

The US-ROK Status of Forces Agreement Joint Committee Statement

Representatives of the Republic of Korea (ROK) and the United States of America (U.S.) held a Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) Joint Committee Representative telephonic conference at 1100 hours on 29 July 2021. The ROK was represented by Director-General Ko, Yunju of North American Affairs Bureau, ROK Ministry of Foreign Affairs while the U.S. was represented by Lieutenant General Scott L. Pleus, Deputy Commander, United States Forces Korea.

The Joint Committee Representatives reaffirmed the need for expediting the return of camps no longer in use by the United States and the grant of facilities and areas requested by the United States. The two Representatives agreed to encourage the Facilities and Areas Subcommittee and Environmental Subcommittee to continue cooperation and discussions, and conduct joint reviews as needed to ensure the successful return and grant of facilities and areas during calendar years 2021 and 2022.

In particular, the Representatives agreed to proceed with the return of a considerable portion of Yongsan Garrison. The two Representatives recognized that Yongsan Garrison is still an active U.S. military base and agreed to make efforts to expedite relocation to Camp Humphreys completely which is in the interest of both sides. Moreover, to meet expectations and interests of all parties, including the ROK people, the ROK and the U.S. have agreed to identify the sections of Yongsan no longer in use that can be returned when all required transfer and force protection actions are complete.

The ROK and U.S. Representatives highlighted ongoing bi-weekly meetings between relevant ROK-U.S. Subcommittee Representatives to meet the required conditions for a successful return of Yongsan Garrison such as the completion of SOFA Joint Environmental Assessment Procedures and installation of approved Anti-Terrorism/Force Protection fences along boundaries between returned land and land still in use by the U.S. Both sides have committed to closely work together for returning nearly 500,000m² of Yongsan Garrison by early 2022.

The Joint Committee Representatives agreed to continue to address returns and grants based on mutual trust and close cooperation, reinforcing the ironclad ROK-U.S. Alliance. /End/