

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

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the Committee, I am honored to testify as the Commander of the United Nations Command (UNC), the United States–Republic of Korea (U.S.-ROK) Combined Forces Command (CFC), and United States Forces Korea (USFK). Thank you for your continued support to our Service Members, Civilians, Contractors, and their Families, whose service each day on “Freedom’s Frontier” advances vital U.S. interests, strengthens the Alliance between the United States and the Republic of Korea, and makes a critical contribution to the stability of Northeast Asia. In my third year as the Commander, I have witnessed the U.S.-ROK Alliance grow stronger, as the Alliance has improved its capabilities, planning, and cooperation to counter evolving threats from North Korea and to advance our four priorities:

- Sustain and Strengthen the Alliance.
- Maintain the Armistice. Be Ready to “Fight Tonight” to Deter and Defeat Aggression.
- Transform the Alliance.
- Sustain the Force and Enhance the UNC/CFC/USFK Team.

Through this past August’s land mine attack, North Korea’s fourth nuclear test in January, and the TD-2 missile launch earlier this month, the United States and Republic of Korea stood united and resolute against North Korea’s provocative actions. Our strength and combined actions are the product of established ROK-U.S. bilateral processes, the Alliance’s shared commitment to remain ready to “Fight Tonight,” and the alignment of American and Korean values and goals.

While the Command focuses on these core priorities, we are also looking to the future. The Alliance took concrete steps over this past year to enhance our ability to respond to North Korea’s evolving asymmetric capabilities, strengthen ROK forces to lead the combined defense of the Republic of South Korea, and relocate U.S. forces to two enduring hubs south of Seoul.

## **2. AMERICA'S FUTURE IN KOREA – SECURING VITAL INTERESTS AND ADVANCING REGIONAL STABILITY**

The UNC/CFC/USFK mission is vital to the broader effort to expand security and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region. As a sub-unified Command of U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM), USFK's core responsibility is to deter and defeat external aggression against the Republic of Korea, which enhances stability in the Asia-Pacific region and affirms our commitment to the U.S.-ROK Mutual Defense Treaty. We cooperate closely with PACOM in its mission to promote security cooperation, encourage peaceful development, respond to contingencies, deter aggression, and, when necessary, fight to win.

From my perspective, the level of U.S. engagement demonstrated by USFK in Korea and PACOM in the broader region is critical in this time of opportunity and challenge in Asia. Expanding ties among Asian countries and across the Pacific have helped facilitate an era of robust economic growth and military advances. While these advances promote global expansion and interdependent stability, international tensions have risen from the actions of several regional nations' military modernization and the use of national power. In this context of significant and rapid change, the Republic of Korea's neighbors are adjusting their strategies to shape the region's future.

China's continued pursuit of its military modernization program and land reclamation activities have prompted concerns among many nations in the region. Even as China's relations with North Korea remain strained, Beijing continues to support the North Korean regime, remains its largest trading partner, and seeks to prevent spillover of North Korean issues.

Japan's decisions to take a more active role in its defense and to advance global security are viewed by many nations around the world as a positive development. Yet, some in China, the Republic of Korea, and North Korea have been critical, as historical issues continue to influence views on Japan's international role. In this complex setting, USFK continues to look for opportunities to advance trilateral military cooperation among the United States, Japan, and the Republic of Korea.

Over the past year, Russia has continued to expand its military presence, economic investment, and diplomatic engagement to reassert its strategic interests in the region. Russia conducted combined

military drills with China in August, conducted multiple air patrols by its bombers throughout the region and into the Korean Air Defense Identification Zone, and named 2015 as a “Year of Friendship” between Russia and North Korea.

Unfortunately, North Korea has chosen not to embrace this era of change and prosperity, and has been omitted from many of the opportunities in 21<sup>st</sup> century Asia. Kim Jong Un, North Korea’s singular leader and the third generation of the Kim Family, exercises complete control over the state and military decision-making process focused on preserving the survival of his regime. He maintains an extensive internal security apparatus that addresses any challenges to his rule and he has openly replaced several top military leaders to solidify his authority. Kim also perceives that the regime’s survival relies on the domestic and international recognition of North Korea as a global and nuclear power. This January’s fourth nuclear test and February’s launch of a TD-2 missile configured as a satellite launch vehicle – its fifth long-range missile launch since 2006 – further demonstrate that North Korea will continue to defy UN Security Council resolutions and international norms in its attempts to seek the regime’s desired recognition.

Similar to his father and grandfather, Kim has likewise demonstrated that violent provocations remain central to North Korea’s strategy. For example, this past August, North Korea carried out a heinous landmine attack in the DMZ that grievously wounded two Korean Soldiers. Later in the month, tensions rapidly intensified with the deployment of additional forces to the DMZ, psychological operations, and hostile rhetoric which required a strong, yet measured Alliance response. Even though our combined actions enabled national leaders from the two Koreas to resolve the situation diplomatically, it demonstrated North Korea remains a credible and dangerous threat on the Peninsula.

We continue to assess that North Korea recognizes it cannot reunify the Korean Peninsula by force with its large, but aging, conventional military. While it continues to train and man its conventional force, North Korea remains focused on improving its asymmetric capabilities: nuclear weapons, long-range ballistic missiles, and cyber programs. In addition to its fourth nuclear test, the regime conducted a multitude of multiple rocket launch system tests, as well as no-notice Scud and No Dong missile tests from a variety of locations throughout North Korea. Upgrades continued on the Taepodong Inter-

Continental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) launch facility and development of a submarine-launched ballistic missile and vessel. Lastly, North Korea continued to improve its capabilities in the cyber domain which build on the regime's success of past cyberattacks.

Even as North Korea is investing heavily in asymmetric capabilities, its conventional military threats are still formidable. The KPA is the fourth-largest military in the world with several hundred ballistic missiles, the largest artillery force in the world with over 13,000 long-range and other artillery pieces, one of the largest chemical weapons stockpiles in the world, a biological weapons research program, and the world's largest special operations force. About three-quarters of its ground forces and half of its air and naval assets are within 60 miles of the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). In the contested waters around the Northwest Islands and beyond the western end of the DMZ, North Korea has taken deliberate steps to strengthen its awareness and posture with additional navigation buoys, coastal observation posts, and naval patrols. These steps even include beginning construction of troop and weapon emplacements on Kal Do, an island less than three miles from Yeonpyeong Do, site of the 2010 North Korean shelling of the Republic of Korean military and civilian targets.

Due to these enduring and proximate threats, our Command must continue to deter North Korea's aggression as the risks and costs of a Korean conflict would be immense to the Republic of Korea, Northeast Asia, and the world. The region accounts for one-fifth of the world's economic output, 19% of global trade, four of the 13 largest economies, and four of the six largest militaries in the world. If deterrence fails, full-scale conflict in Korea would more closely parallel the high intensity combat of the Korean War than the recent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Furthermore, any conflict with North Korea would significantly increase the threat of the use of weapons of mass destruction.

### **3. THE COMMAND'S FOUR PRIORITIES – PROGRESS AND PROSPECTS**

In the context of this unique strategic environment, the Command advances vital U.S. interests, strengthens the ROK-U.S. Alliance, and makes a critical contribution to security in the Asia-Pacific. This year, we have made progress on each of our four priorities – first, to sustain and strengthen the Alliance; second, to maintain the Armistice, while remaining ready to “Fight Tonight” to deter and defeat

aggression; third, to transform the Alliance; and, finally, to sustain the force and enhance the UNC/CFC/USFK Team.

**A. Sustain and Strengthen the Alliance.** Three key innovations this year have led to substantive improvements in the ability of U.S. and ROK forces to operate together as integrated and capable allies.

**1. A new ROK-U.S. Combined Division improves interoperability.** For more than 60 years, the Soldiers of the U.S. 2nd Infantry Division (2ID) have stood shoulder-to-shoulder with our ROK allies. This year, that enduring commitment was taken one step further through the transformation of 2ID into a Combined ROK-U.S. Division. This new organization integrates over 40 ROK Army officers into the 2ID headquarters, fostering mutual trust, combined decision-making, and open communications. In addition, a ROK Army mechanized brigade will habitually train with the Combined Division's units to develop shared capabilities. If conflict comes to the Peninsula, this brigade will be under the operational control of the Combined Division to create a seamless capability.

**2. Rotational forces improve readiness.** In order to increase the effectiveness and readiness of U.S. Forces on the Peninsula, USFK rotates specifically selected unit capabilities instead of maintaining permanently stationed units with Service Members on individual one-year tours. Fully manned, trained, and mission-ready rotational forces also provide the Alliance elevated capabilities over time by introducing a greater number of the U.S. Service Members to the unique aspects of contingency operations in Korea.

In the summer of 2015, the U.S. Army began rotating Brigade Combat Teams (BCTs) into the Republic of Korea for the first time, on nine-month tours as the 2nd Heavy Brigade Combat Team (HBCT) of the 1st Cavalry Division arrived from Fort Hood, Texas. Just two months after the unit arrived, the BCT was able to integrate with the ROK Army to conduct a combined and joint exercise. 2ID's Combat Aviation Brigade has also increased its capabilities through the rotation of Aerial Reconnaissance Squadrons and the Counter Fire Task Force expanded its combat power by adding a rotational Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS) battalion.

Rotation of fully-trained and resourced forces to the Korean Peninsula is not just an Army commitment. The U.S. Navy's Pacific Fleet ships and aircraft routinely exercise in the waters surrounding the Korean Peninsula as part of their regular rotation throughout the Pacific. Furthermore, the U.S. Air Force rotates both Active and Reserve Component fighter squadrons to Korea, while the U.S. Marines deploy air-ground teams to exercise and practice interoperability with the ROK Marine Corps.

**3. *New capabilities improve the Alliance's defense and deterrence.*** The ROK government has continued to invest approximately 2.5% of its Gross Domestic Product in its national defense – one of the highest rates among U.S. allies. During this past year, the Republic of Korea made progress in enhancing future interoperable-warfighting capabilities by procuring upgrades such as PAC-3 missiles for the Patriot Weapon System, multi-role tanker-transport aircraft, and the AEGIS command and control and weapons system. These follow previous investments in F-35 Joint Strike Fighters, Global Hawk high-altitude unmanned aerial vehicles, and other important assets. Once integrated into our Alliance force structure, these systems will further enhance our readiness and capability. Additionally, we announced this month that we will begin bilateral consultations regarding the viability of deploying the Terminal High-Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system to the Republic of Korea to upgrade our combined missile defense posture.

**B. Maintain the Armistice. Be Ready to “Fight Tonight” to Deter and Defeat Aggression.** The Command's focus on readiness proved critical to answering North Korean provocations this past year. Our cooperation affirmed both countries' pledge to develop Alliance solutions to Alliance challenges.

**1. *The Command deters and defends against aggression to foster stability on the Peninsula.*** President Obama noted at his October meeting with President Park that, from the events of this August, “North Korea was reminded that any provocation or aggression will be met by a strong, united response by the Republic of Korea and the United States.” When crisis came, we were prepared. A constant focus on readiness and open communication enabled the Alliance to act deliberately and prudently. The Alliance's actions deterred broader North Korean provocations and set the stage for a peaceful resolution of the crisis.



**2. *Three successful exercises enhance the Command's readiness.*** UNC/CFC/USFK enhanced its readiness through its three annual multinational, combined, and joint exercises – KEY RESOLVE, FOAL EAGLE, and ULCHI FREEDOM GUARDIAN. KEY RESOLVE and ULCHI FREEDOM GUARDIAN are annual, computer-simulated command post exercises that focus on crisis management and the defense of the Republic of Korea. FOAL EAGLE is an annual field training exercise to ensure operational and tactical readiness. All three exercises provide realistic scenarios that prepare our forces, to include additional participants from the UNC, to deter and defeat North Korean aggression and potential instability in the region. They are essential in improving ROK-U.S. crisis management, combat readiness, and interoperability.

We also aligned USFK's readiness program on the Korean Peninsula with PACOM's regional efforts. In August 2015, USFK and PACOM integrated for the first time the Korea-based ULCHI FREEDOM GUARDIAN exercise and PACOM's PACIFIC SENTRY command and control exercise. This coordination allowed the Alliance to test effective decision-making and mutual support with PACOM.

**3. *A revitalizing UNC strengthens the international contribution to Korea's defense.*** Last year, we increased our efforts to further strengthen the engagement of the United Nations Command's 17 Sending States in our day-to-day operations. When North Korean aggression raises tensions, the Sending States provide credible and multinational support for the defense of the Republic of Korea.

To revitalize the UNC, we will continue to engage all of the Sending States to leverage their many capabilities for Korea's defense. A senior Australian officer on our staff leads a sustained effort to enhance Sending State engagement in UNC's work. The representatives of the UNC Sending States participate in our exercises, train with us, meet monthly with the Command's senior leadership, and assign top-quality officers to work in the Command. During the ULCHI FREEDOM GUARDIAN 2015 exercise, the Command greatly appreciated the 89 participants from seven UNC Sending States (Australia, Great Britain, Canada, New Zealand, Colombia, Denmark, and France).

**C. *Transform the Alliance.*** In 2015, the Command and the Alliance continued to adapt to face both emerging and evolving challenges.

**1. *The MCM and SCM reaffirms ROK and U.S. commitment to defense cooperation.*** Following the October meeting between President Obama and President Park, in which our two countries recommitted to a comprehensive and global Alliance, our senior defense officials met in November at the 40th ROK-U.S. Military Committee Meeting (MCM) and the 47th ROK-U.S. Security Consultative Meeting (SCM). They approved and agreed to implement a new concept to detect, disrupt, destroy, and defend (the “4Ds”) against North Korean missile threats; pledged to address global security challenges of mutual interest; strengthened cooperation in the space and cyberspace domains; reaffirmed a timely completion of the Yongsan Relocation Plan and Land Partnership Plan; identified critical military capabilities that the Republic of Korean military must develop to meet the conditions of OPCON transition; and endorsed the Conditions-based Operational Control (OPCON) Transition Plan, or COT-P.

**2. *The plan for conditions-based OPCON transition (COT-P) defines an effective way forward.*** COT-P creates a well-designed pathway to implement a stable transfer of wartime OPCON of combined forces from the U.S. to the ROK. This Plan provides a road map for the Republic of Korea to develop the capabilities that will allow it to assume wartime Operational Control (OPCON) when the security environment on the Korean Peninsula and in the region is conducive to a stable transition.

**3. *Effective military planning positions the Alliance to respond to a changing threat environment.*** USFK regularly reviews and updates operations plans to ensure our readiness to respond to regional threats and crises. The combined ROK-U.S. operations plan has and will continue to evolve to enhance readiness and strengthen the ROK-U.S. Alliance’s ability to defend the Republic of Korea and maintain stability on the Korean Peninsula.

**D. Sustain the Force & Enhance the UNC/CFC/USFK Team.** Our Multinational-Combined-Joint Force continues to foster a positive Command Climate and focus on the welfare of our team.

**1. *The Command fosters a positive Command Climate through trust and team-building.*** The foundations of our organization and a positive Command Climate consist of effective communication, trust, and teamwork. Regular training on prevention of sexual harassment, sexual assault, and suicides continues to be a priority. The result is a strong record of Service Member discipline in the Republic of

Korea. Over 99.4% of our Service Members demonstrate their discipline and desire to be law-abiding, good neighbors in Korea.

*2. Cohesive communities and new facilities promote Korea as an “Assignment of Choice.”* This attention to the welfare of our entire team has been an important driver in making Korea an “Assignment of Choice.” Our realistic training against a real North Korean threat, cohesive community, the safety of our host country, and the brand-new facilities at Camp Humphreys welcome members of our military to serve on “Freedom’s Frontier.”

#### **4. CRITICAL NEAR-TERM ALLIANCE TRANSITIONS**

Northeast Asia is one of the world’s most dynamic regions. As a result, the Command’s success is not only contingent on our ability to meet our immediate requirements, but also on our flexibility to adapt in the strategic environment to new opportunities and challenges. While we focus our efforts on our four Command priorities, we are also making decisions and taking actions now that shape the future of our Command and Alliance. Longer-term success requires both steadfast advancement of the Command’s priority to maintain readiness to “Fight Tonight” and the agility to transform in the future.

**A. Enhance the Alliance’s capabilities.** As the North Korean threat evolves, its extensive asymmetric arsenal could be used at a time and location of its choosing. This creates indications and warning challenges for the Alliance which require the United States and the Republic of Korea to develop new capabilities to detect and defend against this threat.

*1. Advance ISR, BMD, and critical munitions to sharpen our tools of deterrence.* Together, both countries must constantly improve their intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capacity; develop a robust, tiered ballistic missile defense; field appropriate command and control assets; acquire necessary inventories of critical munitions; and enhance the tools to prevent, deter, and respond to cyber-attacks.

*2. The Tailored deterrence strategy underscores the U.S. commitment to the Peninsula.* We have developed and refined a Tailored Deterrence Strategy, which serves as a strategic framework for tailoring deterrence against North Korean nuclear and ballistic missile threat scenarios. By providing a full range of ready military capabilities, including the U.S. nuclear umbrella, conventional strike, and missile

defense capabilities, this strategy supports deterrence and represents the U.S. commitment to provide and strengthen extended deterrence.

**3. *The Combined Counter-Provocation Plan manages the risks of miscalculation.*** We also have confidence in our Combined Counter-Provocation Plan. This plan improves our ability to respond to North Korean provocations as an Alliance, while managing the risks of miscalculation and escalation. The events of this August underscore how strong, yet measured responses set the conditions for diplomatic efforts to work.

**B. Relocate the U.S. force in Korea.** The Command made progress towards relocating the majority of U.S. forces in Korea to two enduring hubs south of Seoul – a Central Hub around the cities of Osan and Pyeongtaek, and a Southern Hub around the city of Daegu. The \$10.7 billion program is the largest single construction program in the Department of Defense and is well on its way to realizing its goal of modernizing the warfighting Command in Korea, improving the Command’s effectiveness in deterring North Korea, and defending the Republic of Korea.

**1. *Construction peaks as workers build facilities to triple the size of Camp Humphreys.*** At the end of 2015, approximately 65% of the program was completed. Currently, at the peak of production, workers are constructing 655 new buildings, and remodeling or demolishing 340 existing buildings to accommodate the increase in population from approximately 12,000 to more than 36,000 Service Members, Families, Civilians, and other members of our community. The majority of new facility construction at Humphreys will be completed in 2016, and the majority of unit relocations will occur through 2018. During these transitions, we are committed to making relocation decisions with the effective defense of the Republic of Korea as our most important priority.

**2. *U.S. Naval Forces Korea moves its headquarters to Busan, collocated with the ROK Navy.*** The project at Camp Humphreys is not the Command’s only move. This year, U.S. Naval Forces in Korea relocated the majority of headquarters staff from Yongsan Garrison in Seoul to the ROK Navy base in Busan, to enable the two navy staffs to work closer on a daily basis. This is the first U.S. headquarters located on a ROK base.

## 5. USFK'S CRITICAL NEEDS

My top concern remains that we could have very little warning of a North Korean asymmetric provocation, which could start a cycle of action and counter-action, leading to unintended escalation. To remain effective as the threat evolves, we seek four critical capabilities:

First, **Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance**, or ISR. ISR remains my top readiness challenge and resourcing priority as CFC/USFK requires increased, multi-discipline, persistent ISR capabilities to maintain situational awareness and provide adequate decision space for USFK, PACOM, and National senior leaders. Therefore, among various spectrum, deep look, and full-motion video (FMV) capabilities, I also request dependable Moving Target Indicator (MTI) support combined with an airborne command and control and battle management capability. The ability to correlate MTI with other airborne sensor data in near-real-time, with a robust on-board communications ability, contributes to a deeper understanding of the North Korean threat and intent.

Second, **Command, Control, Communications, Computers, and Intelligence**, or C4I. Both the United States and the Republic of Korea are investing in new tactical equipment that will comprise a reliable C4I architecture. We must maintain this momentum in improving C4I capabilities and interoperability, so we can communicate from tactical to strategic levels and between units in the field.

Third, **Ballistic Missile Defense**, or BMD. North Korea's missile program continues to develop, so it is critical for the Alliance to continue to build a layered and interoperable BMD capability. The U.S. PATRIOT system provides important defensive capabilities, and I have previously recommended to both governments that they consider a high-altitude missile defense capability. Meanwhile, the Republic of Korea is moving forward in the development of its Korea Air and Missile Defense (KAMD) and "Kill Chain." We have also made progress in advancing the interoperability of Alliance BMD capabilities, but there remains work to do in this area, particularly to further refine interoperability between systems.

Fourth, **Critical Munitions**. The Command has identified specific munitions that it must have on hand in the early days of any conflict on the Peninsula. In this phase, the Alliance relies on the U.S. and ROK Air Forces air superiority to provide time for ready forces to flow into the Republic of Korea. In

order to ensure this supremacy through immediate Alliance capability and interoperability, we must have sufficient critical munitions on hand. Therefore, we will continue to work closely with the Republic of Korea to ensure it procures the appropriate types and numbers of critical munitions for the early phases of hostilities. Of note, the potential ban on cluster munitions could have a significant impact on our ability to defend the Republic of Korea.

With these capabilities, our Alliance will greatly improve its posture in Korea. If we continue to act together, with the consistent support we have experienced in both Washington and Seoul, I believe the Command and the Alliance will strengthen and ensure our capability to deter North Korea and defend the Republic of Korea and U.S. interests.

## **6. CONCLUSION**

Over the past two-and-a-half years, I have seen steady progress in the U.S.-ROK Alliance. Last year, we were tested, and we found ourselves ready. Through annual exercises that rehearse U.S.-ROK cooperation, the commitment to readiness of U.S. and ROK armed forces, and our peoples' shared values and goals, UNC/CFC/USFK and the ROK-U.S. Alliance have successfully advanced our priorities and realization of our combined vision.

We are deeply thankful for the support of our Korean partners and the UNC Sending States. We appreciate and value the continued support of Congress and the American people, as it is your support that allows us to undertake this critical mission.

It is my honor to serve with the American Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines and our government civilians who serve in the Republic of Korea. Their presence and actions ensure freedom and the success of our objectives. Finally, we would like to recognize the leadership and support of senior U.S. and ROK civilian and military leaders, Ambassador Mark Lippert, and Admiral Harry Harris, as we support vital U.S. interests, strengthen the Alliance between the United States and the Republic of Korea, and make a critical contribution to security and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific.

Thank you, and I look forward to our discussion.