

September 7, 1972

Letters between Ahmet H. Ozbudun and C.V. Narasimhan

Citation:

"Letters between Ahmet H. Ozbudun and C.V. Narasimhan", September 7, 1972, Wilson Center Digital Archive, "International incidents and disputes - Korea - correspondence (603.1)," Executive Office of the Secretary-General, S-0196-0007-01, 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/117608>

Summary:

Ozbudun sends Narasimhan a report on Korean Red Cross talks, detente and unification, remarks by the ROK Prime Minister, remarks by the ROK Foreign Minister, remarks by the ROK ambassador to the US on ROK troop withdrawal from Vietnam, India's stance on Korean debate, and new commander-in-chief of the UNC.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from Kyungnam University

Original Language:

English

Contents:

Original Scan

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

CVN/tab

cc. Mr. Kutakov

UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION FOR THE UNIFICATION AND REHABILITATION OF KOREA
UNCK-UNURCONFIDENTIAL No. 156

1 September 1972

CONFIDENTIAL KOREAN RED CROSS TALKS, DETENTE AND UNIFICATION 7 September 1972

Dear Mr. Narasimhan,

Notwithstanding the advent in Pyongyang of the top-level North-South Red Cross negotiations, some ranking persons in the Government and diplomatic circles have continued to undertake mixed

Dear Ahmet, during the undertaking.

The thinking underlying their misgivings (which may be useful as the I have received your confidential No. 156 dated 1 September

regarding Korean Red Cross talks, detente and unification and your confidential No. 157 of the same date regarding miscellaneous matters. I have taken note of their contents.

in itself of... its consummation is complicated, if not mined, with many a pitfall. (i) The task involves ten million family members and relatives on both sides craving reunion yet still under the spell of fratricidal civil war and subsequent indoctrination under two mutually opposed systems, including the injection of reciprocal hatred by the two regimes concerned. (ii) The inevitable "control" of territorial soil exchange, for "security" reasons, would become a highly controversial issue. (iii) The influx of family visits in untold numbers would create even a more formidable security and surveillance problem for both sides. (iv) The actual evidence would be a political problem of the first magnitude in that such choice would be tantamount to a plebiscite which could be highly embarrassing to the side that would lose on balance (The refugee influx during the Korean War is vividly remembered in this connection).

Yours sincerely,
C.V. Narasimhan
Chef de Cabinet

(v) The "readjustment" of the migrating family members and Mr. Ahmet Ozbudun together "foreign" systems and "pressures" as Principal Secretary on their side to expedite such "readjustment" is UNCURK her disposal problem among many others not mentioned. Seoul, Korea

Second, it is doubtful that either party has gone into the Red Cross venture with full innocence, or having purely humanitarian goals in mind, or completely devoid of ulterior motives. Thus, upon the "ripening of time", the "conquest of the target", or the "securing" of whatever "ulterior motive" a given side may pursue, that side might simply create an impasse, naturally

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

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION FOR THE UNIFICATION AND REHABILITATION OF KOREA
(UNCURK)CONFIDENTIAL: No. 156

1 September 1972

KOREAN RED CROSS TALKS, DETENTE AND UNIFICATION

Dear Mr. Narasimhan,

Notwithstanding the advent in Pyongyang of the top-level North-South Red Cross negotiations, some ranking persons in the Government and diplomatic circles here continue to entertain mixed feelings regarding the undertaking.

The thinking underlying their misgivings (which may be useful as the "devil's advocate" approach aimed at moderating excessive optimism), include the following:

First, the Red Cross venture launched by the two sides is in itself of gargantuan stature and the path to its consummation is barricaded, if not mined, with many a pitfall. (i) The task involves ten million family members and relatives on both sides craving reunion yet still under the spell of fratricidal civil war and subsequent indoctrination under diametrically opposed systems, including the injection of reciprocal hatred by the two regimes concerned. (ii) The inevitable "control" of torrential mail exchange, for "security" reasons, would become a highly controversial issue. (iii) The influx of family visits in untold numbers would create even a more formidable security and surveillance problem for both sides. (iv) The actual choice of residence would be a political problem of the first magnitude in that such choice would be tantamount to a plebiscite which could be highly embarrassing to the side that would lose on balance (The refugee influx during the Korean War is visibly remembered in this connexion). (v) The "readjustment" of the migrating family members and relatives into an altogether "foreign" system and "pressures" as may be employed by either side to expedite such "readjustment" is yet another colossal problem among many others not mentioned.

Second, it is doubtful that either party has gone into the Red Cross venture with full innocence, or having purely humanitarian goals in mind, or completely devoid of ulterior motives. Thus, upon the "ripening of time", the "conquest of the target", or the "securing" of whatever "ulterior motive" a given side may pursue, that side might simply create an impasse, naturally

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

- 2 -

blaming it on the counterpart, cause a downfall of the Red Cross talks and, inadvertently or by design, torpedo whatever chances the prospects for unification efforts might otherwise have.

Third, despite the intense difficulties which the Red Cross negotiations have in any case, the two sides have further confounded the issue by their resolution of 4 July 1972, as contained in the North-South Joint Communiqué. Whereas the original intent appeared to be to approach unification in three distinct and successive stages, graduating from one to the other (humanitarian, non-political, political), with the formation of the Co-ordinating Committee they have practically integrated the three phases into a simultaneous undertaking. This may be likened to an attempt at mountain-climbing after placing Mt. Everest atop Mt. Blanc, in that order.

The aforesaid thinking among some members of the government and diplomatic circles here, proceeds as follows:

There ought to be two rules established to render both the Red Cross talks and the detente toward unification more credible and viable.

The first would be to divorce the former from the latter and abandon over-ambition, or reckless speed, in pursuing either. Moreover, it would be requisite to approach each in stages and with reasonable pace. This at least would accord better prospects to the Red Cross endeavour.

The second rule, applicable to unification through detente, is even more complicated and challenging. Its methodology involves five stages: (i) Detoxification, gradually to remove the venom of the civil war and the prevalent enmity and distrust between the two parts of the nation. (ii) Immunization, to dispell fears for future conflict or attempts at subversion. (iii) Pruning the excesses of the systems and making them more adaptable to each other for the purpose of eventual unification. (iv) Grafting aspects of the two systems realistically through gradual and numerous contacts in the non-political field. And (v) Unification, not in the status quo ante sense of a unitary state which would mean re-unification, but rather achieving a new kind of unification through a loose confederation gradually tightened into a confederation, and then more tightened into a loose federation and, upon further time-testing, converted into a regular federation system (This point practically coincides with my own views reflected in a paper or two submitted earlier).

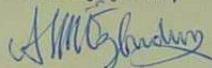
- 3 -

As opposed to the aforesaid thinking which represents the serious misgivings of a handful of persons, the vast majority is thrilled by the first Red Cross session and looks forward to further progress at the impending second round of formal talks in Seoul. However, this majority too advises caution and perseverance for eventual success in view of the 27-year isolation of the two sides.

Other developments are referred to under separate cover.

With warmest personal regards,

Sincerely yours,



Ahmet H. Ozbudun
Principal Secretary

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION FOR THE UNIFICATION AND REHABILITATION OF KOREA
(UNCURK)CONFIDENTIAL: No. 157

1 September 1972

MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS

Dear Mr. Narasimhan,

I should like to report to you under miscellaneous topics this week, as follows:

RED CROSS TALKS

There is little that I could add to my cabled report and to the presumed wealth of material already available to you through the information media at Headquarters on the historic first round formal Red Cross session in Pyongyang.

Many observers here were much surprised that the first round witnessed only one session which they say served the "breaking of the ice", so to speak, and mostly entailed a "get-acquainted" affair. However, this is regarded as a wise first step lest the two sides started treading upon one another's toes from the very start.

It is regarded most significant that members of the visiting ROK group held "important" discussions with ranking DPRK leaders and politicians, including Second Vice-Premier Park Sung Chul and Secretary Kim Chong Min of the Central Committee of the DPRK Workers Party.

The public enthusiasm displayed in the send-off of the ROK team is found to be sharply contrasting to the lack of any visible popular enthusiasm in Pyongyang. However it is reported that DPRK officials amply compensated for this in their warm welcome gestures including parties, receptions and tours. The visit was not reported in the news media the first day. On the second day there was meager reporting. Only yesterday the local media reported extensively. As opposed to this, south Koreans are practically glued to their TV sets, radios and newspapers with extraordinary emotionalism.

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

- 2 -

The decision of the ROK Government to admit and assist also correspondents from Communist countries for the second round Red Cross session in Seoul as of 13 September is regarded by observers as very "imaginative". Officials said that the Government would impose no restrictions to these newsmen. One report stated that some correspondents stationed in Tokyo already enquired about entry possibilities through the ROK Embassy in Japan.

REMARKS BY THE ROK PRIME MINISTER

On 29 August, Prime Minister Kim Chong Pil of the ROK expressed his hope that the United Nations would "leave us alone and watch developments" as full-dress talks between south and north Korean Red Cross were about to start.

He said, "We are just at the beginning of our dialogue. If they really want the Korean question settled, I sincerely hope the members of the UN would leave us alone during this difficult attempt." The Prime Minister expressed strong opposition to the new Korean item in the provisional agenda of the UNGA.

REMARKS BY THE ROK FOREIGN MINISTER

On 29 August, ROK Foreign Minister Kim Yong Shik said that the Red Cross talks could lessen the burden on the Korean people caused by partition twenty-seven years ago, even if political unification was not realized. He said that the talks could bring free communications, free travel and exchange of goods between the south and the north even if no one could say how long the unification process would take.

The Minister stressed that the presence of the US troops was important for peace in this area. He said that Koreans had not built mutual trust or confidence and that it was very difficult to achieve anything without trust. He added:

"Korea still has one million troops from both the north and south lined up and facing each other along the 155-mile Demilitarized Zone. There is no other area in the world so heavily congested in a military sense. So Korea still is a sensitive and dangerous point. If anyone says that dialogue has changed this they overlook this reality. In our geography and history we are a front line. We have been invaded. The other side is supported by Communist countries. We have strengthened our defence posture. If the position of one country is weakened, it cannot successfully negotiate with the other."

- 3 -

The Minister also said that the ROK would not like to have a US force presence in the ROK forever. According to the current timetable, ROK's military modernization programme would end in 1975 when US troops withdrawal could be expected.

REMARKS BY THE ROK AMBASSADOR TO THE US
ON ROK TROOP WITHDRAWAL FROM VIET-NAM

On 28 August, ROK Ambassador to the US Kim Dong Jo stated that the ROK troops in the Republic of Viet-Nam would be withdrawn by the end of 1972. He said, "It is very clear that we will withdraw. When no American boys are there, how could we not withdraw? Without allied troops in South Viet-Nam... we have to implement withdrawals. From a political viewpoint, we cannot be alone in South Viet-Nam". Ambassador Kim said that any Korean military presence in Viet-Nam after the end of 1972 would be discussed with the US and the Republic of Viet-Nam Governments.

A spokesman of the ROK Defence Ministry refused to make any comments on the Ambassador's remarks. Earlier on 25 August, Defence Minister Yu Chae Heung had stated that there had been no change in the Government's plan for the second-phase withdrawal of the ROK troops from Viet-Nam, beginning early January 1973, as originally planned.

INDIA'S STANCE ON KOREAN DEBATE

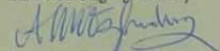
Following ROK Foreign Minister Kim Yong Shik's visit to India, informed circles in Seoul expressed the belief that India would probably abstain this year on the question of deferment of UNGA deliberations on Korea. Considering that India had voted against deferment last year, ROK officials are much elated. They hope that the change to abstention this year would persuade some other countries to take a more sympathetic stance vis-à-vis postponement.

NEW COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE UNC

The new Commander-in-Chief of the United Nations Command in Korea, General Donald V. Bennett, arrived in Seoul yesterday and assumed his new tasks which include the posts of Commanding General, Eighth US Army, and Commanding General, US Forces in Korea.

With warm personal regards,

Sincerely yours,



Ahmet H. Ozbudun
Principal Secretary