

5 June 1947.

Mr. P.H. Ho  
Director General, CNRRA  
Shanghai, China

Dear Mr. Ho:

A very serious situation has developed with regard to CAT operations. In order to give you a clear picture of this situation, I will describe a number of typical instances which threaten the continuation of CAT.

You will recall that we have experienced continuous difficulty and delay in obtaining permission to land on Chinese air fields ever since the beginning of our flying operations. Our efforts to expand the number of air fields mentioned in the original contract, although authorized by the contract, have been unsuccessful to date. In an endeavor to obtain a satisfactory solution of this problem, Mr. Willauer and I went to Nanking, and on May 14 we reached an agreement with Col. Tso and other officials of CAA to the following effect; that our requests for permission to land on designated air fields would be presented to CAA by our representative in Nanking. CAA would then take action on the requests within twenty-four hours and would forward them promptly to the Chinese Air Force for its information and action. The Chinese Air Force Headquarters had already agreed to act promptly on these requests and to send out cables to their station masters and commanders in the field.

We felt that this agreement would permit us to fly cargos within two or three days after the request to do so was filed by CNRRA or other Chinese Government organizations.

In view of the fact that the majority of our landing permits expired on May 31, we prepared complete sets of requests for landing permission for the month of June and our representative delivered these requests to the designated CAA official on May 25. Despite daily visits from our representative, no action was taken on these requests until June 4 when they were all approved, with reductions in number of flights, by CAA. They were then delivered to Headquarters CAF where immediate approval was received. However, it requires from one to seven days (as determined by previous experience) for messages to travel from CAF Headquarters through the intermediate channels of command to local field commanders.

In the meantime our airplanes at Peiping, Taiyuan and Tsingtao have been grounded since May 31 by local CAF commanders because they have no information regarding our permits to fly in June. CNRRA Regional Offices in Peiping and Taiyuan are urging us to fly flour and other goods to Taiyuan where thousands of refugees are reported to be suffering from hunger. The Regional Office at Tsingtao is urging CAT to transport equipment and supplies to Tsinan and Hsuechow.

I believe that a minimum of six days will be lost by twelve CAT planes, or a total of seventy-two flying days or 400 tons of cargo movement, in the month of June by this unjustified delay in acting on our landing requests alone. No doubt many additional days will be lost by delays and interference with our flight schedules later in the month.

Another instance of unjustified delay has occurred and still persists in the movement of CNRRA Cloth to Kunming. About two months ago, some 31 tons of CNRRA cloth was delivered to our warehouse for air lift to Kunming. We applied for and obtained permission to land at Kunming. The first airplane which flew to Kunming with cloth was promptly impounded and held for five days by the CAF officer there because he had not received notice of our permission to land. While negotiating for the release of this airplane, the landing permit expired. We again applied for landing permission for Kunming and received it in due time. The second airplane which flew cloth to Kunming was impounded and held for ten days because the CAF officer there had not been informed that it was no longer necessary to state the serial number of the airplane. Again the landing permit expired while negotiating for the release of the airplane.

We again applied for and received permission to land cloth at Kunming; permission to land from May 25 to June 10 was granted in this case. On May 28 a C-46 departed for Kunming with a load of cloth. After landing at Liuchow for gas, this plane was notified by radio that it would be impounded if it landed at Kunming. The plane turned back and unloaded the cloth at Liuchow and proceeded to Canton empty. CAF Headquarters at Nanking was notified of the action taken by the Kunming CAF Operations Officer. On June 2, a C-46 from Canton unloaded CNRRA cargo at Liuchow and loaded the cloth for Kunming. Upon arrival it was promptly impounded but only held for one day. Thus on three attempts to fly cloth to Kunming, CAT has been penalized 16 flying days besides losing another C-46 idle at Canton for a week. About 21 tons of the original lot of cloth for Kunming still remains in our warehouse at Shanghai and it would seem that it could be delivered more expeditiously by pack train.

You will appreciate the fact that these unwarranted and unjustified delays and impounding of planes interferes with our service to CNRRA very much. The delays also increase CAT costs so much that the success of the operation is seriously threatened. Because of CNRRA's interest in maintaining this service, as well as CNRRA's contractual obligation to negotiate with Chinese Government organizations for the facilities necessary for CAT operations, I earnestly urge you to take such action as you can to permit our operations to be conducted without unnecessary and unjustified delays and interference.

With very best wishes, I am

Most sincerely,

C.L. CHENNAULT  
President CAT

cc: Pres.  
Mr. On Wei, Chief BTW, CNRRA  
E.V.P.  
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