

August 15, 1973

**Letter, Ahmet H. Ozbudun to C.V. Narasimhan,
'Abduction' and Re-Emergence of Former Korean
Presidential Candidate"**

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Summary:

Ozbudun sends Narasimhan a letter concerning the abduction and re-emergence of Kim Dae Jung, a former Korean presidential candidate.

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15 August 1973

"ABDUCTION" AND RE-EMERGENCE OF
FORMER KOREAN PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE

Dear Mr. Narasimhan,

If Mr. Kim Dae Jung's reported "abduction" in Tokyo on 8 August and return to Seoul on the 13th was given very prominent coverage in the international press, such coverage would indeed be dwarfed henceforth if and when the true story behind the "kidnapping" were revealed.

Whoever the culprit is, any such revelation may very well mark one of the most scandalous cloak and dagger capers of all time and possibly involve very serious diplomatic repercussions.

As the investigation into the case is reportedly conducted by Japanese and ROK authorities with utmost secrecy, (it might eventually be somehow combined under a joint operation), very little is known to the public as to the possible identity of the culprits.

I share the opinion of those who refuse to be surprised by any event in this part of the world inasmuch as unexpected shocks of the past have immunized long-term observers against taking anything for granted.

Therefore, and with all due respect, veteran observers do not rule out any contingency concerning the affair. They go so far as hypothetically including among possibilities the following:

First, the Opposition leader, who had mustered about 46% of the popular vote in the 1971 Presidential elections, and has since opposed ROK Government policies also with "revolutionary" advocations of his own, "might have been kidnapped by a ROK security agency". There are several such agencies the foremost of which is the Central Intelligence Agency. These agencies are reported to have the "capability", the "know how" and the "guts" to perform this affair. If this is the case the ramifications might include the following: (i) "adversely affecting", perhaps to a "breaking point, (if for the immediate future only)" the ROK-Japan relations; (ii) "negatively impressing world public opinion" against the ROK at this most crucial juncture before the forthcoming UNGA session; (iii) rendering the ROK a "laughing stock" before the

Mr. C. V. Narasimhan
Chef de Cabinet
United Nations
New York

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DPRK which then might very effectively take the lead in "embarrassing" Seoul to a "point of no return"; (iv) if the "caper" has been staged by one security agency, without the knowledge of others, it might cause the downfall of that agency, or lead to a power-struggle between agencies which has been somewhat strongly prevalent anyway in the recent months; (v) if the affair has been originally known to top ROK leaders or if they engage in a "cover-up effort", there would be created a "Korean Watergate" where the "water might freeze, boil or evaporate" also to a "point of no return"; and (vi) such "discovery", if it ever materializes, may add itself to a "growing string of catalysts" which are, "in unison (or even individually)", "capable" of causing "untold public restlessness, chaos and even revolution". The "motivation" under this "contingency" would be to "silence" the "embarrassing Mr. Kim" and/or to blame the affair on North Korea.

Second, Mr. Kim Dae Jung might have been abducted by Mindan agents (pro-ROK Korean Residents Association in Japan) who are said not to lack capabilities vis-à-vis the affair. One prominent question in this regard is that "if Mindan is the culprit", has it "acted on its own" or in "collusion" with the ROK in one way or another? The "motivation" would be "helping the Fatherland", i.e., "the ROK".

Third, Mr. Kim might have been "kidnapped by DPRK agents" who are said to have increased their presence and activities and organizational network both in Japan and the ROK. Any establishment of North Korean involvement would have the same severe ramifications as the "first" point above, however, obviously in reverse. The motivation would "naturally" be to blame the ROK for the whole affair.

Fourth, the "culprit" might be the Choryon, pro-DPRK residents in Japan. Potentially the Choryon is reported to be organizationally much more capable than the Mindan. If this is the case, the same ramifications as in point two above would apply, however, naturally in reverse. The motivation would again be to "help the cause of the Fatherland", i.e., "the DPRK".

Fifth, the last hypothetical contingency is that the "culprit" of the "abduction" would be Mr. Kim himself and his associates who might have been "motivated by the desire" (i) to blame the ROK incumbent Government and its authorities and to cause its toppling; and (ii) to enable himself to return home after a long absence which might not have been altogether "self-inflicted exile", and with agglomerated public sympathy and popularity. Proponents of this contingency analysis believe that Mr. Kim and his colleagues might have left Japan immediately after his "self-engineered abduction", before the cordoning off of exit points in Japan.

In between the five foregoing theoretical contingencies, there are the "in-between" theories, which range between variations of the five points or imply collaboration between various agencies. Also, these "in-between" theories do not exclude (i) the "involvement", in one way or degree or another, of Japanese agencies; and (ii) the "actual if brief presence" of Mr. Kim, with "his consent", in the DPRK.

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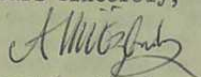
While some of the aforesaid contingencies seem farfetched, observers who advance them realize the purely hypothetical nature of their quest not to leave out any contingency which might after all prove to be the "real culprit".

This, whatever its worth, is their motivation.

All in all, however, most observers are reminded of the June 1967 "mysterious disappearance" of 17 ROK nationals from the Federal Republic of Germany in connexion with a "Communist espionage ring" based in East Berlin. The recall of three ROK diplomats was asked by the FRG. The ROK explained that the 17 Koreans had returned home "of their own accord through persuasion" to facilitate investigation into the case.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,



Ahmet H. Ozbudun
Principal Secretary