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ICAS Fall Symposium 2017 – Speech Outline

On behalf of Admiral Harris, I would like to begin by thanking the Institute for Korean-American Studies for inviting the U.S. Pacific Command – “USPACOM” - to this distinguished Fall Symposium, and for the opportunity to share our perspectives. I can tell you that my boss, Admiral Harris, felt very honored by the invitation to speak during the ICAS Spring 2016 Symposium, and he passes his sincere regrets for not being able to join us - in person, today.

Words are important and I seek to get them right today – from the heart, and with strategic gravitas.

Before I begin my remarks, I would like to call attention to the mission of ICAS and highlight some of the common objectives that your organization shares with USPACOM. To read briefly from the ICAS mission statement:

ICAS promotes pertinent relations and conducts appropriate activities to enhance cooperation and to pursue peace and prosperity in association with people of mutual interests, with a special emphasis on multilateral relations between the United States and Asia-Pacific rim nations.

That statement bears a striking resemblance to one of the core missions of USPACOM. While our number one priority, above all else, is to “protect and defend the United States, its people, and its interests,” the very next objective in our mission statement is to “enhance stability in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region” with the help of our allies and partners.

USPACOM uses various tools to accomplish that mission, to include engaging in security cooperation activities, responding to contingencies, and deterring aggression -- and we have been doing so now since the end of the Second World War.

It is important that I emphasize the “regional stability” element of our mission, and I call attention to USPACOM’s sustained history of engagement in the region.

The Indo-Asia-Pacific remains a top priority for the United States. America is and will remain a Pacific power and Pacific leader. For over 70 years, USPACOM's Joint forces have been protecting America's enduring national interests throughout this critical region. The region has benefited from the peace, stability, and security provided by the United States of America, our allies, and our partners.

As Admiral Harris likes to point out, the Indo-Asia-Pacific has been one of the world's great success stories. Completely transformed since the end of World War II, the region is now home to the world's three largest economies and seven of the eight fastest growing economic/industrial markets.

The region also has 7 of the world's 10 largest armies, which means that the area also shapes the course of global security. But even so, this region has experienced decades of relative peace and stability. This secure environment has facilitated an increase in prosperity -- unequaled in human history.

Admiral Harris often comments that this success story has been made possible, in large part, by the rules-based security architecture in the region – supported by seven decades of American military presence and underpinned by America's security alliances and partnerships – of note, no less than 5 of America's 7 collective defense treaties exist in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region. That fact alone should serve as a testament to the importance that the United States places on peace, stability, and security in this particular area of the world.

It underscores USPACOM's commitment to working together with partners and allies, in order to secure and guarantee the collective benefits that are gained by the established international system of security -- the rules-based international system -- designed to secure freedom from aggression; the free flow of trade and commerce; respect for human rights; and the sovereignty of our allies, partners, friends and neighbors.

Each of those freedoms and values, from which we all prosper – collectively – are placed at risk by the increasing threat that is posed by North Korea.

Much has changed since Admiral Harris spoke before this audience in the Spring of 2016. To put the remarkable increase in North Korean missile and nuclear activity

into context, allow me to use Admiral Harris' presentation in May of 2016 as a benchmark. From the time of the ICAS Spring Symposium through the end of 2016, North Korea fired 15 ballistic missiles over the course of 9 tests. In 2017 alone, North Korea launched 18 missiles during 14 tests, and claims to have detonated a hydrogen bomb.

While these numbers are significant, I have highlighted only North Korean activities from the latter half of 2016 and the current year to date. The statistics and facts pointedly illuminate the scale and the pace of Kim Jong-un's weapons program. For context, in the last 10 years of Kim Il-sung's rule, from 1984 to 1994, North Korea conducted 15 missile tests. Over the next 17 years, Kim Jong-il tested 16 missiles and 2 nuclear devices. Since Kim Jung-un assumed power in 2011, a timespan of only 6 years, he has tested no less than 84 missiles and has detonated 4 nuclear devices, each with a larger yield than the last. These trend-lines are significant. Those figures should give everyone a moment of pause.

Kim Jong-un is on a quest for nuclear weapons and the means to deliver them intercontinentally. The combination of nuclear warheads with ballistic missile technology in the hands of Kim Jong-un is a clear and present danger to the entire international community.

Our expectation at PACOM is that, even in the face of international condemnation and pressure, he will continue to test his capabilities and they will continue to improve. His missiles point in every direction, with steadily increasing range, and he is actively exploring ways to expand their reach. Throughout the first half of this year, we witnessed missiles being tested at ranges between 300 and 600 miles. By mid-September, Kim Jong-un launched missiles over the northern territory of peaceful Japan. They traveled as far as 2300 miles.

Allow me to offer a few thoughts from the USPACOM perspective – and what this may mean more broadly for the region – and the international community. The first implication from the steady progression of Kim Jong-un's testing program is that he is not behaving like an irrational actor, at least in terms of his approach to weapons technology development. His missile and nuclear programs are both following a strategic timeline that does not appear to be tied directly to holidays

or dates with historical significance or propaganda value. In other words, he is conducting tests as soon as his engineers tell him that the equipment is ready to be tested, not when it will have the largest impact on the world stage. Kim Jong-un is pursuing a distinct capability in earnest, with clear strategic objectives in mind. And that makes it all the more serious – for our international community.

The broader implication for the region is that the testing will not stop until Kim Jong-un achieves his strategic objectives – the means to deliver nuclear weapons. We are facing the daunting prospect and the unfortunate challenge of continued uncertainty and instability. The global community must take responsible measures, collectively, to confront this growing threat. We must offer effective coordination and close collaboration, across all of the levers of potential influence and power – diplomatic, economic, social, informational – and military.

Admiral Harris believes that every nation who considers itself to be a responsible contributor to international security must work diplomatically and economically to bring Kim Jong-un to his senses, not to his knees. Japan, South Korea, and the United States are vigorously pursuing economic and diplomatic pressures aimed at persuading Pyongyang to give up its nuclear arms program. At USPACOM, we are supporting and backing-up these preferred diplomatic options and economic sanctions with credible combat power. That's why we deploy carrier strike groups with AEGIS ships and the world's best submarines to Northeast Asia. That's why we maintain a formidable continuous bomber presence in the region. That's why we continue our ironclad defense of our allies with the newest, most advanced, and most capable military platforms – and weapons systems.

When Admiral Harris was here last May, he emphasized the necessity of multinational collaboration against a North Korean threat that endangers all of our nations. This includes increasing trilateral cooperation between the US, Japan, and South Korea, a partnership that Admiral Harris characterizes as an essential “partnership with a purpose.” Our three countries share so much in common – freedom, democracy, liberty, people-to-people ties, free markets, a commitment to human rights – yet, we also share common security threats...they are real.

United, we are stronger, and Admiral Harris believes that there is much we can achieve with even closer cooperation.

The international community must believe that collaboration amongst like-minded and principled nation-states and partners can yield tangible results. As we confront the increasing North Korean threat together, I would like to highlight some recent successes. In response to coordinated diplomatic efforts, countries spanning all regions of the globe – including those that have not traditionally aligned with the United States on this matter – have taken concrete steps to isolate North Korea.

Countries are beginning to view visiting North Korean delegations with caution, recognizing that welcoming these delegations not only lends tacit support to North Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile programs, but comes at a cost to their international reputation. Countries in the Middle East, Europe, and Southeast Asia have halted visa issuances to North Korean laborers, whose wages are garnished to fund the North Korean regime and its unlawful nuclear and missile programs. Malaysia, for instance, has deported hundreds of North Korean workers over the past few months. Others, like Peru, Kuwait, and most recently Mexico, have significantly reduced the size of North Korean diplomatic missions. We are also seeing the cancelation of military engagements and arms-related activities, as well as the expulsion of sanctioned North Korean officials and diplomats engaged in illicit commercial activities.

South Korea, Japan, and Australia have implemented their own unilateral sanctions on entities that are violating UN sanctions. Our European Union partners are augmenting autonomous restrictive measures to implement UN Security Council Resolutions 2375. This is helping to maximize pressure on North Korea. While China remains North Korea's only ally and supports close to 20k North Korean workers within its country, it recently announced its intention to suspend various North Korean business activities and financial transactions within its borders -- by December of this year.

Most significantly, the international community needs to speak openly, factually and directly about the desperate plight and suffering of the North Korean people...the human tragedy there, under Kim Jong-un's regime is significant. The United States is watching the collective actions of the international community very closely, and we are taking note.

However, as the diplomatic and economic pressure on North Korea continues to grow, Kim Jong-un's defiance of the international community remains fixed. His appetite for further developing his growing arsenal of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles appears unabated.

So we must study, consider and remain prepared – ready to act on every possible option to increase the defense of our homelands with the best, most effective combination of coercion, attraction, and with logic and reason.

Many people talk about military options being unimaginable with respect to North Korea. I must highlight Chairman Dunford's recent comments. He stated, "what IS unimaginable is North Korean nuclear-tipped missiles delivered in Denver, or in Juneau, or in Honolulu, or in Seoul, or Tokyo." One need only look at the increasing range of North Korea's missiles to consider where else those missiles have the capability of striking – to include Beijing and potentially Moscow.

As North Korea's technical capability rapidly catches up to its rhetoric, the threat of a nuclear armed North Korea is both regional and global in nature. Most strikingly, it is a clear and present danger to the global peace, stability and security that underpins economic prosperity. As Secretary Tillerson said after the 10th North Korean missile test in July of this year, "global action is required to stop a global threat." The alarming behavior by the Kim Jong-un regime is not just a threat to our friends in South Korea. It's a threat to Japan; it's a threat to China; it's a threat to Russia; it's a threat to U.S. allies -- the Philippines, Australia, and Thailand; it's a threat to the United States; it's a threat to the entire world. And that is precisely the reason that we call for all nations to join us in confronting it – through stronger economic sanctions; through stricter implementation of punitive measures; through closer security cooperation; and through a clearly demonstrated unity of purpose.

The malignity of these times requires our benevolent strategic wisdom, our principled approaches, and our bold action -- to ensure that future generations may enjoy peace and prosperity...without fear. USPACOM is certainly and completely committed to maintaining that long-term peace – through strength!

Let me close my formal remarks with this final thought.

Forged on the battlefield and through the blood we shed together on the Peninsula seven decades ago, South Korea and the United States have an enduring alliance and true partnership.

America and the Republic of Korea are strong because of those who have served before, those who serve now, and those who will serve tomorrow – an unbroken chain, linking our citizens, generation to generation – for Freedom, Liberty, and Democracy...that serves the human desire for prosperity and happiness.

Our strength comes from informed citizens – people like you – who are aware of the challenges, opportunities, and the dangers we face in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region. So, on behalf of ADM Harris and USPACOM – Thank You!

May God Bless the United States of America, and may God keep our most precious allies, friends and principled strategic partners – strong, free and prosperous.

Thank you very much, and I look forward to your questions.