

COMPARATIVE

CONNECTIONS

A TRIANNUAL E-JOURNAL OF BILATERAL
RELATIONS IN THE INDO-PACIFIC

US-KOREA RELATIONS

EVERYTHING EVERYWHERE ALL AT ONCE, EXTREMELY CLOSE AND INCREDIBLY LOUD

MASON RICHEY, HANKUK UNIVERSITY OF FOREIGN STUDIES
ROB YORK, PACIFIC FORUM

Continuing a trend from the May-August [reporting period](#), the final reporting period of 2022 in US-Korea relations was marked by an accelerated ratcheting up of tension. In short, numerous problems reared up on the Korean Peninsula from September-December, and good solutions have been few. And not only does this describe relations between the US and North Korea, but in their own, friendly way also the situation between Washington and Seoul, whose frequent invocations of rock-solid alliance cooperation belie unease about crucial areas of partnership. Two critical issues have been increasingly affecting the US-South Korea alliance in 2022, with the September-December period no exception. First, South Korea desires ever more alliance-partner defense and security reassurance from the US in the face of a growing North Korean nuclear threat and Chinese revisionism. Yet the US has downward-trending limits on credible reassurance as North Korea masters nuclear weapons technology that threatens US extended nuclear deterrence for South Korea. The US also faces less geopolitical pressure to effusively reassure its Indo-Pacific allies—including South Korea—as China grows to menace the regional order and the US consequently faces lower risk of ally hedging or realignment.

This article is extracted from *Comparative Connections: A Triannual E-Journal of Bilateral Relations in the Indo-Pacific*, Vol. 24, No. 3, January 2023. Preferred citation: Mason Richey and Rob York, “US-Korea Relations: Everything Everywhere All at Once, Extremely Close and Incredibly Loud,” *Comparative Connections*, Vol. 24, No. 3, pp 41-60.

Second, in part to compete with China by [partially de-coupling](#) from it, over the last decade US economic statecraft—globally and regionally in the Indo-Pacific—has solidified a dramatic de-globalization shift that demands disruptive geo-economic bandwagoning by allies (such as South Korea) while giving little in return. Washington’s weak sauce Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (see prior [Comparative Connections](#) for more) and dismissive attitude to Seoul regarding the [Inflation Reduction Act](#) (more below) are potent symbols of this. Thus, although the US and South Korea remain allies and partners with shared values and deep incentives and path dependence for cooperation, there are real, substantive, vigorously roiling challenges to the relationship that cannot be successfully met with traditional “ironclad,” “linchpin” shibboleths.

As for US-North Korea relations, the alpha-and-omega is Pyongyang’s nuclear and missile program. During the September-December reporting period, the Kim Jong Un regime [continued to produce fissile material](#) for manufacturing nuclear warheads, and engaged in an [unprecedented pace of missile launches](#)—both activities in gross violation of international law. This was accompanied not only by Pyongyang’s usual vitriol against supposed Washington “hostile policy” and “war-mongering,” but also by increasingly strong statements that denuclearization diplomacy with the US is dead. This dynamic was bookended by North Korea’s new nuclear weapon law in September (which refers to Pyongyang’s nuclear weapon possession as “irreversible”) and a Korea Worker’s Party Plenum in December, at which Kim called for “exponential growth” of North Korea’s nuclear arsenal. With denuclearization diplomacy apparently dead, the US-South Korea alliance has seemingly entered a phase of long-term nuclear deterrence vis-à-vis North Korea, a fraught situation holding many perils.



Figure 1 A photo of what state news agency KCNA reports is the test firing of a hypersonic missile at an undisclosed location in North Korea, released on January 6, 2022. Photo: KCNA via Reuters

US-South Korea Relations: A Fist Full of Solace

The lead issue for the US-South Korea alliance is typically North Korea, notably as concerns defense and security. This makes sense, as the US-South Korea alliance primarily exists to defend South Korea from North Korean attack and thus provide for stability in Northeast Asia, which is also valuable for the US. Over time, of course, Washington-Seoul relations have grown into a comprehensive strategic partnership that includes the military alliance, tight economic/trade relations, shared political values, and cooperation in the maintenance of the post-WWII rules-based international order. And therein lies the rub at present: the US remains an indispensable, formidable, and reliable military alliance partner for South Korea (though there are challenges and stresses, as discussed below), but is also conducting economic statecraft both globally and in the Indo-Pacific seemingly detrimental to and dismissive of South Korean economic interests, not to mention broadly out of step with trade rules anchored in international law. Thus the discussion of US-South Korea relations in the September-December 2022 *Comparative Connections* begins with a look at economic tensions between Washington and Seoul, which in turn also have knock-on effects on the trust underlying the political solidity of the military alliance.

The [principle proximate problem](#) in US-South Korea trade relations is the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), US economic legislation from August 2022 that provides discriminatory subsidies for electric vehicles (EV) in order to incentivize production in the US. Inter alia this part of the

IRA—which is generally considered [against WTO rules](#) and [violates](#) the KORUS FTA—will hurt South Korean auto manufacturers [Hyundai and Kia](#), as well as Korean suppliers downstream of them. South Korean officials have referred to the subsidies as a “betrayal,” and already in the May–August *Comparative Connections* we mentioned the IRA as a potential risk for alliance unity. Things have not improved much, even as the issue has taken up a lot of time and energy for alliance managers. The Yoon administration has at points (see chronology below) dispatched its trade minister, foreign minister, prime minister, and sundry senior officials to discuss the issue with the US trade representative, commerce secretary, secretary of state, deputy secretary of state, national security advisor, and members of Congress. Meetings have been held [bilaterally](#) in Washington and Seoul, as well as at the sidelines of multi-lateral diplomatic gatherings such as the [G20](#), the [UN General Assembly](#), [APEC](#), etc. President Yoon has [personally discussed](#) the issue with President Biden. South Korea [is considering](#) bringing the matter before the WTO if it is not satisfactorily remedied, and has been in [consultations](#) with other aggrieved US trade partners (notably the EU and Japan) on how to proceed in pressuring the US to alter the IRA.



Figure 2 South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol briefly speaks with US President Joe Biden after attending a conference hosted by the Geneva-based Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria in New York on Sept. 21, 2022. Photo: Yonhap

For its part, the Biden administration has been reluctant to admit that the IRA represents a problem for South Korea, instead proffering typical bromides that [acknowledge notice of Seoul’s concerns](#) while also downplaying them and [minimizing the possibility of substantive change](#) to the law, which would have to pass a generally dysfunctional Congress unlikely to

treat the specific issue of the IRA as a priority. The most the Biden administration has offered heretofore is to use executive authority to [interpret the law](#) in a way that will allow overseas companies (such as Hyundai and KIA) to qualify for the subsidy for electric vehicles that it sells for commercial purposes (e.g., vehicles for the rental car market).

Washington’s response to Seoul’s objections to the IRA has obviously not mollified Seoul, and a weekly—seemingly daily—drumbeat of stories (again, see chronology) on the topic in South Korean media has exacerbated the negativity and weakened (even if only very moderately) the trust and mutual respect that should underly the alliance. The IRA is also symbolic of a larger issue in relations between the US and its allies, notably in the Indo-Pacific: lack of US economic statecraft that produces outcomes desired by the US’s regional allies and partners. Under both Trump and Biden the US has remained allergic to contemplating (re-)joining regional multi-lateral trade deals (e.g., the CPTPP), and the Biden administration’s signature regional economic proposal, the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF), is a largely undeveloped project with unknown staying power.

The only certainty is that IPEF does not contain market access provisions, which is the main item IPEF members (including South Korea) want. The suspicion is that IPEF is largely an exclusive US policy intended as a part of Washington’s strategic competition with Beijing, a dynamic in which many US partners and allies (including South Korea) have extremely limited interest, in part because China is much more present economically in the Indo-Pacific (including in market-access trade deals such as RCEP). South Korea signed on to IPEF—as well as the US-led Chip-4 grouping intended to limit Chinese access to high-end semiconductors—more out of alliance obligation than conviction, so to be rewarded with US protectionism in the IRA (as well as [controversial technology export controls](#)) has been a bitter pill to swallow, a source of significant alliance friction, and another data point for questioning US strategy in the Indo-Pacific.

Beyond economics and trade, the more visible challenge for the US–South Korea alliance is the maintenance of effective deterrence and warfighting readiness vis-à-vis North Korea. Although the Yoon and Biden administrations largely (though not completely) fixed some of

the alliance fraying that emerged during the Moon and Trump administrations, solidified Washington-Seoul military cooperation now faces increasingly complicated external threats from North Korea. At root this is due to Pyongyang's improving nuclear arsenal, especially its missile capabilities, which were on [unprecedentedly frequent](#) display in tests and demonstrations during fall 2022 (see US-North Korea section). The Kim regime's apparent qualitative and quantitative progress on short-/medium-/intermediate-/long-range conventional and nuclear-capable missiles, as well as [likely development](#) of tactical nuclear weapons, [challenges](#) both US-South Korea conventional deterrence and US extended nuclear deterrence for South Korea. Much US-South Korea military alliance activity during the September-December 2022 period was dedicated to trying to meet that challenge.

In the first place, the US-South Korea Extended Deterrence Strategy and Consultation Group (EDSCG) [continued meeting](#) in fall 2022. This group intends to coordinate US-South Korea alliance thinking on how to ensure a combined strategic posture and response to North Korea's nuclear weapon capabilities, thus hopefully reassuring South Korea of US extended deterrence credibility and lowering the fear of US-South Korea strategic de-coupling. Beyond the EDSCG, all manner of US and South Korean senior [defense](#), [security](#), and [foreign policy](#) officials—[as well as Presidents Biden and Yoon](#)—intoned tight Washington-Seoul coordination on integrated deterrence of North Korea. The US-South Korea [Security Consultative Meeting](#) and the [Military Committee Meeting](#) were held as scheduled, with senior defense officials from both sides agreeing on closer coordination on a combined defense posture, extended nuclear deterrence improvements, and “routine” and “constant” deployment of US strategic assets to and around the Korean Peninsula.

Actions accompanied words in fall 2022, as the US and South Korea conducted several combined military exercises focused on the North Korea threat, including the conclusion of [Ulchi Freedom Shield](#) (started in August); [naval exercises](#) (both bilateral and trilateral with Japan) involving the USS Ronald Reagan aircraft carrier strike group; [Vigilant Storm air power](#) exercises (which were prolonged as a response to North Korean missile launches) with more than 240 air assets, including stealth fighters and B1B

bombers; and South Korean [“Hoguk” drills](#) that included US Forces Korea (USFK) troops. USFK troops also carried out unilateral [Teak Knife](#) “surgical strike” training, and there were several [trilateral](#) (US-South Korea-Japan) [naval exercises](#) covering anti-submarine warfare and combined operations involving the USS Ronald Reagan carrier strike group.



Figure 3 Ticonderoga-class guided-missile cruiser USS Chancellorsville (CG 62) along with Japan Maritime Self Defense Force (JMSDF) guided-missile destroyer JS Chokai (DDG 176) and Republic of Korea Navy guided-missile destroyer ROKS Sejong The Great (DDG 991) conduct a tri-lateral Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) exercise in the Sea of Japan, October 2022. Photo: US Navy

Yet, despite all the right words and signals of alliance military strength, there remains a [nagging sense](#) that deterrence—conventional and extended nuclear—on the Korean Peninsula is fragile and under heightened threat. This sense is not unreasonable, as North Korea's quantitatively growing and quantitatively improving nuclear/missile capabilities are matched by Pyongyang's worrisome nuclear doctrine and posture pronouncements (which countenance pre-emptive nuclear strikes), as well provocative actions and harassment of South Korean territory, including a [missile crossing](#) the de facto North-South maritime border (Northern Limit Line), [aircraft sorties](#) approaching South Korean airspace, and [drones actually violating](#) South Korean airspace.

The official Washington and Seoul approach to these challenges has mostly been “more of the same, but better”: more and better consultation, more and better exercises, more and better strategic asset deployment, etc. There have been two main exceptions to that. First, Yoon instigated an [alliance communication kerfuffle](#) by insisting in public statements that the US and South Korea would engage in combined “nuclear

exercises” in order to solidify extended nuclear deterrence, an assertion leading to minor diplomatic disagreement over several days, including finally a terse rejection of Yoon’s statement by President Biden. The poor alliance management during the confused spat was bad enough, but the real news is the underlying belief, apparently held by Yoon, that US extended nuclear deterrence is indeed not currently sufficient or credible, and that “more of the same” in US-South Korea military alliance relations is not a viable answer for Seoul. Second, the one obvious, feasible shift that could in principle rearrange the status quo vis-a-North Korea is improved, scaled-up trilateral defense and security cooperation with Japan, and indeed the US and South Korea are enacting that (or planning on it) in areas such as naval exercises, intelligence sharing, and (potentially) [anti-missile defense cooperation](#). This would help neutralize some of North Korea’s stratagems, and potentially make North Korean attack either more costly or less likely to succeed (or both); it would also be a source of concern (and potentially serious discord) with China. Perhaps that is a feature, not a bug, as Washington has made clear that if Beijing does not help rein in Pyongyang, the US-South Korea-Japan military cooperation that worries China so much [could be in the offing](#).

It is also worth noting that outside officialdom, there has been a growing sense that the fragility of and heightened threats to deterrence on the Korean Peninsula require a new set of answers. A significant part (~70%) of South Korea’s population, [as well as a small number of mainstream think-tank analysts and politicians](#), are now in favor of (in the abstract) acquisition of indigenous nuclear weapons, with support correlating with beliefs that North Korea will not denuclearize and that US extended nuclear deterrence guarantees are insufficiently credible (although national pride and a forward-looking desire to deter China are also factors). Going in the opposite proliferation direction, there are [growing voices arguing for arms control](#) talks with North Korea. Richard Haass, former US State Department Policy Planning Director under President G.W. Bush and the living embodiment of the Washington foreign policy mainstream, [acknowledged](#) that denuclearization was unrealistic and arms control thus advisable. This perspective also got a small boost from “official Washington” when Bonnie Jenkins, US State Department Undersecretary for Arms Control, [made a lengthy public statement](#) positively

assessing the possibility of arms control negotiations with North Korea. Jenkins’s remarks were quickly walked back by the Biden administration. In any event, arms control proponents have one thing on their side: the assumption that denuclearization is dead, the era of long-term extended nuclear deterrence vis-à-vis North Korea has arrived (but that deterrence may not hold), and that security dilemma risks will thus grow in the absence of mechanisms to mitigate them.

Finally, in the “various and sundry” category of US-South Korea relations, the September-December period featured numerous multi-lateral diplomatic gatherings—UN General Assembly, G20, APEC, and ASEAN and East Asian Summits—at which South Korean and US officials met both in the multi-lateral fora and bilaterally on the sidelines. These meetings naturally covered the aforementioned IRA and North Korea, but also COVID-19, climate change, the Russia-Ukraine War, and other regional and global issues. South Korea also released its long-awaited [Indo-Pacific Strategy](#), which struck a balance between dovetailing with US interests in the region and reassuring China that Seoul remains a partner solicitous of good economic relations with Beijing. As concerns South Korea’s contribution to the war effort in Ukraine—an important issue for the US—in late fall Seoul agreed to [provide artillery shells](#) to the US that are destined for Ukraine as end-user. In December South Korean tanks and howitzers [arrived in Poland](#) as part of a deal in which Warsaw was backfilled by Seoul for supplying Kyiv with older-era equipment. In both cases, South Korea was able to make good on its promise to support Ukraine while not violating its pledge to refrain from directly supporting Ukraine with offensive weapons.

US-North Korea Relations: Chaos Muppet Unchained

From September-December 2022, North Korea had its most active missile testing period in history, including a day in November featuring a [23-missile barrage](#). Whether it was the technical need for testing systems under development, training for missile crews, capability demonstrations for international messaging, or taking advantage of a permissive international environment (in which China and Russia have protected North Korea from United Nations Security Council sanctions), Kim Jong Un was unchained in the final trimester of 2022. The

testing spree began in the last week of September, when the North [fired](#) a short-range ballistic missile (SRBM) toward the Sea of Japan (East Sea) on the 25th, then [fired](#) two more SRBMs into the same sea just three days later. The proximate cause of the launches appeared to have arisen from events on Sept. 23, when the nuclear-powered USS *Ronald Reagan* arrived in South Korea to conduct joint exercises. These exercises would take place on the 26th, and if the tests themselves were not enough of a hint, the North's representative at the UN on the following day [said that](#) the "security environment of the peninsula was caught in a vicious cycle of tensions and confrontations due to the growing hostility of the United States."

On Oct. 4, the North [fired](#) an intermediate-range ballistic missile (Hwasong-12 IRBM) over Japan, its first such launch in eight months (and the first over the Japanese archipelago since 2017). Two short-range tests [followed](#) on Oct. 6, [two more](#) on Oct. 9, [one more](#) on the 14th (accompanied by around 170 artillery [shots](#) into the maritime "buffer zones"), plus more [artillery shots](#) on the 19th, and [two](#) more SRBMs on the 28th. These were not the only provocations the regime committed in October. North Korean state media [reported](#) on Oct. 10 that missile activity had included the simulated use of its tactical battlefield nuclear weapons to "hit and wipe out" potential South Korean and American targets.

Then, on Oct. 13 state media reported that leader Kim Jong Un had [supervised](#) the test-firing of long-range strategic cruise missiles involving units operating "tactical nukes" to demonstrate the country's deterrence capabilities. On the 14th approximately 10 North Korean military aircraft [flew](#) close to the border with South Korea, prompting the South Korean Air Force to scramble F-35 stealth fighters and other assets to the scene.

On Nov. 2 North Korea [launched](#) a record barrage of missiles and artillery shells, with one SRBM flying across the de facto maritime border (NLL) with South Korea. This was followed up with North Korea [firing](#) an intercontinental ballistic missile and two short-range missiles toward the Sea of Japan/East Sea (the ICBM launch was later called a [failure](#) by a South Korean defense source). Two days later Pyongyang [launched](#) three SRBMs toward the East Sea, and [one more](#) on the 8th. South Korea [scrambled](#) around 80 planes after detecting more than 180 North Korean military aircraft active near South Korean

airspace on [the 17th](#). On Nov. 18 Kim Jong Un supervised the [firing](#) of the Hwasong-17 intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM). Unlike on November 3rd (and tests earlier in the year), this launch of the Hwasong-17—with a reputed range of more than 9,000 miles, sufficient to target the entire US—is believed to have been a [success](#). Kim Jong Un certainly treated it as such, [stating](#) that the firing of the intercontinental ballistic missile was representative of North Korea's "strategic forces and its powerful combat performance as the strongest strategic weapon in the world." Interestingly, Kim Jong Un's daughter, Ju Ae, [apparently attended](#) the Nov. 18 ICBM launch (North Korean media also later showed her inspecting mass-production lines of nuclear-capable Hwasong-12 IRBMs in December). Although much analyst/expert speculation centered on Ju Ae's potential to succeed Kim Jong Un, a second, symbolic message precluding denuclearization was as important: North Korea's nuclear arsenal is intended to be bequeathed to posterity.



Figure 4 North Korean leader Kim Jong-un with his daughter Ju-ae in a photo released by the Korean Central News Agency. Photo: KCNA

In December, North Korea began the month by [firing](#) 130 artillery shells into inter-Korean maritime buffer zones. On December 16 it then tested a [high-thrust, solid-fuel](#) rocket engine likely intended for long-range, nuclear-armed missiles, as was prioritized by Kim at the 8th Korean Worker's Party Congress in 2021. If this technology succeeds, it would greatly enhance North Korea's nuclear arsenal, whose liquid-fueled ICBMs are currently vulnerable on the ground prior to launch. On the 19th, Pyongyang [conducted](#) a "final-stage" test evaluating the capabilities for putting a military reconnaissance satellite into orbit, with a spokesperson at the National Aerospace Development Administration saying the regime would finish

preparations for its first military reconnaissance satellite by this coming April. Pyongyang then ended the year by [firing](#) two SRBMs into the East Sea on Dec. 23, and [three more](#) on Dec. 31.

Essentially, trends from earlier in the year, when the North expanded its nuclear capabilities (while suggesting they were not only for deterrence), continued in the final reporting period of 2022. On Sept. 9, while [celebrating](#) the 74th anniversary of the national founding, Kim did more than just tell the 14th Supreme People's Assembly that the country would resist any sort of pressure to give up nuclear weapons (calling North Korea's possession of nuclear weapons "irreversible"), rather also spelling out five conditions for using them in a pre-emptive strike. All of these involved the use (or imminent use) of nuclear weapons by adversaries, lethal strikes on key North Korean strategic assets, or other actions by which the North Korean state would be threatened by a "catastrophic" event impacting the safety of its people. Pyongyang did claim, however, that it would not share nuclear weapons or associated technology with other countries. This recalcitrant attitude at the beginning of the September-December reporting period was bookended by an end-of-year Korean Worker' Party Plenum, in which Kim [called for "exponential"](#) growth of North Korea's nuclear arsenal.

Unsurprisingly all this has gone along with no evident progress on the diplomatic front for Washington or Seoul; the US reportedly [made](#) a dialogue offer in July through its New York channel, but as with other diplomatic offers since Biden's administration commenced there has been no response. Instead officials from the North have drawn a direct correlation between their actions and those undertaken by the US-South Korea alliance: Kim Song, North Korea's ambassador to the United Nations, has [urged](#) the US to suspend joint exercises with South Korea and [claimed](#) that its missile launches have been [provoked](#) by South Koreans. For good measure, a ruling party official has [said](#) that the US and South Korea will "pay the most horrible price in history" if they attempt to use armed forces against North Korea. Near the end of the year, Kim Yo Jong, younger sister of and frequent attack dog for Kim Jong Un, [lambasted](#) those who question the regime's satellite development capabilities following its Dec. 19 test, and suggested another, more threatening one would follow: "They will immediately recognize it in case we launch an ICBM in the way of real angle

firing straight off... I think that they would be well advised to halt their nonsense and think twice."

If there is any upside to all of this, it's that South Korea and the US, even if irritated over the trade-related issues noted above, [continue](#) to [speak](#) in one voice regarding North Korea's provocations. Virtually all of the tests North Korea conducted in the third trimester of 2022 were greeted by unified statements from US and South Korean representatives, and frequently joined by Japan. Other statements—such as from People Power Party chairman Chung Jin-suk in October [warning](#) that North Korea seeks to break the US-South Korea alliance and [calling](#) for enhanced deterrence—indicate that South Korea's view of the US as security guarantor has not changed, and will not while conservatives remain in the Blue House. Another positive is that North Korea's seventh nuclear test has reportedly been "imminent" since [spring](#), but still has yet to take place despite US government [warnings](#).

The bad news is that whatever has prevented Pyongyang from taking that decisive step is not obvious to the outside world, and therefore it is impossible to say for certain that such conditions will continue. Furthermore, signs at the UN indicate that Russia and China remain [unwilling](#) to authorize punitive measures against the North if it should test another nuclear weapon, which is unsurprising considering the state of Washington's relations with Moscow and Beijing (and with the US [accusing](#) the North of arming Russia with ammunition to help it in its illegal invasion of Ukraine).

While officials in Washington say they have begun preparing for "[contingencies](#)" with untold "[overwhelming force](#)" awaiting the North in the event of a nuclear test, they remain mum on details. The continuance of joint military drills—often in direct response to North Korean missile tests—is also indicative of their cooperation, but shows little sign of actually changing the North's behavior, if statements by Kim Jong Un, his sister, and other government functionaries are to be believed.

Under such circumstances, more of the same may be the best the alliance can hope for.

Conclusion: An Offensive Realism

In the coming year the US and South Korea are expected to [conduct](#) as many as 20 “realistic” joint drills in order to bolster deterrence and improve combined military readiness in the face of North Korea’s continued recalcitrance and threatening behavior. If drills in response to specific provocations by Pyongyang persist, 20 may be a low estimate, and last spring was an especially [testing time](#) for peninsular tensions. One of the biggest questions will be whether North Korea carries out its long-predicted seventh nuclear test, and, if so, to what extent it will display progress toward a reliable tactical nuclear warhead.

As for US-South Korea alliance relations, there appears to be appetite on both sides to continue dialogue over the IRA, especially as South Korea has lent its weight to the Biden administration’s IPEF and Chip-4 Alliance initiatives (nebulous as they are), and support for the alliance remains a matter of mostly bipartisan [consensus](#) (for now). The last National Defense Authorization Act took place in the waning days of the last Congress, however, and US legislators [warned](#) the revisions to the IRA were unlikely amid the lame-duck session between November and January. Going forward, if US Congressional action is required to address impasses in the alliance, recent events on Capitol Hill suggest that what was once procedurally standard can no longer be taken for granted.

CHRONOLOGY OF US-KOREA RELATIONS

SEPTEMBER—DECEMBER 2022

Sept. 1, 2022: South Korea and the US [wrap up](#) the Ulchi Freedom Shield exercise. US Brig. Gen. Pat Ryder notes the importance of the exercise for strengthening the “security and the stability on the Korean Peninsula and Northeast Asia.”

Sept. 2, 2022: President Yoon Suk Yeol [meets](#) with Gov. Doug Ducey of Arizona and asks for Ducey’s cooperation in addressing South Korea’s concerns about the Inflation Reduction Act.

Sept. 5, 2022: South Korean Defense Minister Lee Jong-sup [discusses](#) with a group of visiting US House representatives to bolster combined defense posture amid concerns of another North Korea nuclear test.

Sept. 5, 2022: South Korean National Assembly Speaker Kim Jin-pyo [meets](#) with a US congressional delegation led by Rep. Stephanie Murphy (D-Florida) to raise South Korea’s concerns about the Inflation Reduction Act.

Sept. 6, 2022: South Korean Prime Minister Han Duck-soo [meets](#) with US Ambassador to South Korea Philip Goldberg and requests Washington’s consideration for South Korean firms entering the US market following the Inflation Reduction Act.

Sept. 6, 2022: South Korean Trade Minister Ahn Duk-geun [arrives](#) in the United States for talks on the Inflation Reduction Act and [meets](#) with White House National Economic Council Director Brian Deese and US Trade Representative Katherine Tai.

Sept. 7, 2022: South Korean Land Minister Won Hee-ryong [meets](#) with US Ambassador to South Korea Philip Goldberg to discuss cooperation in transportation and construction. Goldberg asks for South Korean companies to invest in US transportation infrastructure and launch the [relocation project](#) of US Embassy headquarters in Seoul. Won asks Goldberg to deliver Seoul’s concerns over the Inflation Reduction Act.

Sept. 8, 2022: US [develops](#) “Unhiding Hidden Cobra,” a nine-day training program designed to help detect and prevent malicious cyber activities by North Korea.

Sept. 8, 2022: After [meeting](#) with White House National Economic Council Director Brian Deese and US Trade Representative Katherine Tai, South Korean Trade Minister Ahn Duk-geun [states](#) that South Korea and the US will launch ministerial level talks on minimizing damage from the Inflation Reduction Act on South Korean carmakers

Sept. 9, 2022: North Korea [celebrates](#) the 74th anniversary of its founding. At the 14th Supreme People’s Assembly, North Korea announces five conditions for a nuclear preemptive strike, states that it will not share nuclear weapons and technology with other countries, and reaffirms that the country will resist all sanctions and pressures to give up its nuclear weapons.

Sept. 11, 2022: South Korea and 13 other member nations of the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework [agree](#) to start official negotiations to boost regional economic cooperation.

Sept. 13, 2022: A recent Korea Information Society Development Institute report [finds](#) that South Korea’s participation in the Chip 4 alliance would be a “rational” decision for the country amid intensifying competition for global technology.

Sept. 14, 2022: South Korea’s Personal Information Protection Commission [approves](#) the fines of 69.2 billion won (\$55.2 million) for Google and 30.8 billion won for Meta Platforms for collecting personal information without users’ consent.

Sept. 15, 2022: South Korean Defense Minister Lee Jong-sup [states](#) that South Korea and the US will revise contingency plans for nuclear crisis scenarios in their joint deterrence strategy and make intelligence-sharing more systematic.

Sept. 15, 2022: South Korean Vice Defense Minister Shin Beom-chul [visits](#) the Pentagon to discuss bilateral cooperation in high-defense tech projects. Shin also holds bilateral talks with US Undersecretary of Defense for Acquisition and Sustainment William LaPlante to discuss the expansion of South Korean firms’ participation in the US defense supply chain.

Sept. 16, 2022: South Korean Vice Foreign Minister Cho Hyun-dong [points](#) out the “discriminatory elements” in the Inflation Reduction Act while meeting with US officials.

Sept. 16, 2022: United States and South Korea [hold](#) the third meeting of the Extended Deterrence Strategy and Consultation Group (EDSCG) which provides a forum for discussions on strategies to strengthen Alliance deterrence on the Korean Peninsula.

Sept. 18, 2022: Yoon [states](#) that “South Korea will take a more clear position with respect to US-China relations” and criticizes the diplomacy of his predecessor, Moon Jae-in.

Sept. 20, 2022: Yoon [arrives](#) in New York to attend the 77th session of the UN General Assembly and plans to hold a series of summits on the sidelines with US President Joe Biden and Japanese Prime Minister Kishida Fumio.

Sept. 20, 2022: After meeting with US Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo, South Korean Industry Minister Lee Chang-yang [expresses](#) worries that the negative impacts of the Inflation Reduction Act will have impacts on bilateral ties.

Sept. 20, 2022: South Korean and American soldiers [conduct](#) combined training at the National Training Center in California to improve “warfighting” and “interoperability” capabilities.

Sept. 20, 2022: Reports say the US [made](#) a dialogue offer in July to North Korea through the New York channel but North Korea has yet to respond.

Sept. 21, 2022: South Korean and US Marine Corps [develop](#) a five-year plan to strengthen combined amphibious landing exercises.

Sept. 21, 2022: Yoon [asks](#) UN Chief António Guterres for a stern response to North Korean provocations and thanks Guterres for supporting the “complete, verifiable, and irreversible” denuclearization of North Korea.

Sept. 22, 2022: Biden and Yoon [hold](#) a brief bilateral meeting on the sidelines of the 77th of the United Nations General Assembly and reaffirm “their commitment to strengthen the US-ROK alliance and ensure close cooperation to address the threat” posed by North Korea.

Sept. 22, 2022: In an address to the UN General Assembly, Biden [names](#) North Korea as one of the main reasons why the United Nations should work to strengthen the nuclear nonproliferation regime and states that the US is prepared to pursue “critical arms control measures.”

Sept. 22, 2022: Yoon [asks](#) Biden to resolve South Korea’s concerns over the Inflation Reduction Act. Biden affirms that he is aware of the concerns and states that both sides should continue discussions.

Sept. 22, 2022: Yoon and Kishida [agree](#) to improve relations by resolving pending issues and share concerns about North Korea’s nuclear program.

Sept. 22, 2022: South Korea’s Vice Defense Minister Shin Beom-chul [assures](#) the South Korean public that the US and South Korea will ensure that “consultations would not move in a direction that undermines security on the Korean Peninsula.”

Sept. 23, 2022: South Korea [draws](#) investment worth a combined \$1.5 billion from seven North American firms in the semiconductor, battery, and energy sectors. The seven firms plan to build facilities in South Korea.

Sept. 23, 2022: In reference to a video circulating of South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol speaking to his aides in vulgar language in supposed reference to the US Congress and US President Joe Biden, Yoon’s office [clarifies](#) that the president was speaking about South Korea’s opposition-controlled National Assembly.

Sept. 23, 2022: On the sidelines of the G20 meeting, South Korean Trade Minister Ahn Duk-geun and US Trade Representative Katherine Tai [agree](#) to make joint efforts to seek solutions regarding the Inflation Reduction Act.

Sept. 23, 2022: Second Vice Foreign Minister Lee Do-hoon [meets](#) with White House Indo-Pacific Coordinator Kurt Campbell to discuss the Inflation Reduction Act. Lee also meets with Sen. Jon Ossoff (D-Georgia), Rep. Darin LaHood (R-Illinois), and Rep. Young Kim (R-California).

Sept. 23, 2022: US [stands](#) by its intelligence that Russia is seeking to purchase ammunition from North Korea, despite a North Korean statement earlier this week that it has never exported any

weapons or ammunition to Russia and does not plan to do so.

Sept. 23, 2022: Nuclear-powered USS *Ronald Reagan* aircraft carrier [arrives](#) in South Korea to conduct its first combined drills with the South Korean Navy, two days later, North Korea [fires](#) a short-range ballistic missile toward the East Sea, the North's fifth missile firing since the Yoon administration took office.

Sept. 26, 2022: Yoon [states](#) that “untrue” reports of his [remarks](#) caught on a hot mic during an event in New York damaged South Korea's alliance with the United States.

Sept. 26, 2022: US Ronald Reagan Carrier Strike Group [conducts](#) a series of exercises with the Republic of Korea Navy. Kim Song, North Korea's ambassador to the United Nations, [calls](#) the joint military exercise an “extremely dangerous act” and argues that it arouses “serious concerns.”

Sept. 27 2022: Kim Song, head of the North Korean mission to the United Nations, [states](#) that the “security environment of the Korean Peninsula is now caught in a vicious cycle of tensions and confrontations due to the growing hostility of the United States” during an address to the UN General Assembly.

Sept. 27, 2022: Previous USFK Commander Gen. Robert Abrams [states](#) that the United States will preserve “all options” in determining what forces might be used in the event of a military conflict between China and Taiwan.

Sept. 27, 2022: South Korean Ambassador Cho Tae-young [states](#) that South Korean Yoon and Biden have reaffirmed their commitment to resolving issues concerning the Inflation Reduction Act.

Sept. 27, 2022: US Department of State Press Secretary Ned Price [states](#) that North Korea is in a “period of provocation” but the United States remains committed to engage with North Korea in serious diplomacy.

Sept. 28, 2022: North Korea [fires](#) two short-range ballistic missiles into the East Sea, just three days after the North fired one SRBM earlier this week.

Sept. 28, 2022: South Korean Deputy Trade Minister Jeong Dae-jin [meets](#) with 18

ambassadors to Seoul from several EU nations to ask seek joint responses over the US Inflation Reduction Act.

Sept. 29, 2022: North Korea [fires](#) two short-range ballistic missiles into the East Sea, making this its third provocation in less than a week. The United States quickly [condemns](#) its recent ballistic missile launches but urges North Korea to engage in dialogue.

Sept. 29, 2022: Harris [promises](#) Yoon that the United States will look for solutions to South Korea's concerns regarding the Inflation Reduction Act.

Sept. 30, 2022: Following recent North Korean missile provocations, a US Forces Korea unit [carries](#) out Exercise Teak Knife, a series of surgical strike drills, at US base Camp Humphreys.

Sept. 30, 2022: United States Indo-Pacific Command [releases](#) a statement reaffirming its “ironclad” commitment to the defense of South Korea and Japan following North Korea's recent firing of two ballistic missiles into the East Sea.

Sept. 30, 2022: South Korea, Japan, and the United States [conduct](#) a trilateral anti-submarine exercise, following North Korea's short-range ballistic missile launches this week.

Oct. 1, 2022: North Korea [fires](#) two short-range ballistic missiles into the East Sea, just a day after South Korea, the United States, and Japan staged an anti-submarine warfare exercise. This marks North Korea's fourth missile launch within a week.

Oct. 1, 2022: In light of North Korea Freedom Week, the US State Department releases a statement [urging](#) for global efforts to improve human rights conditions in North Korea.

Oct. 4, 2022: North Korea [fires](#) an intermediate-range ballistic missile (IRBM) over Japan, making this the North's first launch of an IRBM in eight months and the fifth missile test in just over a week. In response, a South Korean F-15K fighter [fires](#) two JADAM precision bombs at a firing range on a Yellow Sea island and air drills with the US in a combined strike package.

Oct. 4, 2022: South Korean Foreign Minister Park Jin and United States Secretary of State Antony

Blinken [agree](#) to strengthen cooperation in responding to North Korea's missile tests, including a new UN resolution against North Korea and trilateral action with Japan.

Oct. 4, 2022: South Korea-US Combined Forces Command [plans](#) to move its headquarters to Camp Humphreys in Pyeongtaek.

Oct. 5, 2022: South Korea and the United States [fire](#) four ground-to-ground missiles into the East Sea in joint drills to demonstrate the allies' deterrence capability.

Oct. 5, 2022: Biden [sends](#) a letter to Yoon expressing his willingness to continue talks on the Inflation Reduction Act.

Oct. 5, 2022: United States, among other countries, [call](#) for an emergency meeting of the UN Security Council. The session ends with no agreement on next steps, with Russia and China insisting that US-led military exercises in the region provoked North Korea.

Oct. 5, 2022: US National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan [discusses](#) appropriate responses the international community should take with his South Korean counterpart Kim Sung-han and Japanese counterpart Akiba Takeo.

Oct. 5, 2022: USS *Ronald Reagan* [returns](#) to the waters east of South Korea to conduct a trilateral exercise with South Korea and Japan in a show of force following North Korea's recent ballistic missile launches.

Oct. 6, 2022: North Korea [fires](#) two short-range ballistic missiles into the East Sea, making this the sixth missile test in under two weeks. In response, Yoon [states](#) that he "will thoroughly take care of the people's lives and safety through a strong South Korea-US alliance and security cooperation between South Korea, the US, and Japan."

Oct. 6, 2022: North Korea [condemns](#) the United States for redeploying the USS *Ronald Reagan* into the waters east of South Korea, stating that the US "poses a serious threat to the stability of the situation on the Korean Peninsula."

Oct. 6, 2022: South Korea, Japan, the United States, and eight other UN member countries [issue](#) a joint statement condemning North Korea for its ballistic missile provocation and call on

other UN members to urge North Korea to abandon its "unlawful weapons programs."

Oct. 6, 2022: Kim Gunn, special representative for Korean Peninsula peace and security affairs, and American counterpart Sung Kim [voice](#) "serious concerns" regarding North Korea's recent firing of two short-range ballistic missiles.

Oct. 6, 2022: South Korea, Japan, and the United States [conduct](#) a joint naval exercise in the East Sea focusing on countering nuclear and missile threats from North Korea.

Oct. 7, 2022: South Korea and the United States [conduct](#) a joint naval exercise involving a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier to reinforce the allies' operational capabilities against North Korean provocations.

Oct. 7, 2022: South Korean Ambassador Lee Shin-hwa, special envoy for international cooperation on North Korean human rights, [argues](#) that appointing a US special envoy for North Korean human rights—a post vacant for five years—will send a clear message to North Korea that human rights matter.

Oct. 7, 2022: Kim Gunn, special representative for Korean Peninsula peace and security affairs, [agrees](#) to redouble joint efforts to block North Korea's nuclear and missile program financing through cryptocurrency theft with American and Japanese counterparts Sung Kim and Funakoshi Takehiro.

Oct. 7, 2022: United States [imposes](#) sanctions on two people and three entities for violating UN Security Council (UNSC) sanctions on North Korea for being involved in illegal ship-to-ship transfers of petroleum with North Korean vessels designed to evade UNSC sanctions.

Oct. 7, 2022: US Forces Korea [brings](#) in new pieces of equipment to its THAAD missile defense unit to complete the three-stage Joint Emergent Operational Need program to enhance the efficiency of its overall anti-missile capabilities.

Oct. 9, 2022: North Korea [fires](#) two short-range ballistic missiles into the East Sea, making this its seventh missile provocation in two weeks.

Oct. 10, 2022: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un [supervises](#) an exercise of tactical nuclear

operation units to check and assess the “war deterrent and nuclear counterattack capability” in response to recent joint US-South Korea military trainings. Kim states that North Korea has “no content for dialogue with the enemies and felt no necessity to do so.”

Oct. 10, 2022: North Korean state media [reports](#) that North Korea’s recent missile provocations were the simulated use of its tactical battlefield nuclear weapons to “hit and wipe out” potential South Korean and American targets.

Oct. 11, 2022: US State Department [rejects](#) the notion that the United States’ “defensive actions” such as joint military and naval exercises with South Korea do not justify North Korea’s “escalatory and unlawful behavior.”

Oct. 11, 2022: South Korea’s industry, finance, and foreign ministries [hold](#) a third round of their joint task force meeting with officials from the domestic car and battery industries to discuss concerns over the US Inflation Reduction Act.

Oct. 12, 2022: Kim Song, North Korean Ambassador to the United States, [urges](#) the US to refrain from providing a nuclear umbrella and to suspend joint exercises with South Korea.

Oct. 12, 2022: John Kirby, US National Security Council coordinator for strategic communications, [states](#) that the US remains open to dialogue with North Korea without any preconditions.

Oct. 13, 2022: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un [supervises](#) the test-firing of long-range strategic cruise missiles involving units operating “tactical nukes” to send a “clear warning to the enemies” and a demonstration of the country’s deterrence capabilities.

Oct. 13, 2022: Representative Chung Jin-suk, party leader of the ruling South Korean People Power Party, [calls](#) for a stronger US nuclear umbrella.

Oct. 13, 2022: In its 2022 [National Security Strategy](#), the United States [reaffirms](#) its commitment to the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula through diplomacy and to strengthening US alliances to address “shared challenges” while outmaneuvering geopolitical competitors.

Oct. 13, 2022: Rather than the redeployment of tactical nuclear weapons, South Korean Vice Defense Minister Shin Beom-chul [states](#) that the most desirable way to deter North Korea is through the “redeployment of US strategic assets to the Korean Peninsula in a timely, coordinated matter.”

Oct. 13, 2022: South Korean Ambassador to the United States Cho Tae-yong [states](#) that the two nations may need to “quietly review creative solutions” to the “real threat” posed by North Korea.

Oct. 14, 2022: North Korea [fires](#) a short-range ballistic missile into the East Sea and around 170 artillery [shots](#) into the maritime “buffer zones,” making this its eight missile provocation in three weeks.

Oct. 14, 2022: A group of around 10 North Korean military aircraft [flies](#) close to the border with South Korea, prompting the South Korean Air Force to scramble its F-35A stealth fighters and other assets to the scene.

Oct. 14, 2022: North Korea [claims](#) that its latest ballistic missile launch was a countermeasure to the South Korean military’s “provocative” and “reckless” moves in the frontline area.

Oct. 14, 2022: Chief South Korean, US, and Japanese nuclear envoys [express](#) “deep concerns” over North Korea’s recent provocations and “strongly” denounce its actions.

Oct. 15, 2022: South Korean Democratic Party leader Lee Jae-myung [sends](#) a letter to Biden delivering concerns over the US Inflation Reduction Act.

Oct. 15, 2022: Vice Admiral Karl Thomas of the US Seventh Fleet [states](#) that the recent joint US-South Korea naval exercise may have “precipitated” North Korean provocations, especially “after many years of not Operating in the Sea of Japan and visiting South Korea.”

Oct. 18, 2022: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken [states](#) that North Korea may be trying to draw US attention and argues that North Korean provocations may be a reaction to the growing cooperation between the US, South Korea, and Japan.

Oct. 18, 2022: US Ambassador to South Korea Philip Goldberg [stresses](#) the United States' "ironclad" commitment to extended deterrence for South Korea and denounces recent threats of tactical nuclear weapons. Goldberg also criticizes China for having "done little" to mitigate North Korean provocations.

Oct. 18, 2022: US Forces Korea [reveals](#) it conducted a "quick reaction force training" with South Korean special warfare troops as the allies strive to sharpen deterrence against evolving North Korean threats.

Oct. 19, 2022: North Korea [fires](#) around 100 artillery rounds into the Yellow Sea and another 150 rounds into the East Sea, falling into the eastern and western buffer zones north of the Northern Limit Line. North Korea [calls](#) this a "serious warning" over South Korea's ongoing military drills, calling on the South to immediately stop "reckless and inciting provocations."

Oct. 19, 2022: South Korean Trade Minister Ahn Duk-geun [meets](#) with British Ambassador to Seoul Colin Crooks, Swedish top envoy in Seoul Daniel Wolven, and Charge' d'affaires of the European Union Christophe Bess to discuss the US Inflation Reduction Act.

Oct. 19, 2022: South Korea and the United States [stage](#) combined river-crossing military drills to strengthen readiness to counter evolving North Korean threats.

Oct. 20, 2022: South Korea and the United States [agree](#) to continue working-level consultations to seek solutions regarding the US Inflation Reduction Act.

Oct. 20, 2022: South Korean Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman General Kim Seung-kyum and US counterpart General Mark Milley [reaffirm](#) to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula and developing the countries' joint defense posture at the annual Military Committee Meeting.

Oct. 21, 2022: At the Trilateral Chief of Defense Meeting, Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman General Kim Seung-kyum, US General Mark Milley, and Japanese General Yamazaki Koji [emphasize](#) the importance of trilateral security cooperation against North Korea.

Oct. 21, 2022: Brig. Gen. Pat Ryder of the US Department of Defense [states](#) that the US is not considering deploying nuclear weapons to South Korea.

Oct. 21, 2022: US Forces Korea [discloses](#) footage on artillery live-fire training in response to North Korea's recent firing of artillery shells.

Oct. 24, 2022: As part of the annual ongoing Hoguk drills, the South Korean Navy [begins](#) a large-scale exercise in the Yellow Sea involving American troops.

Oct. 25, 2022: US Department of State Press Secretary Ned Price [announces](#) that the US assesses that North Korea is preparing for its seventh nuclear test.

Oct. 25, 2022: South Korean Vice Foreign Minister Cho Hyun-dong [states](#) that the "geopolitical situation in Northeast Asia is grim" due to North Korean provocations and the end of the Chinese Communist Party Congress.

Oct. 26, 2022: Brig. Gen. Pat Ryder of the US Pentagon [affirms](#) that the US has no plans to adjust its defense posture in the Indo-Pacific region, such as deploying tactical nuclear weapons to the region.

Oct. 26, 2022: US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen [states](#) that the US Inflation Reduction Act will be implemented without exception. Yoon states his believe that Yellen's statement is "slightly different from the general view of the US government."

Oct. 26, 2022: A seventh nuclear test by North Korea would constitute a "grave escalatory action," [states](#) Vedant Patel, principal deputy spokesperson of the US State Department. Patel furthers that the US has a "number of tools" to hold North Korea accountable for future provocations and calls on China and Russia to hold North Korea accountable when necessary.

Oct. 28, 2022: North Korea [fires](#) two short-range ballistic missiles toward the East Sea.

Oct. 28, 2022: In its [National Defense Strategy](#), the US Department of Defense [states](#) that any nuclear attack by North Korea against the US or its allies and partners is "unacceptable" and will result in the "end of that regime."

Oct. 28, 2022: South Korea's Ambassador to the US Cho Tae-yong [states](#) that the two countries are working together to strengthen extended deterrence to "strongly and sternly" react against North Korean provocations.

Oct. 28, 2022: South Korea [launches](#) an interagency task force to prepare for the envisioned Reciprocal Defense Procurement Agreement with the United States, an effort to strengthen cooperation in defense supply chains.

Oct. 29, 2022: Sabrina Singh, deputy spokesperson for the US Department of State, [asserts](#) that the United States condemns North Korea's recent missile launches and continues to seek dialogue with North Korea.

Oct. 31, 2022: Yoon [thanks Biden](#), other foreign [leaders](#), heads of foreign [embassies](#), and [US Forces Korea](#) for their condolences over the Itaewon stampede.

Oct. 31, 2022: South Korea and the United States [conduct](#) the five-day Vigilant Storm exercise involving stealth jets and more than 240 aircraft.

Oct. 31, 2022: US Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security Bonnie Jenkins [states](#) that the United States welcomes a conversation with North Korea about arms control.

Nov. 1, 2022: In response to the US-South Korea Vigilant Storm drills, North Korea [states](#) that it will respond with "more powerful follow-up measures" if the US continues "military provocations."

Nov. 1, 2022: Ned Price, press secretary of the US Department of State, [asserts](#) that the United States does not and will not recognize North Korea as a nuclear weapons state.

Nov. 1, 2022: US Ambassador to South Korea Philip Goldberg [meets](#) with leaders of South Korea's ruling and main opposition parties to discuss improving bilateral cooperation, North Korean threats, and the US Inflation Reduction Act.

Nov. 1, 2022: South Korea [continues](#) to engage in defense deals with European nations as they seek to become a bigger player in international weapons sales, bringing forth concerns from US defense industry insiders.

Nov. 2, 2022: North Korea [launches](#) a barrage of missiles and artillery shells, with one short-range ballistic missile flying across its de facto maritime border with South Korea.

Nov. 2, 2022: Pak Jong-chon, secretary of the Central Committee of North Korea's ruling Workers' Party, [states](#) that the US and South Korea will have to "face a terrible case and pay the most horrible price in history" if they attempt to use armed forces against North Korea.

Nov. 2, 2022: Yoon [condemns](#) North Korea's recent missile launches, as one of the missiles crossed the Northern Limit Line. Yoon orders the military to maintain "full readiness."

Nov. 2, 2022: South Korean Foreign Minister Park Jin and US Secretary of State Antony Blinken [condemn](#) North Korea's latest missile launches, calling them an "unprecedented, grave provocation."

Nov. 2, 2022: South Korea will [submit](#) an official written response providing feedback to the United States regarding the US Inflation Reduction Act.

Nov. 3, 2022: North Korea [fires](#) an intercontinental ballistic missile and two short-range missiles toward the East Sea.

Nov. 3, 2022: US Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin and South Korean Minister of National Defense Lee Jong-sup [meet](#) during the 54th Security Consultative Meeting to discuss matters such as the allies' combined defense posture, strengthening cooperation in various areas such as cyber, and responding to North Korean provocations.

Nov. 4, 2022: South Korea and the United States [agree](#) to extend the Vigilant Storm drill by another day in response to recent North Korea's recent firing of an intercontinental ballistic missile.

Nov. 3, 2022: North Korea [denounces](#) South Korea and the United States for extending their joint Vigilant Storm exercise

Nov. 3, 2022: North Korea's recent intercontinental ballistic missile launch is an apparent [failure](#), according to a South Korean government source.

Nov. 3, 2022: South Korean First Vice Foreign Minister Cho Hyun-dong and US Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman [condemn](#) North Korea's latest missile launches during a phone call consultation and agree to maintain a strong combined defense posture.

Nov. 3, 2022: US Secretary of State Antony Blinken [condemns](#) North Korea's missile provocations, especially its "reckless decision" to fire a missile below the Northern Limit Line.

Nov. 3, 2022: South Korean Defense Minister Lee Jong-sup [visits](#) the US National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency and meets with Director Frank Whitworth. Lee and Whitworth share intelligence regarding North Korea's recent missile and artillery firings and agree to stronger cooperation.

Nov. 3, 2022: According to John Kirby, spokesperson for the US White House National Security Council, North Korea [supplies](#) a large number of artillery shells to Russia for use in the ongoing aggression in Ukraine.

Nov. 4, 2022: North Korea [fires](#) three short-range ballistic missiles toward the East Sea.

Nov. 4, 2022: South Korea [scrambles](#) around 80 warplanes after detecting more than 180 North Korean military aircraft activities.

Nov. 4, 2022: South Korean Defense Minister Lee Jong-sup and US Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin [meet](#) for the 54th Security Consultative [Meeting](#). Both sides [agree](#) on four categories of extended deterrence cooperation against North Korean provocations.

Nov. 5, 2022: North Korea [fires](#) four short-range ballistic missiles toward the Yellow Sea on the last day of the Vigilant Storm drill of South Korea and the United States.

Nov. 5, 2022: United States [calls](#) on the United Nations Security Council to hold North Korea accountable for its recent ballistic missile launches, and most recently, its launch of an intercontinental ballistic missile.

Nov. 5, 2022: While wrapping up the South Korea-United States Vigilant Storm exercise, two US B-1B aircraft [join](#) the drills, making this the first time that long-range supersonic bombers have been deployed to South Korea since 2017.

Nov. 7, 2022: South Korean First Vice Foreign Minister Cho Hyun-dong, US Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman, and Japanese Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Mori Takeo strongly [condemn](#) North Korea's latest missile launches.

Nov. 8, 2022: North Korea [launches](#) one short-range ballistic missile toward the East Sea. The missile is assumed to be one of North Korea's new SRBMs.

Nov. 8, 2022: US State Department Press Secretary Ned Price [calls](#) on China and Russia to hold North Korea accountable for its missile launches in violation of United Nations Security Council (UNSC) sanctions, after China and Russia [vetoed](#) additional sanctions on North Korea during the ninth UNSC meeting this year on North Korea's missile launches.

Nov. 8, 2022: Under the Korea-US Supply Chain and Commercial Dialogue, South Korea and the United States [discuss](#) the impacts of recent US measures to restrict exports of advanced semiconductor equipment to China.

Nov. 8, 2022: South Korea's climate ambassador Na Kyung-won and US climate envoy John Kerry [sign](#) an agreement to establish a green cargo shipping route linking South Korea's Busan port with the US Tacoma port near Seattle to better achieve maritime carbon neutrality.

Nov. 9, 2022: US Department of Defense spokesperson Brig. Gen. Pat Ryder [states](#) that the United States is closely watching the suspected delivery of North Korean artillery shells to Russia.

Nov. 9, 2022: During a visit to the US 7th Fleet Headquarters, South Korean Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Lee Jong-ho [meets](#) with US Vice Adm. Karl Thomas to discuss strengthening the allies' combined defense posture against North Korea.

Nov. 9, 2022: Kim Gunn [condemns](#) North Korea's missile provocations along with his American counterpart Sung Kim and Japanese counterpart Funakoshi Takehiro.

Nov. 11, 2022: Yoon [announces](#) South Korea's new Indo-Pacific Strategy, promoting peace and stability in the region, along with the Korea-ASEAN Solidarity Initiative. This marks South

Korea's first time presenting a diplomatic strategy specific to the Indo-Pacific.

Nov. 11, 2022: South Korea's Defense Ministry [reaffirms](#) its commitment to not provide Ukraine with lethal military support.

Nov. 11, 2022: US State Department Press Secretary Ned Price [calls](#) on North Korea to "put the interest of its people first" and states that the United States is looking for ways to support the "humanitarian needs" of the people of North Korea.

Nov. 11, 2022: Kim Gunn [meets](#) with members of the Korean Peninsula Club, a consultative channel of the ministry and 20 foreign ambassadors based in Seoul. Gunn encourages member countries to step up against North Korea's illegal cyber activities.

Nov. 13, 2022: Yoon and Biden [state](#) that the two countries will respond with "overwhelming force using all available means" if North Korea uses nuclear weapons in any form.

Nov. 13, 2022: During a trilateral [summit](#) at the ASEAN summit Biden, Yoon, and J Kishida [express](#) commitment to bolster deterrence against North Korea.

Nov. 15, 2022: South Korea and the United States [celebrate](#) the completion of the relocation of their Combined Forces Command headquarters from Seoul to Pyeongtaek.

Nov. 15, 2022: Biden [calls](#) on Chinese leader Xi Jinping to discourage North Korea from taking further escalatory steps, as the United States will take "more defensive" actions that will be "up in the face of China" should North Korea conduct a nuclear test.

Nov. 15, 2022: South Korea's Deputy Trade Minister Jeong Dae-jin [meets](#) with Swedish State Secretary of Foreign Ministry Hakan Jevrell discuss ways the two countries can work together to resolve concerns over the US Inflation Reduction Act.

Nov. 16, 2022: Lee Tae-woo, the South Korean Director-General for North Korean nuclear affairs, [meets](#) with his US counterpart Jung Park to share updates on North Korean cyberthreats and extortion of cryptocurrencies.

Nov. 17, 2022: North Korea [fires](#) one short-range ballistic missile into the East Sea, making this its second missile provocation in a little over a week, which the United States [condemns](#). North Korea has launched 50 ballistic missiles this year, the largest number of ballistic missiles launched in a single year.

Nov. 17, 2022: US Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Nuclear and Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction Policy Richard Johnson [meets](#) with Director-General of the South Korean Defense Policy Bureau Ha Dae-bong to explain the recently released US Nuclear Posture Review and Missile Defense Review.

Nov. 17, 2022: Third Committee of the United Nations General Assembly [passes](#) a resolution condemning North Korea for systematic human rights violations and calling for efforts to improve human rights conditions, marking this the 18th consecutive year the committee passed such a resolution.

Nov. 17, 2022: Vedant Patel, principal deputy spokesperson for the US State Department, [states](#) that China has a "responsibility" to encourage North Korea to act responsibly and not engage in nuclear or ballistic missile tests.

Nov. 17, 2022: South Korea and the United States [co-host](#) the Symposium on Countering DPRK Cyber-Exploitation of Cryptocurrency Exchanges. Officials from more than a dozen countries discuss ways to counter cryptocurrency theft and other illegal cyber activities of North Korea.

Nov. 18, 2022: North Korea [fires](#) an intercontinental ballistic missile toward the East Sea. The launch involves the Hwason-17 ICBM, notorious for its sheer size and range capabilities. Yoon [orders](#) a strengthening of the US-South Korea combined defense posture and executability of extended deterrence against North Korea. South Korean Prime Minister Han Duck-soo, US Vice President Kamala Harris, and prime ministers of Japan, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada, jointly [condemn](#) the launch.

Nov. 18, 2022: Anne Neuberger, US Deputy National Security Advisor for Cyber and Emerging Technologies, [states](#) that North Korea is believed to fund about 30% of "its missile and

other malicious programs” through cyber attacks.

Nov. 19, 2022: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un [states](#) that the recent firing of an intercontinental ballistic missile is representative of North Korea’s “strategic forces and its powerful combat performance as the strongest strategic weapon in the world.”

Nov. 19, 2022: A US B-1B Lancer strategic bomber [joins](#) a US-South Korea joint air drill, one day following North Korea’s firing of an intercontinental ballistic missile.

Nov. 21, 2022: On the sidelines of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation summit, South Korean Trade Minister Ahn Duk-geun and US Trade Representative Katherine Tai [agree](#) to continue consultations regarding the US Inflation Reduction Act.

Nov. 22, 2022: United States [calls](#) on the United Nations Security Council to hold North Korea accountable for its recent missile provocations and attributes inaction to China and Russia, two veto-wielding members of the council.

Nov. 30, 2022: General James Dickinson, commander of the US Space Command, [states](#) that the Command is working to integrate US assets into an architecture that will provide both the US and its allies and partners “as much advanced warning as possible” regarding missile activity out of North Korea.

Dec. 2, 2022: Eliot Kang, Assistant Secretary of State for international security and nonproliferation, [states](#) that Russia and China have gone to “great lengths” to shield North Korea from “accountability for increasingly provocative behavior.”

Dec. 2, 2022: South Korea’s Trade Minister Ahn Duk-geun and the European Union’s Vice-President Commissioner Valdis Dombrovskis, [agree](#) to work more closely for joint responses to the US Inflation Reduction Act.

Dec. 2, 2022: South Korea [sends](#) its second official written opinion to the United States regarding the US Inflation Reduction Act.

Dec. 3, 2022: United States [designates](#) North Korea and 11 other countries as Countries of

Particular Concern under the International Religious Freedom Act of 1998.

Dec. 3, 2022: Ned Price, US State Department Press Secretary, [announces](#) that the United States is working with allies to prepare for any contingencies from North Korea, especially a seventh nuclear test.

Dec. 5, 2022: North Korea [fires](#) 130 artillery shells into inter-Korean maritime buffer zones.

Dec. 5, 2022: Major Gen. Kim Su-kwang, Director of South Korea’s Joint Chiefs of Staff, [discusses](#) strengthening US extended deterrence against North Korean provocations with Rear Admiral Anthony Carullo, Director of Plans and Policy at the US Strategic Command.

Dec. 7, 2022: US State Department Press Secretary Ned Price [states](#) that China and Russia must “fulfill its obligations” and implement U.N. Security Council resolutions on North Korea to push back on North Korean provocations.

Dec. 7, 2022: United States Senate and House of Representatives [reach](#) an agreement on the National Defense Authorization Act which requires the US to maintain a minimum of 28,500 US service members in South Korea and reaffirm its commitment to providing extended deterrence to South Korea.

Dec. 8, 2022: South Korean Foreign Minister Park Jin [meets](#) with a delegation from the National Committee on American Foreign Policy (NCAFP) and urges NCAFP’s support in strengthening bilateral ties.

Dec. 9, 2022: US Special Representative for North Korea Sung Kim [talks](#) with China’s Special Representative on Korean Peninsula Affairs Liu Xiaoming to discuss North Korea’s recent missile provocations.

Dec. 9, 2022: During a meeting between several US lawmakers and a South Korean delegation, US lawmakers [state](#) that revisions to the US Inflation Reduction Act are unlikely during a lame-duck session of Congress.

Dec. 10, 2022: United States [imposes](#) sanctions on over 65 individuals and entities in 17 countries, including North Korea’s border guard bureau, for serious human rights violations and other crimes related to North Korea.

Dec. 12, 2022: South Korean National Assembly Speaker Kim Jin-pyo [expresses](#) concerns over the US Inflation Reduction Act and calls for an “exceptional clause” for countries that have entered a free trade agreement with the United States prior the IRA.

Dec. 13, 2022: At the seventh Senior Economic Dialogue, South Korea’s 2nd Vice Foreign Minister Lee Do-hoon [meets](#) with US Under Secretary of State for Economic Growth, Energy, and Environment Jose W. Fernandez to discuss concerns about the US Inflation Reduction Act. Both sides reaffirm commitment to continuing discussions on the issue.

Dec. 14, 2022: United States military [launches](#) US Space Forces Korea, a unit focused on strengthening bilateral space security coordination in the Indo-Pacific region.

Dec. 14, 2022: Air Force Major General Michael E. Martin, Commander of the Special Operations Command-Korea (SOCKOR), [states](#) that the SOCKOR unit is committed to military readiness by conducting peak-level “realistic” training.

Dec. 14, 2022: US State Department spokesperson Ned Price [stresses](#) the “complete denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula” as an overarching US objective and to holding North Korea accountable for its recent missile provocations.

Dec. 16, 2022: South Korea and the United States [hold](#) their sixth Cyber Policy Consultations to discuss ways to enhance bilateral cooperation on cybersecurity and countering cyber threats posed by North Korea.

Dec. 16, 2022: United Nations General Assembly [passes](#) a resolution calling for international efforts to improve human rights conditions in North Korea, making this the 18th consecutive year the General Assembly has adopted such a resolution.

Dec. 16, 2022: North Korea successfully [conducts](#) a static firing test of a high-thrust solid-fuel motor, which the Korean Central News Agency states is an “important test” that provides “sure sci-tech guarantee” for the development of a new strategic weapons system. John Kirby, US National Security Council coordinator for strategic communications, [states](#) that North

Korea is pursuing military capabilities that pose a threat to the region.

Dec. 19, 2022: Leader of South Korea’s ruling People Power Party Chung Jin-suk [condemns](#) North Korea’s latest missile launches, stating that such provocations are aimed at breaking up the South Korea-United States alliance.

Dec. 19, 2022: North Korea [conducts](#) an “important final-stage” test that evaluates the capabilities of putting a military reconnaissance satellite into orbit. A spokesperson at the National Aerospace Development Administration states that North Korea will finish preparations for its first military reconnaissance satellite by April 2023.

Dec. 20, 2022: Kim Yo Jong, Vice Department Director of the Central Committee of the Workers’ Party of Korea and sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, [criticizes](#) those who question the regime’s satellite development capabilities and reconnaissance satellite project.

Dec. 20, 2022: South Korea, the United States, and 13 other member nations [participate](#) in the US-led Indo-Pacific Economic Framework ministerial meeting.

Dec. 20, 2022: South Korea and the United States [conduct](#) combined air drills to strengthen the credibility of America’s “extended deterrence.”

Dec. 21, 2022: North Korea reportedly [conducts](#) the first static ground test of a large solid-propellant rocket motor, the first indication that the regime is developing a propulsion system usable in intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) or ICBM-range submarine-launched ballistic missiles.

Dec. 21, 2022: South Korea and the United States [plan](#) to conduct around 20 combined “realistic” training programs in the first half of next year to address growing North Korean security threats. The allies also [consider](#) staging their first large-scale combined live-fire demonstration to mark the 70th anniversary of the establishment of their alliance and to demonstrate the allies’ “overwhelming deterrence capabilities against North Korea.”

Dec. 23, 2022: North Korea [fires](#) two short-range ballistic missiles into the East Sea, following the

combined South Korea–United States air drills the day before.

Dec. 26, 2022: Five North Korea drones [cross](#) the inter-Korean border, with one flying over northern Seoul. South Korea fails to shoot down the five drones but sends its own drones to the border, with some crossing the border to carry out surveillance and other operations.

Dec. 28, 2022: United States White House [issues](#) a statement welcoming South Korea’s [adoption](#) of the US Indo-Pacific strategy.

Dec. 29, 2022: South Korea’s Industry Minister Lee Chang-yang [states](#) that South Korea will maximize the benefits from the US Inflation Reduction Act in the battery, solar, and wind power generation fields to minimize fallout in the car industry.

Dec. 30, 2022: Kim Gunn [discusses](#) the need for a stern response to North Korean provocations with US counterpart Sung Kim. Kim Gunn also urges China to take a more active role in holding North Korea responsible for its provocations during a consultation with Liu Xiaoming, China’s top nuclear envoy.

Dec. 31, 2022: North Korea [fires](#) three short-range ballistic missiles into the East Sea, a day after South Korea [conducted](#) a test flight of a homegrown solid-propellant space rocket. Kim Gunn [denounces](#) North Korea’s firings, along with his US and Japanese counterparts Sung Kim and Takehiro Funakoshi.

Chronology prepared by Pacific Forum research intern Kaylin Kim