

United States– Republic of Korea Defense Ministers Meeting Joint Statement

U.S. Secretary of Defense James N. Mattis and Republic of Korea Minister of National Defense Song Young-moo convened a defense ministerial meeting in Singapore on June 2 on the margins of the International Institute for Strategic Studies 17th Asia Security Summit (Shangri-La Dialogue), and held discussions on coordination measures relevant to current security situation on the Korean Peninsula and key ROK-U.S. Alliance issues.

The Secretary and the Minister welcomed the results of the two recent inter-Korean Summits, to include the “Panmunjeom Declaration for Peace, Prosperity and Unification of the Korean Peninsula,” and noted that positive changes that have been brought about are setting favorable conditions for the U.S.-North Korea Summit. They agreed that in addition to strong international enforcement of United Nations Security Council Resolutions, the robust ROK-U.S. Alliance and the close bilateral coordination greatly contributed to bringing such changes. The two leaders resolved to strengthen the coordination and cooperation between the two defense authorities.

Minister Song explained that defense-related agreements from the inter-Korean Summits will be faithfully implemented and that he will continue to provide defense-level support to ensure implementation of the other agreements. In particular he emphasized that it is important to continue to strongly maintain the ROK-U.S. combined defense posture through every step of alleviating military tensions and building trust between the two Koreas, and noted that he will continue to closely communicate with the U.S. in this regard.

Secretary Mattis reaffirmed that the ironclad U.S. defense commitment to the ROK will continue to be maintained regardless of the changes in the security situation on the Korean Peninsula, and to this end, noted that U.S. Forces Korea will continue to maintain the current level of forces. Moreover, he stressed that the role of the military will continue to be to reinforce diplomatic measures, such as through cooperation to enforce implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolutions aimed at the objective of complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization.

The Secretary and the Minister recognized the progress towards preparation for the OPCON transition, to include acquiring the necessary Alliance capabilities, and

developing strategic documents and operational plans, and committed to strengthen cooperation to expeditiously meet the necessary conditions for the OPCON transition.

The two sides shared the understanding that the upcoming U.S.-North Korea Summit will serve as a historic opportunity towards denuclearization and building lasting peace on the Korean Peninsula, and resolved to further strengthen the bilateral ministerial communication and coordination to provide defense-level support for setting favorable conditions for the Summit.