

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

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Dag Hammarskjöld's sand.

Peking story

22-28 Jan. 1955

Johnson, D.M., (Perun Repr. of Canada to the U.S.)

3 letters to D.M.

+ enc. cables (conc. American fliers jailed in China)



S E C R E T

CANADIAN DELEGATION TO THE UNITED NATIONS  
NEW YORK

January 22, 1955.

Dear Mr. Hammarskjold,

I am enclosing a copy of a telegram dated January 21 which I have received from Mr. Pearson. You will note that in paragraph 6 of this telegram, Mr. Pearson requested me to take an early opportunity to convey to you the views outlined in this telegram as an informal suggestion.

In a subsequent telegram, Mr. Pearson suggested that any message sent to Mr. Chou En-Lai in accordance with paragraph 4(e) of the enclosed telegram should also include Colonel Heller, whose circumstances are, we believe, like those of the other three officers.

Mr. Pearson has also asked me to mention to you that he was much impressed by the observations of President Eisenhower in his press conference on January 19 about international suspicions and misunderstandings. The President's observations make clear the moderate and dispassionate approach he has to the issue of the United States airmen. We consider this statement an encouraging sign that the United States Administration is likely to maintain an attitude which might lead to the release of the airmen, and Mr. Pearson has suggested that you might appropriately refer to it in any message to Chou En-Lai along the lines suggested.

Yours sincerely,

D. M. Johnson,  
Permanent Representative of Canada  
to the United Nations.

Mr. Dag Hammarskjold,  
Secretary-General of the  
United Nations,  
New York.



CANADIAN DELEGATION TO THE UNITED NATIONS  
NEW YORK

January 26, 1955.

Dear Mr. Hammarskjold:

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I enclose for your information  
the text of a statement made in the House  
of Commons yesterday by Mr. Pearson on  
Formosa and the coastal islands.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "David M. Johnson".

David M. Johnson  
Permanent Representative of Canada  
to the United Nations

Mr. Dag Hammarskjold,  
Secretary-General of the United Nations,  
New York, N.Y.

S E C R E T



CANADIAN DELEGATION TO THE UNITED NATIONS  
NEW YORK

January 28, 1955.

Dear Mr. Hammarskjold,

I sent to Mr. Pearson the text of your memorandum of January 24 relating to the eleven fliers. Mr. Pearson has now asked me to convey to you the following message:

" Will you please convey to Mr. Hammarskjold my thanks for his message. I am very glad to have his analysis of the situation with which I generally agree. I quite appreciate, of course, that the impending reference of the situation in the Formosa Strait to the Security Council will cause a reconsideration of any plans concerning the American fliers and may well make it desirable that no action should be taken for some time. I am glad to notice, however, that if conditions are suitable, Mr. Hammarskjold intends to make a new demarche at the end of next week about the jet pilots. Please convey my best wishes to Mr. Hammarskjold, with my great regret that I will not be able to see him in New York for the time being".

Yours sincerely,

*David M. Johnson*

D. M. Johnson,  
Permanent Representative of Canada  
to the United Nations.

Mr. Dag Hammarskjold,  
Secretary-General of the  
United Nations,  
New York.

*Mr. H. - Since I arrived here Mr. Pearson telephoned me to say he was going to London to attend Commonwealth Conference. He may return via New York. If not he will try to come over*

IMPORTANT. CONFIDENTIAL. NO. 16(16). JANUARY 21(21).

PART ONE OF FOUR PARTS.

SUBJECT: UNITED STATES AIRMEN IN CHINA.

I HAVE BEEN CONSIDERING WHETHER THERE MIGHT BE SOME WAY IN WHICH THE UNITED NATIONS MIGHT PUT DIPLOMATIC PRESSURE ON THE PEKING GOVERNMENT TO SECURE SOME EARLY ACTION IN THE CASE OF THE SENTENCED AMERICAN FLIERS. IT SEEMS TO ME THAT IT WOULD BE UNFORTUNATE TO LEAVE THE INITIATIVE WITH CHOU EN-LAI(CHOU EN-LAI WHERE IT IS NOW. HE HAS SUCCEEDED IN PUTTING ACROSS HIS COMPLAINTS AGAINST THE UNITED STATES AND HUSHING UP CRITICAL COMMENT. THE UNITED STATES ADMINISTRATION, WHILE RESTRAINING THOSE LIKE SENATOR KNOWLAND(KNOWLAND WHO CLAMOUR FOR IMMEDIATE ACTION IN THE WAY OF UNITED NATIONS CONDEMNATION OF THE CHINESE, AND POSSIBLY A BLOCKADE, CLEARLY HOPES THAT SOME FURTHER CONSTRUCTIVE ACTION CAN BE TAKEN BY THE UNITED NATIONS. IT SEEMS TO ME UNDESIRABLE TO HAVE A SPECIAL SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON THIS SUBJECT AT THIS TIME AS IT IS DOUBTFUL IF IT WOULD ACHIEVE ANY USEFUL PURPOSE AND MIGHT ONLY SERVE TO REDUCE OUR FREEDOM OF MANOEUVRE AND GENERALLY AGGRAVATE RELATIONS. THE PROBLEM, THEREFORE, IS WHAT, SHORT OF A SPECIAL SESSION, CAN BE DONE AT THIS TIME BY THE UNITED NATIONS TO MAKE SOME PROGRESS IN THIS CASE?

2(2). I HAVE REVIEWED OUR TACTICS IN THE CASE OF S/L A.R. MACKENZIE(S/L A.R. MACKENZIE WHO, ALTHOUGH APPARENTLY NOT(NOT OFFICIALLY SENTENCED) WAS WRONGFULLY DETAINED FOR A YEAR AND FOUR MONTHS AFTER THE KOREAN ARMISTICE. WHILE IT MIGHT BE UNWISE TO TRY TO DRAW A GENERAL CONCLUSION FROM A SINGLE CASE, I AM INCLINED TO THINK THAT THE PROCEDURE WE FOLLOWED MIGHT PROVIDE A HELPFUL SUGGESTION WORTH EXAMINATION. IN THE MACKENZIE CASE THE CANADIAN DELEGATION AT THE GENEVA CONFERENCE WAS GIVEN A GENERAL ASSURANCE BY MR. WANG PINGNAN(WANG PINGNAN AND MR. CHOU EN-LAI(CHOU EN-LAI THAT MACKENZIE WOULD EVENTUALLY BE RELEASED. NO(NO DATE WAS SET. AFTER FOUR MONTHS HAD PASSED, MR. CHESTER RONNING(CHESTER RONNING, WHO HAD DONE THE NEGOTIATING WITH THE CHINESE SENT

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PERMDEL FROM EXTERNAL

IMPORTANT. CONFIDENTIAL. NO. 16(16). JANUARY 21(21).

PART TWO OF FOUR PARTS.

.....WITH THE CHINESE SENT.....

A PERSONAL MESSAGE TO MR. WANG PINGNAN (WANG PINGNAN WHICH EXPRESSED DISAPPOINTMENT AT THE DELAY IN MACKENZIE'S RELEASE AND IMPLIED THAT IF IT WAS DELAYED MUCH LONGER IT WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY CAUSE AN INCREASED SENSE OF IRRITATION ON THE PART OF THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT. THE CHINESE APPARENTLY CONSIDERED IT IN THEIR INTEREST NOT (NOT TO PERMIT THE MEASURE OF UNDERSTANDING REACHED AT GENEVA TO DETERIORATE AND, ACCORDINGLY, RELEASED MACKENZIE. THERE MAY BE OTHER MOTIVATIONS IN THIS CASE OF WHICH WE ARE NOT (NOT AWARE BUT WE THINK THAT THIS LINE OF REASONING CARRIED SOME WEIGHT IN THE CHINESE REVIEW OF THE CASE.

3(3). THE POSITION OF THE SENTENCED AMERICAN FLIERS IS, OF COURSE, MORE DIFFICULT THAN THAT OF MACKENZIE BECAUSE OF THE LOW POINT OF UNITED STATES - CHINESE COMMUNIST RELATIONS AND BECAUSE THEY HAVE BEEN PUBLICLY SENTENCED. I DO NOT (NOT KNOW WHAT, IF ANY, PROGRESS MAY BE MADE, WITH OR WITHOUT RELATION TO THE CASE OF THE FLIERS, IN AMELIORATING RELATIONS BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND COMMUNIST CHINA. ANY PROGRESS MADE IN THIS FIELD WOULD UNDOUBTEDLY BE HELPFUL. I DO BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT IT MAY BE POSSIBLE TO USE THE CHINESE DESIRE TO ESTABLISH OR MAINTAIN RELATIONS OF BETTER UNDERSTANDING WITH OTHER UNITED NATIONS MEMBERS AS A MEANS OF PUTTING SOME DISCREET DIPLOMATIC MORAL PRESSURE ON THEM TO MAKE SOME GESTURE IN THE NEAR FUTURE IN THIS CASE.

4(4). IN CARRYING OUT THIS IDEA, I WONDER IF IT WOULD NOT (NOT BE HELPFUL IF THE SECRETARY GENERAL WERE TO SEND A CONFIDENTIAL MESSAGE TO CHOU EN-LAI (CHOU EN-LAI REPORTING ON THE REACTIONS HE HAD RECEIVED FROM THE VARIOUS UNITED NATIONS DELEGATES TO HIS REPORT ON HIS MISSION TO PEKING. SUCH A MESSAGE MIGHT SAY:

(A)(A) MOST OF THE DELEGATES TO WHOM HE HAD REPORTED WELCOMED THE CONTACT WHICH HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED BETWEEN THE SECRETARY GENERAL AND MR. CHOU EN-LAI AND CONSIDERED THAT THIS COULD BE BENEFICIAL TO THE UNITED NATIONS AS WELL AS TO CHINA.

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PERMDEL FROM EXTERNAL

IMPORTANT. CONFIDENTIAL. NO. 16(16. JANUARY 21(21.

PART THREE OF FOUR PARTS.

.....AS WELL AS TO CHINA. ....

(B)(B) MANY DELEGATES CONSIDERED THAT A USEFUL PURPOSE HAD BEEN SERVED IN REVIEWING THE DIFFERENCES EXISTING BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND CHINA.

(C)(C) HE FELT BOUND TO REPORT, HOWEVER, THAT THERE WAS GENERAL DISAPPOINTMENT THAT MORE POSITIVE RESULTS HAD NOT(NOT BEEN ACHIEVED IN RESPECT TO A REVIEW OF THE CASES OF THE AMERICAN FLIERS.

(D)(D) WHILE UNITED NATIONS DELEGATES HAD BEEN PERSUADED BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL NOT(NOT TO EXPRESS THEIR DISAPPOINTMENT PUBLICLY, HE WAS NOT(NOT SURE HOW LONG IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO KEEP THE LID ON THE DIAPPOINTMENT THAT WAS GENERALLY FELT. THERE WAS THE POSSIBILITY THAT MEMBER GOVERNMENTS MIGHT GIVE PUBLIC EXPRESSION TO THEIR DISAPPOINTMENT.

(E)(E) IN ORDER TO PREVENT SUCH AN UNFORTUNATE FURTHER DETERIORATION IN RELATIONS BETWEEN THE UNITED NATIONS AND CHINA, AND WITH A VIEW TO CONTINUING THE PROCESS OF RELAXING TENSION IN THE FAR EAST, WHICH THE SECRETARY GENERAL AND MR. CHOU(CHOU BOTH DESIRE, THE SECRETARY GENERAL HOPED THAT IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE FOR THE CHINESE GOVERNMENT TO MAKE SOME CONCILIATORY GESTURE WITHOUT TOO MUCH FURTHER DELAY. ONE STEP WHICH MIGHT BE GIVEN CONSIDERATION WOULD BE THE RELEASE OF THOSE AMERICAN FLIERS (CAPTAIN FISCHER(FISCHER, LIEUTENANT CAMERON CAMERON AND LIEUTENANT PARKS(PARKS) WHO HAD BEEN DETAINED WITH THE CANADIAN FLIER, S/L A.R. MACKENZIE, WHOM THE CHINESE HAD RELEASED ON DECEMBER 5(5, 1954(54. THEIR CASES WERE APPARENTLY SOMEWHAT SIMILAR TO HIS AND SINCE THEY HAD NOT(NOT APPARENTLY BEEN SENTENCED IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE FOR THE CHINESE TO RELEASE THEM WITHOUT DELAY.

5(5. A MESSAGE OF THIS KIND FROM THE SECRETARY GENERAL COULD BE ACCOMPANIED BY SOME DISCREET REPRESENTATIONS BY GOVERNMENTS HAVING DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATIVES IN PEKING. THE EFFECT MIGHT BE TO PUT THE CHINESE MORE ON THE DEFENSIVE AND CAUSE THEM TO WONDER WHETHER IT WOULD

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I THANK MR PEARSON FOR HIS MESSAGE AND I AM GRATEFUL FOR HIS VALUABLE SUGGESTION AND CONTINUED ACTIVE INTEREST IN A MOST DELICATE OPERATION STOP MY COMMENTS FOLLOW STOP

PRIMO. DIFFERENCES BETWEEN MACKENZIE AND THE ELEVEN FLIERS STOP ONE M WAS NEVER CONVICTED OR CONVICTED ONLY TO DEPORTATION TWO M WAS IN NO WAY LINKED UP WITH CIA ACTIVITIES IN CHINA THREE UN CONDEMNATION WHICH I STILL CONSIDER GREAT POLITICAL MISTAKE FROM INTERNATIONAL VIEWPOINT HAD MADE ISSUE OF ELEVEN MAJOR PRESTIGEQUESTION NOT ONLY IN COMMUNIST WORLD BUT ALL OVER ASIA AS APPARENT FROM NEHRUS ATTITUDE FOUR US POLITICAL REACTION AND DISCUSSION HAD MADE ISSUE OF ELEVEN ESSENTIAL PART OF WHOLE PROBLEM US-CHINA RELATIONS FIVE US DISCUSSION IN GENEVA HAD NOT RESULTED IN STATEMENT OBVIOUSLY GIVEN BY CHINESE CONCERNING MACKENZIE SIX TREATMENT BY CHINESE OF ELEVEN IN GENEVA DISCUSSION HAD, DUE TO AMERICAN PRESENTATION, CLASSED THEM AS NOT KOREAN PRISONERS, WITHOUT US PROTEST SEVEN PEG FOR CONTINUED CONTACT CONCERNING MACKENZIE AFTER GENEVA HAD NO COUNTERPART IN CASE OF ELEVEN STOP SEVERAL OF THESE POINTS APPLY ALSO FOUR JETPILOTS, CASES OF FECTEAU DOWNEY MORE UNFAVOURABLE

SECUNDO. SITUATION RESULTING FROM PEKING TALKS STOP IN VIEW OF CIRCUMSTANCES OUTLINED IN PRIMO MY IMMEDIATE AIMS IN PEKING AFTER SUCCESSFUL CRASHING OF GATE AND ESTABLISHING NEGOTIATION CONTACT WERE A TO CONSOLIDATE THAT CONTACT B TO MAKE ITS MAINTENANCE, TO WHICH CHOU EN-LAI OBVIOUSLY ATTACHES CONSIDERABLE POLITICAL VALUE, CONDITIONED BY SATISFACTORY SOLUTION PRISONER PROBLEM C TO ELIMINATE NUMEROUS FACTUAL MISUNDERSTANDINGS AND ESTABLISH TRUE FACTS WITH CONCLUSION THAT FLIERS WERE KOREAN PRISONERS.

THESE AIMS WERE ACHIEVED AND CONTINUED CONTACT INCLUDING PRISONER QUESTION AGREED. CHOU'S REITERATED REAFFIRMATION GENEVA STATEMENTS ON CHINESE GENERAL POLICYLINE CONCERNING RELEASE OF PRISONERS AND HIS OBVIOUS EFFORTS AVOID ANYTHING THAT MIGHT RENDER MORE DIFFICULT RELEASE IN NEAR FUTURE SEEM AT LEAST TO EQUAL DECLARATION ON MACKENZIE IN GENEVA STOP MY CONCLUSION IS THAT WE ON ELEVEN PLUS FOUR FLIERS AFTER REPEAT AFTER PEKING TALKS ARE IN ABOUT SAME POSITION AS CANADA WAS AFTER GENEVA IN MACKENZIE CASE WITH ADDED POSITIVE ELEMENTS THAT CHOU KNOWS WEAKNESS OF HIS ARGUMENTS AND ESPECIALLY THAT BY NOT ACTING HE MAY LOSE NEWLY OFFERED POSSIBILITIES INFORMAL CONTACTS WITH WEST THROUGH SECGEN.

MR PEARSON'S VIEW THAT CHOU EN-LAI NOW HAS INITIATIVE AND SUCCEEDED PUTTING ACROSS COMPLAINTS WHILE HUSHING CRITICAL COMMENTS DOES NOT SEEM JUSTIFIED STOP INITIATIVE IN MY HANDS STOP ALL CHOU'S COMPLAINTS AS VOICED TO ME PERSONALLY ALREADY PUBLICLY KNOWN STOP CRITICAL COMMENTS HIS GENERAL POLICY NOT HUSHED BY EFFORTS GETTING PRISONER QUESTION DOWN TO SUCH MORE NORMAL TEMPERATURE WHERE PRESTIGEARGUMENTS AGAINST RELEASE LESS APPARENT STOP THIS LAST EFFORT PART OF WORK NECESSARY TO REESTABLISH THE MORE FAVOURABLE CONDITIONS EXISTING BEFORE ASSEMBLY DEBATE STOP ALREADY BEFORE VISIT PEKING OBVIOUS THAT AFTER WHAT HAD HAPPENED RELEASE WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE FOR CHOU EN-LAI AT THAT FIRST STAGE STOP CALL FOR RESTRAINT ON MY RETURN NECESSARY TO WARD OFF DESPERATE REACTION WHEN UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS NOT FULFILLED.

TERTIO. TACTICS FOR FOLLOW UP STOP DIRECT ACTION WHETHER IN FORM DIRECT DEMARCHE FROM US, NEW ASSEMBLY CONDEMNATION OR BLOCKADE WOULD ONLY REDUCE CHANCES SUCCESS AND MIGHT EVEN LOCK THE DOOR DEFINITELY STOP NEW ACTION FROM ME INADVISABLE UNTIL WE HAVE CHOU EN-LAI'S REACTION TO PRESSDEBATE AND MY, DULLES AND ESPECIALLY EISENHOWER'S PRESSCONFERENCES PLUS TACHEN ACTION STOP CANADA WAITED FOUR MONTHS AFTER GENEVA WHILE I LEFT PEKING ONLY TWO WEEKS AGO STOP I HAVE TOLD DULLES THAT I FELT MATTERS MUST SETTLE DOWN SOMEWHAT BEFORE I TAKE NEW ACTION STOP HE SEEMED TO AGREE.

SUBJECT CHANGES CAUSED BY CHOU EN-LAI'S REACTIONS TO DEBATE HERE OR OTHER DEVELOPMENTS I INTEND TO MAKE NEW DEMARCHE END NEXT WEEK CONCENTRATING ON JETPILOTS FOR WHOM EARLY RELEASE IS IN THE AIR STOP ARGUMENTS THEN OF TYPE SUGGESTED BY MR PEARSON BUT INTER ALIA WITH STRONGER ACCENT ON POSSIBILITY MAINTAIN RELATIONSHIP CHOU TO SECRETARY GENERAL STOP IN VIEW MY PERSONAL KEY POSITION FROM CHOU EN-LAI'S VIEWPOINT I AM DOUBTFUL OF VALUE OF DISCREET DEMARCHES FROM GOVERNMENTS ALREADY THAT STAGE STOP BELIEVE I HAVE OPENED DOOR FOR PRESSURE ALSO FROM INDIA AND SOVIET BUT WOULD NOT ACTIVATE THAT YET QUARTO. IF TACTICS OUTLINED IN TERTIO NOT RENDERED IMPOSSIBLE BY NEW DEVELOPMENTS I WILL IN DUE TIME CONSULT THE GOVERNMENTS MOST DIRECTLY INTERESTED STOP ANXIOUS THAT NO REPEAT NO UNCHECKED OR UNCOORDINATED GOVERNMENT ACTION BE TAKEN NOW AND INSIST ON AVOIDING THREATS POSSIBLE OUTWARD PRESSURE LIKE SPECIAL SESSION OR BLOCKADE AS POLICY SHOULD BE TO REDUCE OUTER PRESSURES TO MINIMUM WHILE INCREASING INNER PRESSURES TO MAXIMUM STOP EFFORTS THAT DIRECTION SO FAR SUCCESSFUL AND WILL BE ENERGETICALLY CONTINUED STOP WASHINGTON'S ATTITUDE HELPFUL.

24 January 1955