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ROK-U.S. Alliance agree to formally discuss deployment of THAAD

YONGSAN GARRISON, SEOUL, Republic of Korea – The Republic of Korea (ROK) and the United States of America (U.S.) have determined that today's long-range ballistic missile launch and recent nuclear test by North Korea highlights the serious nuclear, weapons of mass destruction, and ballistic missile threat they pose to the peace and stability of the ROK and the entire Asia-Pacific region.

In response to the evolving threat posed by North Korea, the United States and the Republic of Korea have made an Alliance decision to begin formal consultations regarding improvements to the Alliance missile defense posture, specifically the viability of a Terminal High-Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system operated by U.S. Forces Korea. This Alliance decision was recommended by General Curtis M. Scaparrotti, Combined Forces Command, and U.S. Forces Korea commander, and senior government officials of the Republic of Korea.

The goal of the formal consultations is to bilaterally explore the feasibility of THAAD deploying to and operating on the Korean Peninsula at the earliest possible date.

"North Korea continues to develop their nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs, and it is the responsibility of our Alliance to maintain a strong defense against those threats," Gen. Curtis M. Scaparrotti, Combined Forces Command, U.S. Forces Korea commander. "THAAD would add an important capability in a layered and effective missile defense."

The bilateral discussions that will occur underscore the ironclad commitment of the United States to defend the Republic of Korea. To this end, the Alliance regularly assesses and adjusts its posture on the Korean Peninsula to ensure it retains the ability to defend the ROK and U.S. forces in Korea.

As we have noted in the past, North Korea's strategic provocations and its refusal to engage in authentic and credible negotiations on denuclearization compel the Alliance to take these types of defensive measures.

If the THAAD system were deployed to the Korean Peninsula, it would be focused solely on North Korea and contribute to a layered missile defense that would enhance the Alliance's existing missile defense capabilities against potential North Korean missile threats