

President Eisenhower and CIA Prisoners in China

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There is much that remains to be told, including the Eisenhower administration's handling of the unexpected revelation that Jack Downey and Dick Fecteau were in the hands of PRC authorities.

Anyone with an interest in CIA history or in Sino-US relations should learn the story of John “Jack” Downey and Richard “Dick” Fecteau. These two young CIA paramilitary officers were on a covert flight into northeast China in November 1952 to pick up an agent when their aircraft was shot down. The pilots died in the crash, but Jack Downey and Dick Fecteau survived and spent the next two decades in captivity. Released in large part through President Nixon’s historic opening toward China in the early 1970s, they were in surprisingly good physical, mental, and emotional shape. Downey and Fecteau picked up their lives with their families, started rewarding careers (Jack as a judge, Dick as a university athletic official), and insisted that their story was not very interesting and certainly not heroic. Others disagreed, especially at CIA, which showered them with awards despite their protestations.

As the staff historian who became the CIA’s expert on the case, I had the privilege of writing about Downey and Fecteau for this journal and subsequently assisted in the making of an internal CIA documentary film. The 2006 *Studies in Intelligence* article was unclassified, and the 2010 film *Extraordinary Fidelity* was eventually released to the public,^a making

their story available to a global audience.

Those accounts centered on Downey and Fecteau and the challenges they faced enduring their capture, arrest and trial, the privations of extended captivity, and CIA’s efforts to take responsibility for the men’s financial and family matters. However, there is much about their story that remains to be told, including the Eisenhower administration’s handling of the unexpected revelation that Downey and Fecteau were in the hands of the People’s Republic of China (PRC). That the men were even alive was a late discovery; the Eisenhower administration assumed they were lost after their airplane failed to return. After a year with no indication they had survived—and knowing that Beijing typically trotted out prisoners for propaganda purposes—CIA had declared them dead in late 1953.

In late 1954, however, Beijing announced that it held Downey and Fecteau and had tried and sentenced them, along with the surviving 11 members of the crew of a US Air Force B-29 bomber shot down in January 1953. The US personnel, Air Force and CIA alike, had been convicted of espionage. The Eisenhower administration had known of the US

a. Nicholas Dujmović, “Two Prisoners in China, 1952–1973,” *Studies in Intelligence* 50, no. 4 (December 2006): 21–36. *Extraordinary Fidelity* is available on CIA’s YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z0Mh7EiXRJI>

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Washington's immediate reaction to China's announcement was to forcefully insist that all 13 be released without delay. Then, quietly, and to the consternation of Fecteau's and Downey's families, the administration changed its stance. After a few days, US officials began to distinguish between the 11 USAF men and the two CIA officers. "The 13" became "the 11" in the administration's rhetoric, and the two CIA men faded in priority. Beijing released the US airmen after two years; Downey and Fecteau remained in captivity for the rest of Eisenhower's two terms, the entirety of the Kennedy and Johnson presidencies, and into the Nixon administration.

In summer 2018, I spent some time at the Eisenhower Library researching this mystery of a US policy change that seemed to prolong the captivity of the CIA men *because they were CIA*. Why did this change happen? Who made the policy decision? And finally, might it have turned out differently?

Containment, Rollback, and the "Third Force"

Dwight Eisenhower won the presidential election of November 1952 in part because the voters judged him, rather than his Democratic opponent

Adlai Stevenson, as best suited to deal with the perceived threat from international communism.

During the campaign, John Foster Dulles, who later became Eisenhower's Secretary of State, had publicly criticized the Truman administration for laxity in dealing with the global communist threat. Democratic policies, he argued, were too content with "containment" instead of working to remove this peril.¹ Dulles and other Republicans argued for "rollback" rather than "containment."

It was an unfair charge, as CIA had worked many operations under President Truman to not only contain, but to "roll back" communist gains. Contrary to the Republicans' campaign rhetoric in 1952, the Truman administration had undertaken offensive operations against the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, including an attempted "rollback" of the communist regime of Albania. Elsewhere—including the Baltics, Bulgaria, China, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Russia, and Ukraine—the CIA attempted to insert paramilitary assets and to establish and support resistance to communist rule. To be sure, none of these efforts succeeded—an official CIA assessment called the entire campaign a "disaster"—and so no "rollback" victories could be touted.²

An important aspect of this offensive covert paramilitary effort was aimed at the new PRC, proclaimed by Mao Zedong in October 1949. The

Truman administration initiated two separate major CIA paramilitary projects against China; both were under way when Eisenhower became president. As described in the memoirs of CIA participants,³ one involved working with the Nationalists on Taiwan against the mainland, usually by supporting Nationalist commando raids on PRC-held offshore islands and coastal facilities. The other was the "Third Force" program that endeavored to infiltrate small teams of CIA-trained ethnic Chinese agents into China to establish a foothold for democratically minded leaders who were neither communist nor Nationalist.⁴

Downey and Fecteau were on a Third Force mission when their Civil Air Transport plane (CAT was a CIA proprietary company) left K-16 airfield⁴ near Seoul, South Korea, on the evening of November 29, 1952, bound for a pick-up zone in Manchuria. The team in their unmarked C-47 was attempting to extract a CIA-trained Chinese courier who, unknown to CIA, had betrayed the mission. Antiaircraft gunners shot down the aircraft, killing CAT pilots Norman Schwartz and Bob Snoddy. Fecteau and Downey survived the crash and were taken into custody.

After three days of searching the likely sea and land corridors, CIA and CAT decided on a cover story that the flight was a regular CAT transport flight from Seoul to Japan, with two Department of the Army civilians—Downey and Fecteau—on board. Apparently, no one remembered that the CIA men had been told to say they were CAT employees.

a. See my review of Roger Jeans, *The CIA and Third Force Movements in China during the Early Cold War* (Lexington Books, 2018) in "Covert Action to Promote Democracy in China During the Cold War," *Studies in Intelligence* 64, no. 4 (December 2020): 31–35.

To bolster the new cover story, another CAT C-47, re-marked with the registration number of the missing C-47, openly took off from the K-16 airfield late on December 3rd. The flight was ostensibly bound for Japan, according to the official flight manifest, which listed the missing Schwarz and Snoddy as the pilots of this flight, with Downey and Fecteau as passengers. The actual pilot, CAT veteran Hugh Marsh, was alone, and he returned the C-47 under cover of darkness.⁵ Thus CIA's cover story was set.

Coincidentally, President-elect Eisenhower was beginning his first full day of visiting the Korean Peninsula, the fighting then at a hard-won stalemate, as he fulfilled his campaign pledge to "go to Korea." For Downey and Fecteau, it was also the first day of what would be months of interrogations, first in Shenyang (then known as Mukden) and later in Beijing. Sessions would last four to 24 hours. Although never physically tortured, the men were subjected to sleep deprivation, poor diet, Spartan conditions in a cold cell, and the constant wearing of leg irons.

Despite the fact that their agent had betrayed the CIA mission, Downey and Fecteau initially stuck to their story that they were CAT employees. This proved untenable after CAT announced that one of its aircraft, a C-47 on a transport flight from Seoul to Japan, was missing, because Downey and Fecteau were publicly identified as civilian employees of the US Army. This contradiction led to more intensive, confrontational, and lengthier interrogations. Both men confessed their CIA affiliation within weeks. The interrogations stopped and both expected a trial

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to take place, but almost two years passed before Downey and Fecteau faced the formalities of justice.

Surprise Announcement

On November 23, 1954, an official radio broadcast from Beijing announced a military tribunal had tried and sentenced 13 Americans for espionage against China. Eleven were the surviving crew members of a US Air Force B-29 bomber shot down by PRC forces on January 13, 1953—a week before Eisenhower's inauguration—while engaged in a leaflet-dropping mission (sponsored by CIA) near the China-North Korea border. They were sentenced to prison terms of four to 10 years.⁶

Beijing's announcement included the news that, in addition to the 11 US airmen, "CIA spies" John Downey and Richard Fecteau were convicted of espionage and of making war on the Chinese people. Downey, called the "chief culprit" at the trial, was sentenced to life; Fecteau, the "assistant chief culprit," was sentenced to 20 years in prison. Moreover, the nine surviving Chinese agents trained by CIA and inserted into Manchuria were also tried and sentenced, four of them receiving the death penalty.

CIA was almost certainly the first US government agency to know of the PRC announcement that two of its own, long believed dead, were alive and in Beijing's hands. The Foreign Broadcast Information Service, part of CIA since the passage of the

National Security Act of 1947, routinely monitored and translated such broadcasts. According to memorandums of the calls, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles called his brother and Director of Central Intelligence Allen Dulles on November 23, 1954, to discuss a speech Foster Dulles was to give on Communism in Europe. At the end of the conversation, Allen brought up the matter of the Americans "sentenced in Red China" that day, turning over the details to one of his assistants. The White House press secretary was shortly asking Secretary Dulles for a statement about the "13 Americans."⁷

After another discussion that day between the Dulles brothers, the State Department issued a statement that the United States, through its consul general in Geneva, was strongly protesting to the PRC that the sentencing and "wrongful detention" of both the 11 American airmen and the two civilians "employed by the Department of the Army in Japan"—a reference to Downey and Fecteau.⁸ State noted that the United States had pressed for the airmen's release for almost two years and that their continued custody was a violation of the terms of the Korean Armistice Agreement.

As for Downey and Fecteau, the "broadcast of today is the first word we have had that they are held by the Chinese Communists" as they were believed to have died when their flight to Japan went down "in November 1952" (note the inconsistency with the cover flight, which purportedly left on December 3).

Initially at least, the Eisenhower administration treated all 13 Americans as a group, making no distinction between them other than the fact that 11 were US military and two were civilians.

The imprisonment and sentencing of Downey and Fecteau on “trumped up” espionage charges, the State Department declared, is “a most flagrant violation of justice.”

The next morning, Eisenhower had far more important CIA business to consider. He met with his top advisers on the problem of collecting intelligence on the Soviet Union. Secretary of Defense Charles Wilson, Foster Dulles, Allen Dulles, Air Force Secretary Harold Talbot, and science advisers Dr. James Killian and Edwin Land were there to discuss the U-2 reconnaissance aircraft that Lockheed was building for CIA.⁹ It was not recorded whether the Dulles brothers also mentioned the issue of CIA prisoners held in China, although it seems likely. The president and First Lady Mamie Eisenhower then left the White House for Thanksgiving vacation in Augusta, Georgia.

Eleven Plus Two Equals 13

From Augusta, on November 25, 1954, Eisenhower sent telegrams to the families of all 13 men named in China’s broadcast two days before.¹⁰ After assuring the recipient of his distress that “your husband” or “your son” was held in China, Eisenhower noted that “he was serving his country when taken prisoner” and that “this nation is grateful for that service.” The telegram closed with the president’s assurance that the government was “using every feasible means” to free them and to ensure

their proper treatment and that these efforts would continue “resolutely and tirelessly.” Initially at least, the Eisenhower administration treated all 13 Americans as a group, making no distinction between them other than the fact that 11 were US military and two were civilians.

Other US government responses likewise did not distinguish between the imprisoned USAF personnel and the CIA men in the first days after the PRC announcement. On November 26, the State Department announced new protests to Beijing through the British Foreign Office, in which the US government maintained that all the Americans recently sentenced had been in aircraft that were attacked either over the “recognized combat zone in Korea or over international waters.”¹¹

The US prisoners were collectively described as “unjustly detained American nationals.” Likewise, an intelligence summary issued by the Operations Coordinating Board referred to “the 13 US citizens imprisoned in China.”^a

The US public and press certainly conflated these Americans—military and civilian—into one group. The public, of course, knew nothing of Downey and Fecteau’s CIA mission nor of the propaganda mission of the USAF B-29, except for what the PRC had announced, and it was widely regarded that all such broadcasts were lies. The White House received many letters and telegrams from

US citizens, generally either highly supportive or highly critical of the administration, that referred to the prisoners collectively as airmen, flyers, or air force personnel. A typical editorial was that of the *Evening Outlook* of Santa Monica, California, which urged the president to take firm action in the form of a naval or air blockade against China until the “13 American airmen” are released. Letters to the White House from retired and current military members and from American Legion posts, however, were more measured and focused on the 11 military prisoners.¹²

At least one senior CIA official foresaw trouble. The agency’s senior representative in the Far East cabled DCI Dulles on November 27, noting that despite the inconsistencies in the cover story, CIA was stuck with it. He recommended that the US government stress that “whether in or out of uniform, these were all Americans engaged in hazardous duty during a war and in a war zone.” The CIA representative, recognizing “the temptation to separate uniformed prisoners from civilians in order to get special treatment for uniformed men,” warned that “it would be serious error to enhance chances of one group at expense of others.”¹³

On November 29, 1954 (two years exactly from the crash), Allen Dulles briefed the president on the CIA mission that had led to Downey and Fecteau’s capture. Dulles told the president that Beijing’s statements were accurate in many details and explained the cover story. In preparing for his briefing, Dulles had been warned by his chief of Far East operations that the cover for the CIA

a. Reporting to the National Security Council, the OCB was responsible for coordinating national security policies, including covert action. See “Daily Intelligence Abstracts” no. 271, November 29, 1954, Eisenhower Library.

men was so thin that any “determined investigation by either the press or Congress” would breach it.

Secretary of the Army Robert Stevens was concerned that no Army personnel or background files existed for the CIA men. At the same time, the CIA personnel office reported that senior officials from the Defense Department and the Army wanted to maintain the cover story. Eisenhower’s reaction was not recorded, but Foster Dulles was sufficiently interested to call Frank Wisner, chief of the CIA’s operations directorate, for details the following day.¹⁴

The president, at least for the moment, wanted action regarding all 13 prisoners, and he made clear to Foster Dulles that the United States should “push this matter vigorously” in the United Nations, possibly on the basis that the men were supporting the UN effort in Korea. Because the UN General Assembly (UNGA) was about to adjourn, Foster Dulles and US Ambassador to the UN Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr., agreed to propose a UN Security Council (UNSC) resolution on the prisoners, whom Eisenhower and Dulles were referring to collectively as “our flyers.”¹⁵

Even so, both Eisenhower and Foster Dulles were concerned that others would draw unwelcome distinctions, and they struggled with a respond. Before his press conference on December 1, Foster Dulles called his brother at CIA, wondering what to say if asked about the two civilians: “Do we say they were part of the UN operation?”

Allen Dulles reminded his brother that the story from the outset was that they were “civilian members of the

A measure of clarity was provided by the State Department’s legal adviser who influenced subsequent policy deliberations and, ultimately, the fate of the two CIA men.

Dept. of Defense” and that “we have stuck to it” while referring inquiries to the Pentagon. Foster Dulles replied that Eisenhower had told Defense Secretary Wilson the day before to refer inquiries to the State Department. Allen Dulles said it would be hard to avoid details about these two civilians but that was the best path, as “it is difficult to change stories now.”¹⁶

Fortunately for Foster Dulles, the issue of the two civilians did not arise at his December 1 press conference, but he called the president to warn him that the question would probably come up at his own press conference the next day. Both expressed concern that Eisenhower would be asked the “exact status” of all the prisoners. Referring obliquely to the CIA mission, they agreed that one plane was problematic as it “landed under such conditions” that the men would not be “prisoners of war” as they were “not in uniform nor in Korea.”

Eisenhower told Foster Dulles he would do his best if reporters asked about them and would stick to the statement that “actual circumstances were a matter of record” with the Defense Department but also that he “would not say anything that would make liars out of our people.” The essential thing, they agreed, was that Beijing had agreed under the terms of the armistice to return all prisoners of war and had supposedly provided all names through the ambassadorial-level talks in Geneva but had deceitfully omitted the names of the civilian prisoners.¹⁷

They did not discuss the obvious contradiction that “prisoners of war”

did not apply to civilian personnel, especially CIA, on a covert mission in the territory of a country with which the United States was not formally at war.

“Forget about the Two, Talk About the 11”

While the president, secretary of state, and DCI were flailing for a coherent response, a measure of clarity was provided by the State Department’s legal adviser, who influenced subsequent policy deliberations and, ultimately, the fate of the two CIA men. Herman Phleger was a prominent attorney from San Francisco who had met John Foster Dulles at the founding conference of the UN in 1945 and then had advised the US military government in Germany.

Foster Dulles had mentioned the overall prisoner dilemma to Phleger shortly after the PRC broadcast on November 23, and Phleger went to New York City to advise Ambassador Lodge. On the morning of December 2, Foster Dulles called Phleger in New York to discuss next steps with the UNSC.

The plan was for Lodge to introduce a short resolution on the issue in a special session of the UNSC before going to the General Assembly. The resolution would call on the PRC to release and deliver the 11 USAF personnel—on the basis that they were serving as UN soldiers on a UN mission—as well as “other captured personnel.”

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Regarding the CIA men, Phleger told Foster Dulles on the telephone that “we ought to forget about the two and talk about the 11.” Phleger had zeroed in on the problem—it was hard under the circumstances of their mission to argue for their release as prisoners of war under the terms of the armistice, and doing so might jeopardize the release of the US airmen.¹⁸

It is not recorded whether Phleger’s recommendation to “forget” about the two CIA prisoners was communicated to Eisenhower before his press conference later that day. In any case, Eisenhower himself switched the issue from the 13 to the 11. He took the initiative in bringing up the “13 American prisoners” in the context of the “ideological struggle” of the Cold War and dismissed calls for a retaliatory blockade because it would constitute an act of war.

The president then raised “one thought that I must express: at least 11 of these soldiers, by the Communists’ own propaganda and testimony made public, were in uniform. They were soldiers captured in the Korean War.” Consequently, he emphasized, they must be treated as prisoners of war under the terms of the armistice and, because they were serving “in conformity with” UN actions in Korea, the UN had some responsibility for acting and needed to do so to “retain its self-respect.”¹⁹ The distinction Eisenhower was making implicitly suggested that the two civilians had not been serving the UN

and did not come under the terms of the armistice.

The subsequent question-and-answer session reflected confusion among the press corps regarding the 11 or the 13. Responding to a reporter’s question on what kind of action the president wanted the UN to take “on behalf of the 13 prisoners,” Eisenhower affected not to “prejudge” the UN and reiterated his earlier points that it was obliged to do something. Another reporter, conflating the two planes into one, asked whether the case of these prisoners was comparable to the case of a US RB-29 reconnaissance plane shot down by Soviet fighters near the Kurile Islands the previous month.

Eisenhower said the Soviets were quick to respond to perceived incursions but that “this last case, to my mind, with respect to the 11 uniformed soldiers, was completely indefensible, and they should be home right now.” Another reporter asked whether the United States intended “to take up the matter of the 13 prisoners” with the UN, to which Eisenhower said that was being handled by the State Department.

Finally, John Hightower of the Associated Press, who had recently won the Pulitzer Prize for international reporting, got to the central issue: “Is there anything you can say, sir, about the status of the other two men, in addition to the 11 men who were in uniform?” Eisenhower demurred, saying, “Well, it is cloudy,

and I couldn’t discuss it in detail.”²⁰ The reporters dropped the matter.

Focusing on the Eleven

Immediately after Eisenhower’s press conference, Lodge and Phleger met with UN representatives of the 15 nations that, in addition to the United States, had sent military forces to participate under the UN Command in Korea (excluding South Korea, which joined the UN in 1991).^a Lodge read the president’s recent comments about the UN’s responsibilities; Phleger spoke of the need to uphold the terms of the armistice. Lodge and Phleger reported to Foster Dulles that all 15 nations were concerned “that the men are UN men.” All of these points, of course, applied only to the 11 airmen, not Downey and Fecteau.

That the Eisenhower administration had, at this point, sidelined Downey and Fecteau in its diplomatic efforts at the UN is underscored by a December 3 conversation between Foster Dulles and Krishna Menon, India’s UN representative, who had offered to help mediate with China. The discussion made no mention of the two civilians and focused only on 11 airmen, including the US contention that their B-29 was south of the Yalu River when forced down.

Dulles rejected Menon’s suggestion that the airmen were spies, stating that “this imprisonment of the uniformed members of the armed services for wholly fictitious grounds was something that no nation could accept without reaction” and that the UN had “strong responsibility in the

a. Australia, Belgium, Canada, Colombia, Ethiopia, France, Greece, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the Philippines, South Africa, Thailand, Turkey, UK, and the US.

matter since these men were serving the United Nations.” Dulles, probably assuming Menon would so inform the Chinese, stressed that the UN’s failure to act would force the United States “to take its own measures to seek relief.”²¹

CIA Objects, and Loses

Realizing that US diplomatic efforts were omitting Downey and Fecteau, CIA officers tried to intervene. Frank Wisner, chief of CIA’s operational directorate, supported a proposed statement from the Defense Department that would cover Downey and Fecteau while papering over discrepancies in their cover employment. Wisner read it to Allen Dulles in New York over the telephone on the evening of December 3. No text of the proposal appears to have survived, but an internal CIA memo suggests that the Army wanted to address the lack of backstopping documentation on Downey and Fecteau by announcing that a records search had revealed that Downey and Fecteau were not actually Army civilian employees but were locally hired contractors providing services for the Army in the Far East.

Conceivably Wisner believed this solution would preserve cover while making Downey and Fecteau eligible for inclusion in any prisoner release by connecting them, through the US Army, to the UN Command. In any case, the reaction was negative. Walter Robertson, assistant secretary of state for East Asia and the Pacific, got wind of it and told Wisner that Dulles would not like it and that Wisner should “do nothing” with the proposal until Robertson could confer with the secretary of state.

The shift in focus did not escape the attention of Mary Downey, Jack’s mother, who called her contact in CIA’s personnel office on December 5.

When Foster Dulles learned of the proposal the next day, he opposed it as well. CIA apparently dropped this approach.²²

The proposed UNGA resolution presented by Ambassador Lodge to the group of UN member states comprising the UN Command specified only the 11 airmen and their mission under the UN Command. It mentioned them three times—once as members of the US armed forces, twice as members of the UN Command—in declaring that their imprisonment was a violation of Article 3 of the armistice regarding the repatriation of prisoners of war. It also condemned the detention of “all other captured personnel of the United Nations Command” and requested the UN Secretary-General to seek the release of the 11 and these “other captured personnel.”

During the ensuing UNGA discussion on this matter, Communist bloc representatives emphasized the 13 Americans collectively as “convicted spies” serving US rather than UN interests, while representatives of the allied powers focused on the 11 airmen and their UN connections. Soviet representative Yakov Malik asked Lodge how the United States would react if two aircraft were shot down over US territory with a total of 13 PRC citizens sent to do what the 13 US citizens were sent to accomplish in China. Those spies, he said, would be treated as Beijing was treating the US spies.

Likewise, the Czechoslovakian representative emphasized the “13 American nationals” constituted

a convicted “group of spies.” By contrast, the British representative, Anthony Nutting castigated the PRC for sentencing and imprisoning “the 11 American airmen” who had served in uniform “on behalf of the United Nations during the Korean hostilities.” Nutting mentioned “the 11” eight times and referred to these “airmen” and “prisoners of war” many more times, referencing only the B-29 mission. He asked rhetorically, “Are we to believe that 11 American airmen, packed into a single aeroplane and wearing their national uniform, were about to descend upon Chinese territory to conduct espionage? The idea is so fantastic that it is hard to understand how grown men can advance it as a serious charge.” He did not mention the CIA mission.²³

The shift in focus did not escape the attention of Mary Downey, Jack’s mother, who called her contact in CIA’s personnel office on December 5. She was very upset, “on the verge of hysteria,” because she had been following all the developments in the newspapers and on the radio and saw that the focus was on the 11 but “nothing seemed to be in process for her boy.” Mrs. Downey went to visit her congressman, Rep. Thomas Dodd, that evening (and so she was not home when DCI Dulles tried to call to reassure her that the government was not forgetting her son), Dodd then called Allen Dulles to complain that US diplomats at the UN “had so completely dropped from consideration the two civilians.”

DCI Dulles met with both Mrs. Downey and Representative Dodd on December 10. He warned them that

The degree to which Downey and Fecteau were sidelined is evident from the administration's response to inquiries from Capitol Hill.

discretion was important but assured them that “everything possible was being done for the ‘two’ and they had not been forgotten by the government.”²⁴

More Complications

US diplomatic efforts regarding USAF personnel held in China expanded from 11 to 15 as a result of a State Department recapitulation. Foster Dulles was informed by Assistant Secretary Robertson on December 7, 1954, that there were 15 servicemen in custody—the 11 sentenced on November 23 plus four US fighter pilots shot down and captured by PRC forces but who were as yet untried. Beijing’s propaganda and reports from US repatriates indicated their continued imprisonment, and PRC diplomats admitted it during talks in Geneva. Robertson also told Secretary Dulles that, all told, 28 US civilians “including Messrs. Downey and Fecteau” were in jail in China.

Ignoring the issue of the civilian detainees, Robertson recommended that the cases of the four additional US pilots “be pressed on the same basis as the 11 Air Force personnel who have been sentenced to prison terms.” The lack of a recommendation regarding any of the 28 civilians, including Downey and Fecteau, indicates that the US was settling on an approach involving only its military personnel. Secretary Dulles informed the White House of the four others added to the list.²⁵

US diplomats faced a dilemma. The proposed UNGA resolution approved by the other 15 nations of

the UN military command focused on the 11 airmen already sentenced by the Chinese—to change it to 15 airmen would require another meeting and consensus, and Foster Dulles and Ambassador Lodge were eager to press forward. Fortunately, however, the text of the draft resolution mentioned “other captured personnel of the United Nations Command.”

In his lengthy statement introducing the resolution to the General Assembly, Lodge detailed the story of the 11 and their leaflet-dropping mission over North Korea, which he defended as a legitimate UN military mission. He then told the stories of the additional four US fighter pilots. After relating the specific provisions of the Korean armistice regarding China’s obligations about prisoners of war, as well as Beijing’s admissions regarding all 15 prisoners, he introduced the resolution on behalf of the 16 nations of the UN Command in Korea.²⁶

Lodge’s argument, then, was that “other captured personnel,” a category that Frank Wisner wanted to include Downey and Fecteau, actually referred to the other four USAF pilots, which effectively left out Downey and Fecteau from consideration. This was underscored by C. D. Jackson, an adviser to Eisenhower on propaganda and psychological warfare, who served as a US delegate to UNGA.

Jackson specified the illegal detention, mock trial, conviction, and imprisonment of “11 American airmen” on “fabricated charges of espionage”; no mention was made of Downey

and Fecteau. An important point stressed by the US representatives that apparently swayed a few nations was that the espionage charges were ridiculous because the men were in uniform at the time of their capture, a point conceded by Soviet representative Malik.²⁷

Politicians Weigh In

The degree to which Downey and Fecteau were sidelined is evident from the administration’s response to inquiries from Capitol Hill. Dodd wrote Eisenhower on November 30 that he had pledged to the people of his district and to Downey’s mother that he would do everything in his power to bring about Downey’s release. Dodd urged the president to press China to release Downey and the 12 other Americans. There was no response from the president or a senior adviser.

Dodd’s letter was acknowledged by a White House functionary and turned over to the State Department for action. The response came from the assistant secretary for congressional relations, who thanked Dodd for his concern and outlined the measures already taken regarding the prisoners.

Later that month, Sen. John F. Kennedy of Massachusetts called Assistant Secretary Robertson “about the two civilians”—Fecteau was his constituent—seeking more information. Robertson and Foster Dulles agreed “to play everything down” because putting out more information would “raise more problems than it would solve.” By contrast, when the wife of Colonel John K. Arnold, the senior member of the B-29 crew, wrote to Eisenhower, that letter was

answered at length by Sherman Adams, the president's chief of staff.²⁸

Getting the UN Involved

Foster Dulles was pleased to report to the president a diplomatic victory when the resolution, submitted by all 16 powers of the UN Command in Korea, passed the General Assembly on December 10.²⁹ Of the 60 member nations, 45 voted in favor, five against, and 10 either absent or abstained. The resolution's request that UN Secretary-General (UNSYG) Dag Hammarskjöld seek the release of the prisoners, together with Lodge's personal emphasis to Hammarskjöld that Eisenhower strongly believed the UNSYG had a great responsibility in this matter, convinced Hammarskjöld that he should go to Beijing and negotiate personally.

Hammarskjöld immediately sent a cable to Beijing requesting direct talks, receiving a reply on December 17 that the PRC officials would receive him. Foster Dulles and Lodge agreed that briefings should be set up to prepare Hammarskjöld to deal with potential legal questions, and that these briefings would involve Herman Phleger.³⁰

On December 19, Hammarskjöld went to Stockholm to meet with the PRC ambassador there to make arrangements. Before he left, Phleger spent most of a day briefing him on the B-29 crew's mission, showing him the documentary evidence that they were not spying on China but had strayed close to the border by accident on account of weather.³¹ Hammarskjöld would be in Beijing from late December to mid-January.³²

Foster Dulles called his brother at CIA and "asked if he had any brilliant ideas of what we should do if this mission fails."

While he was gone, US officials maintained a deliberate silence on the matter outwardly—suspending public criticism of China—while they debated their next steps. Lodge, reacting to an idea of Phleger's, suggested to Foster Dulles that the US should press for an UNGA resolution to authorize a UN blockade of China. Dulles called his brother at CIA and "asked if he had any brilliant ideas of what we should do if this mission fails." Allen Dulles, with no mention of his imprisoned CIA employees, told his brother he would get "his boys on it."³³

Frank Wisner was one of those boys, and once again he tried to influence US diplomatic efforts. As chief of the operations directorate, Wisner was responsible for Downey and Fecteau. He learned that Hammarskjöld in Beijing sent a question back to the State Department regarding what Downey and Fecteau were wearing when they were shot down and captured. Writing directly to Foster Dulles, Wisner asserted that "they were wearing a type of uniform commonly used by the troops and also worn by some civilians in the theater of operations at the time," specifically a "denim fatigue uniform" without military insignia.

Wisner pointedly argued "it can be truthfully and accurately stated that they were wearing uniforms of a sort," disingenuously adding that this was "clearly not the sort of clothing which would be affected by persons attempting to appear as civilians or otherwise to disguise themselves." Wisner proposed that the Hammarskjöld mission be

informed that Downey and Fecteau were wearing uniforms at the time of their capture, or at least "uniforms of a United States military type." In addition, Wisner and his deputy, Richard Helms, prepared materials for inclusion in the State Department briefing package for Hammarskjöld that "specifically indicated that these two individuals were on a UN mission."³⁴

Wisner's intervention had zero effect. In Beijing, Hammarskjöld sought assurances as to the health and well-being of all the 13 detained Americans, and Beijing agreed to photograph and provide health information on the 11 of the B-29 Arnold group plus Downey and Fecteau, all of whom were temporarily quartering together so that they could be photographed and filmed under relatively benevolent conditions. PRC officials, however, would talk only about the imprisoned US military members, not about Downey and Fecteau.

Starting a Process

As CIA had predicted, Hammarskjöld returned without an immediate release of any prisoners, but he emphasized a process had been started. Beijing, for example, released photographs of the prisoners, agreed to allow family visits, and said it would begin to allow the exchange of mail—all of which, he suggested to Lodge, meant that while the situation was "delicate," their release would come in "a matter of months." The Eisenhower administration expressed its disappointment but also its confidence in a favorable outcome.

US diplomats had engaged in sporadic talks with PRC representatives on the status of all US citizens detained or imprisoned in China.

Statements from Hammarskjöld, Lodge, and the White House focused solely on the US military personnel being held (the 11 or the 15).³⁵

Efforts to free the US military personnel eventually paid off. On May 31, 1955, Beijing deported the four fighter pilots who had not been tried and sentenced. On August 1, Beijing announced that the 11 airmen would be released; they arrived in Hong Kong on August 4.³⁶ Both groups of airmen were released at the Lowu Bridge on the PRC side of the border with Hong Kong, and they walked across into the then British colony. Fecteau would not retrace that crossing until December 1971, Downey not until March 1973.

All the foregoing is not to say that Downey and Fecteau were completely forgotten by their government, even if they were tactically sidelined during the efforts to secure the release of the US military personnel. I have written elsewhere about how CIA continued to care about their fate and about their families.³⁷ Since June 1954, during the Geneva Convention on the Korean war, US diplomats had engaged in sporadic consular-level talks with PRC representatives on the status of all US citizens detained or imprisoned in China. PRC ambassador Wang Bingnan maintained that all US citizens were free to leave China if they were not involved in civil or criminal cases. The State Department issued press releases on these talks, mentioning Downey and Fecteau by name (but not their true affiliation).³⁸

In August 1955, these became regularized as ambassador-level

talks between U. Alexis Johnson, the US ambassador in Prague, and Ambassador Wang. In his instructions to Johnson, Foster Dulles stated that the “agreed purpose” of the talks was primarily to help settle “the matter of repatriation of civilians who desire to return to their respective countries” and secondarily to facilitate further discussions on other issues of concern to both sides.³⁹

These talks carried on until 1957, when they were suspended, and resumed in Warsaw in 1958.⁴⁰ The US side typically pressed at each of these meetings for Downey and Fecteau’s release but never acknowledged they were CIA officers. For its part, Beijing did release other US civilians, beginning with 10 in September 1955, but it maintained Downey and Fecteau were special cases and were not “civilians.” They had been convicted of crimes against China and therefore they were ineligible for release; the United States should not demand that China change its legal system.⁴¹

Trouble with Cover

In retrospect, it is evident the Eisenhower administration, in its diplomatic efforts during 1954–55 to free the larger group of US military personnel held in China, had no choice but to treat the imprisoned CIA officers differently. As intelligence officers under cover, Downey and Fecteau had a far more tenuous legal status than uniformed combatants. In that respect, notwithstanding the pair’s enormous personal sacrifice, the episode established norms

with the new PRC government and drew a distinction between espionage, a game with few rules, and armed conflict bound by international law and custom. In particular, the agreement in principle on exchanges of prisoners of war and detainees would come into play again years later, for example, when a US EP-3 reconnaissance plane crash-landed on Hainan Island in April 2001.

Might Downey and Fecteau’s ordeal have ended sooner? The point of departure for an alternative history of Downey and Fecteau is not that the Eisenhower administration would never waver from insisting on including the CIA officers with the US airmen. The evidence suggests Beijing would have done nothing different and perhaps would have delayed releasing the military prisoners.

The weakness of Downey and Fecteau’s cover compounded the difficulty of securing their release. Cover, to be effective, needs to be credible, consistent, and coordinated. Downey and Fecteau’s CAT cover was none of those things; their interrogations quickly revealed they knew nothing about the airline. Like many of CIA’s Third Force schemes, it was poorly conceived and poorly executed.

PRC officials knew beyond any doubt, even before the C-47 was shot down, that those on board were CIA. Under intense interrogation, Downey and Fecteau had also admitted it. More important, everyone at the highest levels of the US government—at the White House, State Department, the Pentagon, and CIA—knew that China’s leaders knew. Downey and Fecteau had no cover to preserve.

What the US government was trying to preserve, in my view, was the

use of cover in current and future CIA missions and the ability to sustain cover to protect past operations. The audience for the cover story was not just PRC officials, but the rest of the world and the US public. For Beijing, knowing the truth was mere prelude to having the truth admitted, as both Downey and Fecteau finally did after weeks of denying it.

Should the US government have admitted their CIA status and mission, much as Eisenhower would do in 1960 after Francis Gary Powers's U-2 was shot down over the Soviet Union?⁴² Perhaps, but the two cases differed in important ways, not least because Powers was piloting an unarmed reconnaissance aircraft, while Downey and Fecteau were attempting to foment a guerrilla war.

Should the US government have admitted their CIA status and mission, much as Eisenhower would do in 1960 after Francis Gary Powers's U-2 was shot down over the Soviet Union?

The difference would not have been lost on PRC leaders. Announcing the start of ambassador-level talks in 1955, Premier Zhou Enlai mentioned the focus on repatriating civilians, noting, "The number of American civilians in China is small, and the question can be easily settled." However, Zhou said that China demanded that "the foreign countries concerned put an end to the subversive activities against China and to the dispatching of saboteurs into China to carry out activities in violation of Chinese law."⁴³

What seems certain is that, as far as Beijing was concerned, early

release was impossible without such statements. In contrast, for US decisionmakers of the mid-1950s grappling with the early Cold War struggle with communism—including the aftermath of the Korean War and the collapse of the Third Force covert action program—such a promise might well have been impossible. This impasse, clearly, doomed the CIA men to many years of captivity, ending only with President Nixon's opening to China and his administration's admission, after all these years, that Downey and Fecteau had been CIA officers all along.



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Editor's note: Printed versions of this article contained an erroneous set of Endnotes. The notes that follow this page have been corrected. (April 15, 2022)

Endnotes

1. John Foster Dulles, "A Policy of Boldness," *Life*, May 19, 1952, 146–57.
2. Nicholas Dujmović, "Drastic Actions Short of War: The Origins and Application of CIA's Covert Paramilitary Function in the Early Cold War," *Journal of Military History* 76 (July 2012), 790–94.
3. Frank Holober, *Raiders of the China Coast: CIA Covert Operations during the Korean War* (Naval Institute Press, 1999); James Lilley, *China Hands: Nine Decades of Adventure, Espionage, and Diplomacy in Asia* (Public Affairs, 2004). See also William Leary, *Perilous Missions: Civil Air Transport and CIA Covert Operations in Asia* (University of Alabama Press, 1984) and Dujmović, "Two CIA Prisoners in China," 22.
4. The US Air Force at the time had some 50 "K Bases" in Korea. See list and map at <https://www.nationalmuseum.af.mil/Visit/Museum-Exhibits/Fact-Sheets/Display/Article/196394/k-bases-in-korea/>.
5. A copy of the flight manifest is in the author's records, courtesy of Erik Kirzinger, nephew of CAT pilot Norman Schwarz. See also the declassified CIA internal history by the former president of CAT, CIA officer Alfred T. Cox, *Civil Air Transport: A Proprietary Airline, 1946–1955*, vol. III, CIA Clandestine Services Historical Paper no. 87, May 1969, 130; <https://www.cia.gov/readingroom/docs/CAT%20VOL%203.pdf>.
6. A good summary of the B-29 crew's story was published in August 1998 by Associated Press reporter Robert Burns and syndicated under various titles; the *Los Angeles Times* version is <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1998-sep-13-mn-22205-story.html>.
7. "Telephone call to Mr. Allen Dulles," 5:48 p.m., November 23, 1954, in Eisenhower Library, John Foster Dulles Papers, Telephone Conversation Series, Box 3, folder 3. "Telephone call to Mr. Hagerty," 6:22 p.m., November 23, 1954, in *ibid.*, Box 10, folder 2. Eisenhower's weekly press conference was held that morning, before the Chinese announcement.
8. State Department statement, no. 666, November 23, 1954, Eisenhower Library, JF Dulles Papers, Subject Series, Box 11, Wang-Johnson Talks, folder 6.
9. Memorandum of Conference with President Eisenhower, November 24, 1954, document 199 in *Foreign Relations of the United States: The Intelligence Community, 1950–1955*, (GPO, 2007), <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1950-55Intel/d199>. Ambrose, *Eisenhower*, 227–228. See also Gregory Pedlow and Donald Welzenbach, *The Central Intelligence Agency and Overhead Reconnaissance* (CIA History Staff, 1992), 36–37.
10. Text of the White House press release on the telegrams, copies of the telegrams themselves, and the names of addresses of the recipients are in Eisenhower Library, White House Central Files, Official File, Box 686, OF 154-H-3, POWs—13 Americans Imprisoned by Chinese Communists, folder 2.
11. State Department press statement, no. 673, November 26, 1954, in Eisenhower Library, JF Dulles Papers, Subject Series, Box 11, Wang-Johnson Talks, folder 6.
12. This analysis is based on my review of the contents of two thick files of public correspondence to the president on this matter, in Eisenhower Library, White House Central Files, General Files, Box 938, 125-U-1 13 Americans Imprisoned by Chinese Communists, folders 1 and 2. Editorial "Mr. President, Please Act," *Evening Outlook* (Santa Monica, California), November 30, 1954, in *ibid.*
13. Author's notes on this CIA cable dated November 27, 1954.
14. "Telephone Call to Mr. Wisner," November 30, 1954, in Eisenhower Library, JF Dulles Papers, Telephone Conversations – General, Box 3, Nov–Dec '54, folder 3. Allen Dulles called his brother on 2 December to relate the information he used to brief the President; "Telephone Call from Allen Dulles," December 2, 1954, in *ibid.* Richard Bissell that morning told DCI Dulles that the army secretary was nervous about the lack of documentation. Author's notes on November 29, 1954, memos to DCI Dulles from Office of Personnel and from Chief, Far East division; and on CIA Deputies' Meeting of December 2, 1954.
15. "Memorandum of Conversation with Ambassador Lodge," November 30, 1954, in *ibid.* "Telephone Call from the President," November 30, 1954, in JF Dulles Papers, Telephone Conversations—White House, Box 10, Nov 54–Feb 55, folder 2. "Memorandum of Luncheon Conversation with the President," December 1, 1954, in JF Dulles Papers, White House Memoranda Series, Box 1, Meetings with the President, folder 1. Eisenhower mentioned to Foster Dulles the telegram he had received from publisher William Hearst, urging UN action on the basis that "our servicemen" had been serving UN efforts; see Eisenhower Library, Presidential Records, White House Central Files, Confidential File, Subject Series, Box 61, POWs (13 Held By Chinese Communists).
16. "Telephone Call to Allen Dulles," December 1, 1954, JF Dulles Papers, Telephone Conversations—General, Box 3, Nov–Dec '54, folder 3.
17. "Telephone Call to the President," December 1, 1954, in JF Dulles Papers, Telephone Conversations – White House, Box 10, Nov 54–Feb 55, folder 21; and DDE Presidential Papers (Ann Whitman Files), DDE Diary Series, Box 7, Phone Calls June–Dec 1954, folder 1.
18. "Telephone Call from the President," November 30, 1954, JF Dulles Papers, Telephone Conversations – White House, Box 10, Nov 54 – Feb 55, folder 2. The "ought to forget" statement is in "Telephone Call to Mr. Phleger in NY," December 2, 1954, in JF Dulles Papers, Telephone Conversations—General, Box 3, Nov–Dec 1954, folder 3.

19. "The President's News Conference of December 2, 1954," document 345 in Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Dwight D. Eisenhower: 1954: Containing the Public Messages, Speeches, and Statements of the President, January 1 to December 31, 1954 (GPO, 1960), 1073–9; also available through the University of Michigan at <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/p/ppot-pus/4728402.1954.001/1123?page=root;size=100;view=image>.
20. Ibid, 1079–83.
21. "Telephone Call from Amb. Lodge," December 2, 1954, in JF Dulles Papers, Telephone Conversations—General, Box 3, Nov–Dec 1954, folder 3. "Memorandum of Conversation with Krishna Menon," December 3, 1954, in JF Dulles Papers, Special Assistants Chronological Series, Box 7, O'Connor-Hanes Chronology, Dec 1954, folder 5.
22. Author's notes on CIA personnel officer George Cary memorandum for the record, December 2, 1954. "Telephone Call to Mr. Robertson," December 4, 1954, in JF Dulles Papers, Telephone Conversations—General, Box 3, Nov–Dec 1954, folder 3.
23. Transcript of discussion, no date but probably December 6, 1954, Eisenhower Library, C.D. Jackson Papers, Box 107, UN Misc—9th Gen. Assembly, 1954, folder 3.
24. CIA Office of Personnel memoranda for the record of December 6–7, 1954, and DCI Dulles meeting with deputies on December 13, 1954 (author's notes).
25. Walter Robertson memorandums to Secretary Dulles of December 7, 1954: "Americans Detained in Communist China Since 1951" and "Facts Concerning Additional Air Force Personnel in Communist China" as well as the Edwin Martin memorandum of December 6, 1954, "Comment on Attached Lists of American Military Personnel," all in JF Dulles Papers, Subject Series, Box 11, Wang-Johnson Talks '55, folder 6. "Telephone Call From Mr. Hagerty," December 8, 1954, in JF Dulles Papers, Telephone Conversations—White House, Box 10, Nov 54–Feb 55, folder 2.
26. United States Delegation to the General Assembly, press release 2069, December 8, 1954, in Eisenhower Library, White House Central Files, Official File, Box 686, OF 154-H-3, POWs—13 Americans Imprisoned by Chinese Communists, folder 1.
27. U.S. Delegation to the Ninth UN General Assembly, press release 2072, December 9, 1954, in Eisenhower Library, C.D. Jackson Papers, Box 106, UN Misc. 9th Gen. Assembly, folder 1.
28. Thomas J. Dodd letter to President Eisenhower, November 30, 1954, along with White House acknowledgment and State's response, in White House Central Files, Official File, Box 686, OF 154-H-3, POWs—13 Americans Imprisoned by Chinese Communists, folder 3. "Telephone Call from Mr. Robertson," December 27, 1954, in JF Dulles Papers, Telephone Conversations—General, Box 3, Nov–Dec 1954, folder 1. Sherman Adams letter to Mrs. John K. Arnold, July 22, 1955, in Eisenhower Library, White House Central Files, Official File, Box 686, OF 154-H-3, POWs—13 Americans imprisoned by Communist Chinese, folder 1.
29. Resolution 906 of the 9th UN General Assembly, "Complaint of detention and imprisonment of United Nations military personnel in violation of the Korean Armistice Agreement," December 10, 1954. <https://www.un.org/Depts/dhl/dag/docs/ares906e.pdf>
30. "Telephone Call to the President," 8 December 1954, in JF Dulles Papers, Telephone Conversations – White House, Box 10, Nov 54–Feb 1955, folder 2. Lodge letter to President Eisenhower, December 11, 1954, in JF Dulles Papers, Subject Series, box 11, Wang-Johnson Talks 1955, folder 5. "Telephone Conversation with Mr. Robertson," December 11, 1954, in JF Dulles Papers, Telephone Conversations—General, Box 3, Nov–Dec 1954, folder 2. See also Hammarskjöld's interim report to the UNGA of December 30, 1954 at <https://www.un.org/Depts/dhl/dag/docs/a2891e.pdf>. The cables between the UNSG and Beijing are reproduced at <https://www.un.org/Depts/dhl/dag/docs/a2888e.pdf>.
31. Phleger, "Sixty Years," 246; <https://archive.org/details/sixtyyrsinlawpub00phlerich/page/246>. Reflecting on the matter in his 1977 oral history, Phleger spoke only of the 11 airmen of the B-29, even though at the time of his interview they had been released (Fecteau in 1971, Downey in 1973) and their CIA affiliation had been publicly acknowledged. Phleger praised Hammarskjöld for negotiating personally with Beijing and securing the release of the 11 airmen. Phleger opined that "we would never have been able to get those men out, but Hammarskjöld did."
32. A summary of the mission is at <https://www.un.org/Depts/dhl/dag/time1955.htm>.
33. See the telephone calls of Secretary of State Dulles with Ambassador Lodge and with CIA director Dulles on January 6–7, 1955, in JF Dulles Papers, Telephone Conversations—General, Box 3, 3 Jan–18 Feb 1955, folder 4.
34. Memorandum for Secretary Dulles from Frank Wisner, "Dress Worn by Messrs. Downey and Fecteau at the time of capture," January 8, 1955, in JF Dulles Papers, Personnel Series, Box 1, Name File D – F. That the FGW signature at the bottom of this memo is Wisner's is confirmed by comparison with a 1952 CIA document <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP-P80R01731R003300180051-5.pdf>. Author's notes on Helms memorandum to State Department's China desk, 28 February 1955.
35. CIA "Critical Situations" item, "Door May Be Open for Deal on US Airmen," December 16, 1954, <https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP79T00975A001800400001-7.pdf>. "Telephone Call from Amb. Lodge," January 17, 1955, in JF Dulles Papers, Telephone Conversations – General, Box 3, 3 Jan–18 Feb 1955, folder 3. See various press releases and memorandums in JF Dulles Papers, Subject Series, Box 11, Wang-Johnson Talks 1955, folder 5.
36. UN General Assembly, Report of the Secretary-General, September 9, 1955; available at <https://www.un.org/Depts/dhl/dag/docs/a2954e.pdf>
37. Dujmović, "Two Prisoners."

38. For example, State Department press release no. 112, "Representations in Geneva Regarding United States Prisoners in Communist China, March 1, 1955, in JF Dulles Papers, Subject Series, Box 11, Wang-Johnson Talks, folder 4. At that time, 26 American civilians were imprisoned, three more under house arrest, but Downey and Fecteau were named.
39. Secretary of State Dulles letter of instructions to Ambassador U. Alexis Johnson, July 29, 1955; in JF Dulles Papers, Subject Series, Box 11, Wang-Johnson Talks, folder 2.
40. Before the talks were regularized at the ambassadorial level in August 1955, Foster Dulles briefly considered having Herman Phleger (who held the rank of assistant secretary) serve as the US representative to Beijing in the hope that more authoritative representation might have a positive effect in getting US citizens released. See Secretary of State Dulles memorandum to Hoover, Murphy, Robertson, Phleger, and MacArthur, July 3, 1955 and his memo to Assistant Secretary Walter Robertson, July 5, 1955, both in JF Dulles Papers, Subject Series, Box 11, Wang-Johnson Talks, folder 4.
41. State Department press release no. 539 of September 10, 1955, Ambassador Johnson's statement at Geneva on the impending release of 10 US citizens, in *ibid*, POWs 1955, folder 1. See also Calvin Mehlert, State Department memo, "Analysis of the Question Whether or Not the Agreed Announcement of September 10, 1955, Applies to Americans Imprisoned in Communist China," n.d., Lyndon Baines Johnson Library, reproduced in Declassified Documents Reference System, doc. no. CK3100119939.
42. Michael Beschloss, *Mayday: Eisenhower, Khrushchev, and the U-2 Affair* (Harper and Row, 1986), 265, 307–9 *passim*.
43. *Ibid.*, 265, 307–309.

