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## News Release

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**IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **41st U.S.-RoK Security Consultative Meeting Joint Communiqué**

The following is the text of a joint communiqué issued in Seoul, Korea, on Oct. 22, 2009.

1. The 41st Republic of Korea – United States Security Consultative Meeting (SCM) was held in Seoul on October 22, 2009. ROK Minister of National Defense Kim, Tae Young 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 Lee, Sang-eui and the Chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Michael G. Mullen, presided over the 31st ROK-U.S. Military Committee Meeting (MCM) on October 21, 2009.
2. The Minister and the Secretary reaffirmed the commitment of the ROK and U.S. Presidents to build a comprehensive strategic Alliance of bilateral, regional and global scope, based on common values and mutual trust, as set forth in the Joint Vision for the Alliance of the ROK and the U.S. on June 16, 2009. They also agreed to closely cooperate to implement and build upon the Joint Vision through continued development of measures for the direction of ROK-U.S. defense cooperation, thereby further strengthening the Alliance for the 21st Century.
3. The Minister and the Secretary reiterated that the ROK and the U.S. will not accept North Korea as a nuclear weapon state. They discussed North Korea's missile and nuclear tests in April and May 2009 and recent short-range ballistic missile launches. The Minister and the Secretary reaffirmed these acts clearly violate UN Security Council resolutions and Six-Party Talks agreements; undermine the global non-proliferation regime; and constitute direct and grave threats to peace and stability not only for the ROK and regional neighbors, but also the entire international community. The Minister and the Secretary agreed to closely cooperate on the full and faithful implementation of UN Security Council resolutions 1718 and 1874, and to continue joint efforts to achieve the complete and verifiable denuclearization of North Korea in a peaceful manner through the Six-Party Talks.
4. Secretary Gates reiterated his support for the ROK Government's efforts to reduce tensions on the Korean Peninsula and develop inter-Korean relations for mutual benefits and common prosperity through dialogue, while making the denuclearization of North Korea a top priority. The Minister and the Secretary agreed to further strengthen defense cooperation, ensuring combined readiness to effectively address future challenges and emerging needs in the security environment. They reaffirmed the important role that the ROK-U.S. Alliance has in maintaining peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula.
5. The Minister and the Secretary reaffirmed the two nations' mutual commitment to the fundamental mission of the Alliance to defend the Republic of Korea through a robust combined defense posture, as well as to the enhancement of mutual security based on the Mutual Defense Treaty. They also agreed that the ROK-U.S. Alliance remains vital to the future interests of both nations in securing peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula and in Northeast Asia, and stressed their determination to ensure sufficient capabilities of the combined forces for the security of the Republic of Korea. Secretary Gates reiterated the firm and unwavering U.S. commitment to the defense of the ROK using both capabilities postured on the Korean Peninsula and globally available U.S. forces and capabilities that are strategically flexible to deploy to augment the combined defense in case of crisis. Minister Kim and Secretary Gates acknowledged this commitment is further demonstrated and strengthened by extending and normalizing tour lengths for all service members assigned to Korea to three years, along with the commitment to maintain the current U.S. troop level in Korea.
6. Secretary Gates reaffirmed the U.S. commitment to provide extended deterrence for the ROK, using the full range of military capabilities, to include the U.S. nuclear umbrella, conventional strike, and missile defense capabilities. Minister Kim conveyed his appreciation for the U.S. commitment and both sides agreed to work closely together to enhance the effectiveness of extended deterrence.
7. The Minister and the Secretary agreed to consult closely on the future combined force posture, making enhancements as necessary, to ensure that robust forces and capabilities are available to deter aggression against the ROK and defend against that aggression should deterrence fail. They also agreed to cooperate to maintain appropriate preparedness to implement the shared vision of regional and global contribution in support of mutual security interests.
8. The Minister and the Secretary agreed that the ROK-U.S. Alliance plays a significant role in fostering the peace, stability and prosperity in the region. They further agreed to work jointly to develop cooperative relations and to promote multilateral security cooperation in the region and globally, highlighting the important role that regional partners play in helping advance mutual interests of both the ROK and the U.S.

9. The Minister and the Secretary agreed that the ROK and the U.S. will continue to enhance close Alliance cooperation to address wide-ranging global security challenges of mutual interest, including through peacekeeping activities, stabilization and reconstruction efforts, humanitarian assistance, and disaster relief. In this regard, Secretary Gates expressed appreciation for the ROK's continued support to promote peace and stability in areas such as the Gulf of Aden and Lebanon. Minister Kim also expressed his appreciation for the U.S.' active support to enable the Korean military unit deployed to the Gulf of Aden to successfully conduct its missions. Secretary Gates noted with appreciation the Korean government's May 26, 2009 endorsement of and participation in the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) as a significant demonstration of cooperation in the global effort to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), acknowledging the importance of mutual support and cooperation on PSI-related activities, including exercises and information -sharing.

10. The Minister and the Secretary received a report on the results of the ROK-U.S. Military Committee Meeting from the Commander of the ROK-U.S. Combined Forces Command (CFC), General Walter L. Sharp, which highlighted that the combined defense posture is capable and ready to "Fight Tonight," and that it is prepared to effectively respond to any threat or provocation.

11. Having agreed with the CFC Commander's report that the transition of wartime OPCON of ROK military forces is proceeding smoothly and on schedule, and in accordance with the Strategic Transition Plan (STP), the Minister and the Secretary reaffirmed their intent for the transition to occur on April 17, 2012. They also reaffirmed that the implementation of the STP will be regularly assessed and reviewed at the annual SCM/MCM, with a close eye on North Korean threats, and reflected in the transition process. In this regard, they further noted the importance of the OPCON Certification Plan in ensuring the transition is implemented methodically to validate that the combined defense posture remains strong and seamless. The Minister and the Secretary praised the successful results of the Ulchi Freedom Guardian (UFG) exercise held in August 2009 as a demonstration of the capabilities of the ROK Joint Chiefs of Staff in leading the combined warfight. The Minister and the Secretary agreed to receive Interim Certification Reports and Final Certification Report at the SCMs until the transition is completed.

12. To ensure that the combined defense remains robust, the Secretary reaffirmed that the U.S. will provide specific and significant bridging capabilities until the ROK obtains full self-defense capabilities. Secretary Gates further noted the U.S. commitment to contribute U.S. enduring capabilities to the combined defense for the life of the Alliance. Additionally, the Minister and the Secretary agreed that the two militaries have made substantial progress on the development of military plans and strategic documents related to a range of situations to ensure the combined defense is prepared for an effective response. They agreed to continually conduct combined exercises for the maintenance, development, and readiness of a strong combined defense posture, both during the transition of wartime OPCON as well as afterwards.

13. The Minister and the Secretary received a report on the results of the ROK-U.S. Security Policy Initiative (SPI) meetings over the past year, and expressed satisfaction that, through close consultations, the ROK and the U.S. are making significant progress on important issues in further developing the Alliance, including: ensuring an effective combined defense, proceeding with the implementation of U.S. Forces Korea (USFK) relocation and camp returns, and articulating a shared future vision for the Alliance. The Minister and the Secretary agreed to continue SPI consultations in 2010 and beyond, based on the significant accomplishments of the past five years and the mutual desire to continue to enhance the ROK-U.S. Alliance.

14. The Minister and the Secretary acknowledged the progress on USFK base relocation and camp returns. The Minister and the Secretary agreed to work closely together to complete successfully base relocation and camp returns, noting that the efficient and effective completion of these cooperative joint efforts are in the best interest of both nations. The Minister and the Secretary agreed to minimize challenges and to strive for rapid completion of the Yongsan Relocation Plan (YRP) and Land Partnership Plan (LPP). The Minister and the Secretary expressed satisfaction with the agreement on the Joint Environmental Assessment Procedure (JEAP), established in March 2009 to facilitate bilateral cooperation for camp returns, noting that the JEAP is expected to be successfully applied to complete the return of seven facilities, including Camp Hialeah, by the end of the year.

15. The Minister and the Secretary expressed satisfaction with the 8th Special Measures Agreement (SMA), signed on January 15, 2009, effective from 2009 to 2013. Secretary Gates offered his appreciation to the ROK, emphasizing that the ROK's host nation support significantly contributes to a stable stationing environment for USFK. The Minister and the Secretary shared the view that the new SMA will play an important role in enhancing the combined defense posture and strengthening the Alliance. Both sides agreed to work closely together to implement the recently agreed in-kind contribution program.

16. Secretary Gates expressed sincere appreciation to Minister Kim for the courtesy and hospitality extended to him and his delegation by the Government of the Republic of Korea, and for the excellent arrangements which contributed to the success of the meeting. The Minister and the Secretary agreed that the discussions during the 41st SCM and 31st MCM contributed substantively to strengthening the ROK-U.S. Alliance and further enhanced the development of the bilateral defense relationship into a comprehensive strategic Alliance. Both sides agreed to hold the 42nd SCM in Washington, D.C. at a mutually convenient time in 2010.

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