Republic of Korea Military Forces in 2017

Background

The total active manpower of the South Korean military is approximately 665,000 (Army 458,000; Navy 41,000; Marines 27,000; Air Force 65,000; Special Operations Forces 14,000; and Command and Support forces 50,000). In addition, there are approximately 4,500,000 reservists – most of significant less readiness for operational employment. There are a further approximately 4,500 personnel in active Coast Guard units, and approximately 3.5 million paramilitary reservists in the Civilian Defense Corps.

South Korea’s armed forces are well trained and equipped, exercising regularly, including with the US. The capacity to defend against North Korea’s ballistic-missile arsenal is a priority, with defensive and offensive systems being purchased to address this. Seoul also is in the process of acquiring or developing a number of stand-off precision-strike systems, including both cruise and ballistic missiles. In 2014 the ROK selected the F-35 to meet its future combat-aircraft requirements, with initial deliveries expected to begin in 2018. Meanwhile, the first of four additional tanker aircraft was delivered in February 2017.
Republic of Korea Military Forces in 2017

The ‘total force’ columns represent the maximum military ground/air/maritime capability resourced by the nation. The ‘max equiv potentially available expeditionary’ columns reflect the portion of the total force which reasonably could be employed outside of the national territory within the next year (taking into consideration reserve mobilization and training times, supportability with available combat service support structure and national logistics, interoperability, commitments to home defense, etc.).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NATION</th>
<th>Total Force</th>
<th>Ground</th>
<th>Max Equiv Potentially Avail Expeditionary</th>
<th>Air</th>
<th>Max Equiv Potentially Avail Expeditionary</th>
<th>Sea</th>
<th>Max Equiv Potentially Avail Expeditionary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Republic of Korea (South Korea)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>ACTIVE</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>46 BDE</td>
<td>29 BDE</td>
<td>3 FS (F-15)</td>
<td>9 SSG</td>
<td>4 SSG</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 SSMB</td>
<td></td>
<td>8 FS (F-16)</td>
<td>9 SAG</td>
<td>4 SAG</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2 PAC3B</td>
<td>15 ASFC</td>
<td>1 FS (F-50)</td>
<td>2 MCMG</td>
<td>1 MCMG</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>50 ASFC</td>
<td></td>
<td>9 FS (F-5)</td>
<td>1 ARG, 4 MEB</td>
<td>1 ARG, 2 MEB</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RESERVE</td>
<td>24 BDE</td>
<td>12 BDE</td>
<td>3 FS (F-4)</td>
<td>1 UAVS(R)</td>
<td>1 UAVS(R)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>1 UAMV(R)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

BDE = ground combat brigade  
FS = fighter squadron (approx 20 planes)  
AWAC = Airborne Warning & Control Package  
SSG = diesel pwr'd atk submarine group (2 boats)  
SAG = surface action and/or anti-sub group  
ARG = amphib lift group (incl escorts)  
UAVS(R) = Unmanned air vehicle squadron (recon)  
NSFT = Naval Special Forces Tm (approx. 20 pers)  
SSMB = Surface-to-surface missile Bde (12 launchers)\(^1\)  
PAC3B = Patriot PAC3 Battery (6 launchers)  
MDSAG = Missile defense surface action group  
BS = bomber squadron (approx 10-12 planes)  
ALS = airlift squadron [C-5/C-17 equiv]  
CSG = Carrier Strike Group (incl escorts & aircraft)  
SSNG = nuclear pwr'd atk submarine group (2 boats)  
MCMG = mine counter mine group  
MEB = Marine/Naval Inf Amphib Brigade  
UAVS(A) = Unmanned air vehicle squadron (attack)  
ASFC = Army Special Forces Com (approx. 80 pers)  
ASMB = Anti-ship missile Bde (16 launchers)  
THAAD B = Thtr BMD Btry (6 launchers)

\(^1\) Approx 2 reloads per launcher. Short/medium range missiles; see strategic attack chart for long range systems.
Republic of Korea Military Forces in 2017

Republic of Korea Missile Defense and Strategic Attack in 2017

The following chart depicts national military capabilities for defense against missile threat and for conducting long range/strategic attacks, available in 2017.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NATION</th>
<th>Missile Defense</th>
<th>Strategic Attack</th>
<th>Space Systems</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Republic of Korea</td>
<td>none</td>
<td>2 Yonhap IRBM, 100 Hunyong3 LACM</td>
<td>2 ComSat, 3 ISR, 6 Misc Sat, 1 Ground station</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(South Korea)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

BMD = Ballistic Missile Defense suitable vs. ICBMs
IRBM = Intermediate Range Ballistic Missile
SSBN = Nuclear Ballistic Missile Submarine
SSGN = Nuclear Guided Missile Submarine
ICBM = Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (fixed site)
MICBM = Mobile Intercontinental Ballistic Missile
BS = Bomber Squadron (approx 10-12 planes) capable of delivering nuclear weapons

Just beginning operational fielding in 2017, the Yonhap IRBM can range all of the DPRK, but currently has conventional warhead capability only.

The Hunyon3 Land Attack Cruise Missile also can range all of the DPRK; it also is conventional warhead only.

South Korea has no space launch capability; all South Korean satellites have been carried on US space launch missions.
Republic of Korea Military Forces in 2017

South Korean “Strategic” IRBM and LACM Range Fan
Cyber and the ROK Military

South Korea established a Cyber Warfare Command Centre in early 2010, with over 200 personnel, in the wake of a substantial distributed denial-of-service attack in 2009. The new center responds to the attention given to cyber and information security by the National Intelligence Service and the Defense Security Command.

In early 2014, the first meeting took place of a new Korea–US National Defense Cyber Cooperation Working Group, designed to share information and enhance cooperation in terms of policy, strategy, doctrine and training.

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2 Cyber information is from the 2015 Military Balance, Chapter 6, p 266.