

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

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Peking story

20 May 1955

D.H. — to Arkady A. Sobolev (Perm. Repr. of USSR
to the U.N.)

20 May 1955

STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL

Dear Mr. Sobolev,

Just before leaving for Paris I tried to reach you because I wanted to inform you personally about a certain development about the fliers question which took place today.

As you know I had a prolonged discussion with the Chinese Ambassador to Stockholm during my recent visit to Sweden. On that occasion I sent a message to Mr. Chou En-lai asking him if there was anything I could do in order to facilitate for him the release of the prisoners; the question was based on the fact that Mr. Chou En-lai had given me to understand that already in January he was prepared to shorten the terms of imprisonment but that various incidents in the course of the spring so far had deprived him of the possibility to follow up this line.

This week, with the Swedish Ambassador to Peking as spokesman, I approached Mr. Chou En-lai again urging him to give me his reaction. I pointed out to him that this was essential in view of the problems I had to handle on this side. I also mentioned to Mr. Chou En-lai that the time and channel for replies must be expected to be of great importance also in view of developments which had arisen out of Bandoeng.

I had today a first reaction from Mr. Chou En-lai who said that he wanted to study my last message and intended to give a reply before the end of this month.

H.E. Mr. Arkady Aleksandrovich Sobolev
Permanent Representative to the United Nations
Permanent Delegation of the Union of Soviet
Socialist Republics to the United Nations
680 Park Avenue
New York 21, N.Y.

I feel that this reaction of his may be indicative of an attitude of interest to you. Certainly a positive attitude from Mr. Chou En-lai's side at the present juncture would be of great significance. The tendency most recently illustrated by Mr. Molotov's acceptance of our invitation to San Francisco is one which certainly can be made to bear good fruit if everybody sees his way to avail himself of the opportunities arising to contribute positively.

Looking forward to seeing you quietly on my return, I remain

Yours very sincerely,