

US-ROK Alliance Commits to Continuing Military Exercises; U.S. Lawmakers Push to Prevent First Strike on North Korea

By [Zoom in Korea](#)

Global Research, November 07, 2017

Region: [Asia](#)

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US and South Korean Defense Chiefs Agree to Increase Scale of Military Exercises and US Strategic Assets in Korea

The U.S. and South Korean defense chiefs agreed last week to bolster their joint military capabilities against North Korea. At the [49th annual US-ROK Security Consultative Meeting \(SCM\)](#) held on October 28 at the Defense Ministry in Seoul, Secretary James Mattis and South Korean Defense Minister Song Young-moo released a joint statement committing both countries to increase the scale of future joint military exercises. The statement also included plans to expand the presence of U.S. strategic assets in and near the Korean Peninsula in response to North Korea's recent nuclear and ballistic missile tests.

The defense chiefs praised past joint naval exercises, including the most [recent exercise](#) in October, which featured U.S. nuclear submarines and aircraft carriers. The two countries plan to enhance naval exercises near the Northern Limit Line — the contested maritime demarcation boundary separating North and South Korea.

Donald Trump's summit with South Korean President Moon Jae-in in Seoul on November 7-8 will likely include discussions on further intensifying pressure to isolate North Korea and increasing South Korea's share of the alliance's defense cost.

South Korean peace groups plan to protest Trump before and during his stop in Seoul on November 7. The protests are organized by a broad-based coalition, which includes the Korean Alliance For Progressive Movements (KAPM), Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU), Korean Peasants League (KPL), Korean Women Peasants Association (KWPA), and Korean Youth Solidarity. Koreans in the U.S. and Japan will also organize solidarity actions starting Friday November 3.

The following is a schedule of solidarity actions in the United States:

New York | When: Friday, November 3rd @ 6 p.m. | Where: Koreatown, Broadway & 32nd St., Manhattan

Washington DC | When: Saturday, November 4th @ 2 p.m. | Where: Pennsylvania Ave NW in front of the White House

U.S. Lawmakers Introduce Bill to Prevent First Strike on North Korea

U.S. House representatives John Conyers (D-Mich.) and Thomas Massie (R-Ky.) [seek to prevent](#) the Trump administration from taking rash military action against North Korea. The two lawmakers introduced H.R.4140, the [No Unconstitutional Strike against North Korea Act](#), on October 26. The bill had the support of 60 co-sponsors at the time of its introduction.

A similar bill was introduced in the senate by Senator Chris Murphy (D-Conn) with the support of five other senators. These bills aim to ensure that Trump will not pull the preemptive trigger on North Korea without approval from congress.

Technically, the Constitution and the War Powers Act prevent the administration from ordering a military action without the approval of Congress. Trump, however, bypassed Congress when he ordered missile [strikes in Syria](#) in April of this year, just four months after his inauguration. The Conyers-Massie bill is meant to remind the Trump administration that a unilateral preemptive strike against North Korea would be unconstitutional and undemocratic. H.R.4140 also calls on the Trump administration to seek talks with North Korea with the goal of freezing its nuclear weapons program.

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