

FACT SHEET: The U.S.-ROK Nuclear Consultative Group (NCG)

The Nuclear Consultative Group (NCG) of the United States and the Republic of Korea (ROK) is an enduring bilateral body to strengthen extended deterrence, discuss nuclear and strategic planning, and manage the threat to the nonproliferation regime posed by the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK). The landmark U.S.-ROK Washington Declaration of April 2023 created the NCG. By enabling deeper, cooperative, and coordinated decision-making on nuclear deterrence pertaining to the Korean Peninsula, the NCG helps the Alliance strengthen extended deterrence. The NCG is a tangible symbol of the ironclad U.S. extended deterrence commitment to the ROK, which is backed by the full range of U.S. capabilities, including nuclear.

What is the NCG?

The NCG is a bilateral consultative body tailored to the situation on the Korean Peninsula and aimed at deterring and responding to the DPRK nuclear threat. The NCG deepens extended deterrence cooperation by facilitating senior-level U.S.-ROK policy-level discussions on nuclear and strategic planning. The United States and the ROK operate the NCG as equal partners in extended deterrence cooperation, with a focus on ensuring the continued safety and security of the ROK people, as well as the stability of the Indo-Pacific region.

How does the NCG work?

The NCG is co-chaired at the assistant secretary level by senior policy leaders in the U.S. Department of Defense and ROK Ministry of National Defense and includes U.S. and ROK interagency participants such as national security, defense, military, diplomatic, and intelligence officials. It meets twice per year at the principal-level, and is supported by frequent working-level meetings. The United States and the ROK alternate hosting the NCG. The NCG co-chairs report the progress of the NCG to the U.S. Secretary of Defense and ROK Minister of National Defense through the U.S.-ROK Security Consultative Meeting and to their respective commanders-in-chief through respective chains of command.

Key Participants

<u>U.S. Participants</u>	<u>ROK Participants</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Department of Defense <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Office of the Secretary of Defense ○ Joint Staff ○ U.S. Forces Korea ○ U.S. Indo-Pacific Command ○ U.S. Strategic Command ○ Combined Forces Command ○ Other combatant commands, as needed • Department of State • National Security Council Staff • Intelligence Community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of National Defense <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ HQ of the Ministry of National Defense ○ Joint Staff ○ ROK Strategic Command ○ Combined Forces Command • Ministry of Foreign Affairs • National Security Office Staff • Intelligence Community

Principal-Level Meetings to Date

- July 2023 (Seoul)
- December 2023 (Washington)
- June 2024 (Seoul)
- January 2025 (Washington)

NCG Work Streams

- Nuclear and strategic planning
- Conventional-Nuclear Integration(CNI)
- Exercises, simulations, and trainings
- Nuclear consultation and communication processes during crises and contingencies
- Establishment of dedicated secure communications systems
- Risk reduction practices
- Strategic messaging
- Security and Information sharing protocols

How has the NCG contributed to strengthening extended deterrence?

- Provided a solid foundation upon which both countries are committed to further enhancing U.S.-ROK extended deterrence cooperation in an integrated manner through the principles and procedures laid out in the “United States and Republic of Korea Guidelines for Nuclear Deterrence and Nuclear Operations on the Korean Peninsula.”
- Enhanced information sharing, including through joint military and intelligence threat assessments.
- Strengthened resilient communications in the case of nuclear crises and contingencies, including between Heads of State.
- Improved the frequency and depth of communication between U.S. and ROK subject matter experts and officials on nuclear deterrence issues.
- Advanced discussions on nuclear and strategic planning, particularly on CNI.
- Enhanced U.S.-ROK understanding of DPRK nuclear threats on the Peninsula and shared preparedness to address those threats through regularized TTXs and simulations.
- Increased the regular visibility of U.S. strategic assets in and around the Korean Peninsula, including through a port call by a nuclear-powered submarine, to demonstrate the strong U.S. extended deterrence commitment.
- Established a nuclear deterrence immersion course for ROK officials to enhance their expertise and knowledge of U.S. strategy and operations.
- Created additional opportunities for site visits that showcase U.S. and ROK deterrence capabilities.