

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

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Peking story

19 April 1955

Press reaction on Chou En-lai's letter to the parents
of a U.S. flyer imprisoned in China

International News Service

BULLETIN (LETTER)

BY DON DIXON

WASHINGTON, APRIL 14---(INS)--THE STATE DEPARTMENT TODAY BRANDED AS "CRUEL PROPAGANDA" A LETTER FROM COMMUNIST CHINA PREMIER CHOU EN-LAI TO THE PARENTS OF A U.S. FLYER IMPRISONED BY THE REDS AND SAID AGAIN IT WILL NOT PERMIT RELATIVES TO VISIT THE JAILED MEN.

THE LETTER REFERRED TO BY THE DEPARTMENT WAS TO MR. AND MRS. HAROLD FISCHER OF SWEA CITY, IOWA, ENCOURAGING THEM TO VISIT THEIR SON, CAPT. HAROLD FISCHER, A JET ACE SHOT DOWN DURING THE KOREAN WAR AND HELD SINCE IN A CHINESE PRISON.

CHOU TOLD THE FISCHERS, WHO REQUESTED PERMISSION TO GO SEE THEIR SON, THAT ARRANGEMENTS WOULD BE MADE FOR RECEIVING THEM IF THEY INFORMED HIM WHEN THEY WERE COMING.

THE COUPLE, WHO PREVIOUSLY WERE DENIED PASSPORTS, WERE PLANNING TO SEEK VISAS FROM THE STATE DEPARTMENT TO MAKE THE TRIP. FISCHER SAID HE WAS SURE HIS SON WOULD BE RELEASED AFTER THE VISIT.

A STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL SAID, HOWEVER, THAT THE U.S. GOVERNMENT HAS NOT CHANGED ITS FEELINGS OF JAN. 27 WHEN SECRETARY JOHN FOSTER DULLES WROTE TO RELATIVES OF THE 15 IMPRISONED AIRMEN DENYING THEM PERMISSION TO TRAVEL TO THE CHINA MAINLAND.

THE SPOKESMAN SAID THAT "WE WILL HAVE TO TURN THEM DOWN AGAIN BECAUSE, IF ANYTHING, THE SITUATION REGARDING CHINA HAS BECOME WORSE SINCE THE SECRETARY WROTE THEM IN JANUARY."

DULLES TOLD THE RELATIVES AT THAT TIME "THE INCREASINGLY BELLIGERENT ATTITUDE AND ACTIONS" OF THE REDS "HAVE FORCED THIS GOVERNMENT TO THE RELUCTANT CONCLUSION THAT IT WOULD BE IMPRUDENT FOR THE TIME BEING TO ISSUE PASSPORTS VALID FOR TRAVEL TO COMMUNIST CHINA FOR ANY AMERICAN CITIZENS."

THE SECRETARY ALSO WROTE AT THAT TIME AND THE DEPARTMENT REAFFIRMED TODAY THAT "ONLY BY RELEASING THOSE THEY HOLD CAN THE CHINESE COMMUNISTS CONVINCINGLY DEMONSTRATE CONCERN FOR THE HUMAN SUFFERING THEY HAVE CAUSED."

THE FISCHERS RECEIVED A LETTER FROM THE RED CROSS SOCIETY OF CHINA, PURPORTEDLY TRANSLATING ONE WRITTEN IN CHINESE BY CHOU. THE TEXT RECEIVED BY THE IOWA FARM COUPLE SAID:

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"PEKING, CHINA, MARCH 12, 1955.

"DEAR MR. AND MRS. FISCHER,

"YOUR LETTER OF JANUARY 22, 1955, ADDRESSED TO PREMIER CHOU EN-LAI OF THE STATE COUNCIL OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA HAS BEEN DULY RECEIVED.

"IN VIEW OF THE HONEST WISHES YOU HAVE EXPRESSED FOR COMING TO CHINA TO SEE YOUR SON, HAROLD FISCHER, WE WOULD LIKE TO GIVE YOU EVERY POSSIBLE ASSISTANCE.

"WOULD YOU PLEASE LET US KNOW YOUR PLAN OF COMING TO CHINA SO THAT WE MAY BE ABLE TO MAKE THE NECESSARY ARRANGEMENTS FOR YOU.

"WITH OUR BEST REGARDS, YOURS SINCERELY, THE RED CROSS SOCIETY OF CHINA."

THE LETTER WAS IN REPLY TO ONE WRITTEN BY THE FISCHERS TO CHOU AFTER THE REDS EARLIER ANNOUNCED THAT RELATIVES COULD VISIT THE MEN.

THE FISCHERS STATED THAT THEY HAD HOPED THEIR SON WOULD BE HOME BY MAY 8, HIS 29TH BIRTHDAY. ~~###~~ 321PM

United Press

SWEA CITY, IOWA--PREMIER CHOU EN LAI OF RED CHINA HAS WRITTEN THE PARENTS OF A CAPTIVE AMERICAN FLIER OFFERING THEM "EVERY POSSIBLE ASSISTANCE" IF THE U.S. RELENTS AND ALLOWS THEM TO VISIT THEIR SON.

MRS. HAROLD FISCHER SR. SAID SHE AND HER HUSBAND GOT THE LETTER WEDNESDAY. THEIR SON, CAPT. HAROLD FISCHER JR., A DOUBLE JET ACE, WAS SHOT DOWN TWO YEARS AGO WHILE ON A MISSION IN THE KOREAN WAR.

THE SWEA CITY FARM WOMAN SAID THEY WILL RENEW THEIR EFFORTS NOW TO GET PERMISSION FROM THE STATE DEPARTMENT TO VISIT THE FLIER AT HIS PRISON CAMP IN RED CHINA.

((THE LETTER, DATED MARCH 12, CAME IN CHINESE WITH AN ACCOMPANYING TRANSLATION INTO ENGLISH BY THE CHINESE RED CROSS, ACCORDING TO ROBERT SCHWARTZ, PUBLISHER OF THE SWEA CITY HERALD.))

MRS. FISCHER TOLD THE UNITED PRESS THE LETTER READ AS FOLLOWS:

"YOUR LETTER OF JAN. 22, 1955, ADDRESSED TO CHOU EN LAI OF THE STATE COUNCIL OF THE PEOPLES' REPUBLIC OF CHINA HAS BEEN DULY RECEIVED.

"IN VIEW OF THE EARNEST WISHES YOU HAVE EXPRESSED OF COMING TO CHINA TO SEE YOUR SON, HAROLD FISCHER, WE WOULD LIKE TO GIVE YOU EVERY POSSIBLE ASSISTANCE.

"WOULD YOU PLEASE LET US KNOW WHEN YOUR PLAN ON COMING TO CHINA SO THAT WE MAY BE ABLE TO MAKE THE NECESSARY ARRANGEMENTS FOR YOU.

"WITH OUR BEST REGARDS, CHOU EN LAI."

MRS. FISCHER SAID SHE WILL SEND COPIES OF THE LETTER FROM CHOU TO THE STATE DEPARTMENT AND THE AIR FORCE.

"THEN THEY WILL REALIZE THE RED CHINA INVITATION IS SINCERE AND THAT WE WOULD BE ABLE TO GO IN AND ABOUT," SHE SAID.

MRS. FISCHER SAID SHE AND HER HUSBAND BELIEVE THERE IS A "BIG POSSIBILITY" THEIR SON WILL BE RELEASED FROM PRISON IF THEY ARE ALLOWED TO MAKE THE TRIP.0146PM

SWEA CITY, IA., APRIL 14 -- (INS) -- THE PARENTS OF AN AMERICAN JET AGE IMPRISONED IN RED CHINA HAVE RECEIVED A LETTER FROM COMMUNIST CHINA PREMIER CHOU EN-LAI ENCOURAGING THEM TO VISIT THEIR SON.

MR. AND MRS. HAROLD FISCHER OF SWEA CITY RECEIVED THE LETTER IN ANSWER TO ONE THEY WROTE THE RED PREMIER REQUESTING PERMISSION TO VISIT THEIR SON, CAPT. HAROLD FISCHER, WHO WAS CONVICTED BY THE CHINESE COMMUNISTS OF SPYING.

IN HIS LETTER, CHOU SAID HE GAVE "EVERY ENCOURAGEMENT" TO THE VISIT AND ASSURED THE FISCHERS THAT ARRANGEMENTS WOULD BE MADE FOR RECEIVING THEM IF THEY INFORMED HIM WHEN THEY WERE COMING.

THE FISCHERS NOW ARE PLANNING TO SEEK VISAS FROM THE STATE DEPARTMENT TO MAKE THE TRIP. THEY PREVIOUSLY WERE DENIED PASSPORTS.

FISCHER SAID HE IS SURE HIS SON WOULD BE RELEASED AFTER THEIR VISIT.

C O P Y

ADD ONE FISCHER, SWEA CITY XXX VISIT.

THE TEXT OF THE LETTER RECEIVED BY THE IOWA FARM COUPLE FOLLOWS:

"PEKING, CHINA, MARCH 12, 1955.

DEAR MR. AND MRS. FISCHER,

"YOUR LETTER OF JANUARY 22, 1955, ADDRESSED TO PREMIER CHOU EN-LAI OF THE STATE COUNCIL OF THE PEOPLES' REPUBLIC OF CHINA HAS BEEN DULY RECEIVED.

"IN VIEW OF THE HONEST WISHES YOU HAVE EXPRESSED FOR COMING TO CHINA TO SEE YOUR SON, HAROLD FISCHER, WE WOULD LIKE TO GIVE YOU EVERY POSSIBLE ASSISTANCE.

"WOULD YOU PLEASE LET US KNOW YOUR PLAN OF COMING TO CHINA SO THAT WE MAY BE ABLE TO MAKE THE NECESSARY ARRANGEMENTS FOR YOU.

"WITH OUR BEST REGARDS, YOURS SINCERELY, THE RED CROSS SOCIETY OF CHINA."

THE FIRST LETTER, WRITTEN IN CHINESE, WAS ALLEGEDLY WRITTEN BY CHOU, AND INTERPRETED BY THE RED CROSS SOCIETY.

CHOU'S REPLY CAME ON THE HEELS OF THE LETTER WRITTEN BY THE FISCHERS AFTER IT WAS DISCLOSED PARENTS WOULD BE ALLOWED TO VISIT THE AIRMEN BEHIND THE IRON CURTAIN.

IT WAS REPORTED THAT THE LETTER FROM THE FISCHERS SAID THAT THEY WERE WILLING, WANTED AND WOULD GO TO VISIT CAPTAIN FISCHER AS SOON AS THE STATE DEPARTMENT GAVE THEM CLEARANCE.

THE FISCHERS STATED THAT THEY HAD HOPED THEIR SON WOULD BE HOME BY MAY 8.