

February 12, 1971

**Letter, UNCURK Principal Secretary Kuzbari to UN
Chef de Cabinet Narasimhan**

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Summary:

With the withdrawal of US forces, ROK forces will assume full responsibility for the DMZ, with exception of Panmunjom. Additionally, the upcoming presidential and parliamentary elections will have a strong effect on the political stability of ROK.

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NATIONS UNIES

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

Seoul, 12 February 1971

Dear Mr. Narasimhan,

The first session of UNCURK this year was held at its Headquarters on 10 and 11 February. It was presided over by the Representative of Turkey, Ambassador B.N. Kestelli.

During the opening of the session, members of the Commission took formal acknowledgement of the withdrawal of Chile from the Commission. Its Committee took note of the matter on 23 November 1970.

The session has been primarily called to discuss the Commission's plans for observing the forthcoming presidential and parliamentary elections scheduled previously to be held in May and June 1971 respectively, but during its two days' discussions, the Representatives also discussed a number of issues related to the present security situation as well as the major political developments in the Republic of Korea since the Commission's last session in Kawana, Japan, on 5 and 6 November 1970.

With regard to the present security situation in the Republic of Korea, Ambassador A.H. Loomes, Representative of Australia, drew the attention of the members to the relative calm which existed along the Demilitarized Zone since last December and stated that the level of incidents, if compared with the same period of last year, is quite low. The Representatives exchanged views on the announcement made last week by President Park Chung Hee to have the Republic of Korea forces assume the defence responsibility for the whole 155-mile length of the Demilitarized Zone with the exception of Panmunjom, the site of the Military Armistice Commission Headquarters, and concluded that this development marks an important decision

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

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which could reduce tension in the Demilitarized Zone. It is to be recalled in this connexion that the United States forces, on behalf of the United Nations, have been guarding a large sector of the Demilitarized Zone since the end of the Korean War. Moreover, the Representative of Australia also pointed out that the redeployment of the Republic of Korea forces along the Demilitarized Zone implied that there would be no automatic involvement any more of the United States forces in any major clash between South and North Korea. He added that the Government of the Republic of Korea had resisted for so long the decision of the United States to withdraw its troops from Korea, but seems now to reconcile itself to this decision in return for the United States Government's pledges to modernize its armed forces. The Representative of Turkey commented on this development and stated that the defence treaty between the United States and the Republic of Korea does not call for an automatic intervention by the United States Government in case of war in the Korean peninsula and that the decision to reduce the number of the United States troops in the Republic of Korea, though objected to by the South Korean Government, is an indication that the United States Government is quite reluctant to engage itself once more in any ground war in Korea.

In discussing the domestic political situation, the members of the Commission agreed that the forthcoming presidential and parliamentary elections will have a direct bearing on the political stability in the country. The Representative of Thailand, Ambassador C. Klongvicha, referred to the reported harassment by the Government against the opposition forces and stated that a number of alleged incidents had taken place recently which could convey the impression that the Government is not providing free conditions for the opposition parties to express their views. On the other hand, the Representative of Australia stated that all signs point out that President Park Chung Hee has been consolidating his position as a leader of the Government's Democratic Republican Party and that the recent reshuffle in the party's leadership as well as the Cabinet indicates his desire to have the next National Assembly totally committed to his policies. He also

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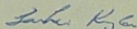
referred to the present controversies regarding the numerous statements made by the opposition New Democratic Party presidential candidate, Mr. Kim Dae Jung, with regard to the question of unification and the improvement of relations with the communist countries, and commented that these statements could become important issues in the forthcoming election campaigns. The Representative of the Netherlands, Ambassador J.Q. Bas Backer, who is resident in Tokyo, and a concurrent Ambassador to the Republic of Korea, provided the Commission with a broader view of the Korean situation as seen from Japan. He said that the Japanese Government is anxious to seek the complete neutralisation of Korea as a buffer-state and that no major clash whatsoever should take place between North and South Korea since such an event could inescapably involve Japan also. He described the present trend in Japan as favouring the establishment of conditions under which both Koreas will free themselves from external pressures.

As to the observations of the forthcoming presidential elections, tentatively scheduled at the end of April, the Commission agreed to form ten observation teams to be despatched to various provinces in the country in order to report on the conduct and results of the elections in those areas.

The Commission agreed to reconvene prior to the date of holding the presidential elections to finalise its observation plans.

With warmest personal regards,

Yours sincerely,



Zouheir Kuzbari
Principal Secretary