

Chinese Defector, In U.S., Asks Refuge



United Press International

Liao Ho-shu

5 FEB 69

By JUAN de ONIS

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Feb. 4—The highest-ranking Chinese Communist diplomat to defect to the United States arrived under tight security today from the Netherlands and requested political asylum, the State Department announced.

The diplomat, Liao Ho-shu, defected Jan. 24 in The Hague from his post as chargé d'affaires, or acting head of the Chinese Embassy in the Netherlands. He turned himself over to the Dutch police and

Continued on Page 2, Column 4

CHINESE, IN U.S., ASKS FOR ASYLUM

Continued From Page 1, Col. 7

asked to go to the United States.

Robert J. McCloskey, the State Department spokesman, said Mr. Liao was being held in "protective custody" pending a decision on his request for asylum.

Mr. McCloskey refused to say if United States agents had been in contact with Mr. Liao before his defection, how he was flown to the United States, or where he was being held.

United States officials said that little was known about the 46-year-old diplomat, who had been attached to the Chinese Embassy in The Hague since April, 1963.

There was lively interest among diplomatic and intelligence specialists on China, however, about what Mr. Liao might disclose under interrogation. Because of his relatively high diplomatic rank, it was thought likely that Mr. Liao had an intelligence background.

China specialists noted that Mr. Liao survived the purge of many senior diplomats that began in late 1966 as part of the Cultural Revolution, directed against elements of Chinese so-

ciety considered susceptible to "counterrevolutionary" Western influences.

The last defection of a Chinese Communist diplomat to the United States was that of Miao Chen-Pai, a third secretary at the Chinese Embassy in Damascus, Syria, in 1966.

His interrogation is reported to have provided little of "hard" intelligence value, but gave a picture of quiet disaffection among many younger, educated Chinese with the rigidities of the Communist system even before the height of the Cultural Revolution.

The interrogation of Mr. Liao was expected, in accordance with past practice, to be conducted by the Central Intelligence Agency.

The motives for his defection have not been established, although there was speculation among officials here that Mr. Liao may have been recalled to China and saw little future for himself there.

The State Department spokesman said he could not confirm press reports either that Mr. Liao's family was still in China or that it had fled to Hong Kong.

The defection was a source not only of intelligence interest but also of potential diplomatic embarrassment, in view of the scheduled resumption of contacts between United States and Chinese Communist representatives in Warsaw on Feb. 20.