

**January 3, 1973**

**Letter, Ahmet H. Ozbudun to C.V. Narasimhan,  
"North-South 'Doctrine of Parallelism'"**

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**Summary:**

Ozbudun sends Narasimhan a letter on North-South 'Doctrine of Parallelism'.

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NORTH-SOUTH "DOCTRINE OF PARALLELISM"

Dear Mr. Narasimhan,

"Parallelism" in the sense of "development of similar new characters by two or more related organisms in response to similarity of environment", <sup>\*</sup> is apparently becoming a new doctrine on the Korean Peninsula. One needs only to broaden the definition (i) to include similarities achieved by a process-in-reverse, and (ii) to regard the concept "similarity of environment" as entailing not only what currently exists but also what is planned for the future.

The drive toward parallelism on the Peninsula is indeed unmistakable, striking and progressive.

Up to early 1972 North and South Korea were proverbially recalcitrant, irreconcilable and anachronistic extremes whose fratricidal legacy and diametrically opposed systems and alliances rendered any effort at dialogue and détente highly utopian.

Whether or not realistic in targeting, scope and pace, a dialogue has actually occurred and explosive confrontation has been suspended by a measure of détente. Not only that, but both the North and South have publicly subscribed to peaceful unification and have commenced actual steps to reconcile their conflicting systems through the aforesaid "doctrine of

\*/ Webster's Seventh New College Dictionary

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

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parallelism".

To elaborate, if somewhat graphically: The pre-1972 Korea co-habited two states, each on the respective extreme of an ideological (or political) graphic line. The process that has now commenced would have each extreme reciprocally move toward center of the line with a view to converging as close to center as possible, as the only hope for both meaningful détente and some form of eventual unification. Barring ulterior motives on both sides (which cannot be ruled out), excessive ambition and undue haste, political observers concede the realism of the process although the dual movement from either extreme may entail much sacrifice from original tenets and loyalties.

It is felt that the graphical process could have been based on an alternative approach which, however, would have at best yielded détente but never unification: Namely, the two extremes (North and South Korea), at each end of the graphic line, could have been forced to bend the political line itself into a crescent-shape where extreme right and extreme left would have come closer to each other than each from the center. To reiterate, however, such closer proximity would have only attained détente at best, with no prospects of foreseeable unification.

The aforesaid "doctrine of parallelism" on the Korean Peninsula has heretofore manifested itself on both fundamental and seemingly subsidiary lines.

That the entire process has been deliberate and not co-incidental, and also that it has emerged as a result of North-South tacit understanding, is glaringly apparent.

The parallelisms include the following:

- Whether it was the North or South which initiated proposals for dialogue in its various phases, both deemed "time ripe" in this regard at the same time not only because of the "rapidly changing international situation" or the threatening tensions on the Peninsula or the prospect of thorough isolation, but each felt with extreme intensity a sense of abandonment by its respective great power allies if not also potential "betrayal" on their part.

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- The timing and scope seriously to take up the matter of peaceful unification is yet another parallelism; indeed the two Capitals practically abandoned all hope that unification could be attained through any other means than "independent" efforts (Ranking ROK officials, however, still expect a UN role as well deeming it not to be an "external force".).
- Both the North and South proceeded with extraordinary parallelism to restructure their constitutional set-up and State organizations and the steps taken in these directions were fully synchronized. These include the enactment of constitutional amendments, their simultaneous promulgation and presidential elections within a few days apart from each other. The new DPRK Constitution has not as yet been made public but some highlights thereof would seem to be reminiscent of the new ROK Constitution.
- Beyond the aforesaid, it will not be very surprising to witness a "parallelism-in-reverse", namely a gradual but distinctive loosening up of the Northern system versus the current tightening of the Southern counterpart. Most observers feel that, besides being the realistic approach for further dialogue, détente and unification efforts, this course, tacitly arrived at, has become the fruit of a North-South compromise. Namely, whereas the North had been insisting on a full-fledged and full-speed approach to dialogue, and the South wanted a most cautious

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pace, President Park has now pledged a "broadened dialogue". The loosening of the North may be seen, for instance, in the change of the state leadership from the centralized "people's committee" to a "state chairmanship system". In the South the President's powers were vastly increased; he ran for election unopposed and as the only candidate; and was elected almost unanimously, with 2357 favourable electoral votes against 2 invalid ballots.

- Last but not least in this list: The ROK seems not fully subscribed to President Kim Il Sung's ideology of "Chuche" (or self-reliance in the political, economic and defence fields) which have now been officially used in the "National Conference for Unification and Self-Reliance" (Chuche) organ of the Constitution. Moreover, President Park's pet development project which is now nation-wide and all-embracing, namely the Saemaun or New Community Movement, appears to some as clearly inspired by a corresponding North Korean programme.

To conclude: Much remains to be seen whether further parallelism will occur without bursting the political and social fabrics of the two respective systems to which the North and South have become so accustomed in past decades. Again much remains to be seen as to how realistically, how far and how fast Pyongyang and Seoul will go, and whether they can go without rupture in their dialogue and efforts towards détente and unification.

Students of Korean affairs, however, wonder most at this juncture as to what would happen to the Korean question as such at the United Nations next year. Would either the North or South revise its stand? Would further progress in the dialogue strengthen or hamper the chances of a further postponement? Would a failure in the dialogue be conducive to weakened support on the part of South Korea's allies (because it has "practically abandoned" representative government without compensatory advancement of the cause of peaceful unification)? What is actually the UN policy of the ROK Government or what will it turn out to be when formulated? What will the impact of other world affairs be on the UN Korean posture, particularly the growing mood among

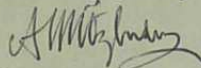
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some States toward recognizing two Koreas, and the German precedent vis-à-vis double Korean membership at the United Nations?

Almost all observers are inclined to agree concerning the last question that raising the matter of double membership at this juncture, might irreparably hurt the North-South efforts toward unification. I hope to be able to write on this topic in due course.

With warm personal regards,

Sincerely yours,



Ahmet H. Ozbudun  
Principal Secretary