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Media Note

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Preamble

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry and Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter convened a “2+2” meeting with Republic of Korea (ROK) Foreign Minister Yun Byung-se and Minister of National Defense Han Min-koo in Washington, D.C. on October 19, 2016. The U.S.-ROK “2+2” session, the fourth of its kind since 2010, preceded the 48th Security Consultative Meeting (SCM) between Secretary Carter and Minister Han on October 20, 2016, at the Pentagon.

The Secretaries and Ministers reiterated the commitment of the U.S.-ROK Alliance to counter the grave security threats posed by North Korea and together meet regional and global challenges based on the shared values of freedom, democracy, human rights, and the rule of law, as set forth in the 2013 “Joint Declaration in Commemoration of the 60th Anniversary of the U.S.-ROK Alliance” and the 2015 “U.S.-ROK Joint Statement on North Korea.” The Secretaries and Ministers reaffirmed that today’s comprehensive and strategic U.S.-ROK Alliance serves as a linchpin of peace and security not just on Korean Peninsula, but across the Asia-Pacific region, promoting regional and global stability, security, and prosperity. They welcomed the continuing evolution of the Alliance into a deepening global partnership, embodying the spirit of the 2015 Joint Fact Sheet “Republic of Korea-United States Alliance: Shared Values, New Frontiers” to meet challenges that affect the world, including climate change and the refugee crisis.

U.S.-ROK Alliance

The Secretaries and Ministers reaffirmed the mutual commitment of the U.S.-ROK Alliance to defend the ROK through a robust combined defense posture and the enhancement of mutual security, as based on the U.S.-ROK Mutual Defense Treaty. Secretaries Kerry and Carter reiterated the ironclad and unwavering U.S. commitment to draw on the full range of its military capabilities, including the U.S. nuclear umbrella, conventional strike, and missile defense capabilities, to provide extended deterrence for the ROK. The U.S. Secretaries also reaffirmed the longstanding U.S. policy that any attack on the United States or its allies will be defeated, and any use of nuclear weapons will be met with an effective and overwhelming response. The officials collectively decided that robust deterrence against North Korea

required leveraging the full breadth of national power – including diplomacy, information, military coordination, and economic elements. To that end, the Secretaries and Ministers decided to establish a high-level Extended Deterrence Strategy and Consultation Group (EDSCG) to be co-chaired by representatives from the Ministry of National Defense, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Department of Defense, and the Department of State, with participation from other relevant agencies. Through this dialogue, the two sides plan to work closely on policy issues related to extended deterrence. To continue demonstrating Alliance readiness, resolve, and determination across our governments, the officials underscored the importance of appropriate planning and combined exercises related to a range of crisis situations on the Korean Peninsula. The Secretaries and Ministers affirmed that preparation for the Conditions-based Operational Control (OPCON) transition is progressing according to the “Conditions-based OPCON Transition Plan” (COT-P). They pledged to continue implementing the COT-P faithfully in order to ensure a stable wartime OPCON transition at a proper time.

The Secretaries and Ministers reaffirmed the Alliance commitment to deploy a Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) battery to U.S. Forces Korea on the Korean Peninsula as an effective and necessary self-defense measure against North Korea’s evolving missile threats. They re-emphasized the system would be deployed solely for the purpose of defending against North Korean missile threats and would not impact the strategic deterrent of other nations in the region. The officials pledged to take appropriate measures to ensure the THAAD deployment process continues to move forward without delay, and they reiterated that the United States and the ROK remained open to constructive engagement on THAAD’s mission on the Korean Peninsula.

The Secretaries and Ministers highlighted the importance of our longstanding, mutually beneficial cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. To this end, they reaffirmed both countries’ commitment to strengthen strategic and future-oriented civil nuclear cooperation by actively engaging in the U.S.-ROK High Level Bilateral Commission, a key mechanism for implementing the recently renewed U.S.-ROK Agreement for Cooperation Concerning Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy, which serves as a milestone for bilateral nuclear cooperation. They welcomed the two countries’ shared commitment to and partnership in nuclear safety and security, as well as their cooperation for the strengthening of the global nonproliferation regime. They welcomed the success of the 4th Nuclear Security Summit held in March 2016 in Washington, D.C., and the United States expressed appreciation for ROK leadership as Chair of the Nuclear Suppliers Group and the Missile Technology Control Regime 2016-2017. The officials are committed to working for the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty to realize the vision of a world without nuclear weapons.

The Secretaries and Ministers praised the inaugural meeting of the Defense Technology Strategy and Cooperation Group (DTSCG) in July. The DTSCG enables the two sides to work together to advance policy and strategic discussion on technology security, foreign policy, and defense technology cooperation in support of the ROK-U.S. Alliance.

They recognized the value of the U.S.-ROK partnership’s advancement into New Frontiers of cooperation such as cyber security, space, and global health. They reaffirmed the two countries’ mutual commitment to increase cyber cooperation, including with respect to North Korean cyber-attacks, and highlighted plans to enhance space cooperation to address challenges to space security. The officials recognized the KORUS-FTA enhanced mutually beneficial economic and trade cooperation between the two countries.

North Korea

The Secretaries and Ministers reaffirmed the Alliance's commitment to countering the accelerating threat to peace and security posed by North Korea's repeated and flagrant violations of its international obligations and commitments. They condemned in the strongest possible terms North Korea's unprecedented level of nuclear tests and ballistic missile launches in 2016, including its fourth and fifth nuclear tests; its 23 short-range, medium-range, intermediate-range, long-range, and submarine-launched ballistic missile launches; and its admission it is producing fissile material – including highly enriched uranium – for nuclear weapons. These actions are destabilizing to the region and clear violations of numerous UN Security Council resolutions. The officials believe the international community must be united in seeking all necessary measures with utmost urgency and determination to urge North Korea to fulfill its international obligations and commitments, cease all activities related to its nuclear and ballistic missile programs immediately, and abandon all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs, as well as other existing weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programs, in a complete, verifiable, and irreversible manner. They shared the view that the rapid advancement of North Korea's nuclear and missile capabilities constitute a direct threat to both countries and other countries in the region. Based on the common understanding of the gravity and urgency of the North Korean threat, they discussed concrete measures the United States and the ROK can take to counter those threats.

The Secretaries and Ministers reiterated their commitment to impose real costs and consequences on the North Korean regime for its provocative and destabilizing actions through multilateral, cooperative, bilateral, and national measures aimed at stopping North Korea's advancement of its nuclear and missile capabilities, and compelling the regime to return to authentic and credible negotiations on denuclearization. They recalled the commitments set forth in the "2015 Republic of Korea and United States of America Joint Statement on North Korea." The Secretaries and the Ministers reaffirmed that the United States and the ROK would continue to work closely to implement fully UN Security Council Resolution 2270, which imposed the strongest sanctions yet on North Korea. They stressed the importance of increased international pressure to compel North Korea to cease its destabilizing behavior that threatens regional security and the global nonproliferation regime. They also highlighted the importance of swift Security Council action to adopt a new resolution to further strengthen our international response to North Korea's unlawful September 9 nuclear test. The officials discussed efforts to encourage third countries to review the full scope of their ties and relationships with North Korea and noted countries which host North Korean laborers have a responsibility to ensure their wages will not support North Korea's nuclear and ballistic missiles programs.

The Secretaries and the Ministers underscored their concern for the well-being of the North Korean people due to the regime's many human rights abuses. They noted the diversion of North Korea's resources to nuclear and missile development were further deepening its isolation and aggravating the hardship of the people suffering under Kim Jong Un and his regime. They also welcomed international efforts to draw attention to North Korea's systematic, widespread, and gross violations of human rights. The officials discussed ways to highlight further the deplorable human rights situation in North Korea, including the activities of the office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Seoul, the implementation of the recently enacted North Korea Human Rights Act, the recent appointment of the ROK Ambassador for North Korean Human Rights, and the launch of the bilateral North Korean Human

Rights Consultation held October 4 in Washington D.C. They decided to work further on issues such as holding leadership accountable in North Korea.

The Secretaries and Ministers exchanged their views on the peaceful unification of the Korean Peninsula, and Secretaries Kerry and Carter reaffirmed their strong support for President Park's vision of a peacefully unified Korean Peninsula, as envisaged in her Dresden address and noted in the 2015 "Republic of Korea and United States of America Joint Statement on North Korea." In that regard, the Secretaries and the Ministers decided to continue high-level strategic consultations to create a favorable environment for the peaceful unification of the Korean Peninsula.

Regional Issues

The United States and the ROK reiterated their shared resolve to promote regional peace and security. As part of those efforts, the Secretaries and the Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to further enhance ROK-U.S.-Japan trilateral cooperation through wide-ranging and close consultations. They recognized the importance of maintaining strong trilateral relations and discussed the positive role each must play to reinforce regional stability. They highlighted the March 2016 trilateral summit among President Barack Obama, President Park Geun-hye, and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and the September Trilateral Ministerial Meeting in New York on the margins of the 71st United Nations General Assembly, and decided to seek ways to sustain the momentum.

The Secretaries and Ministers shared the view that enhancing U.S.-ROK-Japan trilateral cooperation strengthens deterrence against the North Korean threat. In this regard, they lauded the successful trilateral missile warning exercise conducted in June 2016 and anticipated further strides to improve trilateral defense cooperation, using established trilateral defense consultations such as the Defense Trilateral Talks. The officials praised the trilateral diplomatic and defense coordination that took place following North Korea's multiple provocations, including the January and September 2016 nuclear tests. The officials also acknowledged advancements in global cooperation through trilateral consultation mechanisms such as the Vice-Ministerial Trilateral, the Trilateral Discussion on Development Policy, the Women's Empowerment Trilateral Forum, and the Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Response Working Group.

The Secretaries and the Ministers emphasized the importance of constructive cooperation with China through various forms of dialogue to further shared goals of peace, stability, and prosperity. The United States welcomed the ROK government's efforts to build on the vision of ROK-Japan-China cooperation as expressed through the 2015 "Joint Declaration for Peace and Cooperation in Northeast Asia" and to enhance bilateral cooperation with Japan. The ROK government expressed support of U.S. efforts to advance a comprehensive and constructive bilateral relationship with China. Highlighting the importance of guaranteeing freedom of navigation and overflight, the officials emphasized that all countries have the right to fly, sail, and operate in the South China Sea in accordance with international law.

Secretary Kerry also acknowledged the ROK contribution in addressing regional challenges through the Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperation Initiative, which President Park launched in 2013. The Secretaries and Ministers noted the 3rd High-level Intergovernmental Meeting (HIM) co-hosted by the ROK and the U.S. on October 6-7 in Washington D.C., as well as the 2016 Northeast Asia Peace and

Cooperation Forum held concurrently with the HIM, while looking forward to additional trust-building dialogues in the future.

Global Partnership

The Secretaries and the Ministers recognized the impact of the Alliance beyond the region, emphasizing the two nations' collaboration on a wide range of issues requiring a global response. Acknowledging the diverse array of unconventional threats in today's interconnected world, the officials reaffirmed their commitment to tackle issues ranging from climate change to terrorism.

As partners in the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL, the Secretaries and the Ministers condemned the suffering ISIL's violent extremism has caused for the people in Iraq, Syria, and around the world. In response to an unprecedented refugee crisis, the ROK pledged to maintain its current level of annual humanitarian assistance at \$44 million every year for the next three years and also committed an additional \$100 million beyond that level, subject to domestic procedures, within the next three years at the U.S. co-hosted Leaders' Summit on Refugees. Secretaries Kerry and Carter praised the ROK government for its generous contribution and continued promotion of peacekeeping activities, as well as the ROK's \$255 million pledge, subject to domestic procedures, in security and development assistance to Afghanistan.

Building upon the 2015 Conference of the Parties in Paris, both sides reaffirmed the importance of alleviating and adapting to climate change. Secretaries Kerry and Carter expressed appreciation for ROK support of the amendment to phase down the production and consumption of hydrofluorocarbons under the Montreal Protocol. Additionally, both sides conveyed their dedication to prevent, deter, and eliminate illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing through the ratification of the Port State Measures Agreement. In light of the September 2016 Our Ocean Conference, Secretary Kerry lauded the decision to renew a Joint Project Agreement to collaborate on marine research from 2017-2021.

The Secretaries and Ministers acknowledged the positive strides made to advance the Global Health Security Agenda (GHSA), including through the ROK's upcoming 2017 chairmanship of the GHSA Steering Group. They highlighted the successful collaboration among the United States, the ROK, and Japan affirmed at the September 2016 trilateral meeting of health ministers on the Cancer Moonshot. The officials praised U.S., ROK, and Japanese commitment to women's political and economic empowerment within the respective countries through the Equal Futures Partnership Initiative, which was reinforced at the inaugural U.S.-ROK-Japan Women's Empowerment Trilateral Forum in September. The Forum's expanded agenda included global coordination on adolescent girls' education.

Conclusion

Built on mutual trust, shared values, and tested through more than six decades of commitment, the U.S.-ROK partnership has never been stronger. The scope and range of cooperation between our two countries is evident – from strengthening our Alliance, to deepening our trade and economic relationship, building strong regional relations, and expanding our global partnership. The Secretaries and Ministers conveyed their common vision for security and stability in the region, as well as their shared ideals for global peace and prosperity. Guided by mutual values that have opened new frontiers for collaboration, and encouraged by the enduring strength of the U.S.-ROK Alliance, they reaffirmed their commitment to continue to deepen, develop, and advance the partnership to its full potential.

