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**Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright**

Toast at Dinner Hosted by Chairman Kim Jong Il  
October 23, 2000, Pyongyang, Democratic People's Republic of Korea  
As released by the Office of the Spokesman  
U.S. Department of State

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*As Delivered*

**SECRETARY ALBRIGHT:** Chairman Kim Jong Il, Vice Marshal Jo, distinguished leaders of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on behalf of the United States of America, I want to thank you for your kindness and hospitality.

Vice Marshal Jo, we really enjoyed your visit earlier this month to Washington and now you have made us feel very welcome, and we appreciate it very much.

The exchange of letters and greetings between Chairman Kim Jong Il and President Clinton, the exchange of visits by senior officials from our respective lands, and our recent joint communique could not have been imagined only a few years ago. We do not move as rapidly as the performers in tonight's wonderful performance, but step by step we are moving toward a fundamental improvement in our relationship. This will benefit all the people of Korea and of the United States. I believe that our meetings during these two days will help us to move further down the road of cooperation. Mr. Chairman, the process in which we are now engaged is a process that your father President Kim Il-sung helped to begin. It can lead to reconciliation and reunification of the Peninsula and to more normal and prosperous relations between your government and others in the region and the world.

This process will succeed if we all profit from the lessons of the past and understand that confrontation is not the path to progress in this new era. We each must meet our responsibilities to eliminate threats, reduce tension, build confidence, and expand ties. We each must strive to open new avenues of communication, commerce and contacts. We must each do our part if the Cold War is truly to end and along with it the divisions that have caused such suffering to the people of Korea.

There is a great distance between our two lands, but as we are starting to discover through our visits, distance is no barrier to closer ties. The United States understands that differences developed over many decades are real and cannot be eliminated overnight. We must be pragmatic and recognize that the road to fully normal relations remains uphill.

But America's symbol is the eagle, a bird that soars. And Korea's pride is its mountains, which scrape the sky. There is no obstacle we cannot overcome if we make the strategic decision to do so together.

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Vice Marshal, and our other distinguished hosts, on behalf of my delegation, I want to thank you again for your hospitality.

I look forward to tomorrow's meetings and events. And I invite you to join me in a toast to the health of the people of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and to the growth of friendship between you and the people of the United States.

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