

South Korea Leads the Warfight



By B.B. BELL
and SONYA L. FINLEY

USFK (Jason Epley)

The Republic of Korea–U.S. alliance is embarking on the most profound transformation affecting American forces on the peninsula since the Korean War. For the last 57 years, the United States has led the warfighting command responsible for the defense of the Republic of Korea (ROK). As the ROK military matured, the alliance evolved and adopted a number of command and control (C²) mechanisms integrating the ROK military into the decisionmaking process and command.

In October 2006, the Presidents of the United States and the Republic of Korea agreed that South Korea is ready to assume primacy of its own defense in armistice, crisis, and war. In early 2007, the U.S. Secretary of Defense and ROK Minister of National Defense determined that South Korea will assume wartime operational control of its forces on April 17, 2012. The alliance is preparing to inactivate the 29-year-old warfighting Combined Forces Command (CFC) and simultaneously activate complementary national warfighting commands in 2012. U.S. Forces Korea will transform from a Title 10 oversight

headquarters to U.S. Korea Command (USKORCOM), a fully capable, manned, and resourced joint warfighting command in a doctrinally supporting relationship to the ROK armed forces.

The evolution to a Korean-led defense of the Republic of Korea is a success story for both the United States and Korea. Transitioning from a formerly dependent alliance to an interdependent one, with the United States in a doctrinally based supporting relationship to a ROK joint forces command, is a watershed event reflecting successful long-term U.S. engagement and the determination of the Republic of Korea to assume its rightful position as a sovereign, first-world nation. Despite the decimation of the Korean economy and society during the Korean War and the insurgencies and guerrilla warfare that continued long after the signing of the armistice in 1953, U.S. military presence in and commitment to the Republic of Korea afforded the newly formed independent state the opportunity to rebuild. Today, we see the fruition of over 50 years of alliance partnering in a dynamic Republic of Korea that is a vibrant democracy grounded in its own cultural traditions;

a formidable economic power with the world's eleventh largest economy; a professional military power with the world's sixth largest armed forces; and a longstanding and reliable U.S. ally, consistently supporting U.S. and United Nations (UN) military operations around the world with nearly 3,600 servicemembers currently deployed.¹

Certainly as the United States confronts long-term security and nationbuilding challenges in both Afghanistan and Iraq, we should consider the Republic of Korea a model. With sustained U.S. support, nations with very different historical and cultural backgrounds from our own can rebuild, establish effective democratic governments and institutions based on their own traditions, and become longstanding allies, supporting multinational interests of freedom, democracy, and market economies throughout the 21st century.

Enduring Interests

Peace and stability in Northeast Asia are vital U.S. interests. For 54 years, the ROK–U.S. alliance has provided a foundation for sustained peace and stability in the region, enabling dramatic development and economic vibrancy from which all benefit. America's prosperity is directly linked to Northeast Asia, which is home to four of the nine largest American trading partners

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Report Documentation Page

Form Approved
OMB No. 0704-0188

Public reporting burden for the collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to a penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number.

1. REPORT DATE 2007		2. REPORT TYPE		3. DATES COVERED 00-00-2007 to 00-00-2007	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE South Korea Leads the Warfight				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S)				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) National Defense University, Institute for National Strategic Studies, 260 Fifth Avenue SW Bg 64 Fort Lesley J. McNair, Washington, DC, 20319				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution unlimited					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT					
15. SUBJECT TERMS					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT unclassified	b. ABSTRACT unclassified	c. THIS PAGE unclassified			

and accounts for nearly 24 percent of all U.S. trade as well as a \$162 billion position in 2005 U.S. direct investment. With a quarter of the world's population (1.5 billion people) and 4 of the world's 18 largest economies—having a combined 2006 gross domestic product (GDP) of approximately \$16.4 trillion (or 25 percent of the global GDP)—Northeast Asia is crucial to the world's expanding free trade system and the economic vitality and prosperity of the United States.

While Northeast Asia generates much of the world's commerce, it is vulnerable to flashpoints and instability capable of severely disrupting international trade and prosperity. The presence of five of the world's six largest militaries and three proven nuclear powers, along with heightened nationalism, historical animosities, territorial disputes, resource competition, and struggles for regional hegemony, all continue to pose challenges. Additionally, despite the hopeful progress toward a denuclearized Korean Peninsula borne from the Six-Party Talks, North Korea has a track record of not honoring international agreements, proliferating missiles and missile-related technologies, and threatening neighbors. In the current strategic environment, U.S. presence in Northeast Asia remains a national interest imperative.

Solidifying American presence, the ROK–U.S. alliance has matured from a single purpose military relationship to a broader partnership committed to expanding prosperity and stability. Fundamentally, the presence of U.S. forces and the strength of this alliance form a cornerstone of continued regional peace and stability, essential for stable global markets, expansion of prosperity through free trade, and promotion of freedom and human dignity—pillars of the U.S. National Security Strategy. Our continued forward presence on the Korean Peninsula, in a supporting-to-supported relationship to the ROK military, will allow the United States to address potentially destabilizing issues on a day-to-day basis, as well as cultivate a close, cooperative relationship with the Republic of Korea, a nation that has rebuilt itself from the ashes of war to become a stalwart U.S. ally, our seventh largest trading partner, and a model for other nations around the world.

C² Mechanisms

On June 25, 1950, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) invaded the Republic of Korea, intent on reuniting

the peninsula by force and imposing its own brand of repressive communism. Within 2 weeks, the international community responded by authorizing a unified command to defend the new nation.² Led by the United States and including forces from the Republic of Korea and 20 other nations, the United Nations Command (UNC) repelled the attack and restored international peace and security. Following 3 years of heavy fighting that devastated the peninsula, the United States signed an armistice agreement with the Korean People's Army and the Chinese People's Volunteers in June 1953. While the armistice essentially ended active hostilities, it did not end the war or resolve the underlying political impasse on the peninsula. Thus, the UNC stood fast in its defense of the ROK.

In October 1953, the United States and the Republic of Korea signed a Mutual Defense Treaty agreeing to defend the ROK against external aggression and to allow America to station forces in South Korea. U.S. security guarantees allowed the Republic of

Northeast Asia is vulnerable to flashpoints and instability capable of severely disrupting international trade and prosperity

Korea to focus on rebuilding its society and public institutions. This included reestablishing a culturally based educational foundation for nearly all sectors of public and private life

after decades of prewar occupation during which Koreans did not participate in meaningful positions in industry, government, or the military.

Maintaining operational control of ROK and U.S. forces on the peninsula, the U.S. commander was responsible for the overall defense of the Republic of Korea while the ROK armed forces established the foundations of their profession, including the training, equipping, and manning of forces. Initially the U.S.-led UN Command unilaterally conducted all planning functions with ROK liaisons, but with the emergence of an increasingly capable South Korean military, U.S. planners realized that ROK participation in the planning structure would enhance the overall readiness and deterrence posture of the UNC and U.S. Forces Korea (USFK). In 1968, during heightened guerrilla activity by North Korea, UNC/USFK introduced a combined ROK–U.S. operational planning staff with ROK expertise that proved essential to defeating the North Korean insurgency.³ The next step in formally integrating ROK know-how into U.S. planning came in 1971 with the creation of a partially combined staff in the newly redesignated I Corps (ROK/U.S.) Group, which was the lineal descendent of U.S. I Corps. Seven years later, the alliance C² structure evolved into the ROK–U.S. Combined Forces Command (CFC), with a continuing real-world mission to deter and, if required, defeat external aggression against the Republic of Korea.

The United States and Republic of Korea established CFC on November 7,

USS *Ronald Reagan* pulls into Pusan, South Korea, in support of Reception, Staging, Onward Movement, Integration theater exercise



U.S. Navy/Joe Parinter

U.S. and ROK medics conduct training at Eighth Army Training Support Center



U.S. Army Garrison, Camp Humphreys (Bob McElroy)

USFK (Horacio Lozano-Galvillo)

1978, and it has proven to be the most advanced bilateral warfighting command in history. Commanded by a U.S. four-star general, with a Korean four-star general as the deputy commander, CFC is integrated throughout the staff and components, including air, ground, naval, and marine component commands as well as a combined unconventional warfare task force. Characterized by combined planning and logistics as well as integrated intelligence

Combined Forces Command has proven to be the most advanced bilateral warfighting command in history

operations and a robust communications system architecture, CFC effectively has deterred aggression and provided a peaceful and stable setting for the citizens of the Republic of Korea and the region. Underpinning this success is a solid democratic ROK government with a world-class, professional military dedicated to the preservation of

its republic and poised, with U.S. support, to assume its sovereign responsibility in the near future.

A Cooperative, Self-reliant Defense

Upon its founding in 1948 and continuing even after the 1953 armistice agreement, the Republic of Korea has endured repeated cycles of intense North Korean unconventional warfare. Intent on subverting the governing ability of the democratic south and weakening the resolve of the ROK-U.S. alliance, North Korea employed agitation, propaganda, and terrorist acts, including assassinations of ROK civilians and government officials, as well as sporadic combat against ROK and U.S. forces. In the face of these threats, the alliance remained resolute in its defense of freedom. Serving alongside U.S. forces during the Vietnam War, the Persian Gulf War, Operation *Enduring Freedom*, Operation *Iraqi Freedom*, and on the Korean Peninsula, the ROK military has demonstrated superb competencies as well as a firm commitment to the international community.



GEN Bell discusses Army Prepositioned Stock support with senior ROK military leaders

In 1994, the Republic of Korea assumed operational control of its armed forces in peacetime, an important step in the C² evolution toward a self-reliant defense nested within the ROK-U.S. alliance. Since then, each of the ROK services, with a total force structure of 3.72 million, has enhanced its readiness through equipment fielding and training in accordance with modern doctrine. The ROK army has fielded 13 modernized armor brigades since 1998, 11 field artillery battalions, 2 multiple launch rocket system battalions, and an extremely capable special operations force. The marine corps is highly trained, and the navy is emerging as a blue-water force, having launched its first LPX-class ship in 2005, a vessel similar to a light aircraft carrier and the largest ship owned by a regional power in Northeast Asia. In 2007, the navy also commissioned its first Aegis

destroyer. Finally, the air force is modernizing with the inclusion of F-15K fighters and precision-guided munitions to enhance deep strike and core facility protection capabilities.

As a result of such technological, organizational, and doctrinal advances, the ROK military recently sought out and assumed missions historically performed by U.S. forces, specifically the security of the Demilitarized Zone, security and support at the Joint Security Area at Panmunjom, Counter-Fire Task Force headquarters command and control, air-to-ground range management, main supply route regulation enforcement, rapid land mine emplacement, maritime special operations forces interdiction, close air support controllers, weather forecasting, and a communication zone decontamination mission. In 2008, USFK also will transfer a day and night search and rescue mission following equipment fielding, training, and certification of ROK air forces.

Modernizing the entire ROK defense structure and realizing a self-reliant defense are the goals of National Defense Reform 2020, recently enacted into law by the Republic of Korea national assembly. By strengthening the civilian leadership in the Ministry of National Defense, emphasizing the role of the ROK joint chiefs of staff and joint operations, securing long-term defense budgets, acquiring advanced weapons systems, and streamlining military organizations, the Republic of Korea will continue to develop and institute a state-of-the-art, professional force. Assuming wartime operational control of ROK forces in 2012 is the core of this self-reliance, a valuable symbol of the sovereignty of the Republic of Korea and a natural progression for the ROK-U.S. alliance.

Unity of Effort

Evolving from interoperable joint formations, the operational relationship of ROK and U.S. forces in the Korea theater of operations is characterized by interdependency. The current combined organizational construct, guiding documents, crisis action standard operating procedures, operational plans, and operational techniques and procedures matured over years of tremendous organizational energy dedicated to iterative and detailed planning, coordination, and training. Preparing for the new independent command construct requires similar organizational energy and systematic approaches to develop

a doctrinally based command relationship tailored to the alliance.

Ensuring strategic unity of effort, the established formal alliance consultative framework guarantees equal national input and guides a united strategic stance. Consulting on security and military policies, the U.S. Secretary of Defense and ROK Minister of National Defense convene an annual security consultative meeting (SCM) to issue strategic guidance to both the U.S. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and his ROK counterpart, as well as the commander, Combined Forces Command, who reports directly to both national leaders. Taking place prior to the security consultative meeting, the military committee meeting (MCM) provides a forum for the ROK and U.S. chairmen of the joint chiefs to consult and offer recommendations to the SCM as well as provide strategic direction and operational guidance to the CFC commander. Under the auspices of the SCM, the interagency Strategic Policy Initiative meets bimonthly to address the modernization and adaptation of the ROK-U.S. alliance in the face of the changing security environment.⁴ In the future command construct, the SCM/MCM apparatus will provide mutually agreed strategic and operational guidance to both the ROK joint forces commander and the commander, USKORCOM.

To achieve the realignment of forces and responsibilities between U.S. and ROK forces, the SCM established a Combined

Implementation Working Group that completed a transition Road Map identifying requirements and milestones for the next 5 years, including bridging capabilities that the United States will continue to provide. Prior to the ROK assuming wartime operational control of its own forces, U.S. and ROK planners will develop new terms of reference, crisis action standard operating procedures, and supporting-to-supported operational plans through formal alliance consultative processes. The culmination of the Road Map will be a certification exercise in March 2012 followed shortly by the inactivation of CFC and the activation of USKORCOM and a ROK Joint Forces Command. During the 39th Security Consultative Meeting scheduled for October 2007, the U.S. Secretary of Defense and the ROK Minister of National Defense will review the implementation progress.

As with any multinational force, unity of effort in achieving agreed effects in the theater and without diminishing freedom of action is critical. To ensure unity of effort, the United States and ROK will establish coordinating centers, cells, boards, and liaison teams at all echelons for effective and continuous communication and planning. UNC/CFC/USFK has over 30 years of lessons learned to inform planning efforts. Since the mid-1970s, combat support coordination teams have served as coordination links between UNC/CFC/USFK and major



Special Operations Soldier trains ROK navy SEALs

ROK army warfighting headquarters. Facilitating communication and planning for U.S. combat, combat support, and combat service support units working with ROK units, these teams have proven essential. At the component level, 2^d Infantry Division, Eighth U.S. Army, also has a rich history of lessons learned from formal, modified table of organization and equipment liaison positions assigned from the fires brigade to ROK artillery units to ensure coordination of firing positions, clearance of fires, and coordination of security units and combat multipliers.

Ongoing initiatives designed to improve communication and coordination also include staff and component transformations. Within the headquarters, the combined intelligence staff will evolve into the Joint Intelligence Operations Center–Korea with a newly designed Indication and Warning Center and newly developed Intelligence Fusion Center capable of integrating tactical, operational, and strategic intelligence across all disciplines. The Intelligence Fusion Center will process raw data from many single-source systems across Services and fuse a common operational picture for ROK and U.S. forces.

In conjunction with U.S. Joint Forces Command, USFK stood up and tested a Joint Force Support Component Command during both theater exercises in 2006 and reception, staging, onward movement, and integration in 2007. Armed with the expertise and lessons

learned, we will establish a formal, doctrinally based Joint Logistics Command as a U.S. component command. Empowered to execute directive authority for logistics over USKORCOM components, this command will provide U.S. forces a single joint logistics command in theater to ensure synchronous logistics, sustainment, and transportation support to U.S. forces in armistice and wartime. We also will establish a Combined Logistics Coordination Center to coordinate U.S. and UNC logistics support with the ROK in wartime.

Supporting-to-Supported Relationships

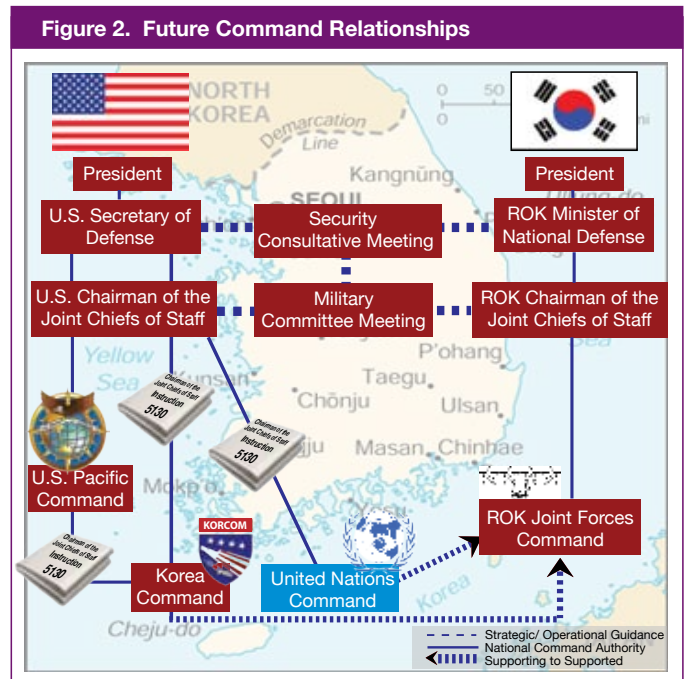
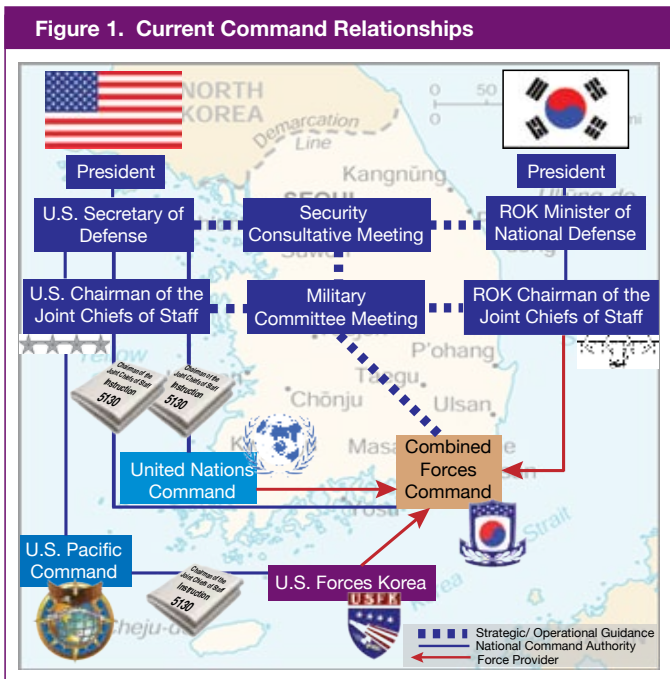
Fundamentally, the USKORCOM commander will maintain command of all U.S. forces in peace and war.⁵ As the simplest multinational C² structure, complementary independent commands in a supporting-to-supported relationship will be flexible and responsive to the future needs of the ROK–U.S. alliance. Coordination mechanisms will ensure unity of effort in a supporting-to-supported command relationship within alliance and coalition warfare, in which the U.S. military has a long and successful history. Routinely, U.S. forces in Korea today operate in a supporting role to ROK forces, although the U.S. commander retains overall command of CFC forces. For example, ROK army headquarters regularly exert tactical control over deployed U.S.

Army corps during theater exercises, and through the recent mission transfers, the ROK Counter Fire Task Force is now the supported unit for ground artillery.

With premier air- and naval-centric capabilities, the U.S. supporting effort complements the predominant ROK ground forces in defending the South in the event of crisis or war. In accordance with U.S. joint

the supported ROK commander will have the authority to exercise general direction of the supporting U.S. forces

doctrine and alliance consultative processes, the supported ROK commander will have the authority to exercise general direction of the supporting U.S. forces, including the prioritization of objectives and timing and duration of supporting actions. As the supporting command, USKORCOM will determine the forces, tactics, methods, procedures, and communications employed.⁶ The coordinating centers, cells, boards, and liaisons will integrate operations, intelligence, logistics, and other functions into the supported commander’s plan, as well as a U.S.-led Air and Space Operations Center executing an alliance-approved master air attack plan.



Training and Exercise Program

During this unique transition, USFK will continue to provide trained and ready forces for the warfighting readiness of Combined Forces Command, while simultaneously reducing, relocating, and reorganizing into a warfighting joint task force—capable headquarters with component forces located in two enduring hubs in accordance with strategic directives. Playing a critical role over the next 5 years, the theater training and exercise program will serve two primary, simultaneous purposes: maintaining the warfighting readiness of the CFC; and training and ultimately certifying the two new complementary national commands.

Our intent is to quickly achieve initial operational capability for the doctrinally supporting USKORCOM headquarters and its Service components followed by full operational capability prior to the final certification exercise in March 2012. Conducting two simulation-heavy, theater-level command post exercises each year—Command Post Exercise (CPX) 1 in the late summer, and CPX 2 and Foal Eagle in the late winter—will visibly demonstrate the strength of the alliance, eliminate any real or perceived gaps in capabilities, and actively deter any external aggression during this transition.

USKORCOM and Component Commands

To construct the actual USKORCOM headquarters building and command posts, USFK will need the full support of the Army's Installation Management Command, Network Command, and Intelligence and Security Command to ensure that the joint force facilities are designed, built, and sustained to standard. Under previous international agreements, the Republic of Korea will cover the preponderance of the construction costs associated with these facilities. Also, establishing the new headquarters likely will require additional personnel for the warfighting command and the essential coordination centers and cells needed at echelon across the components.

Today and in the future, our Air Component Command holds the decisive and ready U.S. deterrent against any aggression. As such, this vital combat multiplier, with warfighting capabilities located at Osan, Suwon, and Kunsan air bases, is a major element of the enduring U.S. commitment to

peace and stability on the peninsula and in the region.

A continuing forward deployed naval presence is also key. On the peninsula, Naval Forces Korea will relocate and expand its communications system to fulfill coordination cell requirements. As always, U.S. Seventh Fleet, stationed in Japan, stands ready to serve as our naval component command in wartime.

Stationed in two hubs south of Seoul in the vicinity of Pyongtaek and Daegu, the Army will continue to provide force protection of U.S. forces and facilities on the

peninsula and play an essential support role for the other Services and the ROK military. During wartime, the USKORCOM Army component will consist of a fully capable Eighth U.S. Army headquarters with Army forces assigned in accordance with alliance operational plans.

A small but essential Marine Forces Korea staff will facilitate operations of expeditionary training facilities, maintain aviation ordnance support facilities, and participate in U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff and USKORCOM training and exercise programs, as well as reception, staging, onward-

GEN Bell tours Andersen AFB with members of the ROK joint chiefs of staff



U.S. Air Force (Miranda Moore)

movement, and integration of Marine Corps forces. Essential to the swift introduction of Marine Corps forces on the peninsula, Camp Mujuk is undergoing significant infrastructure development. III Marine Expeditionary Force, stationed in Okinawa, will continue to serve as the wartime headquarters of the Marine component under USKORCOM.

Finally, Special Operations Command Korea will continue to have a major impact on enhancing ROK special operations capability through combined training and exercises.

Programmatics

Securing required resources from the military Services is essential to the success of this historic endeavor to transform the ROK–U.S. alliance command structure and relocate the footprint of U.S. forces on the peninsula in accordance with national, strategic, policy-level guidance and directives. Regardless of the competing resource demands associated with ongoing operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, the Korean theater of operations remains an integral part of the Nation's global alliance commitment. The progression to a ROK-led defense with the United States in a doctrinally supporting role strategically positions America to support and defend vital U.S. interests throughout Northeast Asia through the 21st century.

In total, moving the U.S. military out of Seoul and from north of Seoul and establishing the new command construct will cost approximately \$8 billion, with the majority provided by the ROK government through national agreements and burden-sharing monies.

Strategic Progression

Evolving to complementary national commands in a supporting-to-supported relationship empowers the ROK–U.S. partnership to achieve national and bilateral strategic objectives, principally continued peace and stability in Northeast Asia. Assuming the primary responsibility for the defense of their own nation enhances the political dynamics and opportunities for South Koreans to achieve their fundamental goal of peaceful, gradual reunification of the Korean Peninsula while maintaining peaceful relations with neighbors. Since 1998, successive ROK administrations have implemented policies linking unification, national security, and

foreign relations. Despite the continuing North Korean military threat, South Korea places a high priority on building trust, reciprocity, and cooperation with the North to lay the foundation for a peaceful, prosperous, and cooperative Korean Peninsula in the future. The United States fully supports this approach.

Through military, social, and economic engagement, both Koreas are changing the political and geographic landscape on the peninsula. For example, two transportation corridors now link the South to the North through the Demilitarized Zone, facilitating primarily inter-Korean economic reconciliation initiatives at the Kaesong Industrial Complex and the Mount Kumgang tourist resort. As the supported national command, the ROK government will have the ability and responsibility to synchronize their fundamental political objectives with alliance war aims, military objectives, and conflict termination/estate criteria. Doing so will better enable the ROK to engage with the North, as well as regional neighbors, as a sovereign and self-reliant state.

Assuming a supporting role in the defense of the Republic of Korea revitalizes the U.S. security commitment to the ROK, a commitment embodied in the Mutual Defense Treaty of 1954. In any crisis involving the Korean Peninsula, the interdependent capabilities between the ROK and United States will end the crisis quickly, which is essential for the security of South Korea's 49 million citizens, as well as the health of the global economy. U.S. air- and seapower—specifically the surface, subsurface, and aerial capabilities of U.S. Seventh Air Force and U.S. Seventh Fleet—are strategically positioned throughout the Pacific region and are key in demonstrating America's resolve as a reliable ally.

The Republic of Korea is cognizant of its accomplishments and eager to increase its role in regional and international stability. Evolving from a dependent to an interdependent relationship in which the Republic of Korea exercises full sovereignty, with the United States in a supporting role for its defense, reflects a natural and logical progression of the ROK–U.S. alliance. The United States will honor the Mutual Defense Treaty with the Republic of Korea as long as America is welcome in that great land.

We have stood side by side in peace and war since 1950, and we look forward to continuing this vital partnership throughout the 21st century. Fundamentally more than a military relationship, the United States and the ROK have a comprehensive and enduring partnership that promotes freedom, prosperity, global free trade, and democracy in Northeast Asia and beyond and serves as a model for future U.S. engagements.

The motto of Combined Forces Command is "*Katchi Kapshida*"—"We Go Together." As we transition to complementary national commands, our two nations will seize this motto as the bedrock for our enduring alliance. **JFQ**

NOTES

¹ See the Republic of Korea Ministry of Defense Web site for details on ROK contributions to international military operations at <www.mnd.go.kr/mndEng/WhatsNew/OverseasTroops/index.jsp>.

² UN Security Council Resolution 84, Document S/1588, July 7, 1950.

³ Daniel P. Bolger, "Scenes from an Unfinished War: Low Intensity Conflict in Korea, 1966–1969," *Leavenworth Papers*, No. 19 (July 1991), 40–41. On April 1, 1968, the United States authorized hostile fire pay for Soldiers serving north of the Imjin River due to the North Korean insurgency.

⁴ Regular U.S. attendees of security consultative meetings/military committee meetings include the Secretary of Defense, Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, Deputy Under Secretary for Asia Pacific Affairs, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Commander, USPACOM, and Commander, UNC/CFC/USFK, as well as ROK counterparts. The Strategic Policy Initiative includes Department of Defense and Department of State officials.

⁵ The classified directive, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction 5130.01C, "Relationships between Commanders of Combatant Commands and International Commands and Organizations," outlines specific relationships and defines authorities.

⁶ See Joint Publication 0–2, *Unified Action Armed Forces*, July 10, 2001, chapter 3, "Doctrine and Policy for Joint Command and Control," available at <www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/new_pubs/jp0_2.pdf>; Joint Publication 3–16, *Multinational Operations*, March 7, 2007, available at <www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/new_pubs/jp3_16.pdf>.