

Joint Statement for ROK-U.S. Defense Ministerial Meeting on June 28, 2018

Republic of Korea (ROK) Minister of National Defense Song Young-moo and U.S. Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis held an ROK-U.S. Defense Ministerial Meeting in Seoul on June 28, 2018 to discuss the security situation on the Korean Peninsula and other major Alliance issues.

Minister Song and Secretary Mattis concurred that the two recent inter-Korean Summits and the U.S.-North Korea Summit created significant momentum for achieving the two Presidents' vision for denuclearization and peace on the Korean Peninsula, and bringing peace and prosperity to Northeast Asia and the world.

The Minister and the Secretary reviewed recent efforts to ease military tension and build confidence, including the decision to suspend select ROK-U.S. combined exercises, including Freedom Guardian scheduled this August. They noted that they will continue to seek measures for building mutual trust and peace as long as North Korea continues the dialogues in good faith. They also noted their shared view that United Nations Security Council sanctions should be enforced until North Korea takes concrete, irreversible steps towards denuclearization. In addition, they resolved to maintain a robust combined defense posture to address threats to the Alliance.

Minister Song and Secretary Mattis noted that significant progress has been made in preparation for the transition of wartime operational control (OPCON) to the ROK, and pledged to strengthen their cooperation to meet the necessary conditions for the OPCON transition expeditiously, while fully taking into consideration future changes in the security situation on the Korean Peninsula.

Minister Song and Secretary Mattis noted that the ROK-U.S. Alliance is stronger than ever, and pledged to maintain close cooperation to develop the Alliance in a future-oriented and mutually reinforcing manner. Minister Song and Secretary Mattis commended the relocation [to Camp Humphreys] of the U.S. Forces Korea (USFK) Headquarters scheduled on June 29, and reaffirmed that USFK, as a symbol of the ROK-U.S. Alliance, greatly contributes to peace and stability of Northeast Asia. They also highlighted that this year's ROK-U.S. Security Consultative Meeting (SCM) will mark its 50th anniversary, and stated they would use the 50th SCM to look forward to the next 50 years of bilateral defense cooperation between the two nations.

Minister Song and Secretary Mattis shared the understanding that amid the dynamic security situation on the Korean Peninsula, continued close coordination is crucial to bringing denuclearization and peace on the Korean Peninsula. In this regard, they resolved to continue to strengthen communication and coordination.

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