

Remarks by Vice President Harris After Tour of the Korean Demilitarized Zone

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Joint Security Area Landing Zone Paju-si, Republic of Korea

THE VICE PRESIDENT: So, the United States shares a very important relationship, which is an alliance with the Republic of Korea. And it is an alliance that is strong and enduring. And today, there were several demonstrations of just that point.

Here you see, at the DMZ, U.S. soldiers serving shoulder-to-shoulder with soldiers from the Republic of Korea. They are training together. They are committed to working in solidarity around a shared purpose and goal, which is to maintain the security and the stability of this region of the world.

I cannot state enough that the commitment of the United States to the defense of the Republic of Korea is ironclad and that we will do everything in our power to ensure that it has meaning in every way that the words suggest. This includes our extended deterrence commitment, which is supported by the full range of U.S. military capabilities, again, as demonstrated right here before you.

But in regard to the threats posed by the DPRK, as I told President Yoon, we are aligned on this issue. The DPRK has a ballistic missile launch program, apparently, including just yesterday, and are destabilizing the peace and security of this region.

Our shared goal — the United States and the Republic of Korea — is a complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

The alliance between the United States and the Republic of Korea was forged in shared sacrifice during the brutal Korean War. Let us remember, Americans and Koreans fought and died together for freedom and for liberty.

Thirty-six thousand U.S. service members lost their lives. A hundred and thirty-seven thousand Korean soldiers lost their lives, as did millions of innocent civilians.

Nearly 70 years since the Korean Armistice, the threat of conflict remains. And we are reminded that the alliance between the United States and the Republic of Korea stands ready to address any contingency.

The commitment of the United States to the defense of the Republic of Korea, I will report, is ironclad. Today more than 28,000 U.S. service members serve shoulder-to-shoulder with our allies here to deter DPRK aggressions and to protect the Republic of Korea and the American people.

I just had an opportunity to meet with several of these brave and highly dedicated and skilled soldiers, and I will tell you what I told them: America benefits from their service every single day.

The DMZ also reminds us of the dramatically different paths that the two sides took from those early days. Over the past seven decades, it has been clear: In the south, we see a thriving democracy, innovation, economic prosperity, and strength, a powerhouse — dare I say — on many of these issues, and a force for good in the world. In the north, we see a brutal dictatorship, rampant human rights violations, and an unlawful weapons program that threatens peace and stability.

The United States and the world seek a stable and peaceful Korean Peninsula where the DPRK is no longer a threat.

We will continue to work alongside our partners here and everywhere as is necessary to maintain stability and peace in this region.

Thank you all.

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