

April 19, 1973
**Letters between Ahmet H. Ozbudun and C.V.
Narasimhan**

Citation:

"Letters between Ahmet H. Ozbudun and C.V. Narasimhan", April 19, 1973, Wilson Center Digital Archive, "International incidents and disputes - Korea - correspondence general (603.1)," Executive Office of the Secretary-General, S-0196-0008-04, United Nations Archives and Records Management Section (UN ARMS), New York, NY. Obtained for NKIDP by Charles Kraus.

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Summary:

Shail Upadhyia sends letters on the issue of future South-North Korean contacts, and Nordic countries along with other nations' recognition of North Korea.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from Kyungnam University

Original Language:

English

Contents:

Original Scan

603.1

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION FOR THE UNIFICATION AND REHABILITATION OF KOREA
(UNCURK)

CONFIDENTIAL

6 April 1973

Dear Mr. Narasimhan,

Pessimism continues to mount over the 19 April 1973 North-South contacts. These contacts have registered little, if any, progress, since they began twenty months ago and hold even less promise for the foreseeable future. Symptomatic of this negative trend is the failure of the recent meeting of the North-South Reunification Committee to take any headway as evidenced by the absence of the customary joint communiqué of such meetings and the similar lack of progress in the last round of the Red Cross talks, which ended without the customary exchange of prisoners of war.

I have received your confidential letters of 6 and 13 April and taken note of their contents.

This turn of events seems to lend credence to the view, from the very outset, ascribed ulterior motives to the two sides in pursuing these contacts and who had all along warned against entertaining illusions as to the results of the talks. This group had continuously maintained that both sides had been keeping the hope and the myth of unification alive as a means of lip service to the cause and by going through appropriate motions to avenge their peoples and world opinion at large. They point out that by using the talks as an excuse, South Korea has already achieved successive deferments of the Korean debate in the United Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea (UNCURK) and that this has used the talks to good advantage, by using it as a vehicle to achieve substantial diplomatic gains. In the last year alone, it is pointed out, a score of countries conferred recognition on North Korea, with Sweden's recognition imminent and that of the other four members of the Nordic Council (Finland, Denmark, Norway and Sweden) in conclusion. In addition, Malaysia's recognition of North Vietnam last week is seen as a prelude to its recognition of North Korea, and most likely to be emulated by the other members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations notably the Philippines, Thailand and Singapore.

It is reliably reported that South Korea, in the face of these diplomatic set-backs and with its "Hallstein Doctrine" torn to shreds, is having second thoughts about the North-South talks.

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

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UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION FOR THE UNIFICATION AND REHABILITATION OF KOREA
(UNCURK)CONFIDENTIAL

6 April 1973

Dear Mr. Narasimhan,

Pessimism continues to mount over the future of the North-South contacts. These contacts have registered little, if any, progress, since they began twenty months ago and hold even less promise for the foreseeable future. Symptomatic of this negative trend was the failure of the recent meeting of the North-South Coordinating Committee to make any headway as evidenced by the absence of the customary joint communiqué issued at the conclusion of each meeting and the similar lack of progress in the last round of the Red Cross talks, which ended without the customary exchange of agreed minutes of the meeting.

This turn of events seems to lend credence to those who had, from the very outset, ascribed ulterior motives to the two sides in pursuing these contacts and who had all along warned against entertaining illusions as to the results of the talks. This group had continuously maintained that both sides had a lot to gain by keeping the hope and the myth of unification alive by paying occasional lip service to the cause and by going through appropriate motions to assuage their peoples and world opinion at large. They point out that by using the talks as an excuse, South Korea has already gained two successive deferments of the Korean debate in the United Nations and has a good chance of securing another deferment should it so choose.

North Korea too, these circles point out, has used the North-South dialogue to good advantage, by using it as a vehicle to achieve substantial diplomatic gains. In the last year alone, it is pointed out, a score of countries conferred recognition on North Korea, with Sweden's recognition imminent and that of the other four members of the Nordic Council (Finland, Denmark, Norway and Iceland) a foregone conclusion. In addition, Malaysia's recognition of North Vietnam last week is seen as a prelude to its recognition of North Korea, and most likely to be emulated by the other members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations notably the Philippines, Thailand and Singapore.

It is reliably reported that South Korea, in the face of these diplomatic set-backs and with its "Hallstein Doctrine" torn to shreds, is having second thoughts about the North-South talks

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and is seriously wondering if the advantage of another deferment of the UN Korean debate outweighs its continuing set-backs (or conversely, North Korea's continuing gains) in the diplomatic field.

ROK sources have indicated that a final determination vis-à-vis another deferment of the Korean debate should be coming forth in July, after the Government has finished evaluating the results of its diplomatic offensive now underway (a spate of high level South Korean delegations has been visiting different parts of the globe in an effort to forestall further recognition of the DPRK) and in light of further developments.

One very significant development vis-à-vis the ROK's policy towards the United Nations is the emergence, within the Administration, of a minority view that, given international realities, considers Korean unification untenable, a "two-Koreas" solution unavoidable and the Government's present policy in this regard unrealistic. The group holding this view maintains that the seeds of a "two Koreas" formula were sown with the rapprochement between China and the United States and can be expected to grow along with the growing rapprochement between the two countries. The thinking of this group runs as follows:

The Sino-US détente calls for a relaxation of tension in Asia and the Pacific, but also calls for the preservation of the status quo in the region including the division of Korea. Thus, China and the United States, while trying to promote a relaxation of tension in the area, will not wish to see the status quo upset by Korean unification. To ease tension, the United States would accelerate the pull out of its troops from the ROK, reduce its military assistance to that country and halt the five-year programme for the modernization of the ROK armed forces. China, on its part, would restrain the DPRK from renewing hostilities or committing other acts detrimental to the relaxation of tension. After tension had been sufficiently relaxed the United States, and also Japan, would move to confer recognition on the DPRK. Logically following that move would be the simultaneous admission of the DPRK and the ROK to the United Nations. The "two Koreas" concept would then become a reality.

The group maintaining the above view asserts that it is high time to begin to "speak of the unspeakable", to accept national division as an established fact and to bow to the trend of international diplomacy which is rapidly moving in the direction of a "two Koreas" formula. It is urging that the Government, for a start, should drop the policy of deferment of the Korean debate at the United Nations

and its opposition to a simultaneous invitation of both North and South Korea to observe the debate of the Korean question at the forthcoming session of the United Nations General Assembly. They see no way around to escape the eventual imposition of a "two-Germany's" solution involving the permanent division of Korea and the admission of both halves as separate members of the United Nations.

It is too soon to tell if this group's thinking might prevail and thus alter the direction of the ROK's UN policy. As mentioned earlier, this segment is still in a minority within the Administration. But the fact that it does exist is potentially significant and its implications for future ROK policy vis-à-vis the United Nations far-reaching. Needless to say, I will keep you informed of further developments in this regard.

With warm personal regards,

Yours sincerely,

Shail U. Upadhyaya

SHAIL UPADHYA
Acting Principal Secretary

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UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION FOR THE UNIFICATION AND REHABILITATION OF KOREA
(UNCURK)CONFIDENTIAL

13 April 1973

Dear Mr. Narasimhan,

Sweden's recognition of north Korea, the first by a western country, coupled with the announced intention of Denmark, Finland, Norway and Iceland to follow suit has come as a big blow to the ROK Government. It is widely feared in official circles that the action of the Nordic countries and their explanation that it was motivated by a desire to contribute to the north-south dialogue and a Korean detente might create a band-wagon effect and provide other like-minded western nations with a ready excuse to emulate the action of the Nordic countries.

Faced with this situation the ROK Government, in order to cope with the challenge, is reported to be undergoing an "agonizing reappraisal" of its foreign policy and its policy towards the North.

It is felt in diplomatic circles that the soul-searching on the part of the ROK has foreboding implications for the south-north dialogue. Fear is expressed that in order to prove the reasoning of the Nordic countries fallacious and to dissuade other countries from recognizing north Korea, the ROK might engage in a deliberate attempt to stall the north-south talks and to put the blame on the DPRK for the dead-lock.

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The ROK is expected to argue that (1) north Korea's recognition by the Nordic and other countries has been detrimental to the north-south talks -- success has gone to its head and has hardened its attitude towards the talks; that (2) the logic advanced in favour of north Korea's recognition by the Scandinavians is therefore fallacious, bringing about the exact opposite of the intended result; and that (3) further recognition of north Korea by other countries would increase north Korea's recalcitrance and would be a disservice to the cause of Korean unification as well as a calculated unfriendly act towards the ROK.

Accordingly, a campaign to discredit DPRK's intentions was launched last week in the ROK press with a series of vituperative articles criticizing the DPRK for resuming hostile propaganda against the ROK and accusing the former of demonstrating a lack of sincerity towards the north-south talks. */ The shooting incident in the DMZ

*/ The "hostile propaganda" referred to by the ROK press pertains to a rebuttal by north Korea of recent statements by south Korean officials blaming the outbreak of the Korean war on the North.

Mr. C.V. Narasimhan
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last month, in which the ROK was not entirely blameless, if not equally at fault, has also been seized upon by the controlled press as a further indication of DPRK's "insincerity". Thus it seems the stage is being set and public opinion being prepared for a breakdown in the north-south talks for which the DPRK is to be blamed. The breakdown could then be used as an argument by the ROK to convince the UN General Assembly this Fall that it is best not to interfere in the bilateral affairs of north and south Korea, either by debating the Korean question or by conferring additional recognition on north Korea.

Presently discernible trends, therefore, point to a renewed effort by the ROK to seek another deferment of the Korean debate in the United Nations while at the same time seeking to forestall further recognition of the DPRK by engineering a dead-lock in the north-south talks.

With warmest regards,

Yours sincerely,

Shail U. Upadhyaya

SHAIL UPADHYA

Acting Principal Secretary