

Nixon Visits With Mao

-- A Surprise Meeting

Unusual Banquet With Chou

By Max Frankel
N.Y. Times Service

Peking

President Nixon began his week-long talks in China yesterday by receiving a surprise audience with Chairman Mao Tse-tung and exchanging unusual toasts with Premier Chou En-lai at a banquet in the Great Hall of the People.

The meeting with Mao, the supreme leader of China's Communist party, appeared to have been added hurriedly to Mr. Nixon's schedule on his first afternoon here.

But nothing is known about what was said and attention was therefore focused on the remarkable banquet given for the visiting Americans by the premier in the evening.

GREETINGS

After the shark's fin in three shreds at the banquet, Chou rose to send greetings, by television, to the American people and to describe Mr. Nixon's long journey here as a "positive move" responding to the wishes of the peoples of both countries.

Chou said the reasons for 20 years of tension without contacts were "known to all" — meaning primarily American support for an independent Taiwan.

He credited both governments for "common efforts" to open the gate to better contacts at last.

And he expressed confidence that further pressure from the people — who "alone" shape world history — will surely bring the day when China and the United States can establish "normal state relations."

RESPONSE

Mr. Nixon responded, in a more expansive tone, after the fried and stewed prawns. Rising from Table No. 1, where he had eaten with chopsticks after his hosts had loaded his plate with a serving of each dish

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in succession, he said he found the hospitality incomparable, the dinner magnificent and the American music, as rendered by the People's Liberation Army Band, unsurpassed in a foreign land.

Although the Chinese have made it plain that they still harbor suspicions about American policy and what they call its "imperialism," the President did his best to bury the American fears of a Chinese menace that he himself had once helped to arouse.

"There is no reason for us to be enemies," he said. "Neither of us seeks the territory of the other; neither of us seeks domination over the other; neither of us seeks to stretch out our hands and rule the world."

IMAGE

There were enmities in the past and there are differences today, Mr. Nixon asserted, but the "common interests" of the moment transcend everything else. Using the most vivid image of Chinese revolutionary history, the president proposed a "long march" on different roads to the common goal of a "structure of peace."

He defined this as a structure in which all nations would determine their own form of government without interference — perhaps intending an allusion to Vietnam, but definitely not Taiwan.

Then Mr. Nixon said:

"Chairman Mao has written: 'So many deeds cry out to be done, and always urgently. The world rolls on. Time passes. Ten thousand years are too long. Seize the day, seize the hour.' This is the hour, this is the day, for our two peoples to rise to the heights of greatness which can build a new and a better world."

PEOPLE

Mr. Nixon observed that "more people are seeing and hearing what we say than on any other such occasion in the whole history of the world."

He also spoke about his daughter Tricia's 26th birthday, his hopes for peace and his vision of a new world.

After each of the toasts before 800 guests at round tables in the huge reception hall, the principal conferees roamed around, clinking their thimble-size glasses as they moved from table to table.

The Americans warmed up gradually to this routine as the band offered a bouncy tune and Nixon, Secretary of State William P. Rogers and Henry A. Kissinger were soon scattered far from their own table, while the premier and his principal politburo colleagues for this visit, Yeh Chien-ying, who is in charge of the military, and Li Hsien-nien, the vice premier who is in charge of most other domestic matters, had moved into orbits of their own.

ROUTINE

By the time Mr. Nixon had spoken the magic word "friendship," at the end of

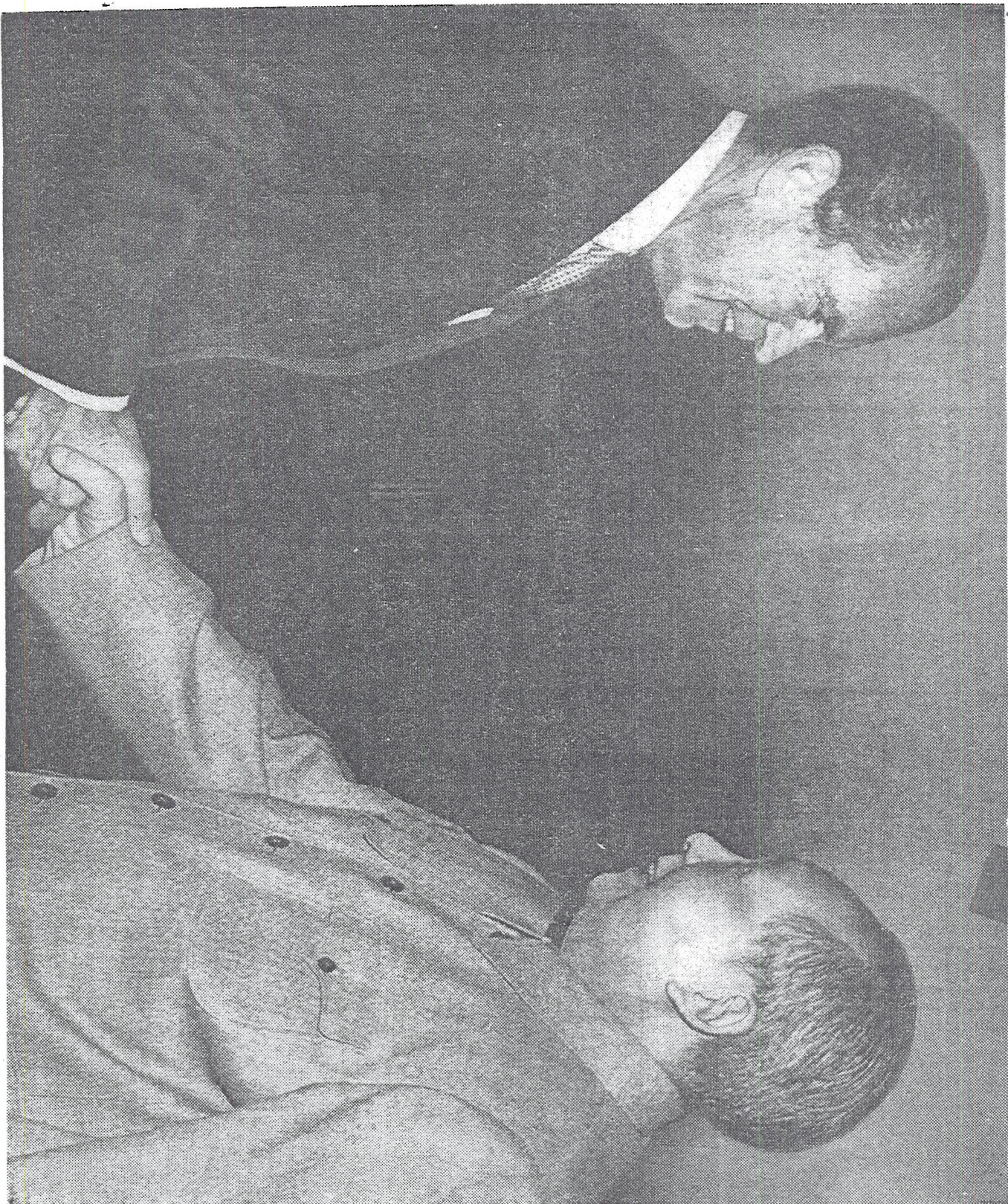
his toast, everyone had learned the routine. Powerful spotlights encouraged the cameras forward and the table-hopping began as if on signal.

The army band, which had already drawn applause for "Home on the Range" now rendered an original and

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sweet version of "America" that went on and on and on while the principals smiled, clinked, milled and sipped.

Mrs. Nixon, in a wine-red dress, stood demurely in her place during these commotions.



President Nixon shook hands with Chairman Mao Tse-tung as they met in an earlier-than-expected session in Peking

UPI/Johnston

Each of the leading diners offered two or three dozen toasts during each round of wandering. They seemed to be consuming more shoe leather than mao tai — the Chinese sorghum firewater that was in their glasses. But bottle-bearers were close at hand and Kissinger, among others, was seen taking at least two refills.

It was a striking celebration also because it occurred only eight hours after a rather minimal welcome ceremony for the President at Peking airport. Chou and his colleagues provided an honor guard and a high-ranking welcoming committee of government leaders, but they allowed no suggestion of popular enthusiasm and only a few signs of public curiosity.

The presidential party was annoyed not so much by this

welcome, it said, as by news and television accounts that portrayed the arrangements as modest. Its spokesmen contended that nothing more had been expected.

In any case, whatever irritations there were passed quickly when Mr. Nixon's hosts arranged for a furtive change of schedule yesterday afternoon and gave the President the relatively rare honor of an opening audience at Chairman Mao's home.

VISIT

This was later described as a one-hour visit, from 3 to 4 p.m., involving a "serious and frank discussion." In Communist parlance, this means a lot more than courteous chit-chat, but it also means that the talk was punctuated by a fair amount of disagreement. And the President's spokesman refused to go beyond that formula of the host to tell how the talk went.

Nor would the President's party give the location of Mao's home. But it is known to be a graceful old, one-story, yellow-roofed residence along the lakes in the old imperial city, one of a group of palace buildings formerly occupied by court mandarins.

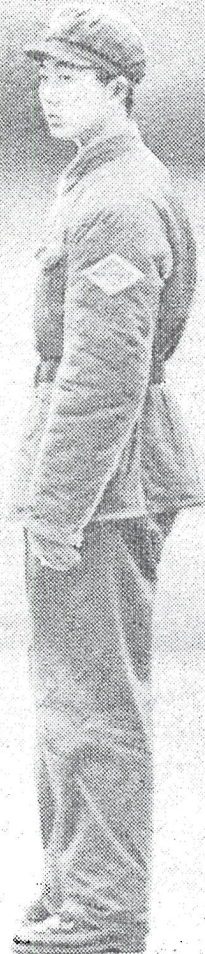
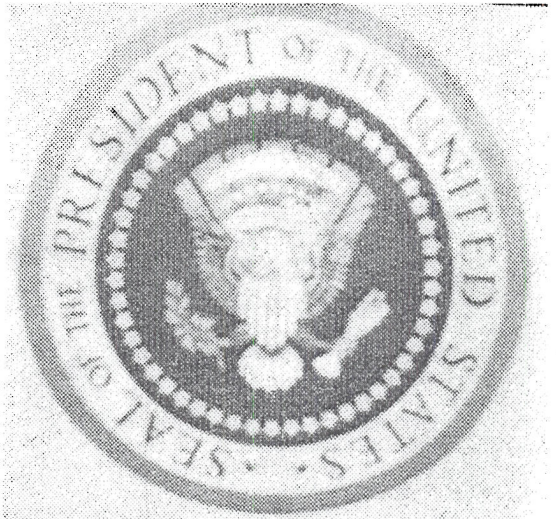
The President went with Kissinger, his assistant for national security affairs, who arranged the visit in two trips here last year. With Mao were Premier Chou, Wang Hai-jung, the deputy director of protocol, and Tang Wen-shen, an interpreter.

The White House gave no explanation for the absence of Rogers.

Mao usually holds himself in reserve until well into the program of a distinguished visitor. The President had been planning on an audience and had expected it to turn to more philosophical talk than some of the concrete policy discussions with Chou. Although two top-level meetings are said to be on no fixed schedule, there is now a distinct possibility that Mr. Nixon will meet with the chairman a second time.

The unexpected detour delayed the first Nixon-Chou conference for 90 minutes, until 6 p.m., and delayed the banquet by a half hour to 7:30.

The President and the premier are to meet in a small group this afternoon while Secretary Rogers and others meet separately with their counterparts.



AP Wirephoto

The Guard

A Chinese soldier stood guard yesterday at the Peking airport over the plane which brought President Nixon and his party to the Chinese capital. On the fuselage of the plane, the Spirit of '76, was emblazoned the presidential seal.

Nixon-Chou Talks

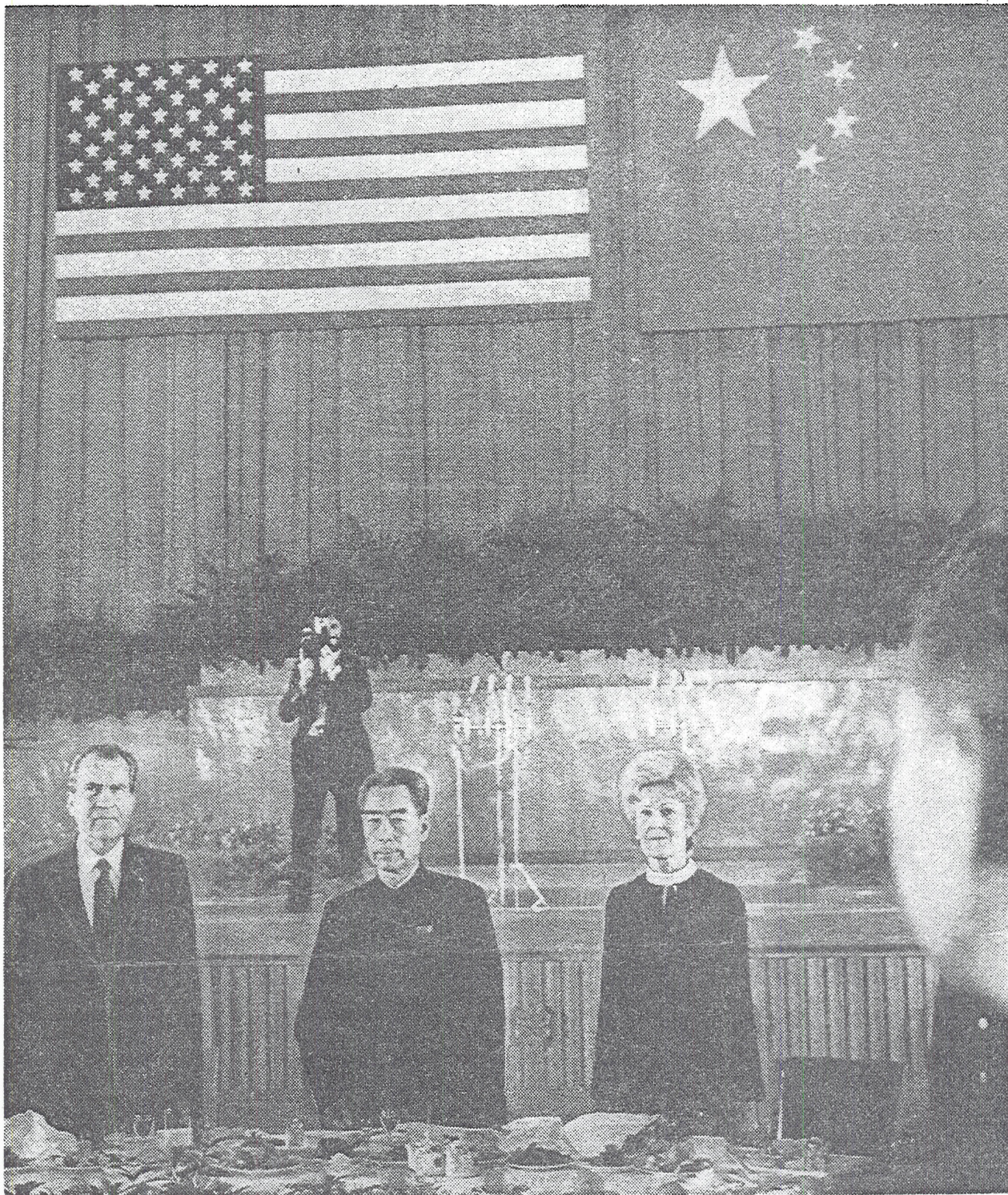
Peking

President Nixon and Premier Chou En-lai continued their search for means to relax 22 years of tensions between their countries today, sitting down for talks at a long, green table in a salon at Peking's Great Hall

of the People.

The second working session between Nixon and Chou started at 1 a.m. EST and was held before a huge painting of a scene from the Chinese Red Army's epic long march of 1934-35.

United Press



UPI Telephoto

President Nixon, Premier Chou and Mrs. Nixon stood as national anthems were played at the start of the banquet