

The 39th Security Consultative Meeting Joint Communiqué

November 7, 2007, Seoul

1. The 39th Republic of Korea – United States Security Consultative Meeting (SCM) was held in Seoul on November 7, 2007. ROK Minister of National Defense Kim Jang Soo and U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates led their respective delegations which included senior defense and foreign affairs officials. Before the SCM, the Chairman of the ROK Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Kim Kwan Jin and the Chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Michael G. Mullen presided over the 29th ROK-U.S. Military Committee Meeting (MCM) on November 6, 2007.
2. Secretary Gates expressed appreciation for the ROK's continued support to the War on Terror, highlighting the important contributions of the ROK armed forces in both Iraq and Afghanistan and their role in advancing freedom for the Iraqi and Afghan people. The Minister and the Secretary reviewed the way ahead and agreed that bilateral cooperation between the two countries on the Global War on Terrorism continues to strengthen the ROK-U.S. Alliance.
3. The Minister and the Secretary welcomed the progress achieved in inter-Korean relations at the 2007 South-North Summit. Minister Kim explained that South Korea and North Korea agreed to jointly endeavor to reduce tension on the Korean Peninsula, and hold a defense ministers' meeting to discuss military confidence-building measures in this regard. The Minister and Secretary agreed that the ROK-U.S. Alliance would continue to assist in advancing peace and stability on the peninsula and in the region and further agreed to closely consult and coordinate in this regard.
4. The Secretary and the Minister welcomed the resumption of the Six Party Talks and the progress made toward the implementation of the September 19, 2005, Joint Statement. They noted positively that the ROK and U.S. are committed to work together

to achieve the early and complete denuclearization of North Korea, establish peace on the Korean Peninsula and promote peace and security in Northeast Asia through the complete implementation of the September 19 Joint Statement wherein North Korea agreed to abandon all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programs, to return, at an early date, to the Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and to International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards. In addition, the Minister and the Secretary agreed that North Korea's continued development of WMD and long-range missiles, along with the danger of proliferation, were a challenge to the ROK-U.S. Alliance.

5. The Minister and the Secretary agreed that the ROK-U.S. Alliance, along with the U.S. forces stationed in Korea, continuously ensure the security of the Korean Peninsula and the stability of Northeast Asia. Secretary Gates offered assurances of firm U.S. commitment and immediate support towards the ROK, including continuation of the extended deterrence offered by the U.S. nuclear umbrella, consistent with the ROK-U.S. Mutual Defense Treaty. Minister Kim reaffirmed the ROK commitment to mutual defense for the preservation of peace and security.

6. The Minister and the Secretary received reports on the results of the ROK-U.S. Security Policy Initiative (SPI) discussions and expressed satisfaction that through close consultations, the ROK and the U.S. are making progress on pending issues, including the transition of wartime operational control of ROK forces and the relocation of United States forces based in Korea. The Minister and the Secretary agreed to continue SPI consultations in 2008 and beyond, based on the significant accomplishments of the past three years.

7. The Secretary and the Minister shared the view that since 2003, the two nations have successfully resolved alliance issues including relocation and realignment of U.S. Forces Korea, transition of wartime operational control, and strategic flexibility, in order to

transform and strengthen the ROK-U.S. Alliance to meet the demands of the changing security environment and future security needs. The Minister and the Secretary agreed that the ROK-U.S. Alliance remains vital to the future interests of the two nations and that a solid combined defense posture should be maintained in order to secure peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula and in Northeast Asia. Both sides stressed their determination to ensure that the capabilities of the ROK-U.S. combined forces remain at peak readiness and continue to improve.

8. The Minister and the Secretary reviewed the progress since the ROK-U.S. Defense Ministerial Meeting held on February 23, 2007, where the two countries agreed to complete the transition of wartime operational control on April 17, 2012. Both sides highly praised the substantial and significant progress that has been made toward implementation since the ROK Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Senior United States Military Officer Assigned to Korea, representing the U.S. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, agreed upon the Strategic Transition Plan (STP) on June 28, 2007. In noting the strong momentum behind this effort, Secretary Gates offered firm assurances that the transition of wartime operational control will be carried out in a manner that strengthens deterrence and maintains a fully capable ROK-U.S. combined defense posture on the Korean Peninsula. The Secretary reaffirmed that the U.S. will continue to provide significant bridging capabilities until the ROK obtains full self-defense capabilities. Secretary Gates further noted that the U.S. will continue to contribute U.S. unique capabilities to the combined defense for the life of the Alliance. Noting that the transition of wartime operational control will strengthen deterrence on the Korean Peninsula, both sides pledged their fullest commitment to meeting agreed upon benchmarks and timelines regarding the transition. In particular, efforts will be made to work together closely to develop new operational plans based on the new supporting-to-supported command relations structure created by the transition of wartime OPCON and to implement a robust combined exercise schedule to further ensure readiness.

9. The Secretary and the Minister praised agreements reached on the Roadmap for the Armistice Maintenance Responsibility (AMR) adjustment through the Senior Level Working Group, and expressed their satisfaction with the progress. In accordance with the Roadmap, both sides agreed to complete the AMR adjustment between the UNC and the ROK military before the transition of wartime operational control in 2012.

10. The Minister and the Secretary expressed satisfaction with the progress of USFK base relocation and returns. Secretary Gates expressed his appreciation towards the ROK government for the dedicated efforts made in this regard and both sides agreed to exert a joint effort to advance the relocation and return of United States Forces Korea bases.

11. The Secretary and the Minister noted that the successful completion of the modernization of Jik-do training range is helping to ensure appropriate training conditions for the ROK and U.S. Air Forces. Both sides acknowledged that ensuring sufficient and sustained training conditions for USFK is of critical importance for combined readiness and agreed to make continuous efforts to enhance training conditions.

12. The Minister and the Secretary welcomed the conclusion of the Special Measures Agreement for 2007-2008, and assessed that defense cost-sharing contributes to strengthening combined defense capabilities on the Korean Peninsula. Secretary Gates offered his appreciation for the ROK's contributions to the stationing costs for U.S. forces in the ROK. Both sides agreed to improve the current cost sharing system and continue consultations toward that end.

13. The Secretary and the Minister voiced their strong support for legislation introduced in the U.S. Congress in July to elevate ROK Foreign Military Sales (FMS) Status noting

that this would enhance defense cooperation between the two countries and further strengthen ROK-U.S. combined defense capabilities.

14. Both sides positively recognized the work of the SCM subcommittees (the Security Cooperation Committee (SCC), the Defense Technology and Industrial Cooperation Committee (DTICC), and the Logistics Cooperation Committee (LCC)). Both sides noted that negotiations are on-going regarding the War Reserve Stockpile for Allies – Korea (WRSA-K) and encouraged both teams to conclude an agreement in the coming year and report to the 40th SCM on the results.

15. The Secretary and the Minister concurred that through intense discussions on alliance issues, the 39th SCM and the 29th MCM not only strengthened the ROK-U.S. Alliance but also significantly contributed to its continued development into a future-oriented, comprehensive, dynamic and mutually beneficial partnership. Both sides agreed to hold the 40th SCM at a mutually convenient time in 2008 in Washington D.C.