

TRI-COMMAND

IN THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA



UNCLASSIFIED SUMMARY | APPROVED FOR PUBLIC RELEASE | DISTRIBUTION UNLIMITED

SPRING 2026

FORWARD



As Commander of United Nations Command, Combined Forces Command, and United States Forces Korea, I am proud to present this Tri-Command publication to our partners, our service members, and the public we serve.

The Korean Peninsula sits at the strategic crossroads of Northeast Asia. What happens here matters not only to the Republic of Korea and the United States, but to the broader Indo-Pacific and the world. Korea is central to regional security, global supply chains, technological innovation, and the preservation of a free and open international order. The security and prosperity of this region are directly linked to global stability.

Our Alliance with the Republic of Korea is a model for modern partnerships. Forged in shared sacrifice during the Korean War, it has matured into one of the most capable, comprehensive, and forward-looking alliances in the world. It is grounded in shared values such as democracy, rule of law, and respect for human dignity, and strengthened by deep economic, cultural, and technological ties. Together, we are deterring aggression while also advancing innovation, strengthening economic resilience, and promoting stability across the Indo-Pacific.

The enduring presence of United States Forces in Korea, alongside our highly capable Republic of Korea Armed Forces counterparts, remains a clear demonstration of our commitment. Our combined posture provides credible deterrence, ensures readiness, and reassures our Allies and partners. The Republic of Korea stands as a model ally by investing in its own defense, expanding its global role, and contributing meaningfully to regional and international security. Through our trilateral cooperation with Japan and engagement with United Nations Command Member States, we continue to strengthen collective defense and impose costs on those who would threaten peace.

Deterrence alone is not our purpose. Our mission is to preserve peace, and the United Nations Command plays a vital role in upholding the Armistice and maintaining stability on the Korean Peninsula. For more than seven decades, the Alliance, together with our United Nations Command partners, has prevented renewed conflict while enabling the Republic of Korea to emerge as a thriving democracy and global economic leader. That success story remains one of the clearest examples in modern history of what steadfast alliances can achieve.

As we look to the future, the Tri-Command will remain focused on readiness, interoperability, and modernization to ensure we are prepared for today's challenges and tomorrow's uncertainties. The strategic importance of Korea will only continue to grow, and so will the importance of this Alliance.

It is a privilege to serve alongside the men and women of the Tri-Command and our Republic of Korea partners. Together, we stand watch at a place of profound strategic consequence, committed to defending our homelands, strengthening our Alliance, and securing a free and prosperous future for generations to come.

UNDER ONE FLAG!
KATCHI KAPSHIDA!
FIGHT TONIGHT!

GENERAL XAVIER BRUNSON
Commander
UNC/CFC/USFK



MISSION STATEMENTS

THE TRI-COMMAND INTEGRATES AND EMPLOYS COMBINED JOINT ALL-DOMAIN (CJAD) COMBAT POWER IN ORDER TO DETER AGGRESSION AND IF NECESSARY, DEFEND THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA AGAINST ANY ADVERSARY OR THREAT TO ACHIEVE PEACE THROUGH STRENGTH IN NORTHEAST ASIA.

THE COMBINED JOINT FORCE (CJF) WILL ENFORCE THE TERMS OF THE ARMISTICE AGREEMENT, COORDINATE MEMBER STATE CONTRIBUTIONS, AND EXECUTE ASSIGNED FUNCTIONS IN THE REGION AS DIRECTED TO MAINTAIN OR RESTORE SECURITY, FREEDOM, AND PROSPERITY ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA.

THE CJF WILL OPERATE IN ALL DOMAINS TO DEFEND THE HOMELAND(S), REESTABLISH DETERRENCE, PROTECT NATIONAL INTERESTS THROUGHOUT THE INDO-PACIFIC, AND ENHANCE ALLIANCES AND PARTNERSHIPS.



UNITED NATIONS COMMAND:
UNC, AS DIRECTED BY US NATIONAL AUTHORITIES THROUGH THE JCS, IMPLEMENTS, MANAGES, AND ENFORCES THE TERMS OF THE 27 JULY 1953 ARMISTICE AGREEMENT, DETERS NORTH KOREAN AGGRESSION, AND EXECUTES PRESCRIBED FUNCTIONS TO UPHOLD PEACE AND SECURITY ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA.



COMBINED FORCES COMMAND:
DETER AGGRESSION AND IF NECESSARY, DEFEND THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA TO MAINTAIN STABILITY IN NORTHEAST ASIA.



UNITED STATES FORCES KOREA:
DETER AGGRESSION AND PROTECT THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA AGAINST ANY ADVERSARY OR THREAT ULTIMATELY MAINTAINING STABILITY IN NORTHEAST ASIA.

SENIOR UNITED STATES MILITARY OFFICER ASSIGNED TO KOREA (SUSMOAK)
SUSMOAK OPERATES AT THE HIGHER STRATEGIC LEVEL ON BEHALF OF THE U.S. CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF TO REPRESENT U.S. NATIONAL INTERESTS ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA.



THE TRI-COMMAND

A STRATEGIC APPROACH TO ACHIEVE PEACE THROUGH STRENGTH

The Tri-Command—comprising US Forces Korea (USFK), United Nations Command (UNC), and Combined Forces Command (CFC)—serves as the cornerstone of peace, security, and stability on the Korean Peninsula. Together, these commands work in unison to deter aggression, defend the Republic of Korea (ROK), and ensure readiness to respond to any threat.

MISSION STATEMENT:

The Tri-Command **INTEGRATES AND EMPLOYS COMBINED JOINT ALL-DOMAIN (CJAD) COMBAT POWER** in order to deter aggression and if necessary, **DEFEND THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA (ROK)** against any adversary or threat to achieve **PEACE THROUGH STRENGTH** in Northeast Asia (NEA).



United Nations Command
"Under One Flag"



Combined Forces Command
"Katchi Kapshida"



United States Forces Korea
"Fight Tonight"

LOE 1: MANEUVER IN INFORMATION ENVIRONMENT

- I2E2: Inform to Influence, Engage and Educate.
- Highlight sovereign rights, expose malign influence in Northeast Asia.
- Gain and maintain Information Advantage.

LOE 2: DEFEND THE HOMELAND(S).

- Synergize operations, activities, and investments (OAs) across all domains.
- Understand the environment and integrate capabilities to counter threats.
- Direct and coordinate high-end training, education, and exercises.

LOE 3: STAND BY ALLIES & PARTNERS

- Increase partner capability and interoperability to fight and win.
- Optimize exchanges, stationing, and planning with allies and partners (A&Ps).
- Strengthen relationships, information sharing, and coordination mechanisms.

LOE 4: SET THE THEATER

- Develop and maintain critical infrastructure and networks.
- Capabilities postured to deter threats, defend the ROK, and defeat any adversary.
- Integrate Multinational Logistics and the Joint Logistics Enterprise (JLEnt).

PEOPLE ARE OUR PLATFORM

ENDURING STATE:

PEACE THROUGH STRENGTH ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA/NORTHEAST ASIA. PREVAIL IN THE INDO-PACIFIC WITH ALLIES AND PARTNERS.



THREE KINGS: THE THREE FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES THAT ARE ESSENTIAL FOR DETERRENCE IN THE INDO-PACIFIC.

PROTECTION-

Safeguarding the homeland, our citizens, our forces, and when required our Allies – against an evolving enemy. Our adversaries are learning and finding new ways to impose costs with both high- and low-end weapons. UNC/CFC/USFK must be a ready and adaptable shield.

POSTURE-

The right capabilities at the right time and place. The Tri-Command provides strategic alignment with flexible and agile forces, including permanent, rotational, and expeditionary forces to provide optionality to America and her allies.

SUSTAINMENT-

You can have the most well-armed force in the world, but if you can't supply and maintain it, you can't fight for long. The sheer distance in the region demands we think through how we get forces to Asia, and then how we keep them in the fight.

AUTHORITIES

AUTHORITIES: Presence and capability are insufficient without the legal and functional permissions to act; authorities activate military position to achieve policy objectives.

Authorities are the "Master Enabler"—the bridge between potential (capability) and kinetic or non-kinetic reality.

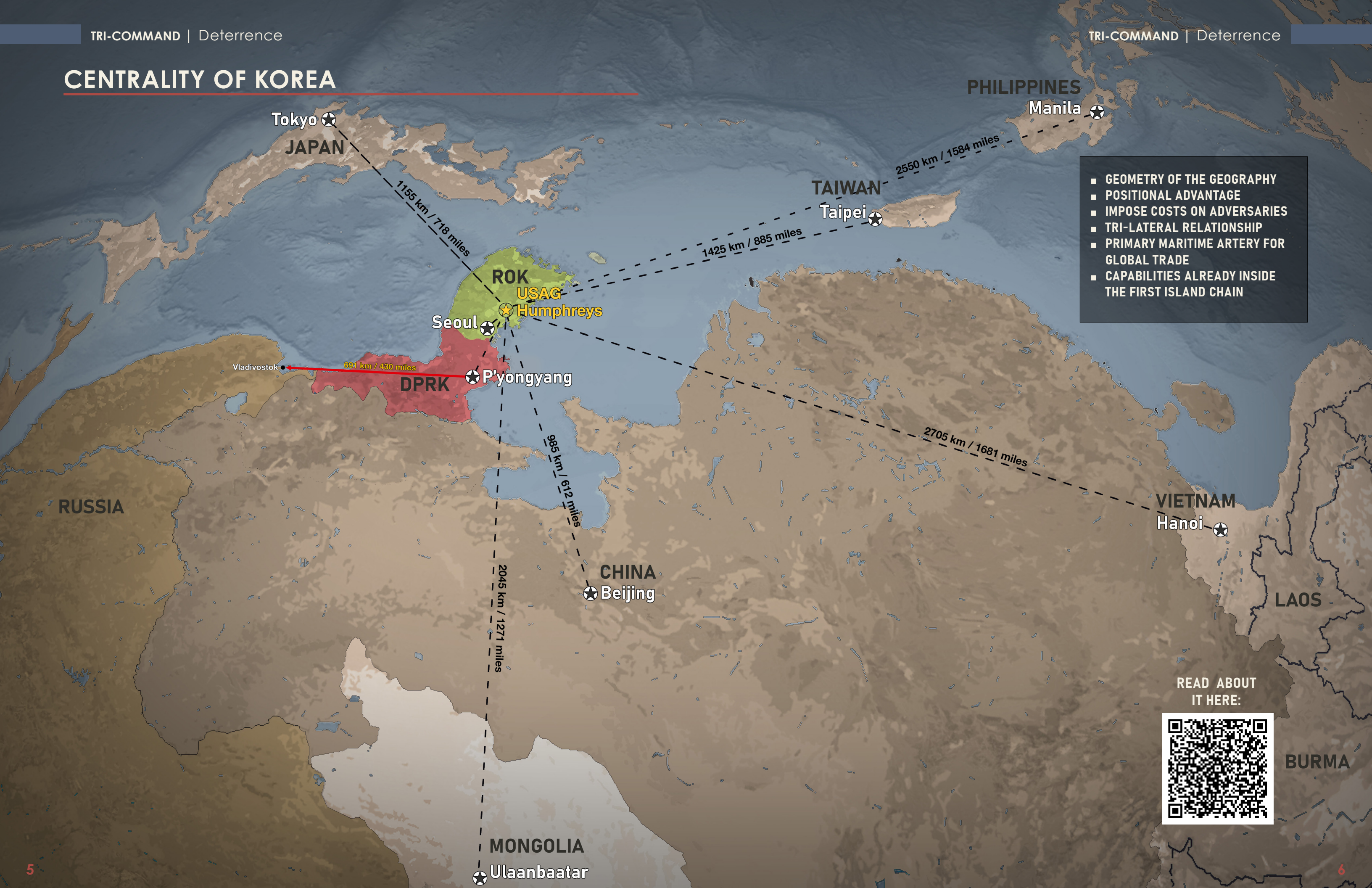
ALLIES AND PARTNERS

- Agreements
- Basing and Facilities
- Permissions
- Interoperability and Investment

UNITED STATES

- Multi-Domain Force Capabilities
- Authorities for All-Domain Operations
- Funding and Programming for Alliance Objectives
- Resources to Enable Regional Sustainment

CENTRALITY OF KOREA



- GEOMETRY OF THE GEOGRAPHY
- POSITIONAL ADVANTAGE
- IMPOSE COSTS ON ADVERSARIES
- TRI-LATERAL RELATIONSHIP
- PRIMARY MARITIME ARTERY FOR GLOBAL TRADE
- CAPABILITIES ALREADY INSIDE THE FIRST ISLAND CHAIN

READ ABOUT IT HERE:



OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT IN NORTHEAST ASIA



Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) is one of the most militarized countries in the world and a critical security challenge for United States, our Northeast Asian allies, and international community. DPRK regularly conducts destabilizing actions to advance its political goals, including attacks on Republic of Korea (ROK), development of nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles, proliferation of weapons, and cyber attacks against civilian infrastructure worldwide. Compounding this challenge, the closed nature of the country makes gathering facts about conditions inside DPRK, including the state of its Korean People's Army (KPA) military forces, extremely difficult.

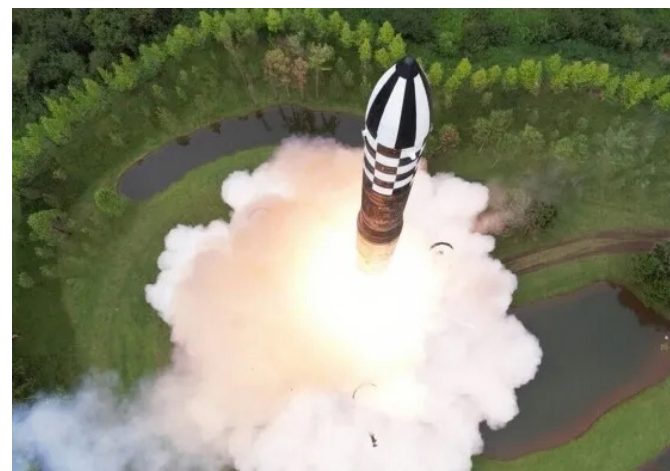
In March 2025, DPRK accused the United States and ROK of preparing a "simulation of total war" against its country, denouncing joint upcoming exercises which would include more field maneuvers and offensive elements than in previous years. DPRK warned that if United States continued to break records with its military deployment, DPRK would respond in kind with the "strengthening of their strategic deterrence."

Geopolitically, DPRK signed the Comprehensive Strategic Agreement with Russia strengthening ties in the economic, military, and diplomatic sector. DPRK receives humanitarian and economic support from People's Republic of China (PRC) and a mutual aid and cooperation treaty underpins the countries' close relationship. Inter-Korean relations have eroded in recent years. In 2024, DPRK revised its constitution to recognize DPRK and ROK as separate countries, rejecting peaceful reunification as a state goal.

Militarily, DPRK has a policy of responding with "strength-for-strength" to claimed external threats. At the same time, DPRK modulates KPA operations during periods of heightened tensions to reinforce its narrative that the country is the more stable actor on the peninsula.

DPRK aims to use foreign military deployments, combined military training, foreign military sales, and professional military education exchanges to establish long-term international defense relationships.

Economically, DPRK relies on trade with Russia and PRC, its overseas workers, and illicit financing sources—such as cyber crime, arms sales, counterfeit currency, narcotics, and wildlife trafficking—to bypass international sanctions and secure funding for its domestic priorities, nuclear and missile programs, as well as the political patronage networks vital to the regime.



A Hwasong-18 ICBM is launched from an undisclosed location in North Korea in this image released by North Korea's Korean Central News Agency on July 13, 2023 [File: KCNA via Reuters]

DPRK national security strategy aims to ensure long-term security for Kim family rule and dominate the Korean Peninsula. Since the mid-2000s, DPRK has given priority to developing nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles to deliver nuclear weapons rather than investing in aspects of the KPA conventional force or improving humanitarian conditions for its people.

DPRK maintains legacy, liquid-propellant short-and medium-range ballistic missiles with sufficient range to strike targets anywhere on the Korean Peninsula and parts of Japan. DPRK is developing newer solid-propellant ballistic missiles that offer a smaller logistical footprint and shorter employment timelines than liquid-propellant systems. DPRK has flight-tested claimed long-range hypersonic missiles and debuted its new Hwasong-20

solid-propellant ICBM, which DPRK claims is capable of reaching all of CONUS. DPRK continues to develop ballistic missiles to strike targets in ROK, increase survivability of its military, and diversify long-range strike options against Alliance forces in the region and the U.S. homeland.



Soldiers of the Korean People's Army ride in armored vehicles during a military parade on Kim Il Sung square in Pyongyang, North Korea, on Sept. 9, 2018. (Ed Jones/AFP via Getty Images)

DPRK last conducted a nuclear test in 2017 and continues to increase its nuclear stockpile through plutonium and highly enriched uranium production. The regime is also diversifying its nuclear weapon designs to develop "smaller and lighter" and "super-large" nuclear warheads.

DPRK longstanding chemical and biological warfare programs give the country the capability to produce biological agents for wartime use or for smaller-scale, covert attacks. Its chemical warfare stockpile could comprise up to several thousand metric tons of chemical agents that KPA can deliver through various platforms like missiles and artillery. KPA has the capability to use chemical warfare in conflict against civilian and military targets to incite panic and terrorize the ROK population.

DPRK cyberspace capabilities support its military operations and national security goals by providing the country a way to collect information on and intimidate its adversaries. Cyberspace capabilities also provide Pyongyang with a means to generate currency that circumvent international controls. DPRK hackers are the world's most prolific cryptocurrency thieves, accounting for more than half of all cryptocurrency stolen worldwide in 2024. In 2025, DPRK hackers stole \$1.5 billion in cryptocurrency in a single heist—the largest in history.



Photo provided by the North Korean government, shows Hwasong-17 intercontinental ballistic missiles during a military parade in Pyongyang, North Korea, Feb. 8, 2023.

CHINA AND RUSSIA RELATIONSHIP



China's interest in DPRK is driven by history, regional objectives, and a shared border. By supporting DPRK, China maintains leverage in pursuit of its three Korean Peninsula priorities: status quo regional relations, stability within DPRK, and denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. DPRK gains diplomatic and economic support by engaging with China. Although China is the most consequential DPRK supporter, their relationship features recurrent strains, mutual distrust, and resentment as both states prioritize self-interests.



Airang mass games, Eric Lafforgue

Geopolitically, China and DPRK share some strategic interests in reducing U.S. regional influence. Bilateral relations have fluctuated over the past decade but typically return to a baseline level of cooperation. In 2017, China condemned DPRK nuclear and missile tests and voted in support of severe UN sanctions on DPRK. After strengthening relations with Russia, DPRK reduced engagement with China until Kim Jong Un met with Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin in Beijing in September 2025.

Militarily, DPRK is the only country with which China has a mutual defense treaty. In 1950, China supported DPRK in the Korean War. However, under Xi Jinping, China remains against the DPRK nuclear program and is wary of supporting military developments that could trigger regional instability.

Economically, China remains DPRK's primary trading partner. In 2020, China closed the 1,352-kilometer China-DPRK border during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, by December 2023, China-DPRK trade per month peaked at over \$257 million, and China comprised 97 percent of all DPRK imports. As of 2022, there were over 100,000 DPRK laborers—IT workers, factory employees, and cyber hackers—working in China that provide valuable revenue for DPRK.

UN SECURITY COUNCIL SANCTIONS

From 2006 to 2017, Russia and China supported UNSC sanctions in response to DPRK nuclear and missile programs. Yet, during this period, both countries used loopholes to continue illicit exports. Starting in 2022, China and Russia have consistently vetoed UNSC motions to introduce further DPRK sanctions. In 2024, Russia vetoed the continuation of the UN Panel of Experts monitoring DPRK sanctions. Despite sanctions, DPRK remains stable and continues to leverage its relations with China and Russia to achieve strategic priorities.



UN Photo/Manuel Elias, 10 January 2017, United Nations, New York



Russia shares a 17-km terrestrial and 22.1-km maritime border with the DPRK. Russian interest in DPRK is driven by shared history, ideology, economic and material gains, and regional objectives. Since 2024, Russia has expanded its relationship with DPRK to obtain military support for its war in Ukraine, low-cost labor, and a diplomatic partner for evading UNSC sanctions. Through relations with Russia, DPRK gains military, economic, and diplomatic support that dilutes Chinese influence and enables evasion of UNSC sanctions.



Vladimir Putin and Kim Jong Un shake hands at a welcome ceremony to kick off their summit on June 19, 2024 | Image: Kremlin

Geopolitically, the Russia-DPRK relationship strengthened after signing the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Agreement in June 2024. This treaty stipulates that each nation will provide military support should the other be attacked. It also calls for cooperation in the areas of food, energy, information and communication technology, climate change, and medical supplies.

Militarily, the Russian invasion of Ukraine provided an opportunity for DPRK to develop and modernize the Korean People's Army (KPA), while Russia gained supplies and personnel. As of January 2025, over 11,000 DPRK troops were deployed to Kursk Oblast. As of October 2024, the DPRK has shipped SRBMs, anti-aircraft missiles, tank munitions, antitank missiles, rocket

launchers, rifles, machine guns, and over one million artillery shells to Russia. In exchange, DPRK gained lucrative revenue, raw materials, and combat experience. Russia has agreed to assist in modernizing the KPA and is providing assistance with advanced weapons systems, potentially including its anti-aircraft, missile, and submarine systems.

Economically, DPRK bilateral trade with Russia has increased since the Russia-Ukraine War began, although economic support falls significantly below China-DPRK trade levels. Russia and DPRK use rail and ship transfers through the Tumen River Friendship Bridge, Port of Najin, and Port of Dunay to support shipments of food, minerals, weapons, petroleum, and sanctioned illicit cargo. In 2020, Russia exported \$41 million in goods to the DPRK, which totaled 4.35 percent of DPRK imports. In 2022, more than 40,000 DPRK laborers in Russia worked in IT, farming, and other manual labor sectors.



Russian servicemen march on Red Square during the Victory Day military parade in Moscow. Photo Kremlin via dpa

FREEDOM SHIELD / ULCHI FREEDOM SHIELD

THE USFK CONDUCTS TWO OF THE LARGEST THEATER-LEVEL COMBINED JOINT ALL-DOMAIN (CJAD) EXERCISES IN THE INDOPACOM AOR.

The USFK exercises provide a prime opportunity for Combined Joint forces to train their wartime mission and OPLAN against a real enemy in a CJAD operational environment, to integrate and mobilize the Alliance and their governments inter agency, and a critical opportunity to interoperate with multinational partners under the United Nations Command to enforce the armistice.

USFK also extends that support to multiple INDOPACOM multilateral exercises. This all happens in a live and simulated environment supported by world class facilities equipped with combined joint networks that distribute simulations across the INDOPACOM AOR.

FS/UFS is the best use case for training, exercises and experimentation capabilities on the peninsula to build and sustain combat readiness gaps.

- 1. **OPPORTUNITIES:** We conduct two annual CJAD theater level exercises and over 100 component level CJADO training events.
- 2. **WAR TIME OPLAN DRIVEN:** Scenario design and training objectives based on wartime mission and OPLAN. Components conduct CJAD training based on OPLAN mission sets.
- 3. **ALLIED CIVIL GOVERNMENT MOBILIZATION:** The only CJAD exercise in the DoW that integrates an Allied government and mobilizes over 4,000 civil agencies and ~480,000 civil servants to rehearse crisis management and transition to conflict.
- 4. **EXISTING OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT:** Pre-positions forces to rehearse and train against potential adversaries and third-party influence and intervention.
- 5. **COMBINED JOINT ALL-DOMAIN EXERCISE:** Scenario that integrates the CJAD fight across three commands in its design with an emphasis on gray zone activities.
- 6. **INTER AGENCY INTEGRATION:** USG inter agency participation such as MDA, DTRA, US Embassy, United States Agency for International Development (USAID)/ Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA).
- 7. **ARMISTICE ENFORCEMENT:** Integrates United Nations Command Member States to rehearse armistice enforcement and request for forces in the event of conflict.
- 8. **ESTABLISHED INFRASTRUCTURE:** World Class training facilities, simulations and combined joint C5ISR networks that already distribute across the INDOPACOM AOR.
- 9. **COMBINED JOINT ALL-DOMAIN TRAINING:** To date this fiscal year, there have been approximately 120 Combined, Joint, or Multilateral training events conducted involving United States Forces Korea. Of these, 66 were Combined training events, and 7x occurred off the Korean peninsula.
- 10. **JOINT TASK FORCE CERTIFICATION:** Robust exercise infrastructure provides a vehicle for Joint Task Force Certification.

USFK FORCES SUPPORTING THE AOR



“DETERRENCE DOESN'T REST, AND NEITHER CAN WE. COMPLACENCY IS ONE OF OUR GREATEST ENEMIES.”

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| 1 UNITED STATES
Red Flag Alaska (Joint)
Valiant Shield (Joint) | 5 PHILIPPINES
Salaknib
Balikatan (Joint) | 9 INDONESIA
Garuda Shield |
| 2 REPUBLIC OF KOREA
Freedom Shield (Joint)
Ulchi Freedom Shield (Joint) | 6 THAILAND
Hanuman Guardian
Cobra Gold (Joint) | 10 BRUNEI
Palawan Warrior |
| 3 JAPAN
Keen Edge (Joint)
Freedom Edge (Joint) | 7 MONGOLIA
Khaan Quest | 11 PALAU
Tenacious Archer |
| 4 AUSTRALIA
Southern Jackaroo
Talisman Sabre (Joint) | 8 MALAYSIA
Keris Strike | 12 RIMPAC
Rim of the Pacific |

EIGHTH ARMY



Eighth Army implements its War-fighting Concept – POSTURE, MODERNIZE, COMPETE – as it expands its regional focus to Northeast Asia.

This approach is guided by four Lines of Effort (LOEs):

- Enhance Readiness
- Modernize the Alliance
- Shape the Theater
- People

MISSION

Eighth Army, as an element of the Combined Joint Force, **POSTURES** ready forces in a position of advantage, **MODERNIZES** the US-ROK alliance, and **COMPETES** in Northeast Asia to deter and deny adversary objectives, and win.

LOE

1

ENHANCE READINESS

Eighth Army is “Fight Tonight” ready and retains operational flexibility in a contested environment in Northeast Asia. Its Soldiers are masters of their core war-fighting functions through persistent validations and exercises at the Combined and Joint Levels.

LOE

2

MODERNIZE THE ALLIANCE

Through its combined relationship with the Republic of Korea Army, Eighth Army provides critical, but limited support to its longstanding ally while simultaneously expanding interoperability and innovation to address mutual security challenges in the region.

LOE

3

SHAPE THE THEATER

Eighth Army shapes the theater by prioritizing resourcing and infrastructure – including the Joint Theater Distribution Center-Korea as a regional sustainment node – while simultaneously maintaining core missions to develop Reception, Staging, Onward Movement, and Integration (RSOI) capacity and set conditions for Noncombatant Evacuation Operations (NEO).

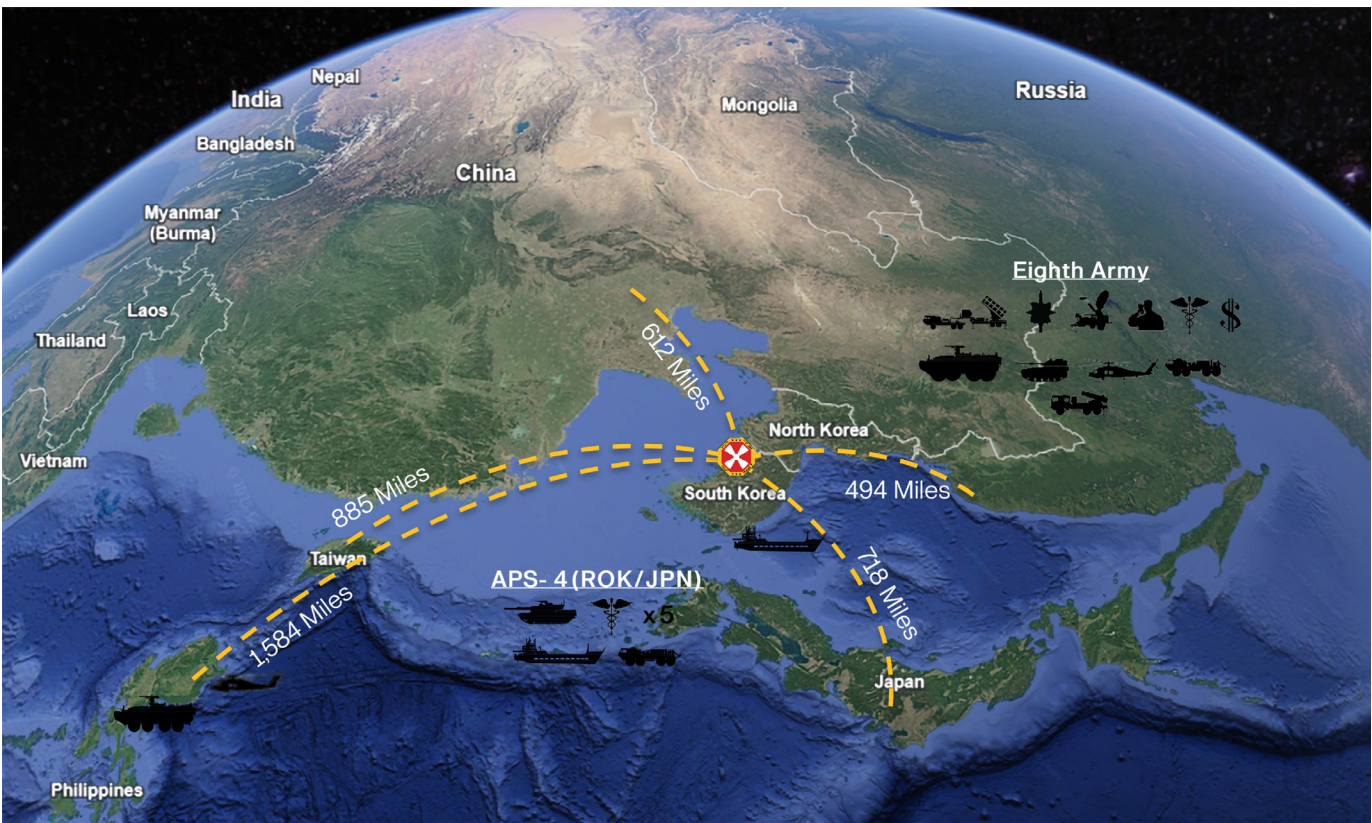
LOE

4

PEOPLE

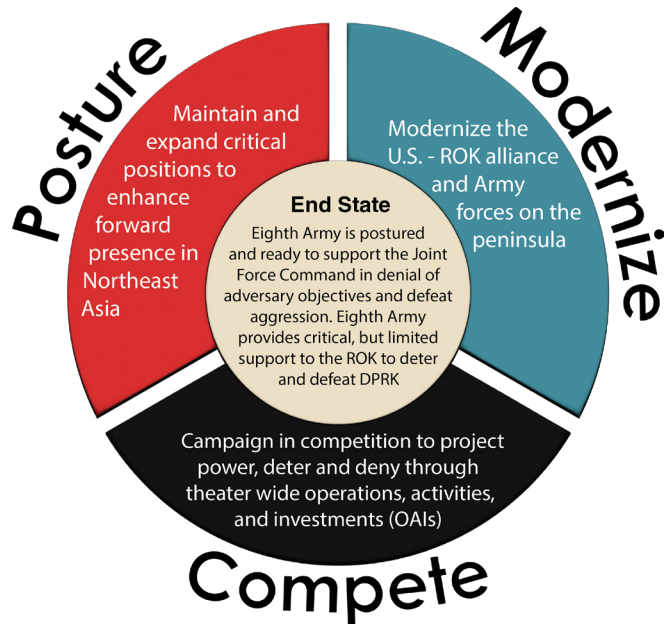
Eighth Army builds cohesive, highly trained, and disciplined teams grounded in physical fitness and mental resiliency. Simultaneously, championing the talent within its ranks by providing opportunities for professional growth and development.

POWER PROJECTION AND COMPETITION



HOW WE FIGHT

Eighth Army maintains a U.S. position of advantage in Northeast Asia by securing key terrain against strategic adversaries. Eighth Army synchronizes and integrates multidomain operations to POSTURE, MODERNIZE, and COMPETE in the Indo-Pacific to impose strategic dilemmas and deny adversary objectives.



EIGHTH ARMY UNITS

- 2nd Infantry Division (ROK-US Combined Division)
- 19th Expeditionary Sustainment Command
- 1st Signal Brigade
- 35th Air Defense Artillery Brigade
- 65th Medical Brigade
- 501st Military Intelligence Brigade



SEVENTH AIR FORCE



OUR MISSION

Provide "Ready to Fight Tonight" air power -- precise, intense, and overwhelming -- to promote stability in Northeast Asia.



OUR UNITS

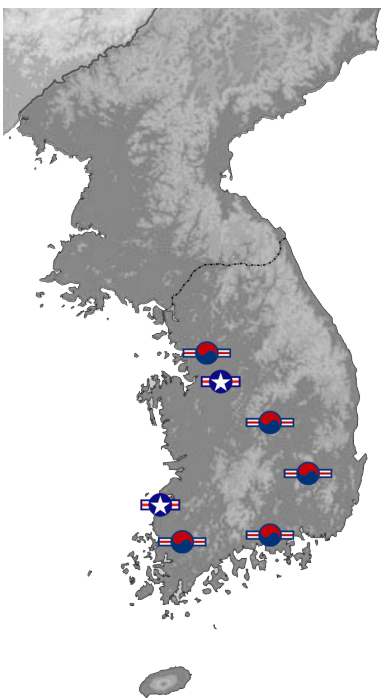
-  51st Fighter Wing (Osan Air Base)
-  8th Fighter Wing (Kunsan Air Base)
-  607th Air Operations Center
-  607th Air Support Operations Group
-  694th Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance Group



SHARPENING THE SPEAR!

- F-16, U-2, UAS
- Rapid, digital, modern kill chain
- Alliance modernization
- Agile Combat Employment
- Combined Exercises
- "Fight Tonight" mentality

FIGHT'S ON!



1 OPTIMIZE POSTURE FOR STRATEGIC COMPETITION
Sharpen warfighter advantage, advance theater posture, strengthen alliances and partnerships, and shape the information environment to reflect the urgency necessary to meet today's challenges.

2 ADVANCE THE JOINT MANEUVER
In collaboration with our allies, integrate across domains to defend the ROK homeland, preserve freedom of maneuver in the East and West Seas, and deter aggression in the First Island Chain.

3 ACCELERATE INFORMATION SUPERIORITY
Leverage artificial intelligence across the full range of military operations to achieve first-mover advantage.

4 STABILIZE THE FORCE
Improve readiness and assignment stability by increasing the number of command sponsored billets and prioritizing construction projects for family support infrastructure.

DETER, DEFEND, DEFEAT

DSN: 315-784-4780
UNIT 2047
APO AP 96266-2047

U.S. SPACE FORCES KOREA



"Space power is essential to deterrence and decisive to victory."

- Colonel John Patrick, Commander, U.S. Space Forces Korea

FORGING THE FUTURE OF SPACE POWER ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA

Over the last seven decades, U.S. Forces in Korea have adapted to new domains of warfare — from land and sea to air and now space — ensuring the Alliance remains ready, relevant, and resilient.

Established in December 2022, Space Forces Korea (SFK) represents the newest and most technologically advanced component of United States Forces Korea, charged with delivering space-based capabilities that empower joint and combined operations across the Korean Peninsula.

A NEW WAR-FIGHTING DOMAIN FOR DETERRENCE AND DEFENSE

From its headquarters at Osan Air Base, SFK ensures space integration for the Combined Forces Command, United Nations Command, and U.S. Forces Korea. SFK capabilities span the spectrum of space operations, including space-based sensing and targeting for enhanced situational awareness, navigation warfare to ensure positioning, timing, and navigation (PNT) superiority, secure SATCOM for reliable communications, robust electronic warfare capabilities, and comprehensive missile warning and tracking for peninsula defense.

By synchronizing these critical functions, SFK enables commanders to see farther, decide faster, and act with precision — strengthening deterrence against any threat. Space power is no longer a support function; it is a decisive enabler of multi-domain operations. SFK ensures that allied forces can operate seamlessly across air, land, sea, cyber, and space during both peacetime and contested conditions.

ALLIANCE THROUGH INNOVATION

Operating alongside the Republic of Korea space professionals, SFK symbolizes a shared commitment to the next generation of defense cooperation. Together, both nations develop interoperable systems, share data, and cultivate the next wave of space professionals — ensuring freedom of action in space and security. Through persistent collaboration, exercises, and innovation, SFK enhances the credibility of the Alliance and reinforces regional stability across the Indo-Pacific theater.

SUPPORTING THE USFK TRI-COMMAND LINES OF EFFORT

- LOE 1 – Maneuver in the Information Environment: Delivering and protecting space-based ISR and communications that enable decision superiority.
- LOE 2 – Defend the Homeland(s): Providing real-time missile warning and tracking to protect the Korean Peninsula.
- LOE 3 – Stand by Allies and Partners: Strengthening interoperability and trust between U.S. and ROK space professionals.
- LOE 4 – Set the Theater: Building resilient space architecture and command-and-control infrastructure that ensure rapid response in any contingency.

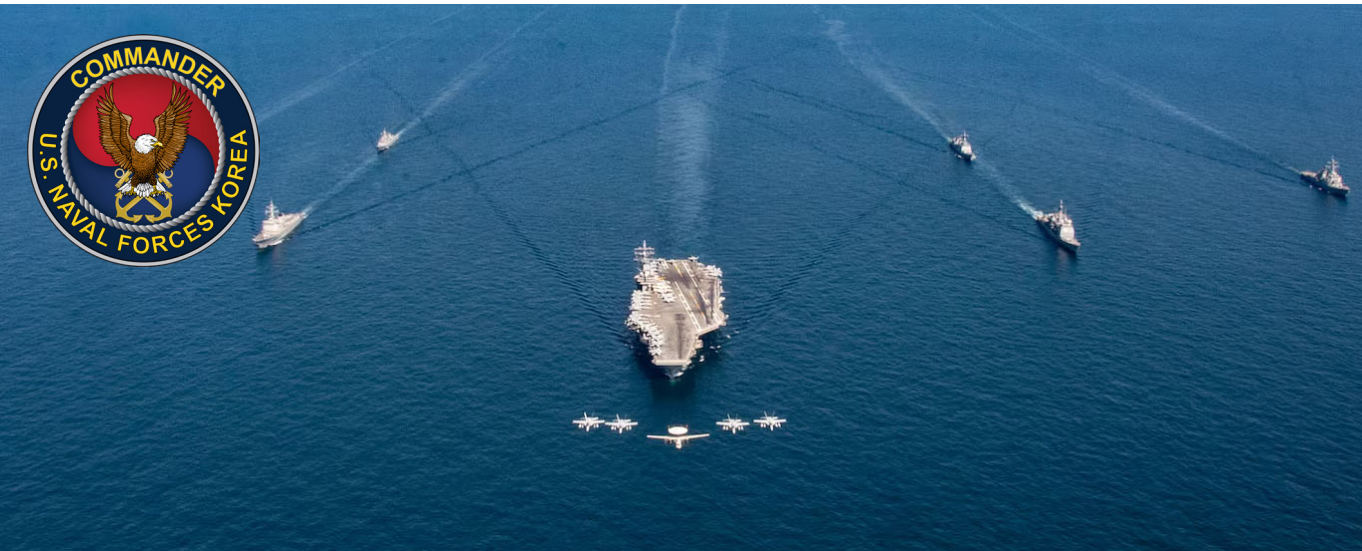
A LEGACY OF READINESS – A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

From the first satellites to modern space operations, America's Guardians have advanced the frontiers of technology and defense. SFK continues that tradition — ensuring the Alliance dominates across all domains and that the Korean Peninsula remains protected, connected, and ready for whatever challenges lie ahead.



U.S. Space Force Guardians and U.S. Air Force Airmen conduct space operations training at Osan Air Base, South Korea, August 2025.

COMMANDER, U.S. NAVAL FORCES KOREA



Established in 1957, Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Korea (CNFK) serves as the U.S. Navy component command for U.S. Forces Korea (USFK), delivering strategic effects to the Korean Peninsula via the maritime domain. CNFK provides shore support for U.S. and allied naval activity in the Republic of Korea (ROK) and coordinates operations with U.S. Seventh Fleet (C7F). Following the Trilateral Leaders’ Summit at Camp David in 2023 between the U.S., ROK, and Japanese governments, CNFK has led the historic surge of trilateral naval operations, exercises, and engagements with Republic of Korea Navy (ROKN) and Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (JMSDF) counterparts.

CNFK is led by a one-star admiral who concurrently serves as Commander, U.S. Naval Forces Korea (NAVFOR-K); Commander, United Nations Command (UNC) Naval Component; Deputy Combined Naval Component Commander; and Commander, Navy Region Korea (CNRK), which includes responsibility for Commander, Fleet Activities Chinhae (CFAC)—the only U.S. Navy base in mainland Asia. Relocated to Busan in 2017 and co-located with the Republic of Korea Fleet Headquarters, CNFK Sailors work side-by-side with ROK Navy counterparts to enhance our combined war-fighting readiness.

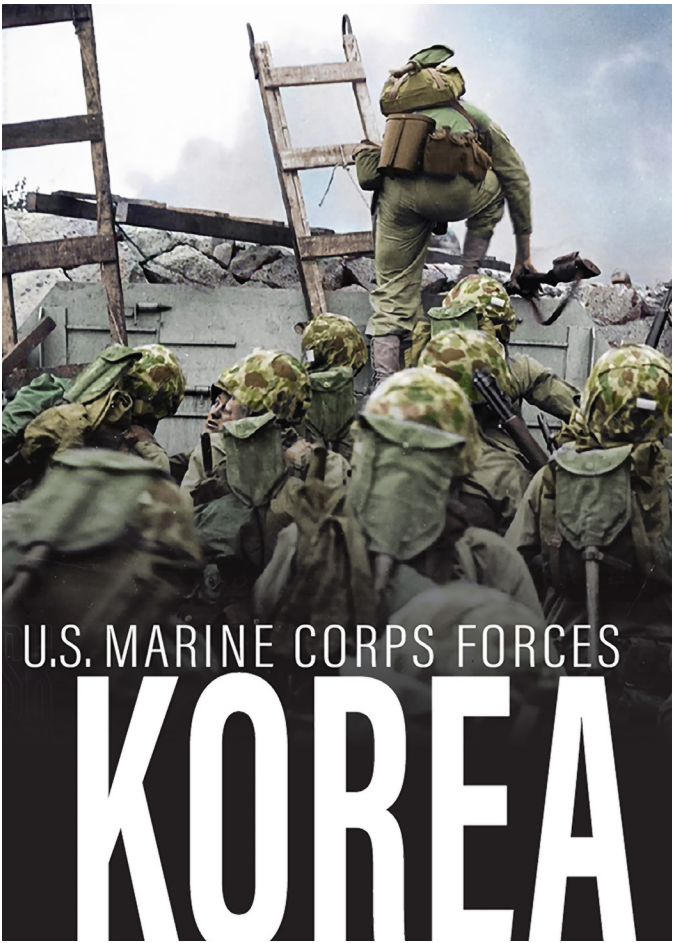
Despite comprising only 2% of all U.S. forces on the Korean peninsula, CNFK has a major strategic impact in the region. CNFK builds and strengthens the US-ROK-Japan trilateral partnership by serving as a key liaison between the ROK Fleet, the JMSDF, and C7F. Recent historic engagements facilitated by CNFK include the first ballistic missile submarine port visit to the Republic of Korea in 42 years, the first U.S. Navy submarine port visit to Jeju Island, and the first visit to a U.S. aircraft carrier by a ROK president in over 30 years.

The normalization of port calls to Korea by high value units such as Carrier Strike Groups (CSGs) and Expeditionary Strike Groups

(ESGs) demonstrate the U.S. Navy’s commitment to projecting strength and deterrence on the Korean Peninsula and in the Indo-Pacific region.

CNFK strengthens the US-ROK alliance through key engagements with ROK Joint Chiefs of Staff, Ministry of National Defense, and ROK Navy leadership. CNFK contributes to enhanced combat readiness by facilitating engagements between U.S. leadership and key ROK shipyards and supporting crucial U.S. naval vessel maintenance and repair in Korea. As the UNC Naval Component Commander, CNFK hosts the annual UNC Mine Countermeasures (MCM) Symposium, convening MCM experts, scientists, and defense industry representatives from over 20 nations of allies and partners to strengthen multinational MCM proficiency and ensure the safety of Korean ports and merchant shipping in the event of conflict.

U.S. Naval Forces Korea remains steadfast in its commitment to maintaining peace and security on the Korean Peninsula, strengthening the enduring alliance with the Republic of Korea, and promoting a free and open Indo-Pacific region.



“I have just returned from visiting the Marines at the front, and there is not a finer fighting organization in the world.”

-General Douglas MacArthur, USA, outskirts of Seoul, 21 September 1950.

Over the last 75 years, the United States Marine Corps forged a legacy of flexibility, resilience, and hard-fought victories on the Korean Peninsula, consistently enabling the joint and combined force.

In 1950, facing a dire situation with the North Korean invasion, the Marines responded decisively. The 1st Provisional Marine Brigade assisted in stabilizing the Pusan Perimeter, and the audacious Incheon Landing by the First Marine Division reversed the course of the war. This operation showcased the Marine Corps’ mastery of expeditionary warfare and rapid integration into combined operations, enabled by unique amphibious capabilities and swift deployment of Marine forces.

Today, as a component of United States Forces Korea (USFK), U.S. Marine Corps Forces Korea (MARFORK) embodies this legacy, serving as the essential bridge for rapidly reinforcing the Korean

Peninsula. Established on 1 June 1995, MARFORK solidified its permanent presence as a sub-unified command under USFK, responsible for employing Marine forces and integrating them within Combined Forces Command (CFC). This construct provides a critical, pre-positioned enabler, minimizing Fleet Marine Force response times in a volatile region – a decisive capability to the joint and combined force.

MARFORK directly supports all four Tri-Command Lines of Effort, most critically LOE 3 (Stand by Allies and Partners) and LOE 4 (Set the Theater). Its enduring partnerships strengthen the Alliance, while its established infrastructure enables rapid response. MARFORK also supports LOE 1 (Maneuver in the Information Environment) through visible commitment and LOE 2 (Defend the Homeland(s)) through operations, activities and investments or by enabling the rapid introduction of expeditionary capabilities.

From the Pusan Perimeter to the present day, the United States Marine Corps has consistently demonstrated its commitment to the defense of the Korean Peninsula and the stability of the Indo Pacific. MARFORK embodies this legacy that strengthens the Alliance and demonstrates resolve. Through enduring partnerships and a dedication to readiness, MARFORK remains vital to prevailing in regional contingencies alongside Allies and Partners.



U.S. Marines and Republic of Korea Marines execute room clearing drills in a shoot house training facility during the Korean Marine Exercise Program 25.1 at Camp Story, South Korea, Feb. 27, 2025.



U.S. SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND KOREA



MISSION

United States Special Operations Command-Korea (SOCKOR) plans and conducts special operations in South Korea and the Indo-Pacific during armistice, crisis, and war.

SOCKOR is a Theater Special Operations Command (TSOC) tasked to plan and conduct special operations in the Korean Area of Operations (KAO) in support of the commander of United States Forces Korea (USFK)/United Nations Command (UNC)/Combined Forces Command (CFC).

VISION

As the only TSOC dedicated to a single country within which U.S. and host-nation Special Operations Forces (SOF) are institutionally organized for combined operations, SOCKOR enables integrated deterrence through a ready, capable, and combined force, and SOF-unique access, placement, relationships, and capabilities across the KAO and Northeast Asia region.

The U.S.-Republic of Korea (ROK) Alliance remains stronger than ever — grounded in mutual respect, deep consultation, and a shared vision for peace and prosperity, and a free and open Indo-Pacific.

MODERNIZED ALLIANCE

SOCKOR; the ROK Army's Special Warfare Command (ROKSWC); ROK Naval Special Warfare Flotilla; ROK Air Force; ROK Coast Guard; and U.S. conventional personnel regularly train to deter aggression, defend the mutual ROK and U.S. homelands, and remain prepared to prevail in conflict when called upon.

Designated as the lead by the UNC, SOCKOR maintains relationships with the 18 UNC Member States' SOF elements as the UNC Special Operations Component Command

(UNCSOCC). If the armistice should fail, SOCKOR and ROK SOF combine to establish the Combined Special Operations Component Command (CSOCC) under the ROK-U.S. Combined Forces Command (CFC). When CSOCC is formed, the SOCKOR commander becomes both the CSOCC deputy commander and the Special Operations Joint Task Force-Korea (SOJTF-K) commander.

SOCKOR tests the establishment of CFC and its components in a wartime scenario through biannual Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) exercises with the ROK and U.S. The 11-day exercises validate the combined, joint, multi-domain, and inter agency requirements, as well as strengthening the relationships, institutions, and infrastructure needed to prevail.

As the U.S. and ROK continue to modernize this ironclad Alliance, SOCKOR remains focused on building a strategically sustainable force posture that credibly deters aggression and responds to the evolving regional threat environment.



TRI-COMMAND HISTORY

The Republic of Korea–United States Tri-Command modern structure, comprising the United Nations Command (UNC), the ROK–U.S. Combined Forces Command (CFC), and United States Forces Korea (USFK), was formally established in 1978 as part of a broader effort to consolidate command relationships and improve the coherence of allied defense operations on the Korean Peninsula. This framework unified armistice maintenance, combined operational planning, and U.S. support functions under a single senior commander, a U.S. four-star general who concurrently serves as Commander of all three entities. The “triple-hat” arrangement has since provided the institutional backbone of deterrence and stability in the post-Korean War era.

From its inception, the Tri-Command was designed to clarify and integrate overlapping responsibilities that had emerged among the existing headquarters. The UNC retained its original mandate from the 1953 Armistice Agreement—maintaining the ceasefire, liaising with the Korean People’s Army and the Chinese People’s Volunteers, and coordinating the contributions of allied “Sending States.” CFC became the central war-fighting command, combining ROK and U.S. components into a single bi-national structure responsible for operational planning, force employment, and deterrence. USFK, meanwhile, remained the service component responsible for sustaining the U.S. military presence and providing logistical, administrative, and personnel support to both UNC and CFC. Together, these three commands formed a mutually reinforcing framework that streamlined alliance decision-making and ensured unity of effort across peacetime and contingency conditions.

A significant evolution in the Tri-Command’s operational balance occurred in December 1994, when the Republic of Korea assumed peacetime operational control (OPCON) of its own armed forces. While CFC retained wartime OPCON, this transfer underscored the growing maturity and autonomy of the ROK military while preserving the integrated defense posture that had been cultivated over decades. The Tri-Command structure adapted accordingly, shifting its emphasis toward combined planning, interoperability, and readiness training to ensure a seamless transition of authority in crisis scenarios.

Throughout the 2000s and 2010s, the Tri-Command continued to evolve in response to strategic, technological, and political developments. Changes in North Korea’s capabilities, including its nuclear and missile programs, demanded a more flexible and adaptive command posture. The allies refined their exercise regimes and crisis management mechanisms to maintain deterrence credibility. Major annual exercises such as Ulchi Freedom Guardian and later Ulchi Freedom Shield were structured as comprehensive Tri-Command events, integrating live, virtual, and constructive elements that tested joint command-and-control processes across all three headquarters. These exercises not only validated operational readiness but also

deepened the habitual coordination between ROK and U.S. staffs that defines the alliance’s day-to-day functioning.

The Tri-Command’s physical consolidation has further enhanced its effectiveness. Between 2018 and 2022, all three headquarters relocated to Camp Humphreys in Pyeongtaek, forming one of the largest overseas U.S. military installations and the central hub of alliance operations. The co-location of command elements and key enablers improved real-time coordination, communications resilience, and crisis response capacity. The move also symbolized a modernization of the alliance infrastructure, reinforcing long-term commitment while positioning the Tri-Command for future organizational transitions.

In recent years, both governments have maintained conditions-based framework for the eventual transition of wartime OPCON. Within this framework, the Tri-Command conducts phased assessments of readiness, interoperability, and decision-making procedures through large-scale exercises such as Freedom Shield and Ulchi Freedom Shield. The Combined Forces Command (CFC) continues to be led by a U.S. four-star general, with a ROK appointed deputy commander, while the same U.S. four-star concurrently commands the United Nations Command (UNC) and United States Forces Korea (USFK). This arrangement ensures unified leadership across all three headquarters and sustains the integrated defense posture that underpins the ROK–U.S. Alliance.

Nearly five decades after its formation, the Tri-Command remains a uniquely structured instrument of multinational defense cooperation. Its enduring success lies in its adaptability: balancing national sovereignty with combined command authority, sustaining a credible deterrent posture amid evolving regional threats, and preserving the alliance’s ability to act decisively as one unified force.

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2026 NATIONAL DEFENSE STRATEGY

Korean Peninsula. With its powerful military, supported by high defense spending, a robust defense industry, and mandatory conscription, South Korea is capable of taking primary responsibility for deterring North Korea with critical but more limited U.S. support. South Korea also has the will to do so, given that it faces a direct and clear threat from North Korea. This shift in the balance of responsibility is consistent with America's interest in updating U.S. force posture on the Korean Peninsula. In this way, we can ensure a stronger and more mutually beneficial alliance relationship that is better aligned with America's defense priorities, thereby setting conditions for lasting peace.

"The security environment on the Korean peninsula and in northeast Asia requires untiring attention and a multi-faceted approach. The DPRK's evolving nuclear and missile programs, coupled with its strengthening ties with Russia and China, necessitate a united front among allies. The U.S. Remains dedicated to its unwavering commitment to the combined defense of the ROK, continuously modernizing defense strategies, enhancing interoperability with regional partners, and employing advanced technologies to counter emerging threats."

- Gen Brunson's statement to congress, April 2025.

AFTERWORD



The Tri-Command, comprised of United Nations Command, Combined Forces Command, and U.S. Forces Korea stands as a premier example of multinational synergy and unwavering readiness. This is an environment where the "Fight Tonight" mission is a daily standard maintained through real-world, challenging training alongside our ROK and international partners. These rigorous exercises do more than just sharpen tactical skills; they broaden the professional horizons of our Service Members and ensure the Alliance remains focused and sharp in a complex global landscape. By training in such a high-stakes, collaborative environment, our personnel develop a level of readiness that is unique to this peninsula.

However, the true strength of this command extends beyond operational capabilities to the families and civilians who form the backbone of our community. We are dedicated to making Korea an assignment of choice by prioritizing a high quality of life through world-class installations, schools, and medical care. By fostering a thriving environment where our people can truly flourish and immerse themselves in the rich culture of our host nation, we ensure a stable foundation for our mission. It is a privilege to witness the strength of the Tri-Command as they serve at the leading edge of our national interests, proving that when we take care of our people, they remain the most capable ambassadors of our values.

UNDER ONE FLAG!

KATCHI KAPSHIDA!

FIGHT TONIGHT!

CSM ROBIN M. BOLMER
Command Sergeant Major
UNC/CFC/USFK



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CIVILIAN AND FOREIGN MEDIA PHOTOGRAPHY

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- Artem Geodakyan of Sputnik/Pool via REUTERS - Russian and North Korean flags at the Vostochny Cosmodrome, the venue of the meeting between Russia’s President Vladimir Putin and North Korea’s leader Kim Jong Un, in the far eastern Amur region, Russia, September 13, 2023.
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- USFK Knowledge Management Graphic Design, Matt Martnick

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