



Center for a  
New American  
Security

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AS DELIVERED

I am honored to give this speech tonight and answer your questions afterwards. I only have 150 PowerPoint slides, so this should be fairly painless... ok, in reality there are no slides, but I am going to speak to you and make a few points about current events and our Republic of Korea - U.S. alliance future initiatives.

President Lee, thank you for your kind introduction. Dr. Cronin and Dr. Lee, thank you for the invitation to speak here tonight. It is always a privilege to speak to the members of the Center for New American Security, and the East Asia Institute. Thank you also for your continued efforts to expand and deepen the discourse on Northeast Asian affairs, and for recognizing the important role of the ROK-U.S. alliance in Northeast Asia.

This year we commemorated the 60th anniversary of the ROK-U.S. alliance. Throughout the year and across the peninsula, the Republic of Korea and our combined military forces hosted numerous 60th anniversary events to remember the sacrifices of all of our Korea War veterans. The many memorials and re-enactments held since June served as a reminder that we have yet to achieve the desired complete peace and stability on the Korean peninsula and must remain forever vigilant in order to deter aggression and fight and win if deterrence should fail.

The ROK-U.S. alliance is one of the most successful alliances in the world and serves the interests of both of our nations in the region. Although our alliance has deterred all-out war we continue to face a belligerent North Korea that persists in attacking the ROK. The struggle today is how do we deter provocations and the continued violation of United Nations Security Council resolutions.

To better address the current and future threats and challenges, both our governments have committed to transforming our alliance

through the strategic alliance 2015 plan. The new plan synchronizes all of our alliance efforts to ensure we have our plans, our organizations, our capabilities and systems, and our exercises established to facilitate OPCON transition on 1DEC 2015 as well as continue to strengthen our alliance to enable us to more agilely and quickly address the threats of today and better shape the future security environment. Included in our plan is a ROK-U.S. whole of government approach that extends our capabilities into the realm of deterring or defeating North Korean limited attacks.

While the republic of Korea and United States are working towards the long-term transformation of the alliance, we are also moving ahead quickly with our near-term deterrent actions and responses to continued North Korean belligerence. Recently the United States and ROK underscored this effort in two high -profile events. First was the trilateral meeting between the U.S., ROK, and Japan held in Washington D.C. Then last week Admiral Mullen led a joint DOD and State Department delegation to Seoul. After a full day of very productive consultations, Admiral Mullen was emphatic about America's support to the ROK and warned North Korea not to mistake the restraint they see today for a lack of resolve.

The senior delegation lead by Admiral Mullen reaffirmed our commitment to the ROK-U.S. alliance and our resolve to meet our mutual security objectives on the peninsula and in the region. An increasingly belligerent North Korean armed with nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles is clearly a regional problem. Admiral Mullen was clear in his recent remarks that we look forward to working together with the ROK and Japan in ensuring continued security and stability in the region and that china bears a unique responsibility to assist in guiding North Korea to act more responsibly.

Though involving less loss of life than the attack on the Cheonan, the north's attack on the northwest islands crossed a significant threshold and represents a worrying trend towards more frequent and more violent provocations. While the north may believe that they

can shake alliance resolve through these actions, it is having the opposite effect. Alliance resolve has never been stronger and we will strengthen the alliance further still both in terms of capability and commitment.

It is difficult to determine exactly why North Korea engages in attacks and provocations, but it is likely that a complex mixture of motives and objectives are operative, including an effort to buttress regime legitimacy and cohesion among the elites, as well as to shore up succession while addressing policy goals. Our task, then, is to find ways to change North Korea's strategic calculus and end the cycle of provocations.

As we address North Korean belligerence together with our Republic of Korea allies, we continue to press on without interruption to execute the strategic alliance 2015 plan. When I spoke with this group last, I shared with you some of my initial thoughts regarding the new plan. Since then we have taken great strides. On October 7th, the ROK and the U.S. chairman of the joints chiefs of staff met for their annual military committee meeting, followed on the next day by the 42nd annual security consultative meeting between the ROK minister of national defense and U.S. secretary of defense.

At the meeting, the ROK minister of national defense and secretary of defense gates signed the guidelines for U.S.-ROK defense cooperation and strategic alliance 2015. These agreements provide a blueprint for the implementation of the joint vision statement, signed by our presidents on in June of 2009, and provide the necessary structure and process for us to build a comprehensive strategic alliance.

The secretary and the minister pledged that the ROK and the U.S. will continue to enhance close alliance cooperation to address a broad range of global security challenges by broadening and

deepening the scope of alliance cooperation with particular emphasis on a whole of government approach.

During Adm. Mullen's recent visit, he consulted with ROK chairman of the joint staff general Han min-Koo. Both our countries reconfirmed that we need to ensure our plans, our force posture, our training and our exercises are focused on full-spectrum operations to deter, and if necessary defeat, a rapidly evolving threat. We will conduct more combined exercises to ensure increased interoperability in critical locations and in war fighting capabilities, including command, control, communications and intelligence in a command structure where the United States is in a supporting role to the ROK. We are taking a long-term view that ensures our near term actions are guided by the strategic alliance 2015 framework as laid out at the SCM.

Strategic alliance 2015 provides the necessary structure and processes to operationalize the defense guidelines and strategic vision. SA 2015 is a comprehensive implementation plan that allows the alliance to synchronize multiple key initiatives to better align with the transfer of wartime operational control and ensure that we progress toward important objectives effectively and in a manner that maximizes the benefits of each element of SA 2015.

Our ongoing efforts to implement SA 2015 are already yielding benefits that I believe will render us better able to address, deter, and respond to these North Korean limited attacks. For example, we continue to make progress in improved coordination, in exercises, planning, and c4isr capabilities.

SA 2015 lays the foundation that enables us to realize the full extent of our alliance's capabilities to not only deter or defeat a full scale North Korea attack, but also to enable us to better address limited attacks. Further SA 2015 enables a greater contribution to peace and stability in Asia and around the world. It is an important step in support of the goals contained in the U.S. global posture review that

lays out a plan for the continued forward presence of U.S. forces in this region.

We will regularly assess and review strategic alliance 2015 at the annual scm/mcm through 2015, with particular attention paid to the evolving North Korean threat. At the security consultative meeting this past October the secretary and minister noted the importance of the OPCON certification plan in ensuring that the transition is implemented with validation that the combined defense posture remains strong and seamless. This includes a U.S. commitment to provide specific bridging capabilities until the ROK obtains full self-defense capabilities and to provide certain enduring capabilities for the life of the alliance.

The key elements of SA 2015 include the following:

- First, realistic plans and exercises based on the full range of possible North Korean actions including provocations, limited attack, and full out direct attack.
- Second, changing our ROK-U.S. organizational structures and command and control relationships by 2015.
- Third, development of additional ROK capabilities that allow them to lead the war fight.
- Finally, realizing greater efficiency by consolidation of U.S. forces into two enduring hubs around Pyeongtaek and Daegu.

SA 2015 is about much more than the transition of war operational control. It synchronizes on-going initiatives using a whole of government approach to propel the alliance into the future. Recent North Korean provocations and attacks only serve to highlight the criticality of the increased capabilities and deterrent value that will result from the full implementation of SA 2015.

An important aspect of SA 2015 is the continual adaptation of our exercise and training program to ensure that we provide the most

realistic training possible. In light of recent events we will seek ways to further adapt our exercises to address limited, as well as full scale, North Korean attacks. All of our exercises are designed to improve our interoperability and demonstrate unwavering alliance resolve to maintain peace and stability in the region.

The recently planned and executed series of naval and air readiness exercises provide an example of how the agile, adaptive alliance envisioned by SA 2015 will make us more responsive to future threats and more able to execute them in a very compressed timeline.

We have successfully executed three exercises in this on-going series. Operation invincible spirit was the first of the series and was completed on July 29th, soon after the completion of the 2 + 2 meeting here in Seoul. The second exercise in this series was an anti-submarine warfare exercise conducted in the seas off the west coast of Korea in September. The ASW exercise served to improve the readiness and proficiency to defend against subsurface attacks by the U.S. and ROK forces. Our most recent exercise involved the carrier strike group George Washington, which allowed the alliance to improve interoperability and combined command and control. we will also take advantage of our biannual theater level exercises, key resolve and Ulchi freedom guardian and other future exercises to continue to improve our alliance capabilities and readiness to respond to not only limited

North Korean attacks but also a North Korean full out attack. In addition to our alliance exercises, the Republic of Korea is involved in a number of other regional multinational exercises each year. Recently the ROK hosted a 15-nation proliferation security initiative exercise. I greatly applaud the Republic of Korea's continued leadership in not only regional affairs but also in UN peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance operations around the globe.

The consolidation of U.S. forces into two enduring hubs is another important aspect of SA 2015. Under the land partnership program and Yongsan relocation program, otherwise known as lpp and yrp, U.S. forces in Korea will consolidate into two enduring hubs, beginning in 2012, the relocation should be complete around 2016 allowing for the eventual reduction of the U.S. footprint from 110 camps down to 48 installations. To be clear, this does not translate into a reduction of our forces. Our strength on the peninsula will stay at its current level for the foreseeable future.

Consolidation of forces is an important enabler of tour normalization, another initiative aimed at both increasing the effectiveness of the alliance and sustaining the alliance well into the future. Presently the vast majority of the service members serving with U.S. forces Korea come on one -year unaccompanied tours. In the future through tour normalization we will give the option to our service members to come to Korea on a two-year unaccompanied tour or a three-year accompanied tour.

As we normalize tours we significantly enhance the effectiveness of our forces. Tour normalization enables further increases in the realism and efficiency of our training and exercise program, and provides a more capable force to respond to North Korea's continued belligerence.

Tour normalization is important to the alliance in more than just a purely military sense. There is no reason that families should not be together here in Korea, one of the world's most vibrant and dynamic societies. Allowing families to accompany their U.S. service member to Korea lowers the level of stress for service members who have deployed many times.

Ultimately, the ROK-U.S. alliance is a relationship between two peoples and by bringing more families to Korea I believe we will build stronger bonds between our countries. In much the same way that Korean students have studied in the U.S. and served as an important bridge between cultures, I believe that our military



families do the same. There is no greater signal of our confidence in the importance and capability of the alliance than the presence of our families now and in the future.

The U.S.-ROK alliance is about more than North Korea. Based on our shared values, our countries are primed to cooperate and act on a global basis to contribute to international security. One of the cornerstone strategic documents underpinning our goals, and the bilateral policy document that SA 2015 is designed to operationalize, is the joint vision for the alliance approved by presidents Lee and Obama in June 2009.

Through the joint vision statement, we have committed to building a comprehensive strategic alliance of bilateral, regional, and global scope. While SA 2015 is an enabler for full realization of this vision, the incremental milestones in the plan allow for continual progress.

As the ROK-U.S. alliance becomes stronger and more agile under SA 2015, it becomes a contributor in the broader Pacific context, and in so doing increases regional transparency and understanding. In the near term we also look forward to dispatching troops from the peninsula to participate in a range of regional military exercises and should they be required, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief missions.

One example is USFK's recent support of the deployment of the ROK provincial reconstruction team to Afghanistan. We worked closely with the deploying ROK team, providing crucial information and intelligence. We also embedded a small contingent from USFJ into this PRT to support the PRT's mission and ensure an effective link between the PRT, U.S., and other coalition forces in Afghanistan.

President Lee has discussed his vision for an expanded global role for the ROK. Regarding the ROK's military role, President Lee said,

“Our military should actively cooperate with the international society when the need arises for us to contribute to world peace and security.” As we move forward implementing the vision of our presidents, we look forward to engaging in a range of military cooperation and security assistance activities where the interests of the ROK, the United States and the region are all aligned. I look forward to U.S. forces Korea facilitating and supporting the ROK military in these regional and global initiatives.

I envision an alliance in the future that is not only designed to counter nation-state threats, but is also prepared to respond to and manage a range of non-traditional security challenges directly as an alliance, or by providing the necessary stability and security on the peninsula, and in the region, that enables the nations of the region to independently and collectively determine and execute responses. Again, going back to the joint vision statement, our presidents committed to working closely to address a broad range of challenges. The habits of cooperative action and the capacity building achieved through bilateral and multi-lateral training opportunities are the keys that will allow us to meet future challenges.

The joint vision also addresses peacekeeping, post-conflict stabilization, and development assistance. In a world where some of our greatest challenges are found not in opposing nation states but rather derive from non-state actors and the chaos they engender, peacekeeping and development assistance are indispensable and I believe the ROK is committed to tackling these challenges. America’s alliances provide strategic latitude and confidence to our partners in the region to adopt novel approaches to tackling challenges and in weaving rising powers into the fabric of Asia in ways consistent with our shared political and economic values. The U.S. presence and system of alliances increases the prospects for creating such a set of constructive bilateral and multilateral relationships.

North Korea poses a significant threat to the northeast Asia region as it continues to pursue its nuclear and ballistic missile efforts. It will take the ROK-U.S. alliance, as well as support from other regional allies to work to change North Korea's strategic calculus and to break the cycle of provocations. The enhanced readiness, improved capabilities, and an overall force posture that will better allow us to anticipate provocations, to deter them, and to respond rapidly, proportionately, and decisively to those that do occur. Our message to North Korea is clear, we will not tolerate attacks against the civilian population and all provocations will be met with the utmost response that the combined ROK-U.S. instruments of national power can bring to bear and that the laws of land warfare permit.

I also call on North Korea to cease its development and testing of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction. The United Nations Security Council and every responsible nation in the region have called on the north to abandon these weapons programs. The ROK-U.S. alliance remains strong, will not be intimidated by North Korean threats and SA 2015 will enable us to successfully counter any threat North Korea may wield.

The ROK-U.S. alliance is a vital element in providing security, stability, and prosperity on the peninsula and in the region. the strategic alliance 2015 plan will ensure that we will be strong and ready to take up this enhanced regional role and that we will always be prepared to deter North Korean aggression and to fight and win if deterrence fails.

Thank you very much for your time and attention. I look forward to your questions.