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**Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright**

Press Availability with Korean Foreign Minister Lee, Japanese Foreign Minister Kono at Shilla Hotel after the Trilateral Meeting  
October 25, 2000, Seoul, South Korea  
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**FOREIGN MINISTER LEE:** *(English translation)* I am very pleased today to have this press conference to brief the results of the Secretary's visit to the North, in the presence of Minister Kono and Secretary Albright. In today's Trilateral Foreign Minister's Meeting, Secretary Albright explained in detail the results of her visit to North Korea, and Minister Kono briefed on the Japanese Government's plan and prospects for the Japan-DPRK normalization talks, and Minister Lee and myself presented views on the recent developments in South-North relations and future prospects. Based on this exchange of information and views, they consulted on the future direction of their North Korean policies. The three ministers shared the view that the historic inter-Korean Summit of last June greatly contributed to creating a positive environment for the improvement of U.S.-DPRK relations and Japan-DPRK relations.

In particular, they noted that significant progress has been made in U.S.-DPRK relations as President Kim Dae Jung advised President Clinton and Chairman Kim Jong Il on the importance of high-level direct contacts between the two countries. The ROK, the U.S. and Japan expressed the shared hope for further progress in the ongoing South-North dialogue on tension reduction, reconciliation and cooperation, and humanitarian assistance. They welcomed the recent positive developments such as Vice Chairman Jo Myong Rok's visit to the U.S. and Secretary Albright's visit to North Korea. They expressed hope for tangible progress in the forthcoming Japan-DPRK normalization talks slated for the end of October. The three countries also expressed hope that North Korea takes note of the importance of faithfully implementing the joint declaration of June 15<sup>th</sup> and the importance of making progress in its relations with the U.S. and Japan, and will continuously take positive measures.

In particular, the three countries confirmed that South-North reconciliation, cooperation, and tension reduction, coupled with improved U.S.-DPRK and Japan-DPRK relations, are the keys to promoting peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula and Northeast Asia and to strengthening efforts for global non-proliferation. The three countries agreed to further strengthen trilateral coordination in their undertakings to make further progress in their respective relations with the North. The Korean Government expects that progress in the U.S.-DPRK and Japan-DPRK relations will help South-North relations and vice-versa, and that these bilateral relations will be mutually complimentary in developing further progress in those relations.

As a conclusion, we support positively the results of Secretary Albright's visit to North Korea and we believe that the two sides had a serious discussion on mutual concerns, thereby making

important progress towards better relations between the United States and North Korea. Once again, I expect that those results will contribute greatly to the expansion and development of the South-North dialogue and relations. These are my remarks and this is the evaluation of the Korean Government, and now I would like to invite Secretary Albright and Minister Kono for their respective remarks.

**SECRETARY ALBRIGHT:** Good afternoon, I am very pleased to be able to join my colleagues here in Seoul. To begin, I want to publicly congratulate President Kim Dae Jung for his richly deserved Nobel Peace Prize. His efforts to end Cold War divisions and increase people-to-people contact between the North and the South merit the world's full support. The South-North dialogue is central to peace and stability. I was encouraged to hear while in Pyongyang of Chairman Kim Jong Il's continued backing for this process and I hope that it will succeed in improving lives on both sides of the 38th parallel. In our trilateral discussions today, my colleagues and I discussed a number of matters including my just-completed visit to the DPRK. I briefed the foreign ministers on my wide-ranging discussions, including those with Chairman Kim, and I will make a full report to President Clinton as soon as I return to Washington. As allies, the Republic of Korea, Japan, and the United States work closely to ensure that our support for stability on the Korean Peninsula and [in] East Asia is well coordinated and effective. In recent years, we have built a platform for progress through the Agreed Framework, the Four-Party talks, the Perry Report, and the exchange of high-level visits. We have begun to address in a serious way some of our differences with Pyongyang. The path to more normal relations has not been smooth and we are still much closer to its beginning than its end. But every step in the right direction is a step toward lasting peace in this region. Accordingly, we will continue to work together closely and to consult carefully. Our unity is crucial if we are to make further gains.

In closing, I would like to thank Foreign Minister Lee for hosting our meetings and lunch today, and I am grateful that Foreign Minister Kono was able to come to Seoul to join us. I look forward to seeing both of my friends at the APEC ministerial next month in Brunei. Thank you very much.

**FOREIGN MINISTER KONO:** (*English Translation*) Japan believes that Secretary Albright's dramatic visit to the North was an extremely meaningful one that, together with the ongoing progress with the North-South relations since the North-South summit in June, which made visible improvements in the situation on the Peninsula will contribute greatly to the relaxation of tension on the Peninsula. I believe that Secretary Albright must be very tired, having just concluded her trip to North Korea, and she has been kind enough to visit Seoul for this meeting with the Foreign Ministers of the Republic of Korea and Japan, and we are very grateful for this opportunity. I am also grateful to Foreign Minister Lee Jong Il and the Government of Korea for making preparations for this meeting at such short notice, especially so soon after the Asia-Europe Meeting.

As far as Japan is concerned, we are convinced that the progress in U.S.-North Korea relations will definitely have a positive impact on Japan-North Korea relations as well. As for our normalization talks next week in Beijing, Japan will hold its eleventh round of normalization talks with North Korea. Although there was a hiatus of seven years in between, since the resumption of the talks, after that hiatus of seven years, it will be the third round of talks.

In the upcoming normalization talks with the North, we would like to build on the report we heard from Secretary Albright and also the results of the meetings we had today with the three Foreign Ministers, and with perseverance, work on our negotiations to achieve further progress in the Japan-North Korea talks. At the meeting, we renewed our awareness that it will be important to see to it that our respective relations with the North -- with the DPRK -- will progress in such a way that they will positively influence each other and that we continue to seek a constructive response from the North to the security and humanitarian concerns of the international community.

To that end, our three countries -- that share such values such as, freedom, democracy and basic

human rights -- will need to keep up close coordination with each other, that's what basically we discussed.

**QUESTION:** My question is to Secretary Albright. During your visit to the North, they say there was no progress in the "missile problem." Was there any "terrorist list" problem? Was there any progress, please explain it to us. But if not, are you satisfied with the developments in the "missile problem," aside from the "terrorist list?" Is President Clinton going to visit North Korea or is he going to visit South Korea?

**SECRETARY ALBRIGHT:** Well, first let me say that on the terrorist list, that is a subject that we have been discussing with the North Koreans for some time now, and we had issued a communiqué on that, and they know what they need to do. Obviously, the subject came up, but it was not the central aspect of our discussions in Pyongyang because the North Koreans know what they have to do on that subject. We did obviously talk about the missiles and the idea of exchanging satellite launches for serious missile restraint, and we think that progress was made. And, as I said in Pyongyang, there will be expert level talks to discuss the subject further in the next week. As far as President Clinton's travel is concerned, no decisions have been made. I will brief the President when I return.

**QUESTION:** Madame Secretary, as you are aware, there are strong suspicions that North Korea may have developed one or more nuclear weapons before the Agreed Framework was signed. How important is it that North Korea be transparent about these activities if Northeast Asia is to achieve freedom from tension after all these years?

**SECRETARY ALBRIGHT:** Obviously, the nuclear issue has been one of central importance to us and the Agreed Framework has been central to a lot of our discussions, and our agreement and our implementation of it is important, and transparency is key. As one thinks about different relations with any country, but especially countries such as North Korea, transparency is essential. And I made the point any number of times in my discussions with Chairman Kim, whatever the subject we were talking about, was that confidence-building measures generally, and transparency, were absolutely essential if our relationship was to move forward.

**QUESTION:** My question is for Minister Kono and Secretary Albright, and this is on the [inaudible] issue, which is a matter of life for the Japanese people. Secretary Albright, did you raise this matter in your meeting with Chairman Kim Jong Il? And what was Mr. Kim's response to that? Mr. Kono, in the trilateral meeting today, what sort of explanations did you hear Secretary Albright make, and how do you evaluate that as [a member] of the Japanese Government? And would the Japanese preparations for the next round of talks change as a result of these explanations?

**SECRETARY ALBRIGHT:** I am afraid I missed the central word in your question.

**QUESTION:** That was on the abductee problem.

**SECRETARY ALBRIGHT:** I did raise it a number of times and I made it very clear to Chairman Kim that this was an issue that was important not only to the Japanese but also to us because, as I have now stated a number of times, it is essential that our three countries carry on these discussions in parallel, and that we reinforce each other in terms of making sure that each country's special concerns are met. And that is why this trilateral meeting has been so important, and why I felt that even before talking to President Clinton, that I would meet with our allies here in Seoul in order to go through the details and to make very clear that our work should be reinforcing.

**FOREIGN MINISTER KONO:** (*English Translation*) On the abductee issue, Secretary Albright just now responded in our trilateral meeting as well. This is exactly what I heard from Secretary Albright. Needless to say, this is an issue that we have discussed with the U.S. over and over again, and Secretary Albright is fully aware of the importance of the issue to Japan. It is with that understanding that Secretary Albright went to the meetings in North Korea. As she

stated just now, the issue was taken up at the meetings as well. How will this bear on the normalization talks next week, as Secretary Albright has stated just now, how we assess this is up to us. As far as Japan is concerned, how we will appraise their response on this issue, and how we are to address this, [well] this is a matter which we, the Japanese, have to give full thoughts to in preparation for the upcoming round.

**QUESTION:** This question is to Mr. Lee. With the rapid progress between the DPRK and the U.S., there is a great concern over the peace process or peace structure on the Korean Peninsula in order to change the truce system to a peace structure. What is your position on the Four-Party talks and your forecast for the meetings?

**FOREIGN MINISTER LEE:** (*English Translation*) The Korean Government, during the past two-and-a-half years, has been consistent in pursuing North Korean policies, and we have put an end to the Cold War structure of the past 50 years by eliminating the risks of war with a permanent peace structure on the Korean Peninsula. Upon this basic position, the Korean Government welcomes the rapid progress of relations between the U.S.-DPRK and Japan-DPRK, and we are going to utilize the framework of the Four-Party talks as South Korea [is] the foremost interlocutor, and we are going to continue with this process.

In connection with this, the historic summit meeting between the South and the North, in a joint declaration, the two sides confirmed the principal of resolution of the problem between the parties that are concerned, and all the other parties are welcoming this principle. So, the peace structure on the Korean peninsula will be realized with the welcome of all the other [members of the] international community.

**QUESTION:** Would you be willing to take the four Red Army persons who are still in North Korea? Have you had any discussions about this with the North Koreans? And is it your understanding that this would then allow North Korea to be taken off the terrorist list and international aid would flow to that country?

**FOREIGN MINISTER KONO:** (*English Translation*) Whether I got to the hijackers of the [inaudible]? We did have discussions in our meeting today. We would like to hear further details on this matter.

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