



MEDIA TALKING POINTS

Subject: ROK espionage allegations
Date/Version: 3 May 2013/version 2

Talking Points

What's DFAT's response to information released by the Federal Court providing information on South Korean intelligence-gathering activities in Australia?

- It is the long-standing practice of Australian Governments not to comment on intelligence matters.

Will the disclosures affect Australia's relations with South Korea?

- No.

Will the disclosures affect Australia's strong support for South Korea in the face of North Korean provocations?

- No. Australia condemns North Korea's threats which are raising tensions in our region and applauds South Korean President Park's calm and constructive response to North Korea's hostility.
- We strongly support President Park's call for North Korea to "change course" and abandon its nuclear weapons and missiles and stop its provocations and threats.

Background (not for public use)

On 2 May 2013, The *Canberra Times* reported extensively on the activities of the South Korea n National Intelligence Service (NIS) in Australia. The report was based on a Federal Court decision to release information tendered in a pending case, an appeal by an ABARES employee, Dr Yeon Kim, against the loss of his security clearance on the advice of ASIO. Dr Kim had not reported contacts with Australia-based NIS officers as required. The report claims the case is "embarrassing to Seoul and Canberra as Australia has strongly backed South Korea in its standoff with North Korea".

Follow-up stories in the Sydney Morning Herald and Australian Financial Review on 3 May 2013 referred to Fair Work Australia's decision in the case of former Sydney-based AFP employee Bo-rim (Bryan) Kim and his involvement with "a South Korean agent". Kim had also appealed against the removal of his security clearance, but his appeal has been turned-down and the judgment has just been released. Kim's case was referred to in the Canberra Times and Sunday Age on 7 April 2013 but his name and the identity of the "foreign representative" to whom he provided material was not mentioned. The Sydney Morning Herald and Australian both referred to Senator Carr's 2 May statement that "the relationship with the Republic of Korea is so strong, so robust that this will have no effect on it".

Media Interest

Moderate.

Approval

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