

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

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Dag Hammarskjöld's samt.

Peking story - 1955

26 April - 31 May

Press clippings

TODAY AND TOMORROW

By WALTER LIPPMANN

Chou and the Eden Formula

On Sunday at Bandung Premier Chou En-lai proposed that "China and the United States should sit down and enter into negotiations to settle the question of relaxing and eliminating the tension in the Taiwan (Formosa) area. However, this should not in the slightest degree affect the just demand of the Chinese people to exercise their sovereign rights in liberating Taiwan." This statement may be read in the light of what Secretary Dulles said in his press conference on March 15: "If there were a renunciation of the use of force, that would meet the immediate requirements of the situation, and there would be no necessity that I can see for anybody, either on the Republic of China's side, or the Communist side, to renounce what they might call their legal pretensions, their legal claims."

These two statements of positions are so close together that there may be no difference between them.

Five weeks have elapsed between the Dulles statement and Chou's statement. It is reasonable to suppose that in that interval there was very considerable diplomatic activity in which, presumably, London and Moscow, New Delhi and Karachi, had a hand.

The renunciation of force without renouncing claims was first proposed publicly by Sir Anthony Eden on March 8 in a statement to the House of Commons. As a matter of fact, Secretary Dulles' statement was in reply to a question as to whether he agreed with Sir Anthony Eden. Presumably, Secretary Dulles made his statement in order to give Great Britain and the other governments, which have been playing a role of intermediary, a proposal to work with in Peiping.

And presumably also, the mediators had achieved their first success in Peiping some time before the Bandung conference met. For the Chinese Ambassador in Washington, Dr. Koo, spoke out the night before the Bandung conference met and made an elaborate rejection of any kind of *modus vivendi*. The government in Formosa must have known what was in the

wind. And if we guess a little more, we may guess that Chou's acceptance of the formula, rather than the build-up of Red Chinese air power on the coast, was what took Secretary Dulles down to see the President in Augusta just as Admiral Radford was cancelling his trip to Europe in order to rush off to Formosa . . . Or it is sheer coincidence that these pieces, in the jigsaw puzzle fit together?

As a matter of fact, the main novelty of Chou's statement at Bandung was that he made it publicly. For in spite of the Communist propaganda contact with Chou has not been broken since the Hammarskjold mission. And always in these exploratory discussions there has been only one conceivable line of immediate progress—to seek an arrangement, probably tacit rather than explicit, by which the two Chinese governments, while renouncing nothing would not prosecute their claims by waging war.

The choice of the Bandung conference as the place to make public Chou's acceptance of the formula is a most favorable development. For it means that under Eden's leadership there has been found a formula which is acceptable to Peiping and to Washington, and has the approval of the uncommitted nations of Asia and of Africa. The Bandung conference was, of course, overwhelmingly opposed to a war by Chiang, backed by the United States, to overthrow the Red regime. But it was no less opposed to Red China's "liberation" of Formosa by force. What it wanted was what first Eden, then Dulles, and finally Chou were able to propose: an arrangement which would avoid a war that might engulf the greater part of Asia.

If the State Department knows what it is doing, and if the makers of our policy can manage to collect themselves in one place long enough to act with deliberation, Chou's acceptance of the Eden formula in the presence of the Bandung conference is, at a minimum, a public commitment not to use force in the Formosa Straits until the diplomatic exchanges which have already begun have been carried further.

Let us hope that the State Department will not go on fumbling, as it did on Saturday morning after Chou's first statement. Let us hope that the department will not turn what can be a diplomatic success into a diplomatic defeat.

Chou took five weeks to make his reply to the Dulles statement of March 15. There is no reason why with the President in Gettysburg and the Secretary of State on an island in upper New York, the State Department needed to form an opinion and to express it publicly a few hours after Chou's statement was received. What do these people think they are doing? Trying to make a deadline for the next edition of the newspapers or conducting the foreign policy of the United States?

Nor is it necessary, or desirable and wise, to jump to the conclusion that the next steps should be concessions by Peiping in order that we may then agree to participate in a formal conference. The last thing we ought to want now is a formal conference. What we should want is to say just enough to encourage the mediators to continue the exchanges of views—and in the mean time without the beating of all the drums to bring about a dampening down of the sporadic hostilities which are now taking place in the Formosa area.

There is no hope in a formal conference. For at a formal conference there would arise, like a swarm of angry hornets, issues that are really serious only if the negotiations have to be done in public. Who, for example, shall attend the conference? Chiang says he will not attend it, and we have said that we will not attend without him. Are there two Chinas or only one China? What is the juridical status of Formosa?

In a public meeting these are insoluble issues, capable only of touching off explosions of bellicose rhetoric. They are insoluble issues and yet that is no reason for having a war in order to pretend to solve them. The best way to deal with these issues is to live with them and in the course of time to outlive them.

That is what a *modus vivendi*, without a settlement, would permit us all to do.

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MEMORIAL DAY IN RED CHINA

We took pleasure yesterday in this space in listing a number of what we believe to be admirable achievements of the Eisenhower Administration to date.

They are real achievements, real fulfillments of 1952 campaign promises. If President Eisenhower keeps on at this pace, we think he will deserve renomination and reelection next year.



Dag Hammarskjöld

Today, however, we feel called on to take melancholy note of something which is of no credit whatever to the Eisenhower Administration.

We refer to the 15 U. S. airmen still imprisoned by the Chinese Reds on faked charges of espionage.

When Mao Tze-tung's and Chou En-lai's alleged government first announced that these men had been sentenced to long prison terms, we believe a show of firmness by the White House—the sort of firmness President Theodore Roosevelt preached and practiced—would have sprung them.

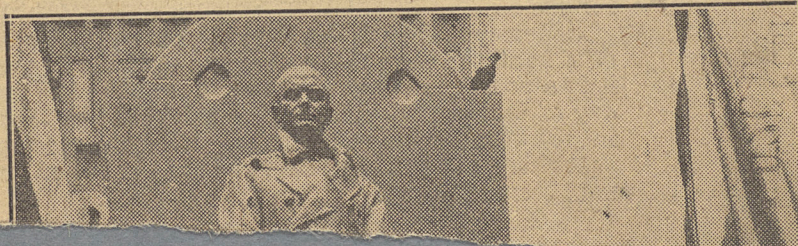
No such firmness was exhibited. Instead, the case was turned over to poor little well-meaning Dag Hammarskjöld, United Nations Secretary General. He went to Peiping, put in a humble plea for the men's release, got the old brushoff, and has been twittering ever since that he hopes for the best.

Memorial Day is the holiday on which we honor our dead in all the wars this nation has fought. In that aspect, it is a somberly glorious occasion. This year, it is also a day of national shame over the treatment of those airmen in Red Chinese prison hellholes. We hope, most earnestly, that this story will have changed for the better long before next Memorial Day.



(John Duprey)

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EDITOR — TUSHAR KANTI GHOSH.

China Releases 4 Detained U. S. Airmen Out Of 11

Menon's Peking Visit Succeeds Peking Decision Opens Door For Direct Talks, Says Menon

FROM OUR SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE
NEW DELHI, May 30.

Hopes for a direct talk between U.S.A. and China on the settlement of the Formosa dispute have brightened following Shri V. K. Krishna Menon's ten-day mission in Peking.

Shri V. K. Krishna Menon, who returned to New Delhi after talks with the Chinese Premier, Mr. Chou En-lai, told the press conference here that the Chinese Government would release today four out of 11 American airmen imprisoned in China on charge of espionage. This he said would be a "major step" towards relaxation of tension in the Far-East.

(Later a New York message said that four American airmen imprisoned in China had been released at the Chinese border.)

Shri Menon disclosed that the four persons to be released to-day by the Chinese Govt., were known as "Fischer Group" and their identity was well known to the U. S. Govt. Shri Menon said the conditions for bringing about a "lowering of tension" might lead to other things and the willingness on the part of China to negotiate with the U.S.A. was a "helpful factor" and direct U.S.A.-China talks.

He said, "by and large to-day exists a set of conditions to make progress possible." He had no doubt

that the "U.S.A. public opinion will respond to the gesture made by China in a healthy way."

Shri Menon added that there would be great opportunities for Americans entering into China and seeing things for themselves.

Without disclosing the trend of his talks Shri Menon hinted at the possibility of the Chinese Government talking direct to Chiang Kai-shek on the Formosa issue as it was an internal matter."

INDIA NOT MEDIATING

Shri Menon made it categorically clear that India was not mediating on any of these issues. "We have not been asked either by the Government of U.S.A. or China or anyone else to do anything in these matters." He denied the existence of what some newspapers called "Menon Plan."

He said, "We are as a sovereign country interested in peace in the pursuit of domestic and foreign policy of a particular character and react to various issues in our own way. That was the position in Korea, Geneva and in other problems. Of course we have the advantage of contacts with the two main sides concerned in this matter the U.S.A. and the Government of China. We have the advantage of good relations with both the sides.

"It is my conviction that no party suspects our motive and that is far more than what we usually get in international affairs. I have some knowledge of the U.S.A. and the Western countries and also the feeling that there is a vast body of opinion in fact over-whelming body of opinion that desires peaceful settlement of all difficulties. That does not mean that there is no prejudice, fear and obstacle and it is in this context the conversation was carried on in Peking."

LOWERING OF TENSION

Shri menon said, "Our first requisite in making progress towards anything that is desired is to try and get a degree of lowering of tension". Lack of understanding of one side by the other created suspicion and any action of one side acquired meaning from the other side. "Therefore the purpose of people like ourselves, who are not mediators, is to contribute towards bringing about harmony. That is a part of the domestic and foreign outlook of India embodied in the declaration of Bandung and the basic principle of our foreign policy."

He said he could not go into the details of what progress had been made or what way to progress had been opened up, except to repeat what Mr. Chou En-lai said that "visit has been extremely useful and we can look forward with hope."

NEED OF MUTUAL CONTACT

He said of the two or three matters that created difficulties one was lack of contact between China and the U.S.A. "I have reason to believe that if more Americans of enquiring mind see things for themselves in China it will make for harmony. It is my belief that these things will be more possible hereafter subject of course to ordinary constitutional provisions. More people seeing things for themselves will create a degree of opinion and desire for peace and goodwill in China and it is exactly the same in the USA opening of the door to what is alleged to be a curtain.

"There is of course always difficulty in opening up one country to another. Even neighbouring countries have restrictions. But I think it is true to say that as from now one can reasonably hope towards easing of the situation given goodwill on both sides. It requires not necessarily bargaining but action from both sides, one leading to the other."

CHINESE STUDENTS IN U.S.A.

He said last time when he had met the Secretary of States of USA and there was conversation of private character, he knew that the USA was going to remove the restrictions on the exit of a certain number of Chinese students. There was no physical restriction but there was legal restriction about going out to China. Restrictions on 58 students had been removed and they have begun to go back. "That is, in my opinion, big or small, an item in the lowering of tension."

CHINA'S DECISION

"In a few hours from now the Chinese Government will announce their own decision as a first step

and in response to our request that we have made to them and contribution to lowering of the tension to release on the frontiers four of the American fliers who are called "Fischer Group". In my opinion this opens the door. It is more than likely that we shall see solution of the problem of national restrictions on the other side.

I myself think, given goodwill, it is possible in a reasonable time that the whole of the problem will be solved. It is difficult to make a beginning. This decision of the Chinese Government taken on their own initiative, may be in response to our request and in the exercise of their sovereign right, is a contribution to the lowering of the tension. I have no doubt in my mind that the response in America will be satisfactory. They would see in this a beginning of remedial course."

Shri Menon forecast that "in the weeks to come further steps are likely". The release of four American prisoners, added he was a "major step" and "it is a great change in the attitude to the whole of the question."

PEKING TALKS

The conversations with the Chinese leaders, said Shri Menon, covered a large number of questions including freer entry of Americans into China. He added, "It is my belief and hope if there is patience and generosity on all sides we may certainly hope to overcome some of the difficulties that have prevented the approach to a peaceful settlement of the matter." Premier Chou En-lai made public his position in regard to negotiations with the USA. Prime Minister Nehru said this desire to negotiate was known to the other side. "And now it has developed to a further extent and was officially stated in the statement made by the Chinese leader to the Standing Committee of his own Legislature. He said they are willing to see settlement of the question of Formosa by peaceful measure if that is possible and reiterated the decision in regard to negotiation. So by and large today exists a set of conditions that could make progress possible."

JUSTIFIABLE CONDITION

Asked if the second stage of the negotiations would take place in Washington, Shri Menon said negotiations must be between the parties, the USA and the Chinese Government, in the international sphere. It was also arguable that the parties were the Chinese Government and Chiang Kai-shek. "The Chinese Government, added he, regarded this as an "internal matter" and they would have no objection to negotiation as an "internal matter". But negotiations must take place "in their own time." The Chinese had never said that "we should not talk to anybody. It is an internal matter and they are prepared to talk to them." The main thing, added he, was lowering of the tension, willingness to negotiate and what other steps could be taken. He regarded the conditions as more justifiable now than it was some time ago.

Asked if freer entry of Americans into China involved recognition of China, Shri Menon said it was not necessary for one country to recognise another to visit.

Shri Menon said the question of release of the other American prisoners was under continuous consideration. The four prisoners to be released today was of different category.

Concluding Shri Menon said the situation in the Far East was "grim" and "so long as these questions are not resolved they contain in themselves elements of catastrophe. Therefore, it is necessary to resolve them. But it takes time and understanding."

Earlier, Shri Menon said between May 11 and 20 he had six different

sessions of conference with Premier Chou En-lai lasting on an average each time three hours. He had also private conversation with the Chinese Premier when he visited some of the factories. Besides, he had talks with Chairman Mao Tse-tung, Vice-Chairman Chu Teh, the Chinese Vice-Premier dealing with foreign affairs and the advisers. He had also discussions with the British Charge d'Affairs in Peking and the Swedish Ambassador.

The Four Released U. S. Airmen

NEW YORK, May 30.

Four American airmen imprisoned in China have been released. New York radio stations reported today quoting Peking Radio.

The Military Tribunal of the Supreme People's Court of China on May 24 tried four American airmen who committed such criminal action as flying their military aircraft into China's territorial air to conduct harassment and provocation," the radio said quoting the New China News Agency.

"Their crimes endangered the security of China and the peaceful life of the Chinese people." The Military Tribunal of the Supreme People's Court of China sentenced the four culprits Roland W. Parks, Edwin L. Heller, Harold E. Fischer, and Lyle W. Cameron to immediate deportation from the People's Republic of China.

The four were captured after their planes were shot down by Chinese fighter planes and anti-aircraft guns.

"Before their capture culprits Parks Heller and Fischer had many times previously intruded over Liaoning and Kirin provinces" it was alleged.

U. S. Welcomes China's Decision

WASHINGTON, May 30.

The United States Department today welcomed the news that the Chinese intended to release four American jet pilots and hoped this signified the early freedom of the other United States airmen and civilians detained in China.

An official State Department statement said, "The news that four United States airmen of the United Nations Command captured during the Korean war will be released by the Chinese Communist regime is welcome".

However, the State Department had not been unaware that some American airmen were to be freed shortly. It had gathered this impression from information received from John Sherman Cooper, American Ambassador in New Delhi who had remained in very close touch

with the Department since Menon's return from Peking.

The detention of the American airmen in China—announced by Radio Peking last winter—had been a source of considerable anxiety to American public opinion and had provided fuel for the campaign waged by the advocates of a "get tough" policy with Peking.

As could be expected the State Department has drawn Peking's attention to the fact that other civilian and military American nationals are still being held in China.

Nevertheless news of the release of the four airmen, received here on Memorial Day when celebrations are being held throughout the nation in honour of American soldiers who fell for their country points significantly towards an easing of tension between China and America.

SATISFACTION IN U.S.

Satisfaction was expressed at the United Nations headquarters today at the news of the imminent release of four American airmen imprisoned in China.

It is hoped their release will be followed by the freeing of 11 other airmen jailed last year on spy charges.

The four jet pilots to be freed today were included in the request made by the General Assembly last December to the United Nations Secretary General, Mr. Dag Hammarskjöld, to do all he could obtain the release of imprisoned American fliers.

Mr. Hammarskjöld visited Peking shortly after and had talks with the Chinese Government.—(Reuter & UPI-APP)