

Washington Declaration

President Joseph R. Biden of the United States of America and President Yoon Suk Yeol of the Republic of Korea (ROK) met on this 26th day of April, 2023, to mark the 70th anniversary of the U.S.-ROK Alliance. The Alliance between our two nations has been forged in shared sacrifice, fortified by enduring security cooperation, and nourished by our close kinship that has enabled both countries to leverage their diplomatic resources to peaceably achieve crucial, strategic outcomes. What began as a security partnership has grown and expanded into a truly global Alliance that champions democratic principles, enriches economic cooperation, and drives technological advancements. Our Alliance has been tested many times, and in every instance we have risen to the occasion and responded to the changing threats on the Korean Peninsula and in the Indo-Pacific.

To commemorate this historic year for our Alliance, President Biden and President Yoon have committed to develop an ever-stronger mutual defense relationship and affirm in the strongest words possible their commitment to the combined defense posture under the U.S.-ROK Mutual Defense Treaty. The United States and the ROK are committed to peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific, and the measures we take together are in furtherance of that fundamental goal.

The ROK has full confidence in U.S. extended deterrence commitments and recognizes the importance, necessity, and benefit of its enduring reliance on the U.S. nuclear deterrent. The United States commits to make every effort to consult with the ROK on any possible nuclear weapons employment on the Korean Peninsula, consistent with the U.S. Nuclear Posture Review's declaratory policy, and the Alliance will maintain robust communication infrastructure to facilitate these consultations. President Yoon reaffirmed the ROK's longstanding commitment to its obligations under the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty as the cornerstone of the global nonproliferation regime as well as to the U.S.-ROK Agreement for Cooperation Concerning Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy.

The Alliance commits to engage in deeper, cooperative decision-making on nuclear deterrence, including through enhanced dialogue and information sharing regarding growing nuclear threats to the ROK and the region. The two Presidents announced the establishment of a new Nuclear Consultative Group (NCG) to strengthen extended deterrence, discuss nuclear and strategic planning, and manage the threat to the nonproliferation regime posed by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). In addition, the Alliance will work to enable joint execution and planning for ROK conventional support to U.S. nuclear operations in a contingency and improve combined exercises and training activities on the application of nuclear deterrence on the Korean Peninsula. In keeping with the Presidents' commitments, the Alliance has established a new bilateral, interagency table-top simulation to strengthen our joint approach to planning for nuclear contingencies.

President Biden reaffirmed that the United States' commitment to the ROK and the Korean people is enduring and ironclad, and that any nuclear attack by the DPRK against the ROK will be met with a swift, overwhelming, and decisive response. President Biden highlighted that the U.S. commitment to extended deterrence to the ROK is backed by the full range of U.S. capabilities, including nuclear. Going forward, the United States will further enhance the regular visibility of strategic assets to the Korean Peninsula, as evidenced by the upcoming visit of a U.S. nuclear ballistic missile submarine to the ROK, and will expand and deepen coordination between our militaries. Furthermore, the United States and ROK will strengthen standing bodies for consultations on extended deterrence, including the Extended Deterrence Strategy and Consultation Group, to better prepare the Alliance to defend against potential attacks and nuclear use and conduct simulations to inform joint planning efforts.

President Yoon affirmed that the ROK will apply the full range of its capabilities to the Alliance's combined defense posture. This includes working in lockstep with the United States to closely connect the capabilities and planning activities of the new ROK Strategic Command and the U.S.-ROK Combined Forces Command. Such activities will include a new table-top exercise conducted with U.S. Strategic Command.

In view of these critical developments, President Biden and President Yoon send a firm message to the international community that the United States and the ROK will stand together in the face of any and all threats to their shared security, and continue their close consultations on further steps to strengthen extended deterrence. In parallel, both Presidents remain steadfast in their pursuit of dialogue and diplomacy with the DPRK, without preconditions, as a means to advance the shared goal of achieving the complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.