

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

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Peking story

15 April - 2 May 1955

Report on Prince Wan's interview with Chou En-lai  
regarding the American airmen

by Andrew Cordier (Exec. Asst.  
to the Sec. Gen.)

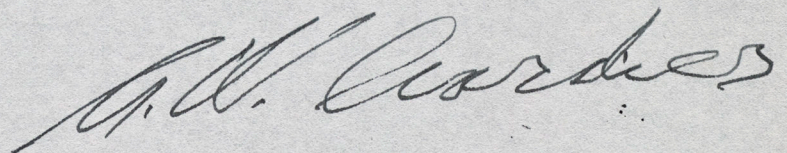
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2 May 1955

MR. KHOMAN'S REPORT ON PRINCE WAN'S  
INTERVIEW WITH CHOU EN-LAI REGARDING  
THE AMERICAN AIRMEN

Mr. Khoman came to my office last Thursday to report on a conversation that Prince Wan had had with Chou En-lai regarding the release of the fifteen American airmen in China. Mr. Khoman referred to the conversation that the Secretary-General had had with him prior to the Bandung Conference in which the Secretary-General had stated that he would appreciate it, if an opportunity should arise, to have Prince Wan discuss the prisoner question with Chou En-lai.

Prince Wan did have an opportunity to discuss the matter with Chou En-lai, who stated that he was considering the release of the airmen when suddenly the plane incident inflamed Chinese public opinion. There was some discussion of this incident which apparently had had quite a dramatic effect upon the Chinese public since the passengers consisted of the first official contingent of the Chinese Peoples' Government to Bandung. Chou En-lai, however, did state, upon being pressed further by Prince Wan, that after public reaction to the plane incident had been allayed, he would return to the position he had developed before the incident took place.



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A.W.Cordier (sign).

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STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

DH/aaa - 15 April 1955

AIDE MEMOIRE

In the morning of Wednesday 13 April 1955 I asked Mr. Khoman and Mr. Arthur Lall to come and see me. Mr. Khoman came Wednesday afternoon and Mr. Lall Thursday morning.

I asked Mr. Khoman to transmit urgently to Prince Wan a personal message to the effect that, while I realized that the prisoner issue should not be raised at the conference table and that pressures would serve no useful purpose, I felt that the issue should be kept in mind; I would be grateful if Prince Wan would use such opportunities as might arise to bring out the fact that the release of the prisoners would be in the interest of Asia in general as the issue represented a point of friction which - without having any positive political value for the Chinese - must be considered a drawback from a general Asian point of view. I also wanted to ask Prince Wan to transmit to Mr. U Nu the same viewpoints; Mr. Barrington undoubtedly was aware of them, but I would like to get this personal message through to Mr. U Nu also via Prince Wan.

I made a similar request to Mr. Lall. With him I elaborated more in detail how I felt that the matter might be handled. Mr. Chou En-lai might need a general setting for a concession and it seemed to me that if a unilateral action were taken in such a general Asian context as to make the other Asian nations the beneficiaries, this might meet his need.

Both Mr. Khoman and Mr. Lall promised to forward the messages without delay.