo-Pacific Strategy with the ROK Southern Policy. However, we must simultaneously remain focused on the fundamental purpose of the Alliance which is the security of our Republic of Korea ally and to deter the DPRK in order to support diplomacy and allow for a peaceful resolution of tensions, while also remaining postured to “Fight Tonight” should deterrence fail.

Using the right mix of technology, operational concepts, and capabilities, the Department of Defense (DoD) is executing Secretary of Defense Austin’s vision for Integrated Deterrence. Our method of employing Integrated Deterrence is to weave together all the instruments of national power, the Alliance, allies, and partners to make adversaries pause in their desire to challenge or injure us and our national interests.

We observed a reduction in tensions along the Demilitarized Zone between the ROK and DPRK after inter-Korean confidence building measures were established in 2018. However, the DPRK has not ceased their activities to develop nuclear and advanced missile systems; we see this through the missile tests that have occurred over the past year. The DPRK continues to pursue

capabilities to hold our Korean and Japanese allies at risk with short and medium range missiles, hold U.S. strategic bases within the region at risk with intermediate range missiles, and hold at risk the U.S. with its intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) program.

Last October, the DPRK Defense Expo showcased a variety of missile capabilities with greater range, accuracy, and lethality while shortening the missile load and launch time from legacy DPRK ballistic missile systems. In January 2022, the DPRK followed this by launching an unprecedented amount of missiles – ranging from the tactical- short-range-, medium-range and intermediate-range systems – that revealed developmental missile systems including advanced warheads and demonstrated maneuverability. We must assume that some of these systems are likely intended to be nuclear capable. In 2020, the DPRK displayed a new ICBM larger than those tested in 2017.

The DPRK also continues to advance cyber capabilities and other conventional and emerging asymmetric military technologies. Various sources reported that the regime stole \$400 million in cryptocurrency last year. The 2021 unclassified Annual Threat Assessment by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence states that the money the DPRK secures from cybercrimes likely helps the regime fund its priorities such as nuclear and missile programs, rather than to reduce the hardships of its people.

The regime's serious commitment to aggressively pursue a weapons development program is noteworthy as it occurred during a period of extreme economic constraint resulting from years of sanctions, recent natural disasters, and of course the ongoing COVID-19 global pandemic. The DPRK's lack of transparency has hindered our ability to fully evaluate the impact of the global pandemic on the regime or its populace. Nevertheless, based on our limited observation, we assess that the pandemic has provided an opportunity to the regime's leadership to consolidate and

reorganize their economic activities, tighten the control over their general population, and enhance its power structure for the preservation of regime survivability.

Despite all the challenges, the DPRK expended great resources and effort to advance the full range of its ballistic missiles with the intent of targeting the U.S. and defeating Alliance missile defenses on the Peninsula. We are committed to the complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, consistent with the President's DPRK Policy. Our Integrated Deterrence approach is designed to deter conflict on the Korean Peninsula while preserving space for continued diplomatic efforts.

One Commander, Three Commands

Our three Commands - UNC, CFC, and USFK - must remain vigilant, prepared, and ready. Under one Commander, these three Commands are empowered to maintain a stabilized security environment for the ROK, our regional allies, and partners. Each Command has its own separate set of authorities and chain of command along with different challenges and opportunities. The common thread that ties these three Commands together is an ironclad commitment to the defense of the ROK, born in battle, and maintained with trust.

International Legitimacy (UNC)

When Communist Forces invaded South Korea in 1950, 22 United Nations' Member States answered the call of United Nations Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR 83, 84, 85) to exercise collective self-defense in support of the ROK and to reinforce the international rules-based orders. These U.N. Sending States (UNSS) provided forces and medical support to a unified command, the United Nations Command; UNC demonstrated an international will against the aggression. Under U.S. leadership, UNSS contributed to the fight with their national resources, and their unrelenting support and commitment to the peace and stability of the Korean Peninsula.

The mission of UNC is to enforce the 1953 Armistice Agreement, coordinate UNSS contributions, and execute assigned functions directed by the U.S. National Authorities through the Joint Chiefs of Staff to restore peace and security on the Korean Peninsula. Maintaining the integrity of the Armistice Agreement is a UNC priority, as is maintaining UNSS cohesion, situational awareness, and support to the U.S.-ROK Alliance.

UNC ensures a true multilateral effort in support of armistice conditions while maintaining the utmost respect for ROK sovereignty. It helps lessen tensions across the Korean Peninsula through leading the UNC Military Armistice Commission, Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission, and UNC-Rear headquarters element in Japan. UNC also diligently carries out its mission while supporting ROK Government initiatives such as the Comprehensive Military Agreement with DPRK. Recently, our most sacred and rewarding mission has been the repatriation of Korean War remains, which provided closure and some measure of comfort to the families of our fallen.

UNC is also capable of functioning as a coordinating headquarters for international contributions in times of crisis. It possesses the ability to serve as “a ready-made Combined Joint Task Force”, demonstrating international legitimacy and support for U.S.-ROK responses to DPRK’s provocations or aggression. True to UNC’s motto “Under One Flag,” we believe in the notion that if you want to go fast, then go alone; if you want to go far, then go together. Our collective efforts and resolve provide the foundation upon which progress towards peace on the Korean Peninsula can be built. Key to the Command’s success is maintaining trust with the Republic of Korea government.

Combined Teamwork of the U.S.-ROK Alliance (CFC)

CFC is the combined warfighting headquarters representing the U.S.-ROK bilateral military partnership. Formed in 1978, it is a unique entity that takes policy, direction, and missions from the

Combined Military Committee and is governed by and subject to bi-national decision-making and consensus.

As the ROK military has matured to become one of the world's most capable militaries, the United States remains fully committed to the bilateral Conditions-based Operational Control (OPCON) Transition Plan. This Plan has three bilaterally-approved conditions that must be met before a transition occurs: 1) the ROK acquires the 26 critical military capabilities required to lead the combined defense; 2) the Alliance must have comprehensive response capabilities against DPRK's nuclear and missile threats; and 3) the security environment on the Korean Peninsula and in the region must be conducive to a stable transition. Since a critical characteristic of CFC is the bi-national decision-making structure, even after the transition, the structure will remain to ensure equal representation in the governing body.

The leadership of both countries continue working to realize the conditions-based OPCON transition, and this remains a priority. We are also focused on the no-fail mission to maintain the combat readiness and interoperability of our combined force. The aggregate result of over seven decades of our Alliance has significantly increased the need for secure and interoperable systems and the U.S. and Korean Servicemembers who comprise CFC focus on exercising and improving our joint and combined interoperability and combat readiness.

Our semi-annual theater-level Combined Command Post Training (CCPT) is our premier training event to maintain our combined combat readiness. Over several weeks, U.S., ROK, and multinational Servicemembers operate from our command posts, and are immersed in a realistic and challenging scenario focusing on the defense of the ROK. This training stresses UNC, CFC, USFK, and ROK systems, improves our interoperability and defines our processes as well as tactics, techniques, and procedures.

During CCPT, we also simulate coordination with ROK civilian authorities, allies, and partners in order to manage the anticipated magnitude of multinational evacuation operations. Since there are more than two million citizens from over 30 countries residing in the ROK, evacuating non-combatants from the Korean Peninsula in a crisis would require herculean and multinational efforts. Exercising such operations in a multinational format is crucial for all of us on the Peninsula to be ready to protect non-combatants while creating a maneuver space for the military to deter and defeat aggression.

As combined readiness is a no-fail mission, we must maintain our ability to train at individual, unit, and combined levels through joint, live, virtual, and constructive formats. Only when we maintain combined readiness, can CFC, as the heart of the U.S.-ROK Alliance, stand as a deterrent to any provocative DPRK behaviors. Maintaining deterrence allows the Force to maintain the Armistice and respond in crisis. More importantly, it allows for the diplomatic process to continue.

U.S. Commitment to Korea (USFK)

USFK is the premier Joint Force committed to defending the security of the ROK. It is disciplined, trained, and ready to Fight Tonight, respond in crisis, and win in conflict. The Joint Services that comprise USFK are maintaining a high level of readiness to ensure they are also prepared to support the mission. The command's leaders and Servicemembers know that combat readiness is perishable; we conduct rigorous training to maximize unit and individual combat readiness.

However, we do have to contend with challenges associated with our readiness. As the ROK has developed to be the 10th largest economy in the world, smaller towns and villages have become vibrant cities, and their populations have grown. As a result, in some areas local construction and

encroachment have become hindrances and challenges to training execution. Our personnel turnover rates also provide challenges to commanders at all levels.

The threats to the Korean Theater of Operations necessitate tough and realistic training. The physical size of available ranges and insufficient airspace present challenges for our forces such as aircrew proficiency and artillery gunnery proficiency. Although three ranges are currently available for U.S. forces to train on – Pilsung Range, Jik-Do Range, and Rodriguez Range - various restrictions that prohibit flexible and comprehensive training require our Air Component to use off-Peninsula opportunities to meet training requirements. Given that the ROK military's readiness is crucial to the overall defense of the Peninsula, we have opened the door to include ROK forces in off-Peninsula training opportunities to ensure they are not impacted by similar range issues. We need a combined U.S.-ROK solution that supports robust, day or night, live-fire and force-on-force training.

Limited access to the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense site at Camp Carroll also affects several issues linked to our readiness. Despite significant progress in increasing access to the site over the last year, unfettered access is required to fully ensure logistical support at the site, and improve the quality of life for Servicemembers stationed there. Limited access also slows the pace of construction projects on site which is critical for maintaining the system's capabilities, crew training, and upgrades. All of this hinders the Alliance's ability to operate this defensive system and defend the ROK people, as well as U.S. and ROK servicemembers.

Another challenge is that we are at the end of the global supply chain which could impact the combat readiness of our essential munitions, ballistic missile defense systems, and pre-positioned wartime stocks. While increased resourcing in 2018 improved our posture and did help "Set the Theater", the improvements were not a permanent fix to our logistics and sustainment

challenges. Careful maintenance of these resources is an ongoing requirement necessary to sustaining increased readiness levels.

Additionally, there remain asymmetric threats that require solutions through additional interoperability and information processing capabilities. USFK continues to work with DoD to address deficiencies in deep look persistent/semi-persistent Command, Control, Computers, Communications, Cyber-defense, Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance, and Targeting (C5ISRT), all of which will enhance situational awareness and inform our critical decision-making.

The U.S.-ROK Alliance anchors the preservation of peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula and the mission. It is critical we maintain a correct mix of highly proficient forces both on and off the Peninsula, paired with the proper capabilities. The Joint Force remains fully committed to maintaining high levels of combat readiness in order to counter any threat that may challenge it.

Strengthening the Force and Families

Servicemembers, Civilians, Families, and Contractors who support the Forces are our most precious resource, and taking care of our people is also a no-fail task. This involves continuous assessment and addressing of systemic issues so that we can provide a safe and inclusive environment. We continue to look for ways to build our multi-cultural community to ensure Korea remains an assignment of choice for our personnel and their Families.

We have zero tolerance for sexual assault, sexual harassment, discrimination, bigotry, or racism. We continue to strive to eliminate these corrosive detractors to trust, morale, readiness, and human dignity throughout the commands with initiatives such as listening sessions, team building exercises, workforce surveys, education, enhanced prevention programs, and enforcement. We have reinforced to our leaders that they have the authorities and responsibilities, in accordance with Services' regulations, and must foster an environment of dignity, respect, and trust that is free from

discrimination. We owe our people good leadership and the opportunity to be their individual and collective best.

Our goal is enhanced collective awareness, dialogue, reporting, feedback, and support to eliminate all forms of discrimination within our community. Toward this goal, we will continue to rely and build on our Strength in Diversity initiative to recognize, enhance, and appreciate that our strength is our diversity and inclusivity within our community. Senior U.S. leaders in the ROK will continue to stress the importance of these initiatives on their subordinates and ensure they are incorporated at all levels.

USFK has several infrastructure and garrison installation housing priorities throughout the ROK. These priorities include managing on-post housing, addressing aging infrastructure, and meeting new mission requirements. Of note, we have six new housing tower units under construction at U.S. Army Garrison (USAG)-Humphreys scheduled for completion no later than 2023. This will meet the requirement to have 40% of command sponsored Families residing on USAG-Humphreys. DoD's military construction (MILCON) is required for valid mission requirements that mitigate operational capability gaps in the ROK. MILCON is also the only source for community support requirements, such as dorms, family housing, and fitness centers, which enhance Fight Tonight capabilities. We appreciate the support from Congress for these DoD MILCON projects as well as ROK funded construction projects through the Special Measures Agreements and the Yongsan Relocation Program.

The health of our community is important, and the Brian D. Allgood Army Community Hospital (BDAACH) at USAG-Humphreys is the medical asset equipped to support 65,000 eligible beneficiaries. BDAACH is an irreplaceable part of caring for the physical, mental, and emotional health of our Servicemembers, Families, and Civilians, many of whom are young, away from home for long periods of time, and combat veterans.

Behavioral health and the well-being of our community is essential to the readiness of the Total Force. To achieve psychological readiness, we are proactively taking action to provide the highest quality of behavioral health care to mitigate the impact of risk factors on our Servicemembers and their Families. This includes addressing misconceptions and stigma surrounding mental illness, implementing comprehensive approaches to suicide prevention, and recognizing the adverse impact of unique stressors, to include the COVID-19 pandemic.

BDAACH has proven critical to supporting our operations to fully vaccinate our USFK-affiliated population in accordance with DoD guidance, including U.S. retirees and local national employees, in order to maintain peak operational readiness. At the time of this writing, 98% of Servicemembers and 90% of our total population are fully vaccinated. COVID-19 has emphasized that the health of our force directly links to our overall readiness, and we continue to manage the impact of this pandemic in accordance with U.S. and ROK government guidelines and requirements.

Way Forward

I am honored to command and serve this dedicated multinational, combined, and joint force in one of the most significant and dynamic regions of the world. Those who serve in the ROK are committed, capable, and well-supported. The Force is postured to deter aggression, defend the Republic of Korea protect U.S. interests, and if called upon, defeat any adversary.

As long as the threat persists, the ironclad U.S.-ROK Alliance remains vigilant, determined, and steadfast in our defense, not just on the Korean Peninsula but across the region. As the Commander of these incredible Servicemembers, I appreciate this Committee's continued support to fully prepare them to fight and win, on the most dangerous distance – that last 100 meters of land, sea, air, cyber, or space.

Under One Flag! Katchi Kapshida, We Go Together! Fight Tonight!