# NAPSNet Daily Report 12 October, 2000

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## I. United States

### 1. Albright To Visit the DPRK

USA Today (Barbara Slavin, "ALBRIGHT, CLINTON PLAN TO GO TO N. KOREA," Washington, 10/12/00) and Japan Economic Newswire ("ALBRIGHT TO VISIT N. KOREA AND MEET KIM JONG IL," Washington, 10/12/00) reported that US official said Wednesday that US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright will travel to the DPRK, possibly by the end of this month, to prepare an unprecedented meeting between US President Bill Clinton and DPRK leader Kim Jong-il. DPRK Vice Marshal Jo Myong-rok extended the invitation to Albright during meetings with Clinton and Albright. Accepting the invitation, Albright said, "I would like to say how much I look forward to visiting your country and meeting with Chairman Kim Jong-il." Jo was quoted as saying that he was pleased to report to Kim a "positive" response by the US to his visit. Jo said Kim is willing to remove the "confrontation and distrust from our bilateral relationship." The trip would be extraordinary because no sitting US president has ever met a DPRK leader. Critics of US policy toward the DPRK remain unconvinced that the small country intends to reform a repressive political system. They charge that the DPRK are prolonging a faltering regime by using its weapons programs to extort foreign aid. Policy supporters, however, say the DPRK has realized that it must reach out and that engagement is the only way to improve the lot of DPRK's 22 million people, who have suffered years of deprivation and famine. [Ed. note: The USA Today article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for October 12, 2000.]

Agence France Presse ("ALBRIGHT TO PREPARE CLINTON VISIT TO NORTH KOREA," Washington, 10/12/00) reported that US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright said Thursday that US President Bill Clinton could make a historic trip to the DPRK before he leaves office. Albright said, "The purpose of my trip will be to explore opportunities for further progress on a range of regional and bilateral issues. I will also be making preparations for a possible visit to North Korea by President Clinton. I will be going very soon, by the end of the month probably." While conceding that relations with the DPRK were moving in a "positive direction" Albright cautioned that deep differences remained which could not be "erased overnight." She added, "Our policy has been to explore through our diplomacy whether it's possible to remove, over time, the obstacles to a better and normal relationship." A US State Department official said there was no condition imposed by the DPRK that it should be removed from the US list of terrorism sponsoring states before Albright's visit.

**2. ROK View of US-DPRK Talks**

Korea Herald (Kang Seok-jae, "DEFENSE MINISTRY POSITIVE ON N.K. ENVOY'S VISIT," 10/12/00) reported that a ranking ROK Defense Ministry official said on October 11 that the landmark meeting between Vice Marshal Jo Myong-rok and US Defense Secretary William Cohen will likely have a positive impact on inter-Korean military ties. The official said, "Wednesday's meeting is expected to greatly help reduce the fifty years of hostility and distrust between the two countries." He said Jo's visit would also pave the way for the ROK and the DPRK to further build confidence and ease tensions on the Korean Peninsula. He added, "A breakthrough in North Korea-U.S. relations will inevitably lead to a further thaw in inter-Korean ties." The official based his prediction on Jo's implication on October 11 that DPRK could abandon its long-range missile development plan. The official said, "As the sensitive North Korean missile issue has been raised in meetings between North Korea and the United States, whatever the results may be, we will be in a better position to discuss comprehensive confidence-building measures with North Korea at the second round of defense ministers' talks slated for mid-November in the North." He also predicted that Jo's US visit would have a synergistic effect on the forthcoming inter-Korean military talks, including the proposed working-level meeting between the ROK and DPRK militaries on concrete cooperative steps for the cross-border railway and adjacent highway projects. [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for October 12, 2000.]

Korea Herald (Shin Yong-bae, "SEOUL WELCOMES U.S.-N.K. RAPPROCHEMENT," 10/12/00) reported that the ROK on October 11 welcomed the developments between the US and the DPRK. A senior foreign ministry official said, "It is what we have wanted, that the two countries are building a ground to normalize bilateral relations." He said the very fact that the DPRK and the US are holding high-level talks to discuss ways of improving relations is a positive development. Quoting unnamed sources in the US, some newspapers in the ROK reported that the DPRK and the US had agreed to open liaison offices at both capitals early next year as a step toward establishing ambassadorial-level relations. Another press report said that the DPRK and US were near an agreement to establish diplomatic relations and soon plan to discuss concrete measures to set up consulates or trade representative offices. However, the ROK foreign ministry official dismissed those reports as nothing but speculation. [Ed. note: This article was included in the US Department of Defense's Early Bird news service for October 12, 2000.]

Agence France Presse ("CHANCES HIGHER THAN EVER FOR US-NORTH KOREA RECONCILIATION," Seoul, 10/12/00) reported that analyst in the ROK said Thursday that there has never been a better chance for the reconciliation of the DPRK and the US than with the invitation of US President Bill Clinton to Pyongyang. Ho Moon- Yong, a fellow at the state-funded Korea Institute for National Unification in Seoul, said the new development was a reminder of former US president

Richard Nixon's visit to the PRC in 1972, which led to the normalization of US-China relations. Ho said, "Just like Nixon's visit, I think, Clinton's visit, if realized while in office, will eventually lead to diplomatic normalization. It could drive both sides to work harder for a new thaw, necessary for Clinton's landmark visit to the North, in the limited time. And what matters is that rapprochement is now on track anyway." Lee Chang-Hee, a professor of the Hankook University of Foreign Studies, said, "The transformation of the armistice agreement into a full peace treaty will likely be finalized by Clinton's visit to the North." Kim Sung-Han, of the Institute of Foreign Affairs and National Security, however, remained cautious about Clinton's DPRK visit. Kim said, "Albright's visit to North Korea is one thing, and negotiations on the pending issues are another." Chon Hyun-Joon of Korea Institute for National Unification said, "Washington seemingly wants to guage Pyongyang's real intention through Albright's direct meeting with North Korean leader Kim Jong-Il. On Pyongyang's side, it wants to shed off its rogue-state image while Albright and possibly Clinton visit the Stalinist state."

The Korean Herald (Shin Yong-bae, "CHANCES SLIM FOR QUICK OPENING OF U.S.-N.K. TIES," 10/13/00) reported that analysts in the ROK cast doubt over chances of an early normalization of ties between the US and the DPRK, despite signs of a rapid progress in relations. They said the outcome of a series of high-level talks between the two sides demonstrates that they are making moves to improve bilateral relations faster than expected. A senior foreign ministry official said, "It is true that both sides are heading toward normalizing ties. But their establishment of diplomatic ties will unlikely come soon." He cited as reasons the alleged lack of progress on negotiations between the two sides over halting the DPRK's nuclear and missile program, and DPRK's tactics to maximize their interests. The official said, "This is a common understanding shared among our ministry officials." The official also said that even though liaison offices or other types of diplomatic representation like consulates are established at both capitals as a preliminary step to establish ambassadorial-level relations, the missile issue will likely remain a pending one between the two sides. However, he added, "the opening of liaison offices will represent a significant progress in Pyongyang-Washington relations in that both sides will have a permanent consultative channel." Professor Kim Sung-han of the Institute of Foreign Affairs and National Security (IFANS), a government think tank, also presented a similar, pessimistic view on the possibility of the early opening of ties between the two sides. Kim did not expect the DPRK to give up the "most valuable bargaining chip" it has and it will be difficult for the US and DPRK to continue down the process of establishing ties without a settlement of the missile issue. He added, "At the earliest, it may take two years before the two sides set up formal diplomatic ties."

### 3. PRC View of US-DPRK Talks

Agence France Presse ("CHINA HAILS U.S.-NORTH KOREAN TALKS," Beijing, 10/12/00) reported that the PRC on Thursday welcomed the talks between the US and the DPRK, hoping they would help to foster stability in the region. PRC foreign ministry spokesman Zhu Bangzao said, "For years, the Chinese side has said that we welcome and support the improvement of relations between DPRK (North Korea) and the United States, leading to the final realization of the normalization of the relations between the two sides." Zhu said Vice Marshal Jo Myong-Rok's visit had been "very successful." He added, "The Chinese side hopes this kind of high level dialogue between DPRK and United States will help to improve the relations between the two countries and contribute to the maintenance of peace and stability in the region."

### 4. PRC Military Threat

US Department of State's Office of International Information Programs, ("U.S. STILL AHEAD OF

CHINA IN MILITARY CAPABILITIES SAYS REPORT," 10/11/00) reported that US Senator Daniel Akaka of Hawaii discussed a report prepared by the Congressional Research Service on October 10 which said the PRC has been busily acquiring high-tech upgrades, especially from Russia, for its military. The report entitled "China's Foreign Conventional Arms Acquisitions: Background and Analysis" said that despite the PRC's acquisitions, it still trails US forces in capability. Akaka said the report concluded that "the operational significance of these major qualitative upgrades through foreign arms acquisitions remains to be seen and will depend in large measure on the PLA's ability to demonstrate an ability to conduct effective joint military operations." The report compared the PRC's new conventional weapons to US capabilities, and found that "in most cases -- with some critical exceptions -- American forces still retain a tactical and strategic edge." However, Akaka said, the US "should not be complacent." He said the PRC is "for the first time in modern history, developing a capability to project air and naval forces" beyond its coastal areas." Akaka said the US "needs to seek ways to address any threat to American interests as a result of that capability not only through pursuing our own military modernization program but also through a strategic dialogue with China which reassures China that we have a shared desire in regional stability." According to the report, Akaka said, the catalyst for the PLA's modernization was the PRC's view that "its top security problem was preventing Taiwan's permanent separation and securing unification as 'one China.'" Additional security goals, he said, may have included preventing Japan's rise as "the strongest Asian power," ensuring PRC influence over the Korean Peninsula, supporting PRC's territorial claims in the East and South China Seas, "subduing India's quest for power," and countering US power in the Asia Pacific region.

### 5. Japan-DPRK Talks

Reuters, ("JAPAN, N.KOREA PLAN TALKS IN LATE OCTOBER," Tokyo, 10/12/00) reported that the Japanese media said Thursday that Japan is finalizing plans for a third round of talks with the DPRK aimed at establishing diplomatic relations. Chief Cabinet Secretary Hidenao Nakagawa was quoted by Kyodo news agency as saying representatives of the two countries were expected to meet in Beijing for three days from October 30. They have held two rounds of talks this year but have failed to narrow gaps over DPRK's demands for compensation for Japan's harsh rule of the Korean peninsula from 1910 to 1945 and Japan's insistence on resolving the issue of Japanese nationals it believes were kidnapped by DPRK agents.

The NAPSNet Daily Report aims to serve as a forum for dialogue and exchange among peace and security specialists. Conventions for readers and a list of acronyms and abbreviations are available to all recipients. For descriptions of the world wide web sites used to gather information for this report, or for more information on web sites with related information, see the collection of other NAPSNet resources.
We invite you to reply to today's report, and we welcome commentary or papers for distribution to the network.

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