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SOURCE: KODAKA.005117

DRAFTED BY: POL:POL:NFIFE -- 12/03/00

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E.O. 12958: DECL: AFTER KOREAN UNIFICATION

TAGS: OVIP (ALBRIGHT, MADELEINE K), PREL, PARM, PTER, JA, KN, KS

SUBJECT: SECRETARY ALBRIGHT'S OCTOBER 25 BILATERAL IN SEOUL WITH JAPANESE FM KONO

1. (U) CLASSIFIED BY DEPUTY EXECUTIVE SECRETARY CAROL Z. SECRET

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PEREZ FOR REASON: 1.5 (D).

2. (U) OCTOBER 25, 2000, GRAND HYATT HOTEL, SEOUL, KOREA.
3. (U) PARTICIPANTS

U.S.:

THE SECRETARY
AMBASSADOR TO JAPAN THOMAS FOLEY
AMBASSADOR WENDY SHERMAN, COUNSELOR OF THE DEPARTMENT
MR. STANLEY ROTH, ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR EAST ASIAN AND
PACIFIC AFFAIRS
MR. CHARLES L. PRITCHARD, SPECIAL ASSISTANT TO THE
PRESIDENT AND SENIOR DIRECTOR FOR ASIAN AFFAIRS, NSC

ASSISTANT TO CHAIRMAN OF JCS VICE ADMIRAL DORAN
MR. PAUL HERSEY, INTERPRETER

REVIEW AUTHORITY: Marvin Russell, Senior
Reviewer

MS. NAN FIFE, EMBASSY TOKYO POL OFF (NOTETAKER)

JAPAN:

FOREIGN MINISTER YOHEI KONO
AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA TERUJI KANEKO
DEPUTY VICE FOREIGN MINISTER TAKEJI UCHI
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MOFA DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR ASIAN AFFAIRS MAKITA
MOFA DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR AMERICAN AFFAIRS SUGISAKI
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT TO THE FOREIGN MINISTER HIROMATSU
MOFA KOREA DIVISION DIRECTOR UMEKIDO
INTERPRETER
NOTETAKERS

SUMMARY

4. (S) SECRETARY ALBRIGHT PROVIDED FOREIGN MINISTER KONO
HER ASSESSMENT OF DPRK LEADER KIM JONG IL AS A PRACTICAL
AND NON-IDEOLOGICAL LEADER WHO SHOULD BE ENGAGED DIRECTLY.
SHE INFORMED THE JAPANESE THAT SHE HAD RAISED THE
ABDUCTION AND JRA HIJACKER ISSUES WITH KIM JONG IL, URGING
HIM STRONGLY TO RESOLVE THE ABDUCTION QUESTION WITH THE
GOJ. THE SECRETARY REPORTED THAT THE DPRK WAS READY TO
MAKE A DEAL ON ALL ISSUES, INCLUDING GOODIES, BUT MANY
DETAILS STILL NEEDED TO BE CLARIFIED BEFORE AGREEMENTS CAN
BE CONCLUDED. CITING THE POSSIBLE OPPORTUNITY FOR A
BREAKTHROUGH IN RELATIONS WITH NORTH KOREA, THE SECRETARY
EMPHASIZED THAT THIS WOULD BE FAVORABLE FOR THE SECURITY
INTERESTS OF ALL THREE TOOPARTNERS.

5. (S) SUMMARY CONTINUED. FWI KONO EXPRESSED TOKYO'S
DETERMINATION TO MAKE EFFORTS TO NORMALIZE WHAT HAD BEEN
AN ABNORMAL RELATIONSHIP WITH PYONGYANG HE DESCRIBED THE
STRONG PUBLIC VIEWS IN JAPAN ON THE ABDUCTION QUESTION,
AND THE DIFFICULTY OF DETERMINING HOW TO OFFER AN
APOLOGY AND HOW TO STRUCTURE ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO
PREVENT DIVERSION. THE SECRETARY POINTED OUT THAT PUBLIC

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OPINION IN THE U.S. OF NORTH KOREA WAS ASSOCIATED WITH

SUGGESTED THAT THE GOJ MIGHT MAKE MORE PROGRESS ON
RESOLVING THE ABDUCTION ISSUE BY NOT MAKING IT A
PRECONDITION TO HIGH LEVEL DISCUSSIONS. THE SECRETARY
EXPLAINED THAT TERRORISM CONCERNS HAD NOT BEEN FORGOTTEN
EVEN THOUGH THE DPRK WAS NOT YET READY TO TAKE THE
ADDITIONAL STEPS REQUIRED. AMBASSADOR BERMAN SAID OUR
INITIAL JUDGMENT WAS THAT THE HOSTAGE CONVENTION DID NOT
APPLY IN A WAY THAT WOULD MAKE RESOLUTION OF THE ABDUCTION
ISSUE A PRECONDITION FOR REMOVING THE DPRK FROM THE

TERRORISM LIST. ENDS SUMMARY.

THE BLACK AND WHITE HUES OF COMMUNISM

6. (S) AS THEIR MEETINGS STARTED, FM/KONO REMARKED ON THE RELIEF HE FELT 35 YEARS AGO AFTER VISITING BEIJING, AT A TIME WHEN JAPAN HAD NO DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH THE PRC, WHEN HE CROSSED BY TRAIN INTO HONGKONG. HE SUGGESTED THAT THE SECRETARY MAY HAVE FELT SIMILARLY ON TRAVELING FROM PYONGYANG TO SEOUL. THE SECRETARY AGREED, NOTING THAT TRAVELING TO COMMUNIST COUNTRIES AS A PROFESSOR HE HAD EXPERIENCED THE CONTRAST BETWEEN THE EASTERN BLOCK AND THE WEST, LIKE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN BLACK AND WHITE AND TECHNOCOLOR.

CHARACTER OF KIM JONG IL

7. (S) THE SECRETARY UNDERLINED THE IMPORTANCE SHE
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ATTACHED TO THE BILATERAL MEETING OF THE TWO COUNTRIES' CLOSE RELATIONSHIP. SHE STATED THAT WHILE ALL TOCG PARTNERS HAVE SHARED CONCERNS EACH HAS ISSUES OF PARTICULAR IMPORTANCE WITH RESPECT TO THE DPRK. THE SECRETARY EXPRESSED HER HOPES THAT THE EARLIER BILATERAL MEETING PROVIDED AN UNDERSTANDING OF HER TRIP, BOTH WHAT WAS ACHIEVED AND WHAT REMAINED TO BE DONE. SHE VOICED SURPRISE AT THE AMOUNT OF TIME SHE WAS ABLE TO SPEND WITH CHAIRMAN KIM JONG IL DURING LENGTHY MEETINGS AND SOCIAL EVENTS. THE SECRETARY ACKNOWLEDGED THAT WE HAD FAILED IN THE PAST TO UNDERSTAND WHAT TYPE OF PERSON KIM JONG IL REALLY IS, BELIEVING HIM STRANGE, MOODY AND HYPERSENSITIVE. A FEW MONTHS AGO ROK PRESIDENT KIM DAE

JUNG HAD TOLD HER THAT THE EARLIER ASSESSMENT OF KIM JONG IL WAS WRONG, AND NOW SHE HAD HER OWN IMPRESSIONS.

8. (S) THE SECRETARY PORTRAYED KIM JONG IL AS PRACTICAL, PRAGMATIC, DECISIVE, AND NON-IDEOLOGICAL. THE SECRETARY SAID SHE FOUND KIM JONG IL WELL-INFORMED FROM HIS EXTENSIVE READING, NOTING THAT HE SAID HE HAD THREE COMPUTERS IN HIS OFFICE. SHE COMMENTED THAT SHE HAD EVEN ASKED FOR THE E-MAIL ADDRESS OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT. THE SECRETARY STRESSED THAT SHE CAME AWAY BELIEVING IT BEST TO FOLLOW KDJ'S ADVICE ON THE IMPORTANCE OF ENGAGING IN DIALOGUE WITH KIM JONG IL IN ORDER TO ASSESS HIS THINKING AND GET RESULTS.

SECRETARY RAISED ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

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9. ~~(S)~~ THE MEETING THEN CHANGED TO A SMALLER GROUP FORMAT CONSISTING OF THE SECRETARY, AMBASSADOR SHERMAN, AND AMBASSADOR FOLEY ON THE U.S. SIDE, AND FM KONO, DEPUTY VICE MINISTER TAKEUCHI, AND DG MAKITA ON THE JAPANESE SIDE, TOGETHER WITH INTERPRETERS AND NOTETAKERS. THE SECRETARY EMPHASIZED THAT SHE UNDERSTOOD THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ABDUCTION AND HIJACKER ISSUES TO THE JAPANESE PEOPLE, AND DEMONSTRATED HER SUPPORT BY BRINGING UP THESE MATTERS DURING THE VISIT. SHE EXPLAINED THAT SHE HAD RAISED WITH KIM JONG IL THE ISSUE OF JAPANESE CITIZENS BELIEVED ABDUCTED BY DPRK AGENTS, AND URGED HIM TO FIND A WAY TO WORK WITH THE GOJ ON A SOLUTION. THE SECRETARY SAID SHE BELIEVED KONO KNEW THAT RESOLUTION OF THE ABDUCTEES' CASES WAS NOT A LEGAL REQUIREMENT FOR NORTH KOREA'S REMOVAL FROM THE USG LIST OF STATE SPONSORS OF TERRORISM. SHE RECOMMENDED THAT THE GOJ ALSO CONSIDER THE ABDUCTIONS AS A HUMANITARIAN ISSUE OF DIVIDED FAMILIES, A CONCEPT THE NORTH KOREAN LEADERSHIP MIGHT UNDERSTAND BETTER.

10. ~~(S)~~ THE SECRETARY AFFIRMED THAT THE JAPANESE RED ARMY HIJACKERS WAS AN ISSUE THAT THE DPRK MUST RESOLVE BEFORE THE U.S. COULD CONSIDER REMOVAL FROM THE TERRORISM LIST. THE SECRETARY SAID SHE HAD FOUND IT INTERESTING THAT THERE WAS NO BIG PUSH BY HER INTERLOCUTORS IN PYONGYANG TO REMOVE THE DPRK FROM THE TERRORISM LIST, ALTHOUGH THE TWO

COUNTRIES HAD ISSUED A JOINT STATEMENT ON THE TOPIC OF TERRORISM EARLIER IN THE MONTH AND THE ISSUES HAD BEEN DISCUSSED DURING VICE MARSHALL JO MYONG ROK'S VISIT TO WASHINGTON. SHE DESCRIBED THE USG AS FIRM IN ITS POSITION THAT PYONGYANG MUST TAKE APPROPRIATE STEPS BEFORE IT CAN

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BE REMOVED FROM THE LIST. THE SECRETARY UNDERSCORED THE IMPORTANCE OF CONTINUED CLOSE CONSULTATIONS BETWEEN THE USG AND GOJ ON THESE ISSUES.

PYONGYANG DISCUSSIONS ON MISSILES

11. ~~(S)~~ THE SECRETARY THEN TURNED TO NORTH KOREA'S MISSILE PROGRAM, THE SUBJECT, WHICH SHE SAID, OCCUPIED MOST OF HER DISCUSSIONS IN PYONGYANG. SHE STRESSED THAT THIS INCLUDED EXTENSIVE DISCUSSION OF THE DPRK'S INDIGENOUS PROGRAMS, BOTH BETWEEN HERSELF AND KIM JONG IL AND DURING TECHNICAL TALKS CARRIED OUT BY A/S EINHORN. THE SECRETARY SAID SHE HAD BEEN CONCERNED THAT THE NORTH KOREANS WOULD DRAW A DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE TAEPODONG AND NODONG BUT, TO HER SURPRISE, KIM JONG IL HAD NOT DONE SO. INSTEAD HE STATED CLEARLY THAT HE WAS WILLING TO STRIKE A DEAL ON ALL LONG-RANGE MISSILES, INCLUDING NODONGS. KIM JONG IL ACKNOWLEDGED THAT HE KNEW OF U.S. CONCERN ABOUT NORTH KOREAN MISSILES THREATENING U.S. TERRITORY, AND ALSO OF JAPAN'S CONCERNS IN THIS AREA.

12. ~~(S)~~ THE SECRETARY SAID KIM JONG IL CONFIRMED THAT HE HAD BEEN SERIOUS IN HIS DISCUSSION WITH RUSSIAN PRESIDENT VLADIMIR PUTIN, AND THAT HE REMAINED INTERESTED IN EXPLORING THE LAUNCHES FOR SATELLITES CONCEPT. IT BECAME CLEAR DURING THE SECRETARY'S DISCUSSION OF THE DPRK'S INDIGENOUS PROGRAM AND MISSILE EXPORTS THAT NORTH KOREAN VIEWS HAD MUCH TO DO WITH THEIR ECONOMIC SITUATION AND DESIRE FOR CURRENCY. THE SECRETARY STATED THAT EVEN THOUGH KIM JONG IL ANSWERED QUICKLY A LIST OF QUESTIONS

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SHE PUT TO HIM, MANY DETAILS AND MODALITIES ARE STILL UNCLEAR AND MUST BE WORKED OUT CAREFULLY. SHE SAID A/S EINHORN WOULD RESUME MISSILE TALKS WITH THE DPRK IN KUALA LUMPUR THE FOLLOWING WEEK.

CHANCE FOR TRANSFORMED RELATIONS

13. ~~(S)~~ THE SECRETARY STATED THAT SHE THOUGHT ALL COUNTRIES WERE NOW QUESTIONING THEMSELVES ABOUT WHAT WAS HAPPENING IN THE DPRK AND WHAT EFFECT THE CHANGED RELATIONSHIPS MIGHT HAVE. SHE NOTED HER ASTONISHMENT THAT SHE HAD VISITED PYONGYANG AS SECRETARY OF STATE AND HAD A RATIONAL DISCUSSION WITH KIM JONG IL. THE SECRETARY UNDERSCORED THAT AN AGREEMENT ON RESTRAINING THE DPRK'S MISSILE PROGRAM WOULD BE A BREAKTHROUGH WITH A FAVORABLE IMPACT ON THE SECURITY INTERESTS OF BOTH THE U.S. AND JAPAN.

14. ~~(S)~~ THE SECRETARY DESCRIBED THE PACE OF DEVELOPMENTS AS SURPRISINGLY FAST. SHE STATED THAT THIS PUT US IN A POSITION WHERE FLEXIBILITY AND CREATIVITY WERE CALLED FOR, AND WE MUST BE PREPARED FOR CHANGES IN NORTH KOREA'S OUTLOOK TOWARD OUR COUNTRIES. WHILE WE CAN QUESTION WHY KIM JONG IL WAS MAKING THESE MOVES, AT THE SAME TIME WE MUST BE READY TO REACT. TO DO SO IT WAS NECESSARY TO LOOK AT THE BIGGER PICTURE. A BREAKTHROUGH ON THE MISSILE ISSUE, TOGETHER WITH PROGRESS BETWEEN NORTH AND SOUTH, PRESENTED AN OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL THREE TCOG COUNTRIES TO TRANSFORM THEIR RELATIONS WITH THE DPRK. THE SECRETARY EXPRESSED UNDERSTANDING THAT JAPAN MUST FIGURE OUT ITS OWN

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WAY TO PROCEED WITH THE DPRK. SHE ASKED ABOUT THE GOJ'S STRATEGY, INCLUDING ITS EXPECTATIONS FOR THE NEXT ROUND OF JAPAN-DPRK NORMALIZATION TALKS.

KONO ON NORMALIZATION TALKS

15. ~~(S)~~ FOREIGN MINISTER KONO INFORMED THE SECRETARY THAT JAPAN'S NEGOTIATIONS WITH NORTH KOREA WOULD RESUME AT THE

END OF THE MONTH IN BEIJING. HE NOTED THAT THE DPRK PREFERRED INITIALLY NOT TO HOLD THE MEETING IN BEIJING, BUT IN THE END AGREED ON THAT LOCATION. KONO EMPHASIZED THAT JAPAN FOR ITS PART WAS DETERMINED TO MAKE EFFORTS TO NORMALIZE WHAT HAD BEEN AN ABNORMAL RELATIONSHIP, AS DEMONSTRATED BY THE GOJ'S DECISION TO CONTRIBUTE 500,000 TONS OF RICE TO NORTH KOREA. HOWEVER, THE DECISION PROVOKED STRONG CRITICISM WITHIN JAPAN. GRAVER ISSUES FOR

TOKYO INCLUDED MISSILES AND ABDUCTEES. THE JAPANESE DELEGATION WOULD STRIVE TO MAKE THE DPRK SIDE UNDERSTAND THE EXTREME IMPORTANCE OF MAKING EFFORTS TO RESOLVE THESE TWO MATTERS. IF PYONGYANG WANTED TO RESOLVE THEM, THERE WAS THE POSSIBILITY THAT THEIR NEGOTIATIONS WOULD BRING RESULTS. KONO SAID THAT DESPITE DOMESTIC CRITICISM, HE LOOKED AT THE MATTER FROM A MORE INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE AND BELIEVED IT ONLY NATURAL FOR TOKYO TO TRY TO NORMALIZE RELATIONS WITH PYONGYANG NOW WHILE NORTH KOREA IS REACHING OUT INTERNATIONALLY.

16. ~~(S)~~ KONO RECALLED THE SECRETARY'S SUGGESTION THAT ABDUCTIONS BE TREATED AS A QUESTION OF DIVIDED FAMILIES.

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HE POINTED OUT THAT JAPAN IN THE PAST ALSO HAD THE IDEA THAT IT WOULD BE EASIER FOR THE DPRK TO MAKE EFFORTS IN THIS AREA IF JAPAN USED THE TERM MISSING INSTEAD OF ABDUCTEES. THE IDEA HAD NOT BEEN FORGOTTEN BY EITHER SIDE. HOWEVER, THERE ARE ALSO STRONG VIEWS IN JAPAN THAT KIDNAPPING JAPANESE CITIZENS FROM ITS TERRITORY WAS A CLEAR VIOLATION OF THE NATION'S SOVEREIGNTY, AND THAT THE GOJ SHOULD NOT LET THIS PASS. KONO ALSO RECOGNIZED THE HUMAN DESIRE OF PARENTS TO BE REUNITED WITH THEIR CHILDREN, SOMETHING HE DID NOT TAKE LIGHTLY. ON MISSILES, KONO SAID HE WAS DELIGHTED TO HEAR THAT THE NORTH KOREANS HAD NOT DIFFERENTIATED BETWEEN VARIOUS CATEGORIES, SO THE NODONG WAS INCLUDED. HE STRESSED THAT WE MUST ALSO CONSIDER HOW TO DEAL WITH SOME 100 ALREADY DEPLOYED NODONGS.

17. ~~(S)~~ KONO TOLD THE SECRETARY THAT THE GOJ, IN MOVING TO NORMALIZE WHAT HAD BEEN ABNORMAL IN ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE DPRK, HAD TO DEAL WITH TWO ISSUES FROM THE PAST: HOW TO APOLOGIZE FOR ITS COLONIZATION OF KOREA, AND HOW TO PROVIDE ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE. THE LATTER INVOLVED SERIOUSLY THINKING ABOUT THE AMOUNT AND THE MEANS, AVOIDING CASH PAYMENTS THAT MIGHT END UP SUPPORTING MILITARY OR OTHER UNKNOWN PROGRAMS. KONO CONCLUDED THAT ONCE JAPAN DID NORMALIZE RELATIONS, THIS WOULD BE A PLUS FOR THE SECURITY OF NORTHEAST ASIA.

CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITY

18. ~~(S)~~ THE SECRETARY STATED THAT IN THEIR LINE OF WORK

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MANY ISSUES CAN BE DEALT WITH METHODICALLY, WHILE OTHERS ARE A CHALLENGE TO THE INTELLECTUAL REASONING AND BASIC INTERESTS OF THE COUNTRY. NORTH KOREA IS IN THE LATTER CATEGORY. THE SECRETARY SAID THAT WHILE MANY IMPORTANT ISSUES HAD BEEN DISCUSSED BETWEEN THE U.S. AND JAPAN IN THE PAST, THIS ISSUE SEEMED TO BE A WHOLE DIMENSION LARGER. SHE MENTIONED THAT DURING HER MEETINGS AT UNGA, SHE HAD CONCLUDED THE MOST DYNAMIC REGION OF THE WORLD WAS ASIA.

19. ~~(S)~~ THE SECRETARY SAID THAT DOMESTIC PUBLIC OPINION ABOUT NORTH KOREA WAS A FACTOR FOR THE USG AS WELL. KOREAN WAR VETERANS WHO FEEL THEIR WAR WAS FORGOTTEN HOLD STRONG VIEWS. TALK OVER THE PAST TWO YEARS ABOUT DEVELOPING NMD TO PROTECT AGAINST A MISSILE THREAT FROM THE DPRK AND IRAN HAD ALSO GENERATED A NEGATIVE IMAGE OF NORTH KOREA. MOVING TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH PYONGYANG WAS A HUGE SHIFT FOR THE AMERICAN PUBLIC. THE SECRETARY POINTED OUT THAT IMPROVING TIES BETWEEN THE U.S. AND NORTH KOREA WAS IN MANY WAYS MORE COMPLICATED THAN WITH THE FORMER SOVIET UNION OR BETWEEN EAST AND WEST GERMANY BECAUSE THOSE SITUATIONS HAD NOT FOLLOWED A WAR WITH A HIGH DEATH TOLL LIKE IN KOREA.

20. ~~(S)~~ CALLING ABDUCTIONS A SERIOUS PROBLEM, THE SECRETARY NOTED THAT JAPAN HAD MADE RESOLUTION OF THE MATTER A PRECONDITION FOR DISCUSSIONS WITH KIM JONG IL. SHE SUGGESTED THAT MOVING AHEAD TO HOLD SUCH DISCUSSIONS MIGHT BE MORE PRODUCTIVE IN ACHIEVING RESOLUTION OF THE ISSUE. ON MISSILES ALREADY DEPLOYED, THE SECRETARY SAID EINHORN WOULD BE SEEKING CLARIFICATION. SHE TOLD KONO

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THAT THE ISSUE OF PROVIDING CASH WAS ALSO PROBLEMATIC FOR THE USG BECAUSE CRITICS CHARGED THAT PYONGYANG WAS BLACKMAILING WASHINGTON.

21. ~~(S)~~ THE SECRETARY CITED QUESTIONS FROM A SKEPTICAL GROUP OF REPORTERS WHO ACCOMPANIED HER ON THE TRIP TO PYONGYANG. TO THEM SHE HAD REPLIED THAT SHE WAS NOT BORN YESTERDAY, AND THAT HER GLASSES WERE NOT ROSE-TINTED. THE SECRETARY UNDERScoreD THAT WE MUST BE CRITICAL OF WHAT WE

ARE SEEING, BUT AT THE SAME TIME WE MUST RECOGNIZE THE HUGE OPPORTUNITY AFFORDED US TO CHANGE A DANGEROUS SITUATION TO ONE WHERE ALL COUNTRIES CAN BE BETTER OFF.

CLARIFICATION ON TERRORISM LIST, ABDUCTIONS

22. ~~(S)~~ KONO SOUGHT CLARIFICATION ON THE QUESTION OF REMOVING NORTH KOREA FROM THE TERRORISM LIST, ASKING

WHETHER THE USG WOULD PURSUE THIS MATTER IF THE DPRK DID NOT RAISE IT. ALBRIGHT SAID THAT WHILE NOT MUCH TIME ON THIS TRIP HAD BEEN DEVOTED TO THE ISSUE, THE U.S. HAD NOT GIVEN UP ON IT. SHERMAN CITED THE JOINT STATEMENT ISSUED BY THE U.S. AND DPRK EARLIER IN THE MONTH AS AN IMPORTANT STEP TOWARD ADDRESSING OUR CONCERNS. THERE ARE OTHER REQUIRED STEPS REMAINING, AND CLEARLY NORTH KOREA IS NOT YET PREPARED TO TAKE THEM, SHE STATED. KONO QUESTIONED WHETHER THIS MEANT PYONGYANG WAS NO LONGER INTERESTED. SHERMAN RESPONDED THAT WE DO NOT KNOW WHY NORTH KOREAN OFFICIALS CHOSE NOT TO DISCUSS THE TERRORISM LIST, SPECULATING THAT IT MIGHT BE A DECISION TO SET IT ASIDE TO

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BE ADDRESSED IN ANOTHER CHANNEL WHILE USING THE SECRETARY'S VISIT TO DISCUSS BROAD STRATEGIC ISSUES. SHE CLARIFIED THAT A SIX-MONTH PERIOD OF GOOD BEHAVIOR ON NORTH KOREA'S PART WOULD BE NEEDED AFTER THE ADMINISTRATION NOTIFIED THE CONGRESS OF ITS INTENT TO REMOVE THE DPRK FROM THE TERRORISM LIST.

23. (S) THE SECRETARY REITERATED THAT SHE HAD RAISED JAPAN'S POSITION ON THE ABDUCTION ISSUE AND URGED NORTH KOREA TO ADDRESS IT. KONO, CALLING NORTH KOREANS VERY PROUD, ASKED WHETHER THE REACTION HAD BEEN AS SENSITIVE AS WHEN THE JAPANESE BRING UP THE TOPIC. THE SECRETARY RESPONDED AFFIRMATIVELY, STATING THAT DPRK OFFICIALS WERE VERY SENSITIVE ABOUT JAPAN. SHE CONSIDERED NORTH KOREANS' FEELINGS ABOUT JAPAN MUCH MORE COMPLICATED THAN ABOUT THE U.S. THE SECRETARY ACKNOWLEDGED THAT ALL MUST DEAL WITH HISTORY IN THEIR OWN WAY.

24. (U) SHERMAN RECALLED AMBASSADOR SHUNJI YANAI'S EARLIER SUGGESTION THAT THE HOSTAGE CONVENTION MIGHT BE RELEVANT TO CONSIDERATION OF THE ABDUCTION QUESTION,

MAKING RESOLUTION OF THE ABDUCTION CASES AN ADDITIONAL CONDITION FOR REMOVAL OF THE DPRK FROM THE TERRORISM LIST. SHE EMPHASIZED THAT SHE HAD TAKEN AMBASSADOR YANAI'S IDEA SERIOUSLY AND HAD PURSUED IT TO SEE IF THE CONVENTION MIGHT BE APPLICABLE. SHERMAN INFORMED THE JAPANESE THAT THE INITIAL OPINION OF THE DEPARTMENT'S LEGAL EXPERTS WAS THAT THE CONVENTION DID NOT APPLY. SHERMAN POINTED OUT THAT THE USG HAD BEEN VERY CAREFUL NOT TO LAY OUT PUBLICLY THE STEPS REQUIRED FOR REMOVAL FROM THE TERRORISM LIST,

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CHOOSING INSTEAD TO MAINTAIN AMBIGUITY FOR THE SAKE OF BOTH THE USG AND GOJ BY STATING ONLY THAT THE NORTH KOREANS UNDERSTOOD WHAT THEY MUST DO.
ALBRIGHT

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