

**March 19, 1956**

**Statement released by the Department of State  
(Press Release 115) commenting on a Chinese  
Communist Statement of March 4**

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**Summary:**

The United States responds to a Chinese statement concerning the ambassadorial talks.

**Original Language:**

English

**Contents:**

Transcript - English

## U.S. Views on March 4 Statement by Chinese Communists

Following is a statement released by the Department of State on March 6 (press release 115) commenting on a Chinese Communist statement of March 4 regarding the Geneva discussions which have been taking place between U.S. Ambassador U. Alexis Johnson and Chinese Communist Ambassador Wang Ping-nan [Wang Bingnan].

The Chinese Communist statement of March 4 contains nothing new. Its failure, however, even to mention that the Chinese Communists still hold 13 Americans in prison, despite their agreement of last September-6 months ago-that these Americans would be permitted "expeditiously" to exercise their right to return to the United States, cannot be overlooked. This only reemphasizes that these Americans are being held as political hostages.

The reply which the United States made on January 21<sup>[1]</sup> to a similar Chinese Communist statement of January 18 is equally applicable to the Communist statement of March 4. The concluding paragraphs of that reply read as follows:

"1. Four months after the Communists announced that they would adopt measures to permit Americans in China to return to the United States, 13 Americans are still held in Communist prisons.

"2. The United States proposed that the parties renounce the use of force without prejudice to the right of individual and collective self-defense against armed attack, in order that the discussions might take place free from the threat of war.

"3. The United States made clear that this renunciation would not prejudice either side in the pursuit of its objectives and policies by peaceful means.

"4. The Communists, while stating that they accept the principle of the renunciation of force, have deprived such acceptance of its value by refusing to agree that it is without prejudice to the right of individual and collective self-defense against armed attack and that it is applicable to the Taiwan area.

"In short, the Communists so far seem willing to renounce force only if they are first conceded the goals for which they would use force.

"The United States, for its part, intends to persist in the way of peace. We seek the now overdue fulfillment by the Chinese Communists of their undertaking that the Americans now in China should be allowed expeditiously to return. We seek this not only for humanitarian reasons but because respect for international undertakings lies at the foundation of a stable international order. We shall also seek with perseverance a meaningful renunciation of force, particularly in the Taiwan area."

<sup>[1]</sup> [Department of State] BULLETIN of Jan. 30, 1956, p. 164.