

**Statement of
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Security Situation on the Korean Peninsula

Introduction

Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the committee, thank you for the privilege of appearing before you today to discuss the security situation on the Korean Peninsula. I greatly appreciate this opportunity to update the committee on affairs in Korea since the last time I appeared before you last March. The year 2010 marks the 60th anniversary of the start of the Korean War, a three-year conflict that resulted in millions of military and civilian casualties and has yet to be concluded by a formal peace agreement. United States Forces Korea and our component commands, in cooperation with government and veterans organizations in the Republic of Korea (ROK), have been conducting a host of events to honor Korean, United States (U.S.), and United Nations veterans who fought courageously side-by-side to repel North Korea's aggression of six decades ago. The year 2010 also marks the 57th anniversary of signing the U.S.-ROK Mutual Defense Treaty. Serving as a cornerstone for the broader U.S.-ROK Alliance, mutual commitments under the treaty have allowed both nations to deter aggression against the ROK and promote peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula and throughout the broader region of Northeast Asia. As observed by President Obama in his Korean War Veterans Armistice Day Proclamation of July 26, 2010, the U.S.-ROK Alliance is rooted in shared sacrifice, common values, mutual interest, and respect, where the partnership is vital to stability in Asia and the world. Despite the Alliance's promotion of stability, however, North Korea's

sinking of the ROK naval ship *Cheonan* last March and other provocations by Pyongyang shows that a comprehensive peace has yet to settle over the Korean Peninsula.

State of Affairs in Korea

North Korea remains a threat to peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula and in Northeast Asia as a whole. Pyongyang continues to build its asymmetric and conventional military capabilities despite the dire economic conditions faced by its people and threatens the use of these capabilities as a means to manipulate the international community. Its long-range artillery and missile forces are an immediate and daily threat to the ROK's capital city of Seoul – which is located approximately 30 miles from the military demarcation line – as well as to over 23 million people that inhabit the Greater Seoul Metropolitan Area (Seoul, Incheon, and Gyeonggi Province). While responsible nations of the world are working toward reducing the existence of weapons of mass destruction, North Korea continues to develop these weapons and the means to deliver them. Pyongyang also develops and maintains robust asymmetric warfare capabilities as exemplified by the large size and aggressive positioning of its special operations forces. And based upon past behavior, North Korea has great potential to proliferate weapons of mass destruction and related technologies. Thus, in both conventional and increasingly asymmetric terms, North Korea and its provocative behavior remains a threat not only to the ROK and U.S., but also to the broader region of Northeast Asia.

The threat posed by North Korea received heightened attention on March 26, 2010, when it conducted a premeditated and unprovoked attack on the ROK naval ship *Cheonan*. At the time of the attack, the *Cheonan* was patrolling off the west coast of Korea in the vicinity of Paengnyong Island. North Korea's unprovoked attack sank the ship and took the lives of 46 sailors and several rescue personnel during the rescue attempts. In the aftermath of the *Cheonan* tragedy, the ROK government acted in a responsible manner and led a joint civilian-military investigation group to determine the cause of the *Cheonan's* sinking that included the participation of experts from foreign governments. The investigation conducted by the group was performed in an objective, scientific, thorough, and deliberate manner, concluding that North Korea was

responsible for the ship's sinking. This finding was assessed by a special investigative team from the United Nations Command Military Armistice Commission (UNCMAC). The special investigation team determined that North Korea's action, by failing to enforce a complete cessation of all hostilities in Korea, failing to respect the waters contiguous to the island of Paengnyong, making an armed intrusion and/or the firing of a torpedo into Paengnyong Island's contiguous waters, and making a deliberate and premeditated armed attack on the *Cheonan*, constituted major violations of the Armistice Agreement. This determination made by the UNCMAC special investigation team was endorsed by the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission. It should be noted that our Korean partners and friends greatly appreciated the resolution passed by the U.S. Senate last May that expressed sympathy to the families of those killed when the *Cheonan* sank.

In response to this unprovoked act of aggression, President Obama directed his military commanders to coordinate closely with their ROK counterparts to ensure readiness and to deter future aggression. As a result of this direction Secretary of Defense Gates and his Korean counterpart Kim Tae-young announced last July that a series of combined military exercises would be conducted. These exercises are designed to send a clear message to North Korea that its aggressive behavior must stop and the U.S. and ROK are committed to enhancing their combined defensive capabilities. The first exercise held in this series, a combined maritime and air readiness exercise held from 25-28 July 2010, was called *Invincible Spirit* and occurred in the seas east of Korea. The naval portion of the exercise featured 20 Alliance ships that conducted extensive training in the areas of anti-submarine warfare, battle group air defense, and surface warfare training to include live fire exercises. Complimenting the naval events was a robust air component composed of over 200 Alliance aircraft flying a variety of missions in the skies over and around the ROK. Approximately 8,000 Alliance Army, Air Force, Navy, and Marine personnel participated in the *Invincible Spirit* exercise.

Following *Invincible Spirit* was the *Ulchi Freedom Guardian* exercise that was held from 16-26 August 2010. This annual exercise, like all other training events conducted by the Combined

Forces Command, was designed to improve the Alliance's ability to defend the ROK. The exercise was focused on ensuring our readiness to prepare for, prevent, and prevail against the full range of provocations on the Korean Peninsula both now and in the future. It helped teach, coach, and mentor Command personnel on staff and leadership decision-making processes.

Ulchi Freedom Guardian was supposed to be followed by a five-day anti-submarine warfare exercise from 5-9 September in the waters off the west coast of the Korean Peninsula. Regretfully, the conduct of this exercise has been delayed due to adverse weather conditions created by a typhoon that swept through the region earlier this month. Once held, the focus of this exercise will be anti-submarine warfare tactics, techniques, and procedures. The exercise is scoped to send North Korea a clear message about its provocative behavior while at the same time enhance Alliance capabilities and demonstrate the flexibility and interoperability of U.S. and ROK forces. It will be defensive in nature, reinforce regional stability, and send a message of deterrence to Pyongyang. Planning is ongoing for combined exercises in addition to those discussed above that will continue to strengthen U.S.-ROK capabilities and reinforce a message to North Korea that its aggressive behavior must stop and that the Alliance remains committed to enhancing combined defense.

Strategic Alliance 2015

Since I appeared before you last March, President Obama and President Lee of the ROK agreed to adjust the transition of wartime operational control (OPCON) until December 2015. Although the U.S. and ROK were on track militarily for OPCON transition in 2012, this adjustment will provide the Alliance additional time to synchronize a variety of ongoing Alliance initiatives of which wartime OPCON transition is just one. The adjustment of OPCON transition also allows the ROK and U.S. to ensure Alliance initiatives collectively support the U.S.-ROK Joint Vision Statement of June 2009.

At the U.S.-ROK Foreign and Defense Minister's Meeting last July all four ministers agreed to develop a comprehensive Alliance transformation plan that goes beyond simply OPCON

transition. This plan will be called Strategic Alliance 2015 and will be completed and signed by next month's Security Consultative Meeting. Strategic Alliance 2015 will align all of the transformation initiatives currently underway to include the ROK's ongoing defense reform program and U.S. transformation program, with a goal of building adaptive capabilities to deter and defeat any future provocations on the Korean Peninsula and to fight and win if deterrence fails. The Alliance is creating an overarching and synchronized combined transformation plan that has agreed to end states and milestones to ensure a smooth evolution of combined defense for the ROK. Initiatives falling under the Strategic Alliance 2015 construct include OPCON transition, refining and improving combined plans, the definition and development of new organizational structures, the procurement and certification of ROK capabilities to lead the warfight, and the consolidation of U.S. military units located in Korea onto two enduring hubs. End state conditions for Strategic Alliance 2015 include ROK assumption of the lead for the combined defense by late 2015, synchronization and completion of most Alliance transformation initiatives, and collective support for the U.S.-ROK Joint Vision Statement. Current plans to transition USFK to U.S. Korea Command (USKORCOM) will be implemented on schedule. As a result of the delay in OPCON transition, however, USKORCOM staff will be dual hatted as the U.S. contribution to Combined Forces Command until the latter organization is disestablished by OPCON transition in 2015. After OPCON transition, USKORCOM will play a supporting role to the ROK Joint Chiefs of Staff.

The ROK is already in the process of procuring the equipment, conducting the training, and making the organizational changes needed to eventually lead the warfight. Until all these ROK actions are completed, however, the U.S. will provide agreed upon bridging and enduring capabilities. By adjusting the date of OPCON transition to late 2015 the ROK has more time to field many of the critical systems that are part of an ongoing defense reform initiative and to ultimately assume lead of the warfight. The Strategic Alliance 2015 plan will improve readiness by allowing time for the ROK to establish key warfighting headquarters and to acquire critical command and control systems and capabilities. As a result, the OPCON transition process will progress smoother and ultimately end in stronger Alliance forces.

Tour Normalization

Another initiative under implementation by the Command is tour normalization. In the 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review, the Department of Defense committed itself to the long term goal of normalizing the stationing of U.S. forces in the ROK from unaccompanied to accompanied tours. Indeed, we are in the process of changing U.S. force presence in the ROK from being one of forward-deployed to one of being forward-stationed with the presence of family members. In December 2008 the length of tours for service members assigned to Korea changed to 3/2-year accompanied and 1-year unaccompanied. Since the summer of 2008, the number of families in Korea has increased from 1,700 to around 4,200, with a Command sponsorship waiting list of over 500 service member families. The Command's goal is to tour normalize 85% of the force as the required resources and infrastructure become available sometime near the end of this decade. At that time, approximately 12,000 service member families will be in the ROK and most military personnel will be on 3-year accompanied/2-year unaccompanied tours similar to the forces stationed in Europe and Japan.

Tour normalization provides a host of benefits. Implementation will improve combat capability and force readiness by decreasing personnel turnover – 85% of the force in Korea today is on a 1-year assignment. Tour normalization also demonstrates a greater commitment on the part of the U.S. to the ROK as well as the larger Asia-Pacific region. By extending tours to 2- and 3-years in length, less stress will be placed on service members and their families. Finally, the timing for normalization is right, because it can leverage off other Command transformation initiatives to include the Yongsan Relocation Plan (YRP) and Land Partnership Plan (LPP).

Humphreys Housing Plan

An important part of the Command's transformation program and YRP/LPP initiatives is housing. Future housing needs at U.S. Army Garrison (UASG) Humphreys will be satisfied through the Humphreys Housing Plan, which consists of two components: the Humphreys Housing Opportunity Program (HHOP) and Army Family Housing (AFH) Military Construction (MILCON) funds. The HHOP involves a partnership between the U.S. Army in Korea and

private industry that will create modern housing accommodations for service members and families assigned to the ROK.

The HHOP draws upon private sector development, financing, and operational support for the construction and operation of 1,400 housing units at USAG Humphreys under a permitted SOFA Use Agreement without the need for Army capital investment. Costing approximately \$800 million, HHOP units will be built on land granted by the ROK under the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) and is one part of a larger effort to construct 2,902 units of housing on the garrison. Units built under this program will be rented to service members using their Overseas Housing Allowance (OHA) as the means of payment. No guarantees on occupancy or terms of rent will be made, however, to the private operator. Units constructed under HHOP will include a mix of three, four, and five bedroom apartments, each offering ample living space, modern interior finishes, comfortable floor plans, and embedded with family support infrastructure such as playgrounds, community centers, and athletic fields. By leveraging permitted land under the SOFA with market demand, HHOP is able to construct modern affordable housing that meets service member needs at no capital investment cost to the Army.

In addition to the 1,400 housing units built under the HHOP, the Humphreys Housing Plan requests the application of AFH MILCON funds toward the overarching plan of building 2,902 units in total on USAG Humphreys. If approved, AFH MILCON funding will be used to construct 1,127 housing units. Both the HHOP and AFH MILCON funding are vital components of the Command's objective of accommodating 60% of the service member housing requirement at USAG Humphreys on-post.

Summary

Pyongyang's attack on the *Cheonan* last March shows that North Korea remains a serious threat to peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula and in Northeast Asia as a whole. In response to the threat posed and belligerent actions taken by North Korea, the U.S.-ROK Alliance has conducted – and will continue to conduct in the future – exercises designed to increase the

combined capability, reinforce the message that Pyongyang must stop its aggressive behavior, and to demonstrate the Alliance remains committed to enhancing its combined defense. U.S. commitment to defense of the ROK remains unshakable. As announced in a joint statement by Defense Secretary Gates and his Korean counterpart Kim Tae-young in Seoul last July, we remain committed to ensuring sufficient combined force capabilities and the provision of extended deterrence through the U.S. nuclear umbrella, conventional strike, and missile defense capabilities while maintaining an enduring U.S. military force presence and the current level of American troops in the ROK. It is in everyone's interests – to include North Korea – for Pyongyang to stop its provocative behavior, cease threatening its neighbors, take actions to promote peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula, and implement irreversible steps to fulfill its denuclearization commitments.

The Strategic Alliance 2015 plan will better synchronize ongoing transformation efforts between the U.S. and ROK. Additionally, the plan reaffirms U.S. commitment to the ROK, ensures both nations are better prepared to deter and defeat aggression, and will ultimately result in a stronger Alliance. As movement is made towards the plan's end state, the Alliance will have the right operational plans, right organizational structures, the right capabilities and systems, right exercises, and right force structure and alignment to ensure that the Alliance grows stronger and is ready to fight tonight across the entire spectrum of conflict.

Thank you and I look forward to your questions.