

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

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Peking story

8 June 1955

Aide memoire (talks with Mr. Bierecki (Polish mission to
the U.S.))

8 June 1955
DH/aaa

AIDE MEMOIRE

Mr. BIRECKI saw me today at his own request. He brought up various matters but got into a discussion also of the prisoner-issue. I informed him about the latest developments and my recent move. His comments were that he considered that I was absolutely right as concerns the link with the meeting of the four and right also in my interpretation of the significance of the family visits. However, he feared that the gesture I offered would be found insufficient by the Chinese. They were likely to insist on the families going.

To my objections against family visits at this stage he replied that he felt that it would not be more difficult to let the families go (supposedly) to Peking than to send them to meet the fliers in Honolulu. He understood that the visits could not be brought about unless they were organized within an agreed and firm framework where comments would be necessary from the Chinese side in order to ward off false interpretations. My impression from what Mr. Birecki said is that what he had in mind was that the families should go, but in fact should be met in Hongkong by the prisoners.

Mr. Birecki said that the great mistake in the whole development was the refusal to let the families go in February and the form in which this refusal was given. He said that he was convinced that if the families had gone, the whole problem would no longer have existed. I asked him if he was sure about that, and he said that he was.

This last statement of Mr. Birecki's is of significance as he has informed me, and repeated it this time, that the Polish Government and he himself have all the time been consulted by the Chinese. He referred again to the fact that they had received a very full report on our talks in Peking.

Mr. Birecki confirmed, what we already know, that the Chinese were prepared to release the prisoners in January.