

September 11, 1973

Letters, Ahmet H. Ozbudun to C.V. Narasimhan

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Summary:

Ozbudun and Narasimhan's letters on prospects for the impending Korean deliberations at the 28th UNGA, UNCURK's press release, request for cable information, dilemma of UNCURK's local staff, etc.

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UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION FOR THE UNIFICATION AND REHABILITATION OF KOREA

CVN/mnccf

CONFIDENTIAL: No. 210

7 September 1973

DIRECTOR OF U.N.CURK'S LOCAL STAFF

11 September 1973

Dear Mr. Narasimhan,

Surely, you too would be heartbroken if you directly witnessed the tragic, perhaps utterly horrifying, dilemma faced by our Korean staff members, now that UNCURK's dissolving appears to be a certainty.

First, because of government regulations stipulating employment at a younger age, almost all would be deprived of this "better than nothing" option.

Dear Ahmet,

I have received your confidential letters Nos. 210, 211 and 212, and taken note of their contents. Government offices or private firms, the pay and other benefits would be so incredibly lower that the I shall be handing over to Mr. Kittani at the end of the week at UNCURK week and I shall bring your letter No. 210 and its contents to his attention. If not dealt with, it will be a disaster.

With kind regards,

Third, as far as finding employment with the very limited number of resident diplomatic missions is concerned, these few are barely functioning with skeletal staff, and could at best assimilate no more than one or two UNCURK local staff. (I will try regardless).

C.V. Narasimhan
Chef de Cabinet

Fourth, without exception, the eight so-called maintenance workers, mostly a total of twenty-eight, have been fully dedicated, highly competent and cost-conscious in every sense. Some have served for twenty-three years — throughout the existence of UNCURK — with almost devotion, in peace, war and many a trying crisis. As you know, the eight maintenance workers are currently paid by the Government. I arranged this in early 1972 when our funding was cut off. Nevertheless, they have no termination pay and other benefits and must be treated responsibly as part of our staff in Korea.

Mr. Ahmet H. Ozbudun
Principal Secretary
UNCURK
Korea.

Can not the United Nations do anything, at least to alleviate the incredible suffering of its local staff members?

cc. Mr. Kittani
Mr. Shevchenko

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

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION FOR THE UNIFICATION AND REHABILITATION OF KOREA
(UNCURK)CONFIDENTIAL : No. 210

7 September 1973

DILEMMA OF UNCURK's LOCAL STAFF

Dear Mr. Narasimhan,

Surely, you too would be heartbroken if you directly witnessed the tragic, perhaps utterly hopeless, dilemma faced by our Korean staff members, now that UNCURK's dissolution appears to be a certainty.

First, because of government regulations stipulating employment at a younger age, almost all would be deprived of this "better than nothing option".

Second, even if some obtained jobs with government offices or private firms, the pay and other benefits would be so incredibly lower that the present hand-to-mouth existence the staff now undergoes at UNCURK would be pathetically reduced to next-to-bare-survival, if not demi-starvation.

Third, as far as finding employment with the very limited number of resident diplomatic missions is concerned: these few are mostly functioning with skeletal staff, and generally with rock-bottom pay, and could at best assimilate no more than one or two UNCURK local staff. (I will try regardless).

Fourth, without exception, the twenty "regular" staff members and the eight so-called maintenance workers*, namely a total of twenty-eight, have been fully dedicated, highly competent and most-deserving in every sense. Some have served for twenty-three years -- throughout the existence of UNCURK -- with utmost devotion, in peace, war and many a trying crisis.*/As you know, the eight maintenance workers are currently paid by the Government since I arranged this in early 1972 when our manning table was cut by 28.8%. Nevertheless, they have no termination pay and other benefits and must be treated responsibly as part of our staff_/_.

Can not the United Nations do anything, at least to alleviate the incredible suffering of its local staff members?

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

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May I respectfully propose that the following measures might well merit an endeavour, in addition to what you yourself may wish to offer:

1. Other sister agencies of the UN such as the expanding UNDP (UNICEF, WHO, etc.) can be prevailed upon to accord full priority to former UNCURK staff members in hiring their staff members, however, also taking their service with the Commission into full account for the purpose of establishing tenure, seniority and salaries. I propose to talk extensively, and I hope persuasively, to Mr. McInnis and Miss Nash, respectively the Resident Representative of the UNDP and his Deputy, and the other UN mission chiefs to absorb as many UNCURK members as possible, and, with the best possible employment conditions. HOWEVER, I would be also personally most grateful if you actively pursued the establishment of a Headquarters policy to request the UN missions here to "inherit" our local UN staff members and maintenance workers.
2. In taking requisite and appropriate measures in connexion with the impact on the UN Memorial Cemetery in Korea (UNMCK), of UNCURK's expected dissolution, the following can usefully be borne in mind:
 - a. Some UNCURK staff members (in addition to the Custodian and Assistant Custodian) serve inter alia not only UNCURK but UNMCK as well. They actually perform almost exclusively the administrative and financial tasks of UNMCK.
 - b. Consequently, while the UN would "save" financially with the exit of UNCURK, there is no way but to increase considerably the budget of UNMCK and among other things, incorporate into the UNMCK at least key members of our local UNCURK staff who have been all along (and on gratis basis) working for the administrative and finance spheres of UNMCK.
 - c. Therefore some UNCURK staff members, who devote about a third or half of their energies currently on UNMCK, can indeed most usefully be incorporated (without tenure or financial losses, and with compensation for moving their households from Seoul to Pusan) into UNMCK.
3. One other essential if not absolutely incumbent measure to assist our severely stricken Korean staff members is to endeavour to transfer them into UN Headquarters or other UN agencies elsewhere in the

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world. Some of our staff members in Research, Finance, Administration and Maintenance are, I am sure, not less qualified, in language, competence and dedication than any one could encounter elsewhere in the UN system.

4. Last but not least, you could, I am sure, most effectively elicit or grant or create for UNGURK staff members certain imperative and much deserved financial grants in addition to their meagre separation entitlements, interpreting or "stretching" rules to their maximum benefit. Are there no humanitarian or "special" UN funds where all twenty-eight persons concerned -- especially the "maintenance", (who have no termination pay and other benefits), could be granted lump sum "compensation" or "rewards", at least sufficient to start small "business ventures" of their own?

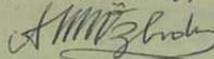
5. Meanwhile, I propose to prepare recommendation letters and curriculum vitae for every staff member concerned, and take some other action, which may humbly contribute at least to sustaining their morale, and God Willing, help them toward some job prospects, however "modest".

My gratitude to you would be beyond bounds, if you could use all your powers to assist along the foregoing lines, above all in connexion with point 4.

I am taking the liberty of presenting a similar plea to Mr. Lansky.

With warmest personal regards -- and much advance indebtedness for your endeavours in reference to my plea,

Yours sincerely,



AHMET H. OZBUDUN
Principal Secretary

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UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION FOR THE UNIFICATION AND REHABILITATION OF KOREA
(UNCURK)CONFIDENTIAL: No. 211

7 September 1973

UNCURK's PRESS RELEASE; AND REQUEST
FOR CABLE INFORMATION; ETC.

Dear Mr. Narasimhan,

UNCURK's Press Release No. 6/73 was issued at eight hundred hours instead of nine hundred hours local time upon realization of continued Summer Daylight Savings Time in New York which reduces the fourteen hours time difference between Seoul and New York by one hour.

The members were grateful to you for the simultaneous issuance of the release in New York. They wish to renew their request for the urgent cabling of any pertinent unclassified information on co-sponsorship and texts of draft resolutions, CA General Committee, Plenary and First Committee votes, etc. on the Korean issues.

As you know, during my seven years at Headquarters, between my second and third Korean assignments, you had arranged with my Department to cable such detailed information (under Messrs. Vellodi's and Chacko's signatures) for which the members and my predecessors had been grateful to you. The members and I will appreciate very much if you kindly obtained similar arrangements for the crucial period ahead. It becomes highly embarrassing to plead ignorance toward diplomats or, even worse, to request pertinent information from the ROK Foreign Ministry or wire services.

Also, last year we had great difficulties with the pouching of records and other documentation from HQ, which we hope, with your kind arrangements and directives, will be avoided this year.

With many thanks and kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Ahmet H. Ozgurdun".
AHMET H. OZGURDUN
Principal SecretaryMr. C. V. Narasimhan
Chef de Cabinet
United Nations

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NATIONS UNIES

UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION FOR THE UNIFICATION AND REHABILITATION OF KOREA
(UNCURK)CONFIDENTIAL: No. 212

7 September 1973

PROSPECTS FOR THE IMPENDING KOREAN DELIBERATIONS
AT THE TWENTY-EIGHTH U.N. G.A.

Dear Mr. Narasimhan,

A growing number of observers here wonder what useful purpose the UNGA deliberations on the two Korean items will serve in that:

- (i) barring serious outbreak of hostilities on the Peninsula, UNCURK will be surely dissolved (whether by one or another draft resolution);
- (ii) such dissolution now required by the so-called pro-ROK side, will in effect exceed the "Algerian", etc. demand which in its present form calls for the "suspension" of the Commission's activities (surely the wording would in effect be changed to "dissolution" or some similar concept);
- (iii) the battle, therefore, would be between "swan-singing" UNCURK or "drumming it out";
- (iv) barring a last-minute "compromise", attempts at the GA to have the United Nations Command or the US Forces removed will fail with or without causing the issue to be referred to the Security Council;
- (v) in the absence of an advance gentlemen's agreement, and if the Korean items are referred to the First Committee rather than discussed at plenary, the battle between the participating North and South Korean Observers will be so poisonous as to "infect" other participants in the debate and, beyond that, perhaps so as to deal a fatal blow to whatever hope remains in the Korean dialogue in the foreseeable future;
- (vi) it would be interesting for the purpose of extrapolation to keep moves by the PRC and the USSR under careful study since some diplomatic quarters believe the eruption of the Sino-Soviet cleavage also on the Korean question to be very imminent; and

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

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- (vii) procedural wrangles would probably be very pronounced and their effect very harmful unless closed-door discussions could be held through a joint sub-committee (such wrangles could for instance occur on the "true" order of priority of draft resolutions tabled).

The same observers express the hope that since the Korean debate is pregnant to no useful purpose and, on the contrary, can indeed ruin whatever good prospects exist within or beyond the Korean items at the forthcoming UNGA, the aforesaid gentlemen's agreement becomes all the more imperative.

This "agreement", it is further pointed out, could first involve obtaining a pledge from both Korean observer missions to act with moderation, "tolerantly" and constructively, and, if such pledge were denied, then either (a) to hold the Korean debate at plenary level so as to exclude representatives of both Koreas; or (b) to hold the debate at the First Committee but either (i) bar Korean participation by withholding invitations, or (ii) have such participation only so long as either or both acted respectably.

Second, "partisans" of either Korea would similarly be requested to follow suit.

Third, the two items could perhaps be combined under a compromise formula as could the draft resolutions presented by both sides with neither side clamouring for or boasting of "victory" which in fact could be shared by both -- if only North-South negotiating normalcy could be encouraged and attained.

In conclusion, I feel that an "apologia" or justification for my insistence to avoid a UN political presence in Korea is in order.

Indeed, my honest-to-Goodness concern (a) that a political vacuum, particularly its timing, is untenable, and (b) that this will inevitably lead to a fatal military vacuum is literally tangible. By insisting repeatedly on the need for the Secretary-General seriously to consider, and soonest, a high calibre personal representation, I am aware that I may be exposing myself to criticism for being (a) ultra-recalcitrant; (b) "more royalist than the king" (since proponents of the UN Korean posture and even the ROK have heretofore sought no successor to UNCURK); and (c) excessively alarmist.

I pray not to be vindicated, but I know that I will be if, among certain vital steps, direct and high calibre political presence of the Secretary-General is not established in the whole of Korea, separately in both parts, or at least in the South.

Moreover, I have no doubt that if the aforesaid presence(s) is not established now as part and parcel of the whole UNGA transaction, it will be infinitely more difficult to do this even in the face of a genuine or tangible crisis.

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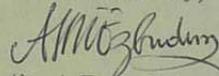
Hence my profound apprehension ...

I am fully aware that I could be more "popular" or "pleasing" if I ceased ~~or~~ broaching the topic time after time. But then, I would not be doing justice to Headquarters, or to my assignment to this vital political weather station, or to my convictions. Thus, this being a vital problem of morality, I hope those who may question my reporting will understand that my deep-set fears, as expressed in numerous points in preceding letters, are genuine and based on (i) having lived the Korean question almost a decade and a half; (ii) having been trained as a student of political science also in my twenty-four years with the Organization; and (iii) having had access to parallel thinking and similar apprehension among most competent observers at this end.

Finally, at the expense of modesty, I have been contemplating on my "batting average" so to speak for forecasting during the past two years. Regrettably, the record happens to be equally impressive and frightening.

With kindest regards,

Yours sincerely,



Ahmet H. Ozbudun
Principal Secretary