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Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright

Toast at Lunch Hosted by Vice Marshal Jo Myong Rok
October 24, 2000, Pyongyang, Democratic People's Republic of Korea
As released by the Office of the Spokesman
U.S. Department of State

SECRETARY ALBRIGHT: Vice Marshal Jo, distinguished guests, thank you so much for your hospitality today and throughout our visit to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

It's been a great pleasure for me to see your country and to visit with the citizens, and I am very grateful to you for having arranged to have this luncheon at this beautiful place, and to have the opportunity to drive through the colorful countryside.

I was pleased to have an opportunity to exchange views with Chairman Kim Jong Il, and to have renewed my acquaintance with you, Mr. Vice Marshal, and again, so recently and pleasantly

We have had many serious issues to discuss, and I'm heartened that we have been able to continue our talks in such a positive and constructive way.

The United States loves peace, and we want to see Cold War divisions end. We want countries in the region to feel secure from the threat of conflict or war. We want every nation to participate in the international system and to observe global norms, and we want to harness new technology to help people everywhere live better and richer lives.

These goals will benefit all Koreans and all Americans, and to achieve them we must each meet our responsibilities to fulfill commitment and eliminate threats. We must move with a steady stride away from the bitterness of the past and persist in the search for common ground.

Mr. Vice Marshal, I congratulate you for the role you and your government are playing in exploring new possibilities for fundamental change. The Joint Communiqué we issued at the end of your visit to Washington was a valuable addition to our understanding. Our talks this week are yet another sign that the desire to make progress is mutual.

We have far to go, but I am convinced that we are moving in the right direction.

And so this afternoon I would like to raise a glass to friendship between the American people and the citizens of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea -- and to all Koreans, a future marked by prosperity, reconciliation, and peace.

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