



*Embassy of the United States of America*

November 3, 2009

ATTN: Lee Ji-Eun  
Coordinator  
People's Solidarity for Participatory Democracy  
132 Hongin-dong, Jongro-gu, Seoul  
(110-043)

Dear Mr. Lee:

Thank you very much for your facsimile, which we received October 27 here at the U.S. Embassy. Your questions about the U.S. Government's position related to the Republic of Korea's provision of assistance to the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan are quite timely, especially given the announcement this past Friday, October 30 by the Republic of Korea that it would expand its Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Afghanistan.

The Office of the Press Secretary of the White House issued the following statement on October 30, in response to the announcement by the Government of the Republic of Korea:

We welcome the announcement by the government of the Republic of Korea to expand its assistance to the Government of Afghanistan and its people by establishing a Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT), in addition to the Medical and Vocational Training Team that South Korea is already operating. This is an important contribution to the international effort in Afghanistan and to fostering reconstruction and stability in the region. The U.S. will continue to work closely in partnership with Korea as we support the people and government of Afghanistan.

Regarding the questions you pose concerning the U.S. position on Korean assistance to Afghanistan, Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, in questions taken from the press on October 22 in Seoul, said:

The United States very much appreciates the assistance that the Republic of Korea has provided over the recent years in both Iraq and Afghanistan. We're very mindful of the sacrifice involved in that and the commitment.

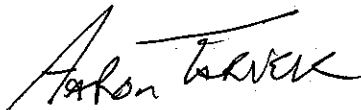
As far as going forward, I've made no specific requests during my visit here in terms of Afghanistan.

It's entirely up to the government of the Republic of Korea what it chooses to do in Afghanistan. There are, as I just indicated, a range of needs from helping to pay for the expansion and sustainment of the Afghan army and police to civil projects, economic reconstruction and so on. And so we obviously welcome any contributions that any countries around the world are prepared to make, but that decision is entirely up to what and how much to contribute, it's entirely up to the government of the Republic of Korea.

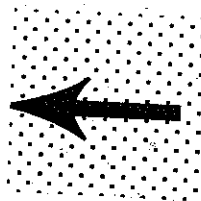
To that end, I am attaching transcripts of Secretary Gates' joint press availability with Defense Minister Kim, as well as a transcript of his remarks to U.S. troops at Yongsan Garrison on October 21.

If you have further questions, please feel free to contact us. Thank you very much!

Sincerely,



Aaron Tarver  
Spokesperson  
U.S. Embassy Seoul



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