

Peking story (American prisoners in China) - correspondence, letters and ca...

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Peking story - 1954

10 - 15 June

Press Releases conc. second and third
contact between representatives of the
U.S. and Chinese Delegation.

Press Release
Press Office
Delegation of the People's Republic of China

PROC/04
June 10, 1954

A second contact was made this morning between the representative of the Delegation of the People's Republic of China and the representative of the U.S. Delegation on the question of nationals of each side residing in the other and the question of Chinese students in the U.S.

U.S. representative Johnson handed over a list of American nationals and military personnel he alleged to have been detained by the Chinese Government, asking the Chinese side to give them an early opportunity to return to their country.

Chinese representative Wang Ping-nan gave the following reply:

"It is not difficult for today's contact on the question of nationals of each side residing in the other and the question of overseas students to secure a reasonable and ~~their~~ solution so long as both sides have the sincerity to solve the problem.

"The government of my country has all along accorded protection to the American nationals in China as long as they abide by the law of China. They can reside in China and engage in legitimate business. If they want to leave China for their own country for one reason or another, they can do so at any time as long as they are not involved in any criminal or civil cases. As a matter of fact, since the founding of the People's Republic of China, 1,485 American nationals have already left China, of whom 582 left in 1950, 727 in 1951, 143 in 1952 and 33 in 1953. The fact that they are American citizens has never constituted a reason for the Government of China to deter their departure. The Chinese government and the Chinese people have always been friendly to the American people.

"A few Americans engaged in espionage and sabotage activities in China. Some of them took part in the civil war launched by the Chiang Kai-shek reactionary clique against the Chinese people. Others violated China's territorial air or trespassed against China's territorial waters. The People's Government of China has prosecuted in accordance with law these few culprits. This is the duty and responsibility which should be carried out by the government of any sovereign state. The Government of China, in deciding sentences for these American nationals, based its considerations entirely on the crimes they had committed. They were detained and imprisoned because their crimes warranted it.

"As to the list of Americans your side handed over, we will examine it and will give you a reply in our next contact."

"As to the question of the retention of Chinese students in the U.S. by the U.S. Government, we intend to bring it up in our next contact."

The next contact is scheduled to be made on June 15, 1954.

THE GENEVA CONFERENCE
GENEVA, SWITZERLAND

USDel 35 (PR 22)
JUNE 15, 1954

In a continuing effort to obtain the release of United States citizens imprisoned or otherwise detained in Communist China, U. Alexis Johnson, Ambassador to Czechoslovakia, met today for the third time with a representative of the Chinese Communist Delegation.

In reply to questions raised by Ambassador Johnson at the last meeting the Chinese Communist representative stated that the relatives of imprisoned Americans may send small packages to them. In addition the Chinese Communist representative stated that United States military personnel currently imprisoned in Communist China for violations of Chinese territorial air can carry on correspondence with their families and their families may send small packages to them. The delivery of letters and packages to civilian and military prisoners will be handled by the "National Red Cross Society of China, Peking".

Claiming that sentences passed on American civilian and military personnel, are based on offenses committed in violation of Chinese Communist law, the Chinese Communist representative went on to say, however, that the authorities will consider sentence commutation or the early release of prisoners who have records of good behavior.

The Chinese Communist representative further stated that the status of individual detained Americans carried on the list supplied to him at the last meeting by Ambassador Johnson is now being checked and that when the investigations are completed the United States Delegation will be notified.

During the course of the meeting the Chinese Communist representative alleged that a large proportion of the approximately 5,000 Chinese students in the United States desire to return to China but are blocked because of obstructions imposed by the United States Government. In reply Ambassador Johnson pointed out that only a small percentage of the total number of Chinese students presently residing in the United States have since 1951 applied for exit permits. Out of the group of 434 that have applied only some 120 have been refused exit permits. Such refusals have been based on pertinent United States regulations and laws. Ambassador Johnson then referred to the wide freedom of movement and employment possibilities accorded even to persons in that category.

Ambassador Johnson stated he would request that the current status of the Chinese who have been denied permission to leave the United States be reviewed and that the Chinese Communist representative would be furnished pertinent information as soon as it becomes available.

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Press Release

PROC/ 06

Press Office

June 15, 1954

Delegation of the People's Republic of China

A third contact was made this morning at 10 o'clock between the representative of the Delegation of the People's Republic of China and the representative of the U.S. Delegation on the question of nationals of each side residing in the areas of the other side and the question of Chinese students in the U.S.

Chinese representative Wang Ping-nan made a reply to the questions put forward by the other side on June 10. Wang Ping-nan stated that the Chinese side agrees that the American nationals detained for committing crimes and the American military personnel detained for violating Chinese territorial air may have correspondence with their families and their families may also send small packages to them. The delivery of letters both ways and of small packages as mentioned above will all be handled through the National Red Cross Society of China.

Wang Ping-nan stated that in deciding the sentences for law-breaking foreign nationals (including law-breaking American nationals and American military personnel violating the territorial air of China), the Chinese Government made its decisions solely in accordance with the crimes they have committed. However, after a sentence has been decided upon, if the prisoner's behavior is good, the Government of China may consider a commutation or an early release. This is the way in which the Chinese Government has already acted.

With regard to the list which the American side handed over on June 10, Wang Ping-nan stated that it is being checked by the department concerned in the Chinese Government. When information is received by the Chinese Delegation, an appointment will be

made for conversation with the American side.

Wang Ping-nan then brought up the question of unreasonable retention of Chinese students by the U.S. Government. He pointed out that China has now more than 5,000 students in the United States of America. Many of these students wish to leave the United States to return to their motherland, but they have been subjected to multifarious obstructions. When they applied for exit permits from the U.S. Government, the latter notified them that they were not allowed to leave the U.S. and further told them that if they should violate this order, they would be fined not more than \$ 5,000 or imprisoned for not more than five years, or both. The U.S. Government went so far as to take away even the passports of the Chinese students in the U.S. There have been not only cases of retention of Chinese students by the U.S. Government, but also cases of ill-treatment, arrest and imprisonment by the U.S. Government of Chinese students who asked to return to their motherland. As a result, many Chinese students in the U.S. dare not apply for returning to their country. In its statement issued on May 29, the U.S. Delegation also admitted the fact that the U.S. Government has retained Chinese students.

Wang Ping-nan pointed out that the Chinese students in the U.S. have not been guilty of anything. There is no reason for the U.S. Government to deprive them of their right of returning to their motherland and reuniting with their families. We ask, Wang Ping-nan stated, that the U.S. Government end its retention of Chinese students and restore their right to leave the U.S. and return to China at any time. The Chinese nationals residing in the U.S. should also have the right to return to their motherland at any time.

Finally, Wang Ping-nan proposed that the two sides issue a joint communique, declaring that the Government of each side will not deter the departure of the law-abiding nationals, including students, of the other side residing in its areas when they apply for return, and that they have the freedom to return to their country at any time.