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Co-chairs' summary of the Vancouver Foreign Ministers' Meeting on Security and Stability on the Korean Peninsula

Statements

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On January 16, 2018, Foreign Ministers and representatives of 20 countries from across the globe met in Vancouver, Canada, to demonstrate global solidarity in opposition to North Korea's illegal and dangerous actions, and to advance diplomatic efforts towards a more stable, secure and denuclearized Korean Peninsula. Nearly seven decades after these states stepped up to restore stability on the Korean Peninsula, Ministers unequivocally declared that North Korea will never be accepted as a nuclear power and committed to exerting continued pressure, including by strengthening sanctions, in order to bring North Korea back to negotiations. They reaffirmed that these measures will remain in place until North Korea changes its course and takes decisive, irreversible steps to denuclearize. The Ministers agreed, however, that a diplomatic solution is both essential and possible.

2. Ministers recognized the importance and special responsibility of China and Russia in contributing to a long-term solution on the Korean Peninsula. They welcomed the United States and the Republic of Korea's reiteration that they do not harbour hostile intent towards North Korea, nor do they seek regime change, instability, or accelerated unification on the Korean Peninsula. A North Korea that completely, verifiably and irreversibly dismantles its nuclear program has a secure place in the international community. Such a decision would contribute to the security and economic development of North Korea, leading to a brighter, safer and more prosperous future for its people. It is up to North Korea to choose the future it wishes for itself.

Non-Proliferation

3. The Ministers noted that North Korea's reckless nuclear tests and ballistic missile launches pose a grave and growing threat to the Republic of Korea, the Asia-Pacific region, and the world. In the past year alone, North Korea conducted its largest ever test of a nuclear device, test-launched three intercontinental ballistic missiles, and twice sent ballistic missiles over the territory of Japan, threatening the safety of the Japanese people and introducing serious risks to international civil aviation traffic. These actions violate successive UN Security Council resolutions, clearly demonstrating North Korea's disregard for international law.

4. The Ministers acknowledged that beyond advancing its weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and missile delivery system programs, North Korea has long covertly trafficked conventional weapons in order to raise revenues for its own illicit programs and undermine the global non-proliferation regime. As North Korea feels the impact of sanctions, it will become more reliant on state-sponsored criminal activity, including through cyber operations, to help fund its WMD programs. North Korean cyber-attacks and other malicious cyber activities pose a risk to critical infrastructure in countries around the world and to the global economy. The Ministers also discussed past experiences with safeguards verification in North Korea conducted by the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Sanctions

5. The Ministers noted that sanctions are a tool of diplomacy aimed at creating the conditions for a negotiated solution. They recalled that the UN Security Council has adopted 10 separate resolutions which implement a comprehensive set of sanctions measures intended to prevent North Korea from further advancing the capabilities of its WMD programs. Ministers embraced steps by China and Russia to comply with UN sanctions and called on all states to fully enforce these measures. The Ministers reaffirmed that the purpose of sanctions is not to harm the North Korean people, but noted that Pyongyang has consistently prioritized its illicit weapons programs over the needs of its citizens, including in the period predating sanctions imposed by the UN.

6. The Ministers noted that this international effort is having an effect, stemming the flow of funds, limiting the ability of proliferators to travel and abuse the international banking system, and curtailing North Korean officials' fund-raising activities abroad. However, North Korea's systems for circumventing sanctions are sophisticated and continue to evolve, requiring continued vigilance and determined action.

Diplomacy

7. The Ministers welcomed the recent inter-Korean dialogue and North Korea's intent to participate in the Pyeongchang Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games. They expressed their hope that such actions will lead to the peaceful holding of the Pyeongchang Winter Games, the easing of tensions on the Korean Peninsula, improvements in inter-Korean relations, and progress in denuclearization dialogue.

8. The Co-Chairs stressed the important role for civil society actors and non-governmental organizations in supporting efforts to foster the conditions for a diplomatic solution and, in particular, noted the critical role women and women's organizations can play in contributing to conflict resolution and enduring peace.

9. The Ministers expressed concern that, according to the UN Commission of Inquiry on Human Rights in the DPRK, North Korea has engaged in systematic, widespread, and grave human rights violations against its citizens. The Ministers noted the ongoing human cost of the frozen conflict on the Korean Peninsula, including on divided families, as well as abductees and their families. Regrettably, North Korea continues to prioritize its WMD and ballistic missile programs at great humanitarian cost.

10. Ministers called upon North Korea to create conditions conducive to dialogue by ceasing all provocations and complying with its international obligations, noting that meaningful negotiations cannot be expected unless Pyongyang shows sincere will and concrete actions toward denuclearization. Together, the Ministers resolved to apply the full range of measures available to make clear to North Korea that a diplomatic solution leading to complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearization is North Korea's only viable option.

Next Steps

11. The Ministers emphasized the urgency of addressing the current instability. In order to persuade North Korea to abandon its current course and create conditions conducive to dialogue, they stressed their collective resolve to undertake the following concrete actions:

- support progress in the inter-Korean dialogue, in hopes that it leads to sustained easing of tensions;
- maintain readiness to support a political solution, and recognize China's special role and responsibility to contribute to this effort;
- work closely with partners in the region and globally, including China and Russia, to ensure full and effective implementation of existing sanctions on North Korea, particularly through enhanced information sharing and expanded support to the UN Panel of Experts, to combat sanctions evasion;
- further strengthen the international pressure campaign through diplomatic advocacy with states that lack the political will to implement sanctions;
- help to build global capacity to effectively implement sanctions and prevent proliferation financing, including from criminal activities and cyber operations;
- sever financial lifelines for all of North Korea's WMD programs, including through enhanced coordination within the region and internationally;
- counter North Korea's maritime smuggling in accordance with relevant UNSC resolutions, including measures to stop its illegal use of "ship-to-ship transfers";
- agree to consider taking steps to impose unilateral sanctions and further diplomatic actions that go beyond those required by UN Security Council resolutions;
- undertake preparatory efforts to outline principles and requirements for a verification mechanism sufficient to guarantee the complete and irreversible dismantlement of all of North Korea's WMD programs and related delivery systems;

12. The Vancouver Foreign Ministers' meeting is evidence that North Korea represents a security challenge of the highest priority for the international community. Ministers agreed to work individually and collectively, in support of the efforts of the United Nations, toward a stable, secure and denuclearized Korean Peninsula

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