

Statement on Efforts To Improve Relations With North Korea *December 28, 2000*

For several years, we have been working with our east Asian allies to improve relations with North Korea in a way that strengthens peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula. We have made substantial progress, including the 1994 Agreed Framework, which froze North Korea's production of plutonium for nuclear weapons under ongoing international inspections, and the 1999 moratorium on long-range missile tests. I believe new opportunities are opening for progress toward greater stability and peace on the Korean Peninsula. However, I have determined that there is not enough time while I am President to prepare the way for an agreement with North Korea that advances our national interest and provides the basis for a trip by me to Pyongyang. Let me emphasize that I believe this process of engagement with North Korea, in coordination with South Korea and Japan, holds great promise and that the United States should continue to build on the progress we have made.

Our policy toward North Korea has been based on a strong framework developed at my request by former Secretary of Defense William Perry and carried out by Secretary of State

Madeleine Albright and Special Adviser Wendy Sherman. We have coordinated each step forward with our allies the Republic of Korea and Japan. The engagement policy of President Kim Dae-jung and his personal leadership have spurred this process and earned the world's admiration. Taken together, our efforts have reduced tensions on the Korean Peninsula, improved prospects for enduring peace and stability in the region, and opened an opportunity to substantially reduce, if not eliminate, the threat posed by North Korean missile development and exports.

This past October, when DPRK Chairman Kim Chong-il invited me to visit his country, and later when Secretary Albright traveled to Pyongyang, Chairman Kim put forward a serious proposal concerning his missile program. Since then, we have discussed with North Korea proposals to eliminate its missile export program as well as to halt further missile development. While there is insufficient time for me to complete the work at hand, there is sufficient promise to continue this effort. The United States has a clear national interest in seeing it through.

Statement on Signing the National Moment of Remembrance Act *December 28, 2000*

Today I am pleased to sign S. 3181, the "National Moment of Remembrance Act," which designates 3:00 p.m. local time on Memorial Day each year as the National Moment of Remembrance, in honor of the men and women of the United States who died in the pursuit of freedom and peace. The Act also establishes a White House Commission on the National Moment of Remembrance, to coordinate and encourage commemorative events on Memorial Day each year, and a Remembrance Alliance, to assist the Commission in promoting the observance of the Memorial Day holiday and organizing an annual White House Conference on the National Moment of Remembrance.

Each Memorial Day, the Nation honors those Americans who died while defending our Nation and its values. While these heroes should be honored every day for their profound contribution to securing our Nation's freedom, they and their families should be especially honored on Memorial Day. The observance of a National Moment of Remembrance is a simple and unifying way to commemorate our history and honor the struggle to protect our freedoms.

This Act recognizes in law a commemoration begun on Memorial Day in May 1997, when "Taps" was played at 3:00 p.m. on many radio and television stations across the Nation as Americans paused to remember the men and women who have lost their lives in service to