

*Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2017*

**The President's News Conference With President Moon Jae-in of South Korea in Seoul, South Korea**

*November 7, 2017*

*President Moon.* I extend my heartfelt welcome to the visit by Your Excellency, President Donald Trump, and Madam First Lady to Republic of Korea. His visit marks the first state visit by the U.S. President to Korea in 25 years. And President Trump is also the first state guest for myself and my Government. This special bond forged between President Trump and myself, I find it very meaningful, and I am gratified to be part of it.

President Trump and I met and communicated with each other numerous times, building deep trust and consolidating our friendship. Today we had candid discussions about steadfastness of R.O.K.-U.S. alliance. Moreover, we agreed to work towards resolving North Korean nuclear issue in a peaceful manner and bringing permanent peace to the Korean Peninsula.

Against escalating nuclear and missile threats from North Korea, we reaffirmed our principle that we must maintain a strong stance toward North Korean threats based on overwhelming superiority of power. President Trump has reaffirmed his ironclad commitment to defend Korea, and President Trump and I agreed to further strengthen the robust combined defensive posture of our two countries. In this regard, President Trump and I agreed to expend rotational deployment of U.S. strategic assets in and around Korean Peninsula.

We will step up our collaboration to enhance Korea's self-defense capability to unprecedented levels. To this end, we reached a conclusion today to lift the payload limit on Korean missiles completely, with a final agreement. We also agreed to begin consultation for Korea's acquisitions and development of Korea's state-of-art military reconnaissance assets.

Once again, we strongly urge North Korea to halt its nuclear and missile provocation and to come to a dialogue table for denuclearization as soon as possible. President Trump and I reaffirmed our current strategy, which is to maximize pressure and sanctions on North Korea until it gives up nuclear weapons and to come to the table for dialogue on its own.

At the same time, should North Korea choose to make the right choice, we also reaffirmed our view that we are willing to offer North Korea a bright future. Based on such common approach between our two countries, we will continue to lead efforts to bring peaceful and fundamental solutions to North Korean nuclear issues.

We will maintain close collaboration with international community, including the neighboring countries. I sincerely hope that President Trump's visit at this time will be a turning point for the situation on the Korean Peninsula in the stable manner.

Today, President Trump and I visited Pyeongtaek base, which is a symbolic venue for showing the future of R.O.K.-U.S. alliance and also Korea's contribution to the alliance.

As we gave our words of encouragement to Korean and American servicemembers while striving to realize our common goal, we could feel the strong friendship of Korea and U.S. alliance on the site. President Trump and I also agreed to continue strengthening of the combined defense postures and capabilities of the bilateral alliance by pursuing defense cost-sharing at an adequate and reasonable level.

Last, but not least, we reaffirmed that economic cooperation is an important pillar of R.O.K.-U.S. alliance. We share the view that economic cooperation is a critical element in our efforts to pursue sustainable and future-orientated R.O.K.-U.S. alliance. In order to enjoy the benefit of free, equitable, and balanced trade together, we agreed to have the relevant authorities expedite the process of KORUS FTA consultation. By sharing the universal value and the fruits of economic prosperity with the humankind, President Trump and I agreed to make a joint contribution to the peace and prosperity of the world.

We also agreed to continue strengthening cooperation for global challenges, including issues of terrorism, women, human rights, and public health. President Trump requested that I need to talk with him continuously, and we agreed that we will continuously have a frequent and close communications. And by doing that, we'll further strengthen the trust and ties between us and also solidify the bilateral alliance.

Once again, I extend warm welcome to President and Madam First Lady's visit to Korea. Please enjoy the beautiful autumn weather and find deepening of friendship in our two countries, as well as our two leaders. Thank you.

*Moderator.* Thank you very much. That was an opening statement by President Moon Jae-in, which will be followed by President Donald Trump.

*President Trump.* Thank you very much, President Moon. Thank you for honoring us with the invitation to be here today and for the incredibly warm welcome and magnificent ceremony you have given us during our first trip to the very beautiful city of Seoul. Thank you very much.

Melania and I had a wonderful time having tea with you and First Lady Kim—thank you—at the beautiful Blue House, which I've heard so much about and now get to visit and see firsthand. We're looking forward to joining you for dinner this evening, and we have much to discuss.

Today the President and I had an opportunity to talk about a range of vital economic and security matters, including our trade relationship and our joint efforts to solve North Korea's grave nuclear threat to South Korea and, indeed, the entire world. This is a worldwide problem.

The Republic of Korea is more than a longstanding ally of the United States. We are partners and friends who have fought side by side in a war and, really, worked very hard and prospered toward a great and lasting peace.

I feel confident that we'll be able to reach a free, fair, and reciprocal trade deal as we renegotiate our current 5-year-old trade document. We cannot allow North Korea to threaten all that we have built—and we've built it very much together, and we're very, very proud of it, also, together—but all that we've built in the decade since our soldiers sacrificed side by side in the struggle for freedom. Our alliance is more important than ever to peace and security on the Korean Peninsula and across the Indo-Pacific region.

That is why Vice President Pence, Secretary of State Tillerson, who is with us today, and Secretary of Defense Mattis, who was here just a short time ago, have all traveled to Seoul in the first year of my administration. It was very important to me that they did.

North Korea's sixth test of a nuclear device and its missile launches are a threat not only to the people of South Korea, but to the people all across our globe. We will together confront North Korea's actions and prevent the North Korean dictator from threatening millions of innocent lives. He is indeed threatening millions and millions of lives so needlessly.

North Korea is a worldwide threat that requires worldwide action. We call on every responsible nation, including China and Russia, to demand that the North Korean regime end its nuclear weapons and its missile programs and live in peace. As the South Korean people know so well, it's time to act with urgency and with great determination. All nations must implement U.N. Security Council regulations and cease trade and business entirely with North Korea. It is unacceptable that nations would help to arm and finance this increasingly dangerous regime.

As we work together to resolve this problem using all available tools short of military action, the United States stands prepared to defend itself and its allies using the full range of our unmatched military capabilities if need be. The crucial U.S. security partnership with South Korea is just one aspect of our enduring alliance. We also share deep partnerships on a range of issues, from cultural exchange to cutting-edge advances in science and medicine, and the very important issue of trade.

Currently, we are looking at ways of improving our economic relationship. I would like to thank President Moon for instructing his trade negotiators to work closely with us to quickly pursue a much better deal, a deal that, frankly, has been quite unsuccessful and not very good for the United States.

In the more than six decades since we signed our mutual defense treaty, our alliance has grown stronger and deeper. Our two nations symbolize what independent countries can accomplish when they serve the interests of their people, respect the sovereignty of their neighbors, and uphold the rule of law.

Imagine the amazing possibilities for a Korean Peninsula liberated from the threat of nuclear weapons, where all Koreans could enjoy the blessings of liberty and the prosperity that you have achieved right here in South Korea.

I also want to congratulate President Moon and the South Korean people on hosting the Winter Olympics this upcoming February. It will be a truly spectacular event.

Mr. President, I want to thank you and First Lady Kim. And I mean, it was just so special today. The ceremony was so beautiful. We very much thank you for it.

Together, our two nations will handle threats to peace and security, stand up to those who would threaten our freedom, and boldly seize the incredible opportunities for a better, brighter, and more prosperous tomorrow.

In good times and bad, in moments of great hardship and great success, our two nations can always count on the close bonds and deep friendship we share as free, proud, and independent people.

Mr. President, I look forward to the rest of our visit together, and I send the wonderful citizens of South Korea the best wishes from the people of the United States of America. Thank you very much. Thank you.

*Moderator.* Thank you very much. We have just heard from President Trump, and now we'd like to invite the questions from the members of the media corps.

So we would like to now ask the White House correspondents to the—from the U.S. side to ask questions, and President Trump will respond. And then, from the White—from the Blue House, there will be Q and A.

*White House Press Secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders.* The first question from the United States will go to Margaret Brennan from CBS.

Q. Thank you, sir. Mr. President——

*President Trump.* Which one? [*Laughter*]

#### *North Korea*

Q. Mr. President—President Trump—I will have questions from both of you gentlemen. But, President Trump, you spoke here in South Korea saying that you do believe that the crisis with North Korea will be worked out. So, specifically, have you seen any success in your diplomatic strategy so far? And do you still believe that direct talks are a waste of time?

*President Trump.* Well, I think you know me well enough to know that I don't like talking about whether I see success or not in a case such as this. We like to play our cards a little bit close to the vest. I will say this: that I believe it makes sense for North Korea to do the right thing, not only for North Korea, but for humanity all over the world. So there is a lot of reason, a lot of good reason, behind it.

With that, yes, I think we're making a lot of progress. I think we're showing great strength. I think they understand we have unparalleled strength. There has never been strength like it. You know we sent three of the largest aircraft carriers in the world, and they're right now positioned. We have a nuclear submarine also positioned. We have many things happening that we hope, we hope—in fact, I'll go a step further, we hope to God—we never have to use.

With that being said, I really believe that it makes sense for North Korea to come to the table and to make a deal that's good for the people of North Korea and the people of the world. I do see certain movement, yes. But let's see what happens.

Q. And on direct talks, sir?

*President Trump.* I don't want to say that.

Q. Okay.

*President Trump.* I just don't want to say that. You can understand that.

Q. I do, sir.

#### *U.S. Arms Sales to South Korea*

Q. And, President Moon, you, in your meeting earlier with President Trump, were spoken about by President Trump when he gestured to the military purchases that your country will be making. And I'm wondering, as you look towards that military buildup, if that signals something—perhaps a change in your view—where you believe a more aggressive stance towards North Korea is more appropriate.

*President Moon.* If I could have the question repeated again. Are you referring to the acquisition of the military assets, or are you referring to the military tensions that would be—that could be incurred?

Q. President Trump said you would be making military purchases of military equipment. What does that signal? And is it a change?

*President Moon.* I'm not entirely sure which direction your question was, but I can say one thing: When it comes to the state of our reconnaissance assets and the strategic assets—on

acquisition of these U.S. strategic assets—we have agreed to begin the consultations for acquisition—Korea's acquisition of such assets. And that is to enhance Korea's defense capabilities and also the combined defense posture of Korea and the United States. I think it is essential.

*President Trump.* Margaret, if I may add to that, that the President and I have agreed they'll be buying a tremendous—which they want, and which they need, and everybody thinks it makes a lot of sense. We make the greatest military equipment in the world, whether it's planes, whether it's missiles. No matter what it is, we have the greatest military equipment in the world. And South Korea will be ordering billions of dollars of that equipment, which, frankly, for them makes a lot of sense. And for us, it means jobs; it means reducing our trade deficit with South Korea.

But they'll be ordering billions of dollars' worth of equipment, and we've already approved some of those orders. Okay? Thank you.

*Moderator.* Yes. Next we'd like to have the questions raised to President Moon from the Korean reporters. Please raise your hand.

Yes, Mr. Moon—[inaudible]—Dong-A Daily Newspaper. Please go ahead.

*China/North Korea/Russia*

*Q.* Yes, my name is Moon—[inaudible]. I'm affiliated to Dong-A Ilbo Daily Newspaper. I have a question for President Moon: Between Korea and the United States, I think one of the most important diplomatic challenges would be to overcome—to resolve the nuclear problem of the D.P.R.K. And you gave a foreign press interview; you talked about bringing balance and diplomacy, and you talked about resolving nuclear problem and the close cooperation between Korea and the United States, and you talked about the China's role.

Are you referring to the balance between the U.S.—balance of Korea between U.S. and China, or are you referring to something else? And you have had a third summit meeting at the summit meeting you just had. You said that you have agreed to bring permanent peace to—[inaudible]—on the Korean Peninsula. And what kind of role are you expecting the United States and President Trump to play with regards to settling peace on the Korean Peninsula?

*President Moon.* Yes, on the bringing balance in our diplomatic approaches, this is not about our stance vis-à-vis the United States and the China. We are trying to bring a solution to the nuclear problem—D.P.R.K. nuclear problem—and to bring permanent peace on the Korean Peninsula.

And moreover, we would like to promote peace, stability, and prosperity of the Northeast Asian region. So we would like to expand our diplomatic efforts in this regard. And that should include our efforts for China, as well as ASEAN and Russia and the EU. I believe that we should diversify efforts—diplomatic efforts—so that we can pursue a more balanced approach. So that was the intention of making such comments.

And to establish permanent peace on the Korean Peninsula and to overcome and to resolve the nuclear problem, I think there's role to be played by the United States and China. And when it comes to the United States, a very strong sanctions and pressure is being put by the United States. The U.S. is leading efforts, and I am very sure that substantive results will be realized through such efforts.

And China has also faithfully implemented the U.N. resolution to impose sanctions on D.P.R.K. So we have heightened the pressure and sanctions on D.P.R.K., and I think this will also contribute to resolving the North Korean nuclear problem.

And if our international society's efforts bear fruits—if such efforts bear fruits—and if we can really make a turnaround, then I'm sure that we will be able to bring North Korea to the table of dialogue. And through such dialogue, I am very confident that we can freeze the nuclear program and ultimately dismantle the weapons program of the D.P.R.K. entirely. And in this, I believe that cooperation from the U.S. and China is essential.

And on the establishing a permanent peace on the Korean Peninsula, I don't think it's the right time even that we talk about this issue. Now we should focus on bringing an end to the D.P.R.K. provocations and bringing D.P.R.K. to the table for dialogue. This is the impending challenge that we must address now. So we must focus on the sanctions and pressure. And when there is a turnaround—when the turnaround finally comes—then we should certainly make efforts to further consult each other—Korea and the U.S.—for settling peace on the Korean Peninsula.

*President Trump.* I want to just say that President Xi—where we will be tomorrow, China—has been very helpful. We'll find out how helpful soon. But he really has been very, very helpful. So China is out trying very hard to solve the problem with North Korea. We hope that Russia, likewise, will be helpful. We also hope that other countries—and we know for a fact that other countries have already started. And we've had great dialogue with many other countries, as you know, and they're really helping a lot.

So if we get China, if we get Russia—and we have some other countries, but we want to get most of them—we think that things will happen, and they could happen very quickly.

This is a problem, by the way, that should have been done over the last 25 years, not now. This is not the right time to be doing it, but that's what I've got. That's what I've got. This is a problem that should have been taken care of a long time ago.

Thank you.

*Press Secretary Sanders.* Thank you. The United States second and final question will go to Ali Vitali from NBC.

### *Shooting in Sutherland Springs, Texas/Gun Control*

*Q.* Thank you, Mr. President. You've talked about wanting to put extreme vetting on people trying to come into the United States, but I wonder if you would consider extreme vetting for people trying to buy a gun.

*President Trump.* Trying to what?

*Q.* Buy a gun.

*President Trump.* Well, you know, you're bringing up a situation that probably shouldn't be discussed too much right now. We could let a little time go by, but it's okay. If you feel that that's an appropriate question, even though we're in the heart of South Korea, I will certainly answer your question.

If you did what you're suggesting, there would have been no difference 3 days ago, and you might not have had that very brave person who happened to have a gun or a rifle in his truck go out and shoot him and hit him and neutralize him. And I can only say this: If he didn't

have a gun, instead of having 26 dead, you would have had hundreds more dead. So that's the way I feel about it.

Q. And are you considering——

*President Trump.* Not going to help.

Q. And are you considering any kind of gun control policy going forward because——

*President Trump.* I mean, you look at the city with the strongest gun laws in our Nation, is Chicago, and Chicago is a disaster. It's a total disaster. Just remember, if this man didn't have a gun or rifle, you'd be talking about a much worse situation in the great State of Texas. Thank you.

Q. Thank you.

*[At this point, the moderator spoke in Korean, and no translation was provided. A Korean reporter then asked a question, which was translated as follows.]*

#### *South Korea-U.S. Relations*

Q. A question for the President Trump: Today you visited Pyeongtaek military base as you first stop, and we have allocated 9 trillion won for the building of the military base. And there's been a bit of conflict, confrontations with the residents of Pyeongtaek, over the construction of the Pyeongtaek base. So, to Koreans, a lot of taxpayers' money has been put into build the Pyeongtaek base, and a lot of sacrifices have been made to build that base. So you visited the Pyeongtaek base today, and many people talked about free-riding of Korea against security of the United States. So what are your feelings about such talks as you visited the Pyeongtaek base?

And another question I have is that people have concerns about Korea passing, although a lot of that has gone away. There's people still concerned that Korea may be neglected in diplomacy. So what do you—what are your views on the Korea passing? Can you just say for sure, for certain, that Korea passing no longer exists for the Korean people?

*President Trump.* I'll start off with your second. South Korea—Republic of Korea, Korea—is very important to me. And there will be no skipping South Korea, I can tell you that right now. Plus, I've developed great friendships, not only with the President, but with others, and we're not going to let them down, and they're not going to let us down. Because we're doing a lot for them, to be honest. We're doing a lot for them.

As far as the base is concerned, I thought that Humphreys was an incredible military installation. I know what it cost, and it's a lot of money. We actually spent some of that money, and as you know, that money was spent, for the most part, to protect South Korea, not to protect the United States. But some of that money was spent by us.

That being said, that was long before my time, and I'm sure I could have built it for a lot less. *[Laughter]* That's what I do. *[Laughter]* Thank you.

*President Moon.* Well, if you don't mind, I'd like to make some supplementary remarks. Today President Trump visited Pyeongtaek military base, and his visit shows the—through his visit, we were able to show that Korea is making significant contributions—huge contributions to the KORUS alliance. I hope that that has been felt by President Trump. And at the expanded summit talks, he has expressed his appreciation for the construction of the splendid base. And at the Pyeongtaek base, with the 8th Army commander, as well as the USFK

commander, we heard a—we had a briefing by the commanders, and there was a strong emphasis on their part as well.

*Moderator.* Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to now conclude the press conference of President Trump and President Moon Jae-in.

*President Trump.* Thank you very much.

*Moderator.* I would like to extend our appreciation to the members of the diplomatic corps for being here. Thank you.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 5:20 p.m. at the Blue House. In his remarks, the President referred to Kim Jung-sook, wife of President Moon; Chairman of the Korean Worker's Party Kim Jong Un of North Korea; Sutherland Springs, TX, resident Stephen Willeford, who exchanged gunfire with Devin Patrick Kelley, suspected gunman in the shooting at the First Baptist Church in Sutherland Springs on November 5. President Moon referred to Lt. Gen. Thomas S. Vandal, USA, commanding general, 8th Army; and Gen. Vincent K. Brooks, USA, commander, U.N. Command, Combined Forces Command, and U.S. Forces Korea. President Moon, the moderator, and two reporters spoke in Korean, and their remarks were translated by an interpreter.

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*Subjects:* Army, Department of the : U.S. Army Garrison Humphreys, South Korea; China : North Korea, role; China : President; Commerce, international : Free and fair trade; Communications : News media, Presidential interviews; Defense, Department of : Secretary; Employment and unemployment : Job creation and growth; Law enforcement and crime : Gun control; North Korea : International diplomatic efforts; North Korea : Korean Worker's Party Chairman; North Korea : Nuclear weapons development; Russia : North Korea, role; South Korea : Defense relationship with U.S.; South Korea : Olympic Games in Pyeongchang; South Korea : President; South Korea : President Trump's visit; South Korea : Relations with U.S.; South Korea : Trade with U.S.; South Korea : U.S. Army Garrison Humphreys; Sports : Olympic Games; State, Department of : Secretary; Texas : Shooting in Sutherland Springs; White House Office : Assistants to the President :: Press Secretary; White House Office : Vice President.

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