

South Korean worker at the Kaesong industrial complex in North Korea, who has been held by North Korean authorities since March 30; and American journalists Euna Lee and Laura Ling,

who have been held by North Korean authorities since March 17. President Lee and some reporters spoke in Korean, and their remarks were translated by an interpreter.

## **Joint Statement by the United States of America and the Republic of Korea on the Alliance Between the United States of America and the Republic of Korea *June 16, 2009***

The United States of America and the Republic of Korea are building an Alliance to ensure a peaceful, secure and prosperous future for the Korean Peninsula, the Asia-Pacific region, and the world.

Our open societies, our commitment to free democracy and a market economy, and our sustained partnership provide a foundation for the enduring friendship, shared values, and mutual respect that tightly bind the American and Korean peoples.

The bonds that underpin our Alliance and our partnership are strengthened and enriched by the close relationships among our citizens. We pledge to continue programs and efforts to build even closer ties between our societies, including cooperation among business, civic, cultural, academic, and other institutions.

The United States-Republic of Korea Mutual Defense Treaty remains the cornerstone of the U.S.-ROK security relationship, which has guaranteed peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula and in Northeast Asia for over fifty years. Over that time, our security Alliance has strengthened and our partnership has widened to encompass political, economic, social and cultural cooperation. Together, on this solid foundation, we will build a comprehensive strategic alliance of bilateral, regional and global scope, based on common values and mutual trust. Together, we will work shoulder-to-shoulder to tackle challenges facing both our nations on behalf of the next generation.

The Alliance is adapting to changes in the 21st Century security environment. We will maintain a robust defense posture, backed by allied capabilities which support both nations' security interests. The continuing commitment of extended deterrence, including the U.S. nuclear umbrella, reinforces this assurance. In ad-

vancing the bilateral plan for restructuring the Alliance, the Republic of Korea will take the lead role in the combined defense of Korea, supported by an enduring and capable U.S. military force presence on the Korean Peninsula, in the region, and beyond.

We will continue to deepen our strong bilateral economic, trade and investment relations. We recognize that the Korea-U.S. (KORUS) Free Trade Agreement could further strengthen these ties and we are committed to working together to chart a way forward. We aim to make low-carbon green growth into a new engine for sustainable economic prosperity and will closely cooperate in this regard. We will strengthen civil space cooperation, and work closely together on clean energy research and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Through our Alliance we aim to build a better future for all people on the Korean Peninsula, establishing a durable peace on the Peninsula and leading to peaceful reunification on the principles of free democracy and a market economy. We will work together to achieve the complete and verifiable elimination of North Korea's nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs, as well as ballistic missile programs, and to promote respect for the fundamental human rights of the North Korean people.

In the Asia-Pacific region we will work jointly with regional institutions and partners to foster prosperity, keep the peace, and improve the daily lives of the people of the region. We believe that open societies and open economies create prosperity and support human dignity, and our nations and civic organizations will promote human rights, democracy, free markets, and trade and investment liberalization in the region. To enhance security in the Asia-Pacific, our governments will advocate

*June 16 / Administration of Barack Obama, 2009*

for, and take part in, effective cooperative regional efforts to promote mutual understanding, confidence and transparency regarding security issues among the nations of the region.

Our governments and our citizens will work closely to address the global challenges of terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, piracy, organized crime and narcotics, climate change, poverty, infringement on human rights, energy security, and epidemic disease. The Alliance will enhance coordination on peacekeeping, post-conflict stabilization and development assistance, as is being undertaken in Iraq and Afghanistan.

We will also strengthen coordination in multilateral mechanisms aimed at global economic recovery such as the G20.

The United States of America and the Republic of Korea will work to achieve our common Alliance goals through strategic cooperation at every level. Proven bilateral mechanisms such as the Security Consultative Meeting and the Strategic Consultations for Allied Partnership will remain central to realizing this shared vision for the Alliance.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

## Statement on the Start of Afghanistan's Election Season

*June 16, 2009*

I congratulate the Afghan people on the start of your official election campaign period. On August 20 this year, the people of Afghanistan will choose a President to lead your nation and also elect Provincial councils to represent you locally.

The successful Presidential candidate will have a full agenda and high expectations. Afghan institutions must better serve the people. There must be full accountability and transparency, so that Afghans can see where their money is spent. Fighters who are ready to lay down their arms and embrace peace must be reintegrated, and Afghanistan needs to work with all her neighbours to promote security and opportunity in the region. In all of these efforts, Afghanistan's next President will have a partner in the United States.

Each nation gives life to democracy in its own way, grounded in the traditions of its own people. The United States does not support or

oppose any particular Presidential or Provincial council candidate. Instead, we support the right of the people of Afghanistan to choose their own leaders. That is why we are working with Afghan electoral authorities and the United Nations to help Afghans ensure a credible, secure, and inclusive election process in which all candidates have fair access to media, can freely travel and campaign, and are comfortable with the integrity of the ballots cast on election day.

The United States seeks an enduring partnership with the Afghan people, not with any particular Afghan leader. That partnership will be dedicated to enabling the newly elected President and other officials to deliver governance, security, justice, and economic opportunity to all Afghans. That is the future that the Afghan people deserve, and that is the future that we will seek with the successful candidates and the people who elect them.

## Message to the Senate Transmitting the Protocol Amending the New Zealand-United States Taxation Convention

*June 16, 2009*

*To the Senate of the United States:*

I transmit herewith, for the advice and consent of the Senate to its ratification, the Proto-

col Amending the Convention between the United States of America and New Zealand for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion With Respect to