The Korea Chair team takes a biweekly look at events of interest in Washington, Seoul, and the region.

**U.S.-ROK RELATIONS**

**Under Secretary of State Wendy Sherman Visits Seoul**

The U.S. under secretary of state for political affairs, Wendy R. Sherman, visited Seoul from January 28 to 29. This was her second visit to Seoul since she was appointed in September 2011. She met with ROK minister of foreign affairs Yun Byung-se on the 29th to talk about policies between the United States and ROK, including ways to strengthen bilateral cooperation on regional and global security.

**ROK-U.S. Disarmament and Nonproliferation Consultation**

The 2015 ROK-U.S. Disarmament and Nonproliferation Consultation will take place on January 30 in Seoul. The meeting will be led by the ROK deputy minister for multilateral and global affairs Shin Dong-ik and the U.S. under secretary of state for arms control and international security Rose Gottemoeller. The meeting has been held twice since 2013 in order to strengthen the cooperation on disarmament and nonproliferation policies between the two allies.

**United States and ROK Launch Joint Military Division**

On January 16, U.S. and ROK officials announced the launch of a combined division, led by U.S. Major General Thomas S. Vandal, head of the 2nd Infantry Division, with ROK Brigadier General Ahn Sung-hwan serving as the deputy commander. The new division falls under the Eighth Army and is composed of the 2nd Infantry Division and a ROK mechanized infantry brigade.

**REGIONAL RELATIONS**

**Special Representative for North Korea Policy Sung Kim in Tokyo for Trilateral Meeting**

U.S. special representative for North Korea policy Sung Kim was in Japan from January 27 to 28 for a trilateral meeting with the Japanese director general for Asian and Oceanian affairs Junichi Ihara and ROK special representative for Korean peninsula affairs Hwang Joon-kook to discuss North Korea policy. Special envoy for the Six-Party Talks Sydney Seiler and National Security Council director for Korea Allison Hooker accompanied Kim on the trip.

**TRADE AND ECONOMICS**

**Korea Night 2015 Held on Sidelines of WEF**

On January 22, President Park Geun-hye spoke via a video message to the Korea Night 2015 event held on the sideline of the World Economic Forum in Davos (WEF), Switzerland, by the Federation of Korean Industries. She said that unification will bring new engines of growth not only to the Korean peninsula, but also to Eurasia and the global economy. ROK minister of foreign affairs Yun Byung-se attended and also spoke at the Korea Night event at Davos.
DOMESTIC POLITICS

Annual Ministries Policy Report Meeting at the Blue House
On January 19, the Ministry of Unification, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of National Defense, and Ministry of Patriots and Veteran Affairs presented their 2015 plans to President Park during an annual policy report meeting at the Blue House. Earlier on January 6, 2015, the Ministry of National Defense had also released its 2014 Defense White Paper, the first under President Park Geun-hye's administration.

GLOBAL RELATIONS

South Korea and Bolivia Discuss Bilateral Cooperation
Foreign Minister Yun Byung-se of the ROK met with Foreign Minister David Choquehuanca of Bolivia in Seoul on January 12, 2015 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of bilateral diplomatic relations. The last time a Bolivian foreign minister visited South Korea was in 1996, nineteen years ago. The two ministers spoke about enhancing bilateral cooperation on political affairs, the economy, infrastructure, and development.

National Assembly Speaker Visits Myanmar and Laos
From January 19-25, National Assembly Speaker Chung Ui-hwa visited Myanmar and Laos on his first official overseas trip in 2015. On January 19, Speaker Chung met with President Thein Sein, the Chairperson and General Secretary of the National League for Democracy, member of the House of Representatives for Kawhmu Aung San Suu Kyi, and Speaker of the House of Representatives Thura Shwe Mann in Naypyidaw, Myanmar. On January 22, Speaker Chung met with President Choummaly Sayasone and the Speaker of the Lao National Assembly Pany Yathotu in Vientiane, Laos. During those meetings Speaker Chung reiterated the importance of trade and economic relations.

Looking Ahead
Our Friday morning preview of events to watch in the weeks ahead.

- **February 9-10** | ROK National Assembly confirmation hearings are scheduled to be held for prime minister nominee Representative Lee Wan-koo.

- **February 17** | Commemorating the one year anniversary of the UN commission of inquiry report, CSIS will co-host an international conference “North Korean Human Rights: The Road Ahead” in Washington, D.C.

- **Spring 2015** | The 2015 annual Key Resolve/ Foal Eagle Exercise is expected to take place in South Korea.

- **May 9** | Russia will celebrate the 70th anniversary of its victory in World War II. Many world leaders, including Kim Jong-un, have been invited to the celebration in Moscow.
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