

March 28, 1973

**Letter, Ahmet H. Ozbudun to C.V. Narasimhan,
"Growing Ties with Pyongyang"**

Citation:

"Letter, Ahmet H. Ozbudun to C.V. Narasimhan, "Growing Ties with Pyongyang"", March 28, 1973, Wilson Center Digital Archive, "International incidents and disputes - Korea - correspondence general (603.1)," Executive Office of the Secretary-General, S-0196-0008-03, United Nations Archives and Records Management Section (UN ARMS), New York, NY. Obtained for NKIDP by Charles Kraus.

<https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/117584>

Summary:

Ozbudun sends Narasimhan a report on growing ties with Pyongyang, UNCURK session, document concerning last week's confidential letter, and North-South dialogue.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from Kyungnam University

Original Language:

English

Contents:

Original Scan

CVN/tab

cc - Mr. Kutakov

60

CONFIDENTIAL

28 March 1973

Dear Ahmet,

I have received your confidential letter No. 188 in which you deal with the subjects of growing ties with Pyongyang, North-South dialogue and the UNCURK session and your comments have been carefully noted. I also confirm receipt of two copies of the two alleged security incidents which have, as requested, been attached to your confidential letter of 16 March.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely,

C.V. Narasimhan
Chef de CabinetMr. Ahmet H. Ozbudun
Principal Secretary
UNCURK
Seoul, Korea

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

6

UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION FOR THE UNIFICATION AND REHABILITATION OF KOREA
(UNCURK)CONFIDENTIAL : No. 188

23 March 1973

Dear Mr. Narasimhan,

GROWING TIES WITH PYONGYANG

... Sweden's announcement on 21 March 1973, that a formal decision to propose to North Korea the establishment of diplomatic relations can be expected in the near future has caused great anxiety in government and diplomatic circles here. The announcement made by the Foreign Minister before Parliament also disclosed that the relations of the Nordic States to North Korea had been the subject of contacts between the governments in question and was expected to come up for consideration at the impending meeting of the Nordic Foreign Ministers (on 29-30 March).

Some reliable sources report that the ROK may be resigned to the fact of impending Swedish recognition, that it expects at least Denmark to follow suite, but has not given up hope to persuade those concerned to delay recognition for several months. Both Ambassadors to the ROK, concurrently representing Sweden and Denmark in Japan, were called by Minister Kim Yong Shik to Seoul for long talks.

There is also reported concern in the Foreign Ministry on the growing number of States that have either established or are planning to establish ties with the DPRK, ranging between commercial, cultural and diplomatic relations.

Beyond these, Korean dailies yesterday carried two versions concerning contacts between Australia and the DPRK. An AFP version that appeared in THE KOREA TIMES reported inter alia that Australia had agreed, on the invitation of north Korea, "to have practical working contacts" which however did not imply diplomatic recognition of the "DPRK". A UPI version in the KOREA HERALD reported that Australia was not considering opening diplomatic relations with north Korea at the moment. The Government had agreed to have only "practical working contacts". A spokesman, stating this, had added in this connexion that diplomatic ties were not under consideration "because the Government does not wish to take steps which might undermine any movement in the direction of the reunification of Korea".

The ROK concern over the Australian move is deemed to be particularly deep in view of the latter's long-standing and influential involvement in the Korean question. Many fear that other pro-UN-stand countries might emulate Australia in establishing "practical working contacts" with the DPRK and even go further and recognize Pyongyang.

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

- 3 -

Some reliable sources attribute the seeming deadlock on the two levels to lingering ulterior motives on both sides; the failure to draw a resolute distinction between the Red Cross and Co-ordinating Committee undertakings; and the discrepancy regarding scope and pace in the approach advocated by the two sides.

Most students of the dialogue agree that the deadlock between the North and South cannot be settled in the foreseeable future without some prodding, encouragement and even good offices from the outside without which the deadlock may become an impasse and result in an abandonment of positive contacts.

UNCURK SESSION

We have just returned from Tokyo following the first session of the Commission for this year, the Press Release on which was cabled to you in accordance with standing practice.

Besides reviewing security and political developments, the members discussed a tentative outline of UNCURK's report to the United Nations which more or less follows that of last year. Because two Representatives are to be on leave during August, the finalization and signature session of UNCURK, third for 1973, has been scheduled for 30-31 July. Before that, however, the Commission will hold its second session on 13 and 14 June, perhaps to work on its initial draft of the report.

At the Tokyo session, I was again subjected to very heavy pressure by one delegation to schedule a second session in Japan this year in accordance with past practice. Since I was able to persuade two other members who had earlier been strongly in favour of the proposal, the member in question found himself in the minority but "reserved his right" to introduce the subject subsequently. My arguments had been that we were no longer budgeted for a second annual session in Japan; that the overall demand for economy at the UN was overwhelming; that besides taking other measures for economy, UNCURK should desist from emerging with requests for supplementary funds; etc. As a result of other efforts, I had managed to overcome previous demands to have alternate representatives also attend the last Tokyo session.


DOCUMENT CONCERNING LAST WEEK'S CONFIDENTIAL LETTER

I have inadvertently omitted attaching to my letter of last week the document on two alleged security incidents (Information ... Note No. 10/73 of 16 March 1973) which I do now with apologies for the omission. Please have them attached to my confidential letter of the same date.

* * *

With kindest regards,

Sincerely yours,


AHMET H. OZBUDUN
Principal Secretary

- 2 -

Reverting to the Swedish move, observers feel that if and when recognition materializes, it would have a very influential impact on other non-aligned or neutral countries which might kill the "Korean Hallstein Doctrine", and turn the tide in favour of a two-Korea policy and double UN membership — perhaps to the detriment or demise of bilateral Korean efforts towards unification.

Some other observers are apprehensive that the Swedish decision would have an adverse effect on the delicate balance prevailing in the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission (NNSC) in Korea. While the prospect of a ROK move to curtail or cut its relations with Sweden in retaliation is still regarded to be far-fetched, some fear that Sweden would no longer be able to play the same balancing role, along with Switzerland, in the present and future role of the NNSC. One report has it that Switzerland, which itself had maintained contacts with the DPRK for quite some time, has expressed anxiety in this regard. It is said that originally Sweden and Switzerland had considered recognition of Pyongyang in a move toward (and on condition of) causing Czechoslovakia and Poland to recognize Seoul in reciprocity. Some circles feel that despite its dislike of the unilateral Swedish move, Switzerland might after all emulate Stockholm, thereby further "endangering" the existence of the NNSC and causing a further rush toward a two-Korea policy, etc.

As a result of the foregoing, remaining "optimists" concerning the prospects of deferment at the UNGA this year, seem to have lost considerable confidence.

NORTH-SOUTH DIALOGUE

The Fifth Formal Session of the North-South Red Cross, held in Pyongyang between 21 and 22 March, evidently ended without tangible progress. As in the case of the Joint Co-ordinating Committee's Second Session last week, also held in the DPRK, no joint communiqué or agreed notes were issued. However, this time, there was at least agreement to schedule the next formal Red Cross Session as of 9 May.

A most significant development during the visit of the South Red Cross team occurred when Mr. Park Sung Chul, the Acting Chairman of the Co-ordinating Committee and Second Deputy Premier of the DPRK, asserted, at a dinner he hosted for the visitors, that humanitarian issues can only be solved when the divided land saw peaceful unification. He reiterated his previous call at the Co-ordinating Committee last week for the mutual reduction of military forces and armaments by the two sides; the withdrawal of foreign troops; and North-South settlement of Korean Unification without interference as preconditions for the success of the dialogue. This is however the first utterance by a ranking DPRK official that even the Red Cross talks on humanitarian issues might not be undertaken — pending unification.

If the report on the foregoing is accurate, further apprehension may be justified that lack of progress or breakdown in one of the two levels of dialogue between the North and South may hopelessly afflict the other.

CONFIDENTIALInformation Note
23 March 1973

Passage on Korea in the Swedish Government Declaration
in Parliament on March 21, 1973
(Unofficial translation)

There is only one single case where all official relations are lacking between Sweden and an actually existing state which earlier formed part of a larger state. This refers to North Korea. The Government has found that there are reasons to reconsider the relations of Sweden to this state. Sweden's participation in the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission in Korea can no longer be allowed the same importance in this connection as earlier. More general recognition of both North and South Korea by outside nations would probably contribute to the tendencies of relaxation of tensions which have appeared lately. In order to further this objective, Sweden last year contacted Switzerland, which like Sweden is represented in the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission in Korea. The two other members, Poland and Czechoslovakia, on their part have recognized only North Korea, while both Sweden and Switzerland have relations with South Korea. Last autumn, from the Swedish and Swiss sides inquiries were made to the governments of Poland and Czechoslovakia whether they might not be willing to recognize South Korea provided Sweden and Switzerland on their part recognized North Korea. This inquiry met negative answers from the two governments in question, which we regret. However, the Swedish Government does not find it justified to await a changed attitude on the part of states recognizing only North Korea. A formal decision to propose to North Korea the establishment of diplomatic relations can be expected in the near future. The question of the relations of the Nordic States to North Korea has been the subject of contacts between the Governments in question and is expected to come up for consideration at the impending meeting of Nordic Foreign Ministers.