

**Statement for the Record by
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Introduction

Chairman Levin, Senator McCain and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the Department of Defense (DoD) views on the Korean Peninsula. I am pleased to report that 2010 has been a landmark year for the U.S.-Republic of Korea (ROK) Alliance. The U.S.-ROK Alliance is a key pillar of U.S. strategy for a region undergoing tremendous political, economic, and security-related change. This comprehensive relationship, spanning the defense, diplomatic, and economic spheres, continues to serve as a source of stability in the face of unpredictable and provocative North Korean behavior.

Since joining the Office of the Secretary of Defense last year as Assistant Secretary for Asian & Pacific Security Affairs, I have observed important changes in the nature of the threat posed by North Korea, as well as the structure and vision for the U.S.-ROK Alliance. During my testimony today, I hope to expand on these changes by discussing DoD’s views on the following topics:

- the importance to the United States of peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula;
- North Korea’s unconventional threat to Peninsular and regional security, to include its nuclear program;
- the value of forward-deployed/postured forces on the Korean Peninsula; and,

- the ongoing transformation of the U.S.-ROK Alliance.

U.S. Interests in Korean Security

As you know, this past June marked the 60th anniversary of the start of the Korean War. At its most basic level, the mission of our Alliance today remains the same as it did 60 years ago: to deter aggression against the ROK, and to fight and win should deterrence fail. North Korea remains as much of a threat now as it did 60 years ago when it initiated hostilities with the ROK in an attempt to unify the Peninsula under the banner of communism. As North Korea's conventional military capability slowly deteriorates, the unconventional threat it poses only increases, posing new challenges to the U.S.-ROK Alliance. North Korea's March 26 torpedo attack on the ROK Naval Ship CHEONAN, which killed 46 ROK sailors, is a somber reminder of the active threat that North Korea poses to regional stability. In such a high-threat environment, the U.S.-ROK Alliance's mission to deter and defend takes on added significance and remains our primary focus. While this mission remains the top priority of the Alliance, the U.S. investment in Korea's security has helped create an alliance whose value extends far beyond the security of the Korean Peninsula. America's stake in the peace and prosperity of the Korean Peninsula transcends social and economic interconnectivity to include shared identities as liberal democracies that promote the norms and institutions contributing to a peaceful and prosperous Asia. In the ROK, the United States has a partner that contributes to upholding international norms and promoting international peace and stability, to say nothing of its robust economic relationship with the United States.

For 60 years the United States has supported the ROK as it transformed from a poverty-stricken agrarian society to a global leader in the information age, touting the 14th

largest economy in the world with a dedication to democratic governance. Today, U.S. prosperity is inextricably linked with that of the ROK. The ROK is the seventh largest trading partner of the United States; more than 120,000 U.S. citizens live and work in the ROK, with the vast majority residing in Seoul; and, more than two million ethnic Koreans reside in the United States, playing an active role in our local communities and national economy.

The North Korea Threat

North Korea poses a multi-faceted threat to peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula and in the Asia-Pacific region. Pyongyang's large conventional military, active pursuit of a nuclear capability, ballistic missile testing and development, and weapons export activities – all in violation of United Nations Security Council Resolutions – are enough to cause serious concern, but these factors in and of themselves are not what make North Korea so threatening. Other nations possess material capabilities that match or exceed what North Korea possesses, but North Korea poses a unique threat because of its proven willingness to match resources and capabilities with provocative, unpredictable behavior, and its continued export of illicit items to other states that seek to harm the U.S. and our allies and friends around the world. The danger posed by North Korean weapons and military strength are amplified greatly by the regime's willingness to dedicate its meager resources to maximizing its lethality. Time and again, North Korea has displayed a lack of regard for what the rest of the world considers acceptable behavior, flouting international law and ignoring the will of the international community.

North Korea still maintains a large conventional military force postured against the the ROK, the United States, and other international forces on the Korean Peninsula. Its

large numbers belie its actual capabilities, however, as decades of economic isolation have hindered North Korea's ability to provide proper maintenance and upgrades to its military hardware, leading to a qualitatively inferior conventional military force compared to the ROK. North Korea's Air Force, for example, relies mostly on Russian technology from the 1960s and 1970s.

North Korea's decline in conventional military terms has led to an evolution in the nature of the North Korea threat, not a diminution of it. North Korea has adapted to the U.S.-ROK alliance's conventional military superiority by developing tactics and weapons systems that equip them with offensive capabilities that avoid confronting the greatest military strengths of the alliance, in an attempt to compete on what it likely perceives as a more favorable playing field. The AN-2 Colt, for instance, is a case study of the threat North Korea poses in the face of significant resource constraints. A propeller-driven biplane made mostly of cloth and wood, the AN-2 gives off virtually no signature on radar, making it difficult to identify in the event it is used in troop insertion or infiltration missions. When combined with more than 100,000 special operations forces, North Korea's AN-2 aircraft has truly lethal potential, illustrating how North Korea could disturb the peace even as it faces difficulty modernizing its conventional force.

North Korea has also invested considerable effort in developing, testing, and growing its ballistic missile arsenal. North Korea has continued its ballistic missile-related activities in contravention of UN Security Council Resolutions 1718 and 1874. As North Korea gets closer to perfecting its missile technology over time, its arsenal poses more of a threat to U.S. interests in the region and at home. Although North Korea's Taepodong-2 intercontinental ballistic missile has not yet reached the requisite level of technological

refinement, the missile is theoretically capable of striking U.S. territory. North Korea test-fired an earlier generation version of this missile, the Taepodong-1, over Japan in 1998, demonstrating that at a minimum, it is capable of striking U.S. interests and allies in the Asia-Pacific.

In the context of North Korea's efforts to develop a nuclear program, its ballistic missiles become an even greater concern. Nuclear-armed ballistic missiles, if developed and fielded, would pose a threat to regional peace and stability that would be orders of magnitude greater than the already heightened threat that it poses.

It is important, moreover, to underscore that North Korea's provocations aren't related exclusively to weapons development; they also include the use of these capabilities, as tragically demonstrated in the case of the North Korean sinking of the ROK vessel CHEONAN. We have stood steadfast with our ROK ally through the search and rescue operations and the multinational investigation that decisively concluded that a torpedo from a North Korean submarine, fired under cover of night, produced a shockwave and bubble jet effect that split open the hull of the CHEONAN and sank it nearly immediately, all in a "pillar of white flash." We have undertaken bilateral exercises to improve alliance capabilities, demonstrate readiness, and send a strong signal of alliance resolve. These exercises are entirely defensive in nature, and represent one component of a broader whole-of-government approach to the range of North Korean provocative actions, including missile tests, announced nuclear tests and the sinking of the CHEONAN. That also includes high-level diplomacy at the United Nations and in the region, and the issuance of Executive Order 13551, which imposes new sanctions on targeted entities and

individuals involved in North Korean conventional weapons sales and procurement, luxury goods procurement, and illicit activities.

At the same time that North Korea develops the conventional and unconventional capabilities that I've just discussed for its own purposes, it also makes them available for export to other states that pose a direct threat to U.S. allies, friends, and interests in other regions—a significant source of income for the regime and a phenomenon that vividly illustrates that North Korean behavior is not a problem only on the Korean Peninsula or in Asia, but one that spans the globe and connects with other dangerous actors. Our efforts to deter, track, and stop North Korean arms sales include working closely with the international community. Cooperation on the enforcement of United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1718 and 1874, which prohibit North Korea from transferring all arms and related material as well as WMD, to include related equipment and technology, and their delivery systems, is paramount in this arena and has produced results. In the past year, a number of states in Asia, Africa, and the Middle East have successfully seized arms and related materiel coming from North Korea and bound for other customers. Despite these successes, enforcement of sanctions remains a formidable challenge. North Korea uses various methods to attempt to circumvent UNSCRs 1718 and 1874; as a result we continue to strengthen our implementation efforts and cooperation with allies and partners.

The Value of the U.S. Military Presence in Korea

I would like to touch briefly on the strategic value of the U.S. military's presence on the Korean Peninsula. Since the Armistice Agreement was signed in 1953, the U.S. military posture on the Korean Peninsula, and in the region more generally, has been successful in preventing major war from erupting again. Deterrence has worked.

Fundamentally, the presence of U.S. forces on the Korean Peninsula continues to generate a security dividend that has allowed countries like the ROK and Japan to flourish economically and politically, in spite of the persistent threat from the North. The U.S. military footprint in Korea today thus serves the same basic objective that it has for more than half a century. Our presence in Korea guards against the unthinkable, serving as a physical demonstration of our commitment to the security of our Korean ally, as well as a symbolic reminder to the region that the peace and stability of the Asia-Pacific is a vital U.S. interest.

The threat from North Korea must be kept at bay; stability must be preserved. To achieve this, the United States must maintain a forward military posture. 28,500 troops stationed somewhere in the United States do not have the same deterrent effect as the same number stationed in the ROK. Successful deterrence relies on credibility as much as, if not more than, capability. It is our forward presence that most effectively communicates our resolve to defend our allies and preserve our vital interests in Asia. Our presence is far more than an important symbol. It stands as an irrefutable, tangible manifestation of our commitment to the defense of our allies and our commitment to peace and stability in the region.

But the value of the U.S. military's forward presence in Korea is not limited to preventing war. U.S. forces in Korea will increasingly contribute to regional capacity building, maritime interdiction efforts, counter-piracy missions, and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations. U.S. bases in Korea are strategically positioned to be able to immediately address these types of contingencies throughout the region in a manner much more efficient than deploying troops from the United States.

While our forward deployed force posture is crucial to preventing the outbreak of a major conflict on the Korean Peninsula, it is not a panacea. As I already mentioned, North Korea's development of a range of threatening capabilities, and its willingness to employ them, poses a different type of threat than we faced from North Korea 60 years ago. This asymmetric challenge illustrates the need for the U.S.-ROK alliance to adapt to a new security environment in the region. It is in this vein that I wish to highlight the alliance transformation initiatives going on as we speak.

Alliance Transformation

I will defer to General Sharp's testimony to provide the details of our many lines of effort in the transformation of the U.S.-ROK alliance, but I would like to take a moment to emphasize the net benefit that these various initiatives provide. The security dividend resulting from our longstanding military presence in the region is generally well known, but the ongoing efforts to transform the alliance for the future deserve some attention.

Strategic Alliance 2015 (SA2015) is an umbrella concept that encompasses and harmonizes many different alliance transformation efforts. The foundation of SA2015 is a plan to transition wartime operational control (OPCON) of forces to the ROK Joint Chiefs of Staff. Originally scheduled to transition in 2012, the United States agreed to postpone OPCON transition at ROK request, after assessing the strategic security environment and considering the many changes in the alliance to take place over the next five to ten years. Some of the related initiatives that support OPCON transition, which is now scheduled to take place by December 2015, will result in military plans and exercises that are updated to better account for the most probable threats we could face today and in the near future; other initiatives will strategically redistribute U.S. forces on the Peninsula; still other

efforts will produce restructured command relations so that after OPCON transition takes place in 2015, U.S. forces in Korea will be comprised of a warfighting command that supports ROK forces, who will then lead the warfight.

Increasingly, there is also a regional and global dimension to our bilateral alliance with the ROK. Over time we have both come to realize that we share in common many interests that go beyond the Korean Peninsula. In the Gulf of Aden, the ROK has taken the lead in Combined Task Force-151, a multinational counter-piracy mission. In Lebanon, as the United States has sought to support the Lebanese people by strengthening their government against the forces of extremism, the ROK has done the same, by contributing troops to the UN peacekeeping mission there. In Haiti, a country that once provided development aid to Korea following the ravages of war, the ROK has aid workers on the ground, helping that country rebuild, not only with financial assistance, but also with labor, materials, and technical expertise. The ROK is an active member of the Proliferation Security Initiative, will host a series of PSI-related activities this fall, is a party to several international agreements promoting nonproliferation of WMD, and will even host the Nuclear Security Summit in 2012—symbolically, a complete repudiation of the path North Korea has taken. And in Afghanistan, the ROK provides an entire Provincial Reconstruction Team of more than 400 military and civilian personnel to support the stability and reconstruction operations under the aegis of the International Security Assistance Force. Our alliance with the ROK thus benefits the United States and the international community. The ROK has evolved to become one of the key underwriters of international peace and prosperity, helping to promote globally the values on which our alliance firmly rests.

Closing

The United States is a resident Pacific power, as evidenced by our U.S. military presence and the interests they protect. Our presence on the Korean Peninsula and our strong relationship with the ROK promote peace and stability in the region, which is an enduring interest of the United States and the world. Thank you for allowing me to appear before you today. I look forward to your questions.