

October 13, 2011

FACT SHEET ON THE U.S.-REPUBLIC OF KOREA ALLIANCE

The United States-Republic of Korea Alliance is as strong as it has ever been. The U.S. and the ROK have a proud history of shared sacrifice, and our close security partnership has grown and deepened over the past 61 years. We are indispensable allies, and the U.S.-ROK relationship is a central pillar of security in Asia. President Obama has said that the U.S.-Republic of Korea alliance “has never been stronger than it is today.” President Lee has said the alliance is “strong in every single aspect.”

Continued U.S. military presence on the Korean Peninsula provides a physical demonstration of U.S. commitment to the Republic of Korea’s security. Under the Strategic Alliance 2015 Roadmap (SA 2015), the wartime operational control of ROK forces will transition from the U.S.-ROK Combined Forces Command to the ROK Joint Chiefs of Staff in December 2015. The repositioning and consolidation of U.S. Forces Korea, which is a major signal of continued U.S. military commitment to the alliance, will increase readiness, efficiency, and cost savings. To further our alliance coordination, U.S. Secretary of Defense Panetta and ROK Defense Minister Kim will meet for the annual Security Consultative Meeting on October 28 in Seoul.

Together, the two presidents have charted a forward-looking agenda for the alliance, outlined by the June 16, 2009 U.S.-ROK Joint Vision Statement which encapsulates the essence of our relationship. Under the protection of a security alliance forged in shared sacrifice 60 years ago, our relationship has matured into a multi-faceted one, embracing not just diplomatic and security cooperation, but deep and sustained economic, scientific, cultural, and personal exchanges as well.

A strong U.S.-ROK alliance not only benefits the United States and the ROK -- it ensures stability for the region, and our growing international security cooperation benefits the global community as well. The ROK currently has service members deployed in more than a dozen countries around the world, including a provisional reconstruction team in Afghanistan, peacekeepers and aid workers in Haiti, counter-piracy assets off the coast of Somalia, and peacekeepers in Lebanon.

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Drafted: EAP/K: Donny Yoo 7-7718, cell 202-664-2719

Approved: EAP/FO: E Kagan ()

Cleared: EAP/K: M Carlson ()
EAP/K: J Huck (ok)
D(B): C Crosby ()
P: P Barte (ok)
S/P: T Jung ()
PM: M Cahn (ok)
EAP/P: K McKellogg (ok)
NSS: E Shin (ok)
DOD/OSD: A Kim ()