

November 2, 1973

Letter, Ahmet H. Ozbudun to Ismat Kittani, "The Korean Question: Floodlight from the Middle East"

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Summary:

Ozbudun sends a letter to Kittani comparing the Korean Question to the Middle East.

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CONFIDENTIAL No. 225

12 October 1973

THE KOREAN QUESTION, FOCUS POINT FROM THE MIDDLE EAST

2 November 1973

Dear Mr. Ozbudun,

CONFIDENTIAL

...of the shrinking globe, almost in every
...of any given vital event
...everywhere.

The ... of the ... East ...
... of ... created by recent ...
... "international ...".

The ... are ... to the
... of ...
Dear Ahmet,

Thank you for your confidential letter No. 225
dated 12 October 1973, the contents of which I have
noted.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

Ismat T. Kittani
Executive Assistant to
the Secretary-General

Mr. Ahmet N. Ozbudun
Principal Secretary
UNCKURK
Seoul, Korea.

cc. McKennig/Protaka

UNITED NATIONS



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VUNITED NATIONS COMMISSION FOR THE UNIFICATION AND REHABILITATION OF KOREA
(UNCURK)CONFIDENTIAL : No. 225

12 October 1973

THE KOREAN QUESTION: FLOODLIGHT FROM THE MIDDLE EAST

Dear Mr. Kittani,

Yet another proof of our shrinking globe, almost in every regard, is the political reverberations of any given vital event anywhere -- in distant corners everywhere.

The cardinal repercussion of the new Middle East War in Korea may prove to be the end of euphoria created by recent strides in this "fast changing world" toward "international détente".

The theory that there are indeed unique exceptions to the "rule" has now become an axiom shattering the myth of global rapprochement into which the Korean Peninsula had been very mistakenly included. Many qualified students of the Korean question, and a number of ROK officials, welcome this awakening to reality that exceptions to the rule of détente do certainly prevail in Korea as has been proven to be the case in the Middle East.

Comparative points in the Middle Eastern and Korean cases should include the following:

- Further movement toward international relaxation in the foreseeable future cannot encompass the Middle East and Korea. Among others, these are quite sui generis and require unique treatment.

- Unlike many international problems, great power interests are clearly imbedded in both the Middle East and Korea. However, war could be launched inadvertently or by design, with or without the backing of respective great power allies.

- United Nations political and military presences have existed both in the Middle East and in Korea, however, owing to obvious differences, such presences have been comparatively ineffective in the former (much worse could have happened in their total absence as

Mr. Ismat Kittani
Executive Assistant
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New York

- 2 -

the "Remember-the-Alamo-UNEF-exit" proved) -- and infinitely effective in the latter case.

- Of the two areas of tension or whirlpool, the Middle East may be deemed an international vortex whereas Korean Peninsula a vastly more dangerous maelstrom: (i) the Middle East Wars broke out four times, the Korean War once; yet while neither has escalated into World War III, the Middle East has proven itself immune to global conflict while Korea may be the only part in the world where the global war potential is indeed unmatched; (ii) in addition to normal embitterment in all warfare, the one in Korea entails civil war and fratricide plus the existence in geographic and political congruity of the "fratricidal" chasm between the Socialist titans in the form of the Sino-Soviet rivalry.

- Little can evidently be done, if any, to achieve peaceful settlement in the foreseeable future, in either the Middle East or in Korea. However, while the maximum success in the Middle East is the capability of precluding further warfare from graduating into a world war, the "inseparable-Siamese-Twin-like" political and military presence of the UN in Korea has heretofore boasted and may long boast of ruling out the recurrence of bilateral war. Can there be lessons drawn?

- To introduce the same magic formula of the UN political-presence in Korea into the Middle East may be perchance possible only partially, and it may work. However, the irony of it all is that the international euphoria for détente is on the verge of removing this "blessing" from Korea, without a quid pro quo or an alternative political-military presence. And clearly once removed, no semblance of this "going concern" can ever be re-introduced into Korea despite future signs of clear and present danger.

- By virtue of the unfortunate fourth Middle East War, proponents of change in the Korean status quo at this least promising and most dangerous juncture may derive an abject lesson.

- Moreover, decision-makers on the Middle East may perhaps endeavour emulating the viable and applicable elements of the UN security system in Korea while the Big Four around the Korean maelstrom -- Japan, the US, the PRC and the USSR -- may emulate the unwritten treaty for non-military-involvement of the USSR and the United States in the Middle East.

- As to North and South Korea: If the staggering cost of another fratricide is incapable of putting an end to growing mutual brinkmanship, destined to grow at bitter encounters at the 28th UNGA, the fourth Middle East War, in its devastating casualties and irreparable material losses, may prove added incentive toward the preservation of UN military and political presence in Korea at this time, in one form or another, for the sake of international peace and security.

I believe that the foregoing generally represents prevalent opinion among a growing number of diplomats and government officials in the ROK.

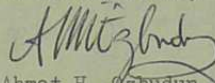
The chief common denominator is: If the options of change will remain tomorrow -- intact and in peace -- then maintain the UN posture

- 3 -

until at least (i) the workable re-activation of the North-South dialogue; (ii) the emergence of an irrevocable and "fool-proof" Big Four understanding; or (iii) the achievement of viable alternative machinery to the UN presences ... For, unlike the Middle East Wars, a Korean conflict might indeed engulf the world.

With warmest personal regards,

Sincerely yours,



Ahmet H. Ozbudun
Principal Secretary