Symbol of Solidarity: Deploy THAAD to South Korea

By Mitchell Bonner

***Resolved: Deployment of anti-missile systems is in South Korea’s best interest.***

In the midst of North Korea’s arms build-up, including its alarming development of nuclear charges small enough for missiles, South Korea has many options on the table to defend itself, one of which is the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) anti-ballistic missile system. Because of dangerous rhetoric and past patterns of the DPRK, South Korea must find a way to fend of this looming threat, and the THAAD system provides the best means of doing so.

However, beyond just the fact they are being deployed, the fact of their deployer, the U.S, provides the long term safety of the U.S.’s display of solidarity. Not only that, the THAAD system provides an economic denial action against North Korea for the foreseeable future. China has expressed fears that such a system could be used by South Korea or the United States against them, which potentially means its deployment seriously harms diplomatic relations.

Geopolitics aside, some call into question the THAAD’s basic effectiveness. They question the system’s ability to take down the full range of DPRK tech.

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Symbol of Solidarity: Deploy THAAD to South Korea

As the generation before us dealt with the ever-looming threat of all out nuclear war with the Soviet Bloc, so this generation deals with a new nuclear threat: the DPRK, or Democratic People's Republic of Korea, or simply North Korea. North Korea has demonstrated its open hostility to the free world on a number of times, and with the safety, security, and stability of the free world potentially at risk, we affirm:

Resolved: Deployment of anti-missile systems is in South Korea’s best interest.

We offer the framework of security and political stability with minimal violence involved to minimize potential provocation. With that in mind,

Contention 1: THAAD deployment is a sign of solidarity against North Korea’s threat.

North Korea still poses a real and active danger to South Korea, escalating its nuclear powers. The Washington Post notes this:

Joby Warrick, Ellen Nakashima and Anna Fifield (Journalists), “North Korea now making missile-ready nuclear weapons, U.S. analysts say” Washington Post, August 8, 2017. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/north-korea-now-making-missile-ready-nuclear-weapons-us-analysts-say/2017/08/08/e14b882a-7b6b-11e7-9d08-b79f191668ed_story.html?utm_term=.9c56f79ed62d>

North Korea has successfully produced a miniaturized nuclear warhead that can fit inside its missiles, crossing a key threshold on the path to becoming a full-fledged nuclear power, U.S. intelligence officials have concluded in a confidential assessment. The analysis, completed last month by the Defense Intelligence Agency, comes on the heels of another intelligence assessment that sharply raises the official estimate for the total number of bombs in the communist country’s atomic arsenal. The United States calculated last month that up to 60 nuclear weapons are now controlled by North Korean leader Kim Jong Un. Some independent experts think the number is much smaller.

In addition, a 2012 report to Congress by the office of the Secretary of Defense highlights the increasingly brazen nature of the DPRK.

Office of the Secretary of Defense (Gov’t organization), “Military and Security Developments Involving The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea”, 2012. <https://www.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/Report_to_Congress_on_Military_and_Security_Developments_Involving_the_DPRK.pdf>

The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) remains one of the United States’ most critical security challenges in Northeast Asia. North Korea remains a security threat because of its willingness to undertake provocative and destabilizing behavior, including attacks on the Republic of Korea (ROK), its pursuit of nuclear weapons and long-range ballistic missiles, and its willingness to proliferate weapons in contravention of its international agreements and United Nations Security Council Resolutions.

Not only is the DPRK brazen, but it is also crafty, and will likely attempt to use their nuclear technology as a tool for an even more aggressive foreign policy. Barry Pavel, director of the Brent Scowcroft Center on International Security notes the dangers involved in this:

Barry Pavel (Director of the Brent Scowcroft Center on International Security), “After North Korea Test, South Korea Pushes to Build Up Its Own Missiles”, July 2017.<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/29/world/asia/us-south-korea-north-korea-missile-test.html?mcubz=3>

Once its assured that it has a “nuclear shield,” North Korea is likely to act much more aggressively in every other area of its foreign and military policies.

Later, Pavel says that this could take the form of,

Increasingly dangerous provocations and the sale of weapons of mass destruction to other nations,

Which can lead to widespread destabilizations in the region, including South Korea. Of course, this is reliant on the DPRK actually having its “nuclear shield”. A proposed solution, the THAAD system, has proven itself capable of the task of warding off the nuclear threat:

Missile Defense Agency (U.S Department of Defense), “THAAD Successfully Intercepts Target in Missile Defense Test”, July 11, 2017. <https://www.mda.mil/news/17news0007.html>

The U.S. Missile Defense Agency (MDA), the Ballistic Missile Defense System Operational Test Agency, and U.S. Army soldiers of the 11th Air Defense Artillery Brigade from Fort Bliss, Texas, conducted an intercept test today of the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) element of the nation’s ballistic missile defense system....A ballistic missile target was air-launched by a U.S. Air Force C-17 over the Pacific Ocean north of Hawaii. A THAAD weapon system located at PSCA in Kodiak, Alaska, detected, tracked and intercepted the target. Preliminary indications are that planned flight test objectives were achieved and the threat-representative, intermediate-range ballistic missile (IRBM) target was successfully intercepted by the THAAD weapon system. “I couldn’t be more proud of the government and contractor team who executed this flight test today,” said MDA Director Lt. Gen. Sam Greaves. “This test further demonstrates the capabilities of the THAAD weapon system and its ability to intercept and destroy ballistic missile threats. THAAD continues to protect our citizens, deployed forces and allies from a real and growing threat.” This was the 14th successful intercept in 14 attempts for the THAAD weapon system. The THAAD element provides a globally-transportable, rapidly-deployable capability to intercept ballistic missiles inside or outside the atmosphere during their final, or terminal, phase of flight. THAAD is strictly a defense system. The system uses hit-to-kill technology whereby kinetic energy destroys the incoming target. The high-altitude intercept mitigates effects of enemy weapons before they reach the ground.

Even in its most recent of tests, North Korean ballistic missiles are only theorized to reach a range of maximum 3,200km (Missile Defense Agency), well within the range of the intermediate range ballistic missile classification (3,000–5,500 km), though still well within range of South Korea.

This promise of defense by the donation of the missile systems thus provides a symbolic security through solidarity. Michael Auslin of the American Enterprise Institute notes thus:

Michael Auselin (resident scholar and the director of Japan Studies at the American Enterprise Institute, specializing in Asian regional security and political issues), ““Is It Time to Reassess the U.S.-South Korea Alliance?”, June 2017. <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2017/06/south-korea-alliance-north-korea-kim-moon-trump/532113/>

The arguments for maintaining a strong South Korean alliance rest on its deterrent effect against North Korea. The Kim regime has repeatedly struck out at the South—see the 2010 sinking of the Korean navy vessel Cheonan that killed 46 sailors and the shelling of Yongpyong Island. Yet the North has refrained from large-scale attacks against either South Korea or Japan, another target of Pyongyang’s ire, despite its significant missile capability and larger military. Washington interprets this as due, at least in part, to the assumption by all parties that a major attack, or full-scale war, would immediately trigger the self-defense clause of the mutual defense treaty between the United States and South Korea. If that is the case, then the U.S. commitment will be even more important: Only a firm U.S. promise to defend the South will deter the North.

By providing means to protect against the clearest danger, the U.S provides an active resource and promise to defend against not only this threat but future ones as well. In addition, it keeps the DPRK from flexing its muscles in the region

Impact: THAAD can save lives and potential regional destabilization from a valid present threat to in the form of a nuclear armed DPRK, both of which are interests of South Korea.

Contention 2: Economic Denial minimizes threat

Not only can the deployment of THAAD and other anti-ballistic missile systems provide stability in the short term by being signs of solidarity, they can provide long term advantages and leverage over the DPRK by forcing the DPRK to forego economic growth if it desires to maintain any sort of nuclear threat, without direct and open violent threats. By ensuring itself a shield, and not displaying its counter sword, South Korea ensures its safety without actively threating the DPRK. This is strategic economic denial that forces North Korea to increase defense spending, creating economic isolation that will force it to tone down its threatening behavior, further benefiting regional stability. Tim Beal explains it thus:

Tim Beal (former Victoria University Professor, taught on Asia and international marketing), “The Korean Peninsula within the Framework of US Global Hegemony”, Nov. 2016. <http://apjjf.org/-Tim-Beal/4980/article.pdf>

As a corollary, it should be remembered that one function of the military threat, as exemplified by the invasion exercises, is to force North Korea to divert resources from the productive economy into defence. ‘Going nuclear’ offers a way of avoiding that trap.” South Korea can maintain the upper hand in the productive economy by building anti - missile systems. This forces North Korea into an arms race (weakening of nuclear capabilities) meanwhile it has a strong need for economy (isolation). “Between 1975 and 1985 nearly one million labourers were sent to the Middle East to work mainly in construction, often for Korean chaebol, providing profit and foreign exchange. In the peak year of 1982 Middle East construction constituted 6.6 percent of South Korea’s GDP. By comparison North Korea’s overseas labour is small beer, but it does provide a useful source of foreign exchange, where such opportunities are much constrained by sanctions, as well as income for the workers and their families. The ostensible rationale given for trying to stop North Koreans working overseas, and for sanctions on exports – from coal to fish.” Coal and Fish are usually harvested faster than they can be reproduced. With only small beer to export (possibly only to allies who are slowly cutting diplomatic interests). In the event that most of these supplies were to run out, North Korea would probably like to export as much as it can to allies before it is completely isolated. This potential loss would be a good reason for South Korea to develop a missile defense system as South Korea can build up deterrence and eventually choke North Korea. Despite the costs, as long as ROK remains careful, the deterrence would solve South Korea’s diplomatic worries and increase security at the collapse of North Korea.

Impact: South Korea maintains its diplomatic advantage at lesser cost of money and diplomacy than a traditional arms race with a minimum show of force and maximizes security at the same time.

Therefore, my partner and I stand Resolved: Deployment of anti-missile systems is in South Korea’s best interest.

Pro-AT: Answers to Not Deploying THAAD to South Korea

AT: THAAD Enviromental Problems

Enviromental problems have been addressed and cleared by the SK government.

Yonhap News Agency (SK news network), “South Korea defense ministry: THAAD won't hurt environment”, Aug. 2017. <https://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2017/08/12/South-Korea-defense-ministry-THAAD-wont-hurt-environment/1271502573410/>

The Ministry of Defense said Saturday the advanced U.S. missile defense system deployed in a southern town won't cause any adverse effects to the local environment. Earlier in the day, the defense and environment ministries conducted their joint environmental survey of electromagnetic radiation and noise from the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense system in Seongju, southeast of Seoul. Two rocket launchers and a powerful X-band radar are operational at the new U.S. Forces Korea base, formerly a private golf course. The defense ministry said the radiation level at a spot 100 meters from the radar was measured at 0.01659 watt per square meter on average during a six-minute test. From 500 meters away, it was 0.004136 W/㎡. At 700 meters from the radar, the radiation level was 0.000886 W/㎡. All figures were far below the regulatory protection standard of 10 W/㎡. The momentary maximum was 0.04634 W/㎡. The noise level was on par with the maximum regulatory standard in residential areas of 50 decibels. At 100 meters from the radar, the noise level was 51.9 db, and it was 50.3 db at 500 meters away. At the 700-meter mark, it fell to 47.1 db. The defense ministry said the nearest residential area is more than a mile away from the THAAD base, and that the noise will have virtually no impact on the community there.

AT: China relations harmed

1. THAAD not intended for China.

South Korea Ministry of Defence, “No Negative Effects On Environment, and THAAD Interception Shows A 100% Success Rate”, Aug 2016. <http://www.defense-aerospace.com/articles-view/release/3/176346/s.-korea-touts-safety%2C-accuracy-of-thaad-missiles.html>

Vice Admiral James Syring, director the U.S. Missile Defense Agency (MDA)….. responded to concerns that the THAAD deployment on the Korean Peninsula would be an incorporation of the U.S. MD system, saying that while this is true when it comes to information sharing, as a matter of the Korea-U.S. alliance, Korea will not be included in the global MD system operated by the U.S. “It is not true that THAAD to be deployed in Korea will be connected to the U.S. Command, Control, Battle Management, and Communications (C2BMC). Radars connected to C2BMC are used for defending the continental U.S. and other regions. The THAAD deployed in Korea would be used in Korea only,” he additionally explained. He also said the THAAD radar would be operated on Terminal Mode (TM) only, not Forward Based Mode (FBM) mode which detects enemy missiles at the launch stage, actively refuting some claims that it might be used to detect Chinese missile bases.

1. Indigenous systems assuage China’s fears.

Benjamin David (International Law and Policy Institute and the Norwegian Defence Research Establishment), “South Korea Goes Indigenous for Its Missile Defense Needs”, 2015. ”, <http://thediplomat.com/2015/11/south-korea-goes-indigenous-for-its-missile-defense-needs/>

South Korea is going indigenous in its attempt to upgrade its missile defense capabilities. In 2006, the country announced that it would create the Korean Air and Missile Defense System (KAMD), an integrated air-land-sea structure for the detection and destruction of incoming North Korean missiles, including nuclear short-range ballistic missiles. The hardware involved in KAMD currently consists mostly of U.S. and Israeli platforms. The U.S.-designed Patroit PAC-2 and 3, supported by the Israeli EL/M-2080 Green Pine radar, make up the mainstay of the South Korean land-based anti-missile arsenal. At sea, the Republic of Korea Navy’s (ROKN) Sejeong the Great-class frigates and the Chungmugong Yi Sun-sin-class destroyers are equipped with the U.S. SM-2 Block IIIA/B missiles and AN/SPY-1 radar. That might change. Seoul is set to complement the seaborne SM-2 with an indigenously designed and constructed missile. At the recent Seoul International Aerospace and Defense Exhibition 2015, South Korean company LIG Nex1 stated that the Korean Surface-to-Air AntiMissile system (K-SAAM) is on track to be deployed to the ROKN by 2018. According to Jane’s, the 2.07 m long K-SAAM employs inertial mid-course guidance and a dual microwave and imaging infrared seeker for terminal guidance. Much of the details surrounding the weapon’ s specifications are still classified. The K-SAAM is a medium-range missile designed as a Close-in Weapons System (CIWS). As such, it would act as close protection for the ROKN warships that would be involved in defending South Korea’s coastal cities from attack by North Korean ballistic missiles and aircraft. K-SAAM is set to replace Raytheon’s Rolling Airframe Missile (RAM), the current system operated by the South Korean navy. Another new addition to KAMD is the land-based Cheolmae II surface-to-air missile system. This weapon, which is set to enter service with the South Korean military this year, will provide KAMD with an indigenous land-based ballistic missile killer system and is set to complement the currently operating PAC-2 and 3s. The Cheolmae II has been designed through a cooperative venture between a consortium of South Korean companies (including LIG Nex1 and Samsung Thales) and Russian Almaz-Antey. According to Global Security, the Cheolmae II has a maximum range of 40 km and can target aircraft and missiles flying at altitudes under 15 km. Once it is launched into air on a piston system, the missile’s rocket motor ignites and the missile is guided by the radar. The missile can change direction quickly and has little chance of being detected by the enemy because it gives off little flares. Equipped with anti-electronic warfare capabilities, the missile system can keep functioning despite electronic jamming maneuvers. The system is set to replace the aging U.S.-built MIM-23 HAWKs currently in service. Furthermore, there are plans to develop an indigenous replacement for the Patriots. Based on the Russian S-400, the Cheolmae 4-H system will reportedly be capable of targeting ballistic missiles at ranges up to 150 km, with a ceiling of 60 km. This represents a performance twice of that of the Patriot system. If and when the Cheolmae-4 comes online, Seoul will be able to field locally produced hardware at all of the so-called “three-tier interception stages.” Seoul’s recent indigenous arms procurement spree has some important political ramifications. Perhaps most crucially, the U.S. wants to deploy its own advanced missile defense system to South Korea, the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense system (THAAD). This has been a deeply divisive issue in the country, with left-leaning elements in Korean politics calling for a definite denial of THAAD’s deployment. A big concern is China’s negative reaction to THAAD’s potential deployment. Beijing fears that the American system might be aimed at China, as much as North Korea. An indigenously produced missile shield could assuage Chinese fears while still providing effective protection against North Korean missiles (although it could upset Washington, which recently signed a missile-defense agreement with Japan).

1. President Moon negotiates and keeps missiles and China happy. (see dates for environmental tests)

Choe Sang-Hun (Journalist), “Moon Jae-in of South Korea and China Move to Soothe Tensions”, May 2017. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/11/world/asia/china-south-korea-moon-jae-in.html?mcubz=3>

Despite Thursday’s overture, it will not be easy for Mr. Moon to reverse the decision on Thaad, especially since it has already been deployed, analysts said, including those who worked as policy advisers for Mr. Moon when he was a candidate. Rather, they said, Mr. Moon will try to persuade China that it should help rein in North Korea’s provocative behavior until both the South and the United States decide the system is no longer necessary. In a call with President Trump on Wednesday, Mr. Moon pledged to strengthen his country’s alliance with Washington, calling it “the foundation of our diplomacy and national security.” Many of Mr. Moon’s liberal supporters opposed the Thaad deployment, accusing Washington of foisting a weapons system on South Korea that they say is part of a broader American strategy of containing China with an antimissile shield. Mr. Trump angered them further recently by demandingthat South Korea pay $1 billion for the system. At the same time, the Thaad system has led to a deep schism in relations between Beijing and Seoul, and it has prompted widespread boycotts in China of popular South Korean brands. China is South Korea’s largest trading partner by far. “I am well aware of the concern and fear of the Chinese about the Thaad deployment,” Mr. Moon told Mr. Xi, according to Yoon Young-chan, the South Korean leader’s spokesman. “I hope both countries can understand each other better on this and will soon open a channel of communication.” During his 40-minute conversation with the Chinese leader, Mr. Moon said he would send separate delegations to Beijing to discuss the Thaad dispute and North Korea’s nuclear threat. He also asked Mr. Xi to help end the Chinese boycott of South Korean goods. “It will be easier to resolve the Thaad issue when North Korea doesn’t do any more provocations,” Mr. Moon said, according to his aide. He also called for dialogue with the North, emphasizing that the goal of sanctions must be to bring the country back to the negotiating table. Mr. Xi agreed, according to Mr. Moon’s office. North Korea appeared to make an overture of its own on Thursday, suggesting in the state-run news media that the two Koreas expel foreign influence from the Korean Peninsula and work together for reunification. It then repeated a longstanding demand that South Korea and the United States stop their joint military exercises and withdraw American troops from the South. Tensions on the Korean Peninsula have ebbed since the joint American-South Korean military exercises ended late last month without major provocations, like a nuclear test, from North Korea. China’s state-run news media portrayed the call between Mr. Xi and Mr. Moon as conciliatory, saying Mr. Xi had reminded Mr. Moon of the friendly relations between China and South Korea since the establishment of diplomatic ties 1992. China views Mr. Moon as a leader who will be far easier to deal with on North Korea than his predecessor, Ms. Park, who was impeached and ousted as president.

AT: THAAD Insufficient

THAAD necessary part of multi-layered defense system

Chaesung Chun (professor, Department of International Relations, Seoul University), “North Korea and Nuclear Weapons: Entering the New Era of Deterrence”, May 2017. Print

The United States and the ROK are committed to maintaining close consultation on deterrence matters to achieve tailored deterrence against key North Korean threats and to maximize its effects. In addition, the two secretaries reaffirmed their commitment to reinforcing the alliance’s renewed deterrence by denial and response capabilities against North Korean missile threats through the establishment of Concepts and Principles of ROK-US Alliance Comprehensive Counter-Missile Operations to detect, defend, disrupt, and destroy missile threats, including nuclear and biochemical warheads. They also reaffirmed that the ROK will seek to develop, by the mid-2020s, its own Kill-Chain and KAMD systems, which will be critical military capabilities for responding to the North Korean nuclear and missile threat and also interoperable with alliance systems. To this end, the secretary and the minister also decided to enhance information sharing on North Korean missile threats. The United States and the ROK are committed to maintaining close consultation to develop comprehensive alliance capabilities to counter North Korean nuclear, other WMD, and ballistic missile threats. 9 When South Korea decides to pursue deterrence by denial, it will not be easy to clarify the sufficient level of deterrence with the unpredictable level of North Korea’s nuclear capacity. South Korea developed the Kill Chain as a practical means of realizing the proactive deterrence strategy. In this strategy, surveillance, reconnaissance, and air-strike systems are key parts of the Kill Chain. But the Kill Chain is not designed to deter all of the North’s missiles before they are launched. South Korea needs to improve the KAMD system to intercept any missiles launched against the South. These days South Korean military specialists and the public are conducting hot debates concerning the need to establish a multilayered missile defense system by focusing on the terminal phase and low altitude defense, and they plan to develop the KAMD system into a more advanced, medium altitude defense concept. South Korea is planning to secure systems such as PAC-3, M-SAM, and L-SAM. Also, it decided to allow the US forces to deploy the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system on Korean soil. The ongoing discussion revolves around finding an appropriate site for the THAAD system**,** its future Koreanization, and the means to fend off heated opposition from China and Russia.

AT: THAAD causes arms races

1. DPRK arms build-up makes arms race inevitable

Choe Sang Jun(Journalist), “After North Korea Test, South Korea pushes it to build up missiles”, July 2017. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/29/world/asia/us-south-korea-north-korea-missile-test.html>

South Korea announced Saturday that it will soon start talks with the Trump administration about allowing Seoul to build more powerful ballistic missiles to counter the North, but current and former American officials said the move would have little effect on the most urgent problem facing Washington: North Korea’s apparent ability to strike California and beyond. The South’s newly elected president, Moon Jae-in, called for the relaxation of limits on its missile arsenal hours after the North launched an intercontinental ballistic missile, or ICBM, 2,200 miles into space, which landed its warhead just off the coast of Hokkaido, the northernmost Japanese island. Experts quickly calculated that the demonstrated range of that test shot, if flattened out over the Pacific, could easily reach Los Angeles and perhaps as far as Chicago and New York, though its accuracy is in doubt. The new missiles that South Korea wants, in addition to being able to strike deep into the North, could be a way of pressuring China to restrain Pyongyang because the missiles would probably be able to hit Chinese territory as well. Mr. Moon’s top national security adviser, Chung Eui-yong, called his White House counterpart, Lt. Gen. H. R. McMaster, early on Saturday Seoul time to propose that the allies immediately start negotiations to permit South Korea to build up its missile capabilities. General McMaster agreed to the proposal, which would probably involve increasing the payload on South Korea’s ballistic missiles, according to officials in both countries. South Korea needs approval from the United States to build more powerful missiles under the terms of a bilateral treaty… Mr. Moon, considered a dovish leader, also ordered his government on Saturday to cooperate with the United States to install an advanced American missile defense battery known as Thaad, whose deployment in South Korea had been suspended since he took office in May. Mr. Moon’s actions signaled that the growing missile threat from North Korea was spurring an arms buildup in Northeast Asia. Japan earlier said that it was considering buying ballistic missile defense systems from the United States.

1. THAAD deployment reduces risk of regional aggression and conflict by reassuring allies

Michael McFaul (Hoover Institute of Stanford University), “Our Allies are afraid, here’s how Trump can reassure them”, 2016, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/global-opinions/our-allies-are-afraid-heres-how-trump-can-reassure-them/2016/11/17/6656a378-acdd-11e6-8b45-f8e493f06fcd_story.html?utm_term=.fc6dddb5e921>

Around the world, our allies are worried. Here in South Korea, President-elect Donald Trump’s unexpected election victory has fueled a deep sense of uncertainty about the future of American leadership in Asia and the world. Government officials and foreign policy experts are scrutinizing every Trump utterance about South Korea, trade and security made during the campaign, and they don’t like what they find. As I have been asked repeatedly during my stay here, does he really believe that the U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement kills American jobs, that South Korea does not contribute substantially to the costs of basing our soldiers here, or that South Korea and Japan should defend themselves against the “maniac of North Korea,” including by acquiring their own nuclear weapons? A similar frightened discussion about the credibility of the United States’ commitments is occurring in Japan, Australia and most countries in the NATO alliance. In conversations, emails and public statements I get from foreign policy officials from Estonia to Canada, the question is always the same: Does Trump really believe all the crazy things he said on the campaign trail about our allies? Historically, uncertainty never enhances alliances. As a candidate, Trump suggested that his unpredictability could increase his negotiating leverage, keeping those on the other side of the table guessing as to what he might do next. That strategy might work when negotiating construction contracts and may even be effective in deliberations with foes, but it does not work with allies. Above all else, uncertainty about our security commitments to our allies tempts our competitors. We don’t want Russia challenging our commitments to our NATO allies, North Korea poking at our fortitude to defend the Republic of Korea or China testing the waters about our staying power in Asia. As his first order of business regarding foreign policy, President Trump should reset relations with all U.S. allies before thinking about a reset with Russia or anyone else. Reassuring allies in Europe and Asia is actually low-hanging fruit: Three signals could change the negative dynamics in our alliance relationships overnight. First, President Trump could state clearly that our resolve to defend our allies is not conditioned by what our allies pay us for security. Alliances are not protection rackets. Early in his administration, President Trump could add credibility to his statements by expressing support for recently announced but not yet implemented enhancements of our defense commitments to our allies, such as the deployment of the Terminal High-Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) missile defense system in South Korea or the $3.4 billion increase in defense spending planned for Europe to enhance our contributions to NATO deterrence against Russia.

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