

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

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Peking story

8 Feb. 1955

Aide memoire (on talks with Ambassador Cabot Lodge, USA)

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AIDE MEMOIRE

Ambassador Lodge and Mr. Barco came to see me in order to tell me about their plans for the Security Council, before bringing them up with other delegations. The idea was to have me report formally on the official reply from Chou and then to wind up by an adjournment after a few statements without any proposals.

I replied that, of course, I could make such a report, but the condition from my point of view was that beforehand I had given Chou some kind of reply to what he said to the Swedish Ambassador. If I made a purely formal report in the Security Council and had said nothing to Chou, he would be mystified and have good reasons for all sorts of suspicions. I did not feel that we should take such a risk.

Lodge then said that they did not wish to comment on my proposal from last Sunday and that the line I took made it necessary for them to think again. I pointed out that I had never asked them to approve of anything. I did not want them in any way committed as this was obviously a question I had to handle on my own responsibility, but it had to me been a matter of course that I should not act without ascertaining that my way of acting would not seriously embarrass Washington.

Lodge then again brought up the question of my "message" maintaining the official line that I had "exceeded my authority". However, he agreed that this now mainly was a question of history. He read to me a few

sentences out of a letter which he obviously had intended to send in reply to my last letter of the 7th.

When I pressed him on the question of a reply to Chou, Lodge said that he could just as well give the reaction now as later as there would certainly not be any change in the Washington line. They considered this as being a matter to be handled entirely on my responsibility. They did not wish to make any comments on my proposed text or line of action, but they wanted to restate that they felt that a continued contact with Chou would mean exceeding my authority.

I said that under these circumstances, with the view I held on the question of the responsibility and authority, I was likely to take action in line with what I had told him/<sup>and</sup>that I felt that in doing so I served the UN interest in maintaining a channel which one day might prove valuable. I had also in mind the need to have the back free, if and when the Security Council met.

Off the record Lodge added that I must understand that the President and the Secretary of State were "moving in a good direction" but that they had very great difficulties. I replied that it was in this situation that I felt that I might do the right thing if, while noting US formal objections and thus maintaining complete freedom of judgment for Washington, I all the same took the necessary step in order to preserve a contact with Chou En-lai.