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**Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright**

Press Conference, Koryo Hotel

Pyongyang, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, October 24, 2000

As released by the Office of the Spokesman

U.S. Department of State

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**SECRETARY ALBRIGHT:** I came to Pyongyang to convey directly to Chairman Kim Jong Il the views of President Clinton and to prepare for a possible visit by the President to the DPRK. During my visit, I have held six hours of serious and constructive talks with Chairman Kim, and also had an opportunity to meet with him more informally over dinners and at cultural events.

I also met with Vice Marshall Jo Myong Rok, Presidium President Kim Yong Nam, and Foreign Minister Paek Nam Sun.

I want to thank Chairman Kim, Vice Marshall Jo, and the North Korean people for the exceptional hospitality they have shown me and our delegation during this first ever visit by an American Cabinet Officer to the DPRK. I was struck by the beauty of Pyongyang, and by the genuine sweetness of the children.

I explained to Chairman Kim America's vision for relations between our countries free from past hostility, relations which contribute to peace and stability throughout the region, and which support the process of reconciliation between the North and the South.

It is important that we work to overcome the enmities of the past and focus on the prospect for a brighter future for our peoples.

Chairman Kim and I had serious, constructive, and in-depth discussions of proposals on diplomatic relations, missile restraint, and security issues.

Chairman Kim and I discussed the full range of our concerns on missiles, including both the DPRK's indigenous missile programs and exports. We also discussed Chairman Kim's idea of exchanging DPRK restraint in missiles for launches of DPRK satellites. Chairman Kim was quite clear in explaining his understanding of U.S. concerns.

Indeed, during the October 23 mass performance we attended together, an image of the DPRK Taepodong missile appeared. He immediately turned to me and quipped that this was the first satellite launch and it would be the last.

While here, I also raised with our DPRK hosts the full range of our concerns, including global issues and compliance with international norms, terrorism, human rights, the need to obtain the fullest possible accounting of missing persons, humanitarian issues, and the need for concrete

steps at tension reduction on the Peninsula. We made important progress, but much work remains to be done, and I am pleased to announce that our missile experts will reconvene next week.

I also had an opportunity to visit a World Food Program distribution center and see with my own eyes some of the very talented and hopeful children to whom our food aid is directed, and I hope my visit here will be a step in helping them and all children on the Peninsula to build a better future.

I will be reporting back to President Clinton on these talks and consulting in Seoul with our Republic of Korea and Japanese allies.

Thank you and I am ready for your questions.

**QUESTION:** Madame Secretary, the quip you eluded to at the event last night: Do you take that as an unqualified pledge on Chairman Kim's part not to test missiles anymore?

**SECRETARY ALBRIGHT:** Well, as you well know, we have a moratorium on testing of all long-range missiles, and we obviously are continuing these very serious missile discussions. I take what he said on these issues as serious in terms of his desire and ours to move forward to resolve the various questions that continue to exist on the whole range of missile issues.

**QUESTION:** Madame Secretary, what steps do you think are necessary before a presidential trip would be warranted? What benefits would such a trip produce in terms of improving this relationship?

**SECRETARY ALBRIGHT:** First of all, I think it's very important to understand how long discussions have been going on in an attempt to have the North-South relationship improve and to also have a change in terms of our own relationship. This has been going on for at least a year and a half in a variety of venues and on a variety of subjects -- the whole range of subjects. And we are taking this on a very step-by-step approach and doing everything that we are doing in terms of U.S. national interests.

I will report to the President the results of this trip and the results of what I have described, characterized as constructive talks and the value, frankly, of face-to-face discussions. I believe that the six hours of serious talks that I had with the Chairman are a very good way, I think, to learn more about his intentions and those of his country. It's always useful to have these kinds of discussions, but I will be reporting to the President and he will make the decisions about future steps.

**QUESTION:** Madame Secretary, I'm curious a little bit about your personal impressions of this country. It's one that has been closed to Americans for many years. It's not easy for Americans to travel here. Your personal impressions of President Kim Jong Il and also of the performance last night -- given your background as a refugee from certain kinds of absolutist regimes, what your reflections are on that?

**SECRETARY ALBRIGHT:** First of all, I think we have to keep things in perspective. We haven't exactly seen a lot of this country. We have seen Pyongyang, and I must say even though I had seen some photographs that I found that it is an impressive city. Quite beautiful, I think, with its landscaping and heroic monuments, and I was obviously interested in seeing that. I found the performance last night -- first of all I wasn't born yesterday, and I have been a student of communist affairs all my life, and so one knows perfectly well how these performances are put together. I must say that I thought it was, of that kind of a performance, it was quite spectacular and amazing. And I just can assure you that these glasses that I have on are not rose-colored.

As far as the Chairman himself, I was obviously very glad to meet him. He is somewhat of a mystery to the world and to Americans. I spent, as I said, not only the six hours at meetings, but

our dinner last night and the performance. And we're going to be having dinner tonight. So there have been informal times, too. I think I would describe him as a very good listener and a good interlocutor. He strikes me as very decisive and practical and serious. We had serious discussions.

**QUESTION:** Madame Secretary, after two days of talks in Pyongyang, what is your suggestion to Japan? Do you, are you now hoping that Japan would go as quickly as the United States in improving its relations with the DPRK, or do you think that they should take their time and address their own concern about the Japanese Red Army terrorists and kidnapping incidents and so on? And have you got any indication whatsoever from the North Korean leaders that they would expel the Japanese Red Army terrorists sometime in the near future?

**SECRETARY ALBRIGHT:** I spoke with Foreign Minister Kono before I got to Pyongyang, and I'm looking forward to seeing him tomorrow in Seoul. I believe that it's very important for each country to determine its own pace. I do think there's value in our trilateral cooperation, which is unique, I think, in this circumstance. But everybody, each of the countries, we build on -- at least from the American perspective -- our relationship is being built on what President Kim Dae Jung was able to do. The Japanese have to make their own assessment, and it's very hard for me to judge what the North Korean reaction is to the Japanese conditions. We discussed it, but I think that it's difficult for me to make an assessment of what they will do.

**QUESTION:** Several of our European allies have announced intentions to resume relations. Did the Chairman indicate to you whether he would be interested in seeing an American liaison or a diplomatic facility open here? And secondly, on the missile issue, in the talks next week, does this indicate that there was enough progress made that you're trying to get closer to some kind of formal agreement, or does it indicate that we didn't make enough progress on this round of talks -- that other talks are needed?

**SECRETARY ALBRIGHT:** On representation, that's also been a subject that has been under discussion for some time and obviously the Chairman was interested in having just generally across the board, I think, more informal and formal relations with the United States.

I think that the fact that talks are resuming on the expert level is an important step forward, because there are numbers of issues that are discussed in a general way but that need to be discussed by experts specifically. So I would not take it as not enough work having been done. On the contrary, that we are in a very systematic way progressing in discussing what are clearly the most important issues.

**QUESTION:** You told us that you had lengthy discussions with our Chairman Kim Jong Il. I'd like to know what are your impressions of the Chairman, and also what kind of discussions did you have?

**SECRETARY ALBRIGHT:** I have to say that I was very gratified by the length of our discussions, by the fact that we took up all the subjects of importance to our side and presumably to his, and I found him a very practical and decisive listener and interlocutor.

**QUESTION:** Madame Secretary, by the State Department's own report, North Korea has one of the most repressive human rights records. How did you bring up this subject with the Chairman, what examples did you cite, and how did he respond?

**SECRETARY ALBRIGHT:** The issue of human rights was raised, the first time that we have raised it, obviously, by a Cabinet-level person. I think that it's obviously a subject of concern, but we have just begun our discussions on the subject. They, obviously, will continue.

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