

October 23, 1969

**Letter, UNCURK Principal Secretary Kuzbari to UN
Chef de Cabinet Narasimhan, Concerning ROK
Domestic and Peninsular Developments**

Citation:

"Letter, UNCURK Principal Secretary Kuzbari to UN Chef de Cabinet Narasimhan, Concerning ROK Domestic and Peninsular Developments", October 23, 1969, Wilson Center Digital Archive, "International incidents and disputes - Korea - correspondence (603.1)," Executive Office of the Secretary-General, S-0196-0002-05, United Nations Archives and Records Management Section (UN ARMS), New York, NY. Obtained for NKIDP by Charles Kraus. <https://digitalarchive.umd.edu/document/117346>

Summary:

Principal Secretary of the UNCURK Zouheir Kuzbari updates Chef de Cabinet of the UN C.V. Narasimhan on the passage of the 1969 October 17 National Referendum on the Constitutional Amendment Bill and United Nations Command reaction to the North Korean ambush in the U.S. sector of the DMZ.

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English

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UNITED NATIONS NATIONS UNIES

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File
Korea

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UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION FOR THE UNIFICATION AND REHABILITATION OF KOREA

CONFIDENTIAL

28 October 1969

Dear Zouheir,

I wish to acknowledge the receipt of your confidential letter of 23 October addressed to Mr. C.V. Narasimhan.

We have taken note of its contents.

With warm personal regards,

Yours sincerely,

Ismat T. Kittani
Director

Mr. Zouheir Kuzbari
Principal Secretary
UNCURK
Seoul, Korea

UNITED NATIONS
COMMISSION FOR THE UNIFICATION AND REHABILITATION OF KOREA
SECRETARIAT
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1211 GENEVE 14, SWITZERLAND

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

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

Seoul, 23 October 1969

Dear Mr. Narasimhan,

The outcome of the National Referendum on the Constitutional Amendment Bill, which was held throughout the Republic of Korea on 17 October 1969, augurs the beginning of a new chapter in south Korea's modern political history. Not only the country has been saved - at least temporarily - from a potentially dangerous internal political crisis, but also the majority of south Koreans have indicated, through voting in favour of the amendment bill permitting the incumbent President Chung Hee Park to run for a third term in 1971, that they were in effect for the continuation of the status quo and economic progress. Of course, the results of the referendum do not assure President Park of a third term, but would make it easier for him to win in 1971 when he finishes his current second term.

The National Referendum itself which, as heretofore, was observed by UNCURK's teams, resulted in a landslide victory for President Park. Of the 15 million eligible voters, 11.6 million cast their ballots with a nationwide total of 7.5 million for and 3.6 million against. There were 413,435 invalidated ballots. In the voting, seven out of the eight provincial capitals carried the amendment while the Capital City of Seoul voted against it. The referendum changed the ROK's Constitution on four points:-

- a) Three terms for the president (instead of two);
- b) National Assembly members will not exceed 250, nor be less than 150 (instead of 150 to 200 members);
- c) National Assembly members can concurrently hold cabinet positions or other public or private posts;
- d) Impeachment of the president shall be proposed by at least 50 members of the National Assembly and passed by at least a two-thirds vote of duly elected members.

President Park's victory was made possible because of better organization, unity among members of his ruling Democratic Republican Party and the support he had received from the rural areas. The

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

- 2 -

opposition New Democratic Party's campaign against the constitutional amendment has been futile. Its ranks were too divided to stage any effective struggle. Most active in protesting against the Constitutional Amendment Bill were the radical students who have a tradition of political sensitivity behind them, but the administration of President Park has been able to handle their demonstrations by avoiding direct confrontation with them.

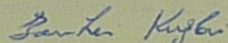
Armed with this new vote of confidence in his leadership, the President moved quickly during this week to meet the mounting criticisms levelled against some of his cabinet members and his high ranking aides. A partial cabinet reshuffle has been announced on 21 October, which resulted in bringing in new members from the academic community. At the same time he accepted the resignations of his two top controversial aides, his Chief Secretary and the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency. The next step is likely to be the re-organization of his ruling party some time next month.

The situation along the U.S. sector of the DMZ seems to be a source of concern to the United Nations Command. On 18 October, four U.S. army soldiers were killed in an ambush by north Koreans inside the DMZ. The UNC charged that they were all shot through the heads by the north Korean attackers after their truck was riddled with bullets and grenades.

The question being debated at the UNC is whether this incident should be viewed as an isolated case or be regarded as part of a developing pattern, indicating that the north Koreans have learned few lessons from the Vietnamese situation wherein heavy inflicting casualties among U.S. servicemen have led to anti-war feelings in the U.S. itself and had prompted the present American military disengagement. Analysts at the UNC were reported to be watching these developments which have also coincided with the same unusual activities within the north Korean sector of the DMZ in the last few weeks.

With warm personal regards,

Yours sincerely,



Zouheir Kuzbari
Principal Secretary

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

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Principal Secretary