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# LIFE



# NIXON IN THE LAND OF MAO

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The Chairman in his study, with shelves of tagged Chinese books

®

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## 'Run, listen, run, take notes, curse TV, run'

With the Nixon party in Peking were LIFE Photographer John Dominis and Columnist Hugh Sidey. Their coverage begins on the next page. Late one North China night Sidey sent us the following account of what it has been like for the press:

"My great fear is that the Nixon administration will pick up some pointers from Mao's regime. A remote Nixon has gone completely beyond reach here. He is around. Now and then you can glimpse him. They say he had a meeting with Mao, but we only have a few photos and the word of Ron Ziegler to prove it. Ziegler has been wrong before. We are reduced to reading sights and sounds and triple-analyzing words and nods and smiles. It is the stuff of fiction.

"But it is fascinating, utterly fascinating. Never, in my opinion, has the U.S. presidency been plunged into such singular circumstances. It would seem to be a breeze to cover. Not so. It is tiring, constant. Not only are we trying to find out what Nixon is really doing, which is impossible, but we are trying to find out about Peking and China, which is hardly easier. As John Dominis's interpreter told him, 'You are always swimming to stay afloat in the pool.'

"Day begins about 7 a.m. with a look across the city from the fifth floor of the Nationalities Hotel. Gray and smoggy and, except for the roof lines, a little like Newark on a damp day. I run in place a bit to jog down the Peking duck of the night before, have a tangerine, load cameras, write a bit if there is anything left over from the night. Then we head out on one of the arranged tours (schools, communes, factories) or follow Mrs. Nixon, the only official to show herself regularly. That kind of reporting is straight out of the police beat. Run, take notes, run, listen, stumble, bump into people, take notes, growl, look around at buildings, curse television cameras and crews. Dominis points out that it could be worse; at least the Chinese field only a few photographers. Back at the hotel there is the usual seven-course lunch, a few minutes to write about the morning. The afternoon event is similar to morning, then another seven-course meal or a state banquet or a bit of culture or athletics. Write until midnight or later.

"Frustration would be reduced if one could move around the city. There are few taxis and the official cars are in constant use. We are at the mercy of our hosts, which is certainly the way they wanted it. While the inner clock has adjusted itself pretty well now, other routines seem impossible to control. Last night New York sent us five cables. They arrived at regular intervals between midnight and 7 a.m., and each time the dutiful messenger knocked, walked in, flipped on the lights, awakened me and handed me the dispatches. Good communications are important to any journalist, but efficiency can be overdone."



SIDEY



DOMINIS

RALPH GRAVES, Managing Editor



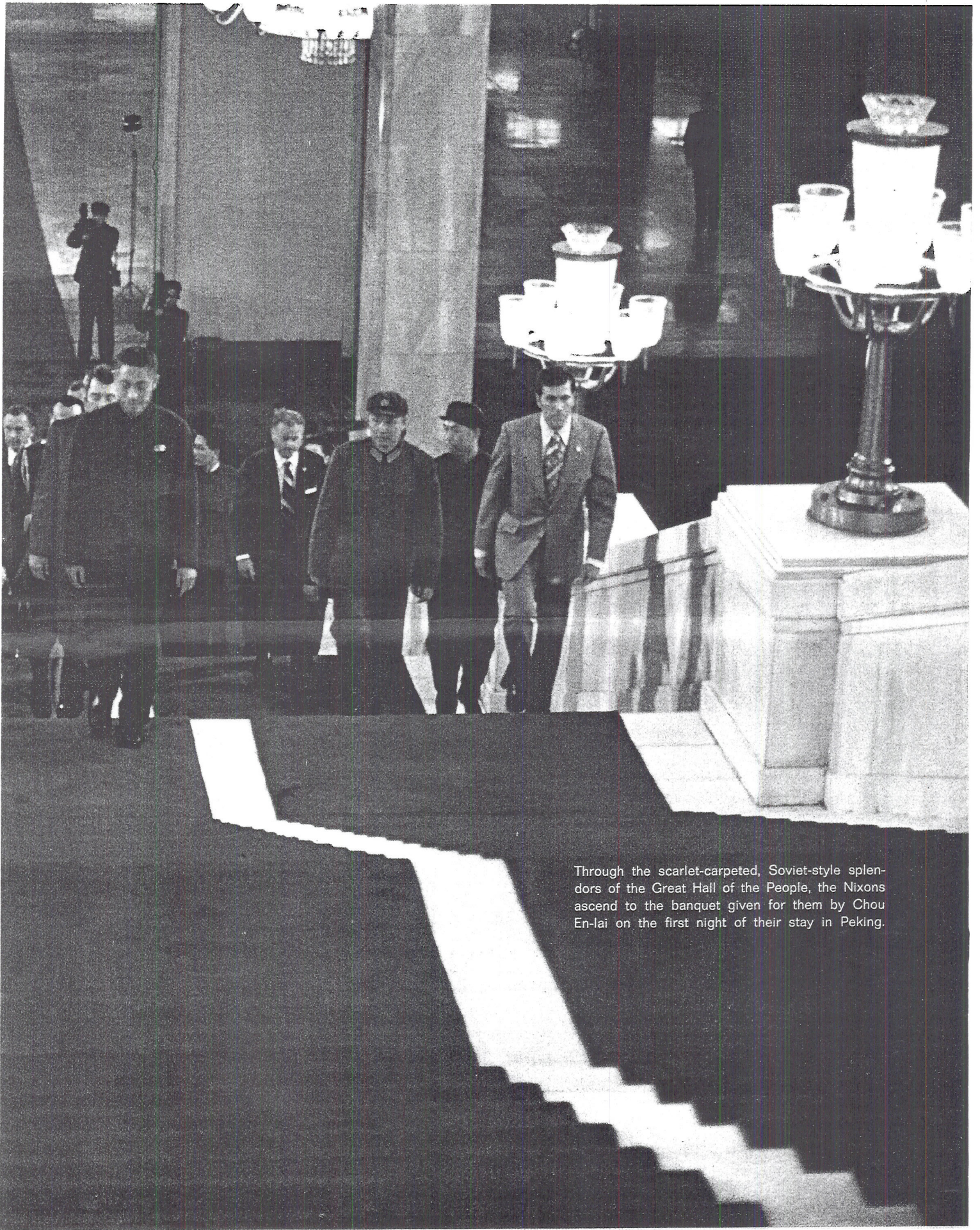
# Nixon's Great Leap into China



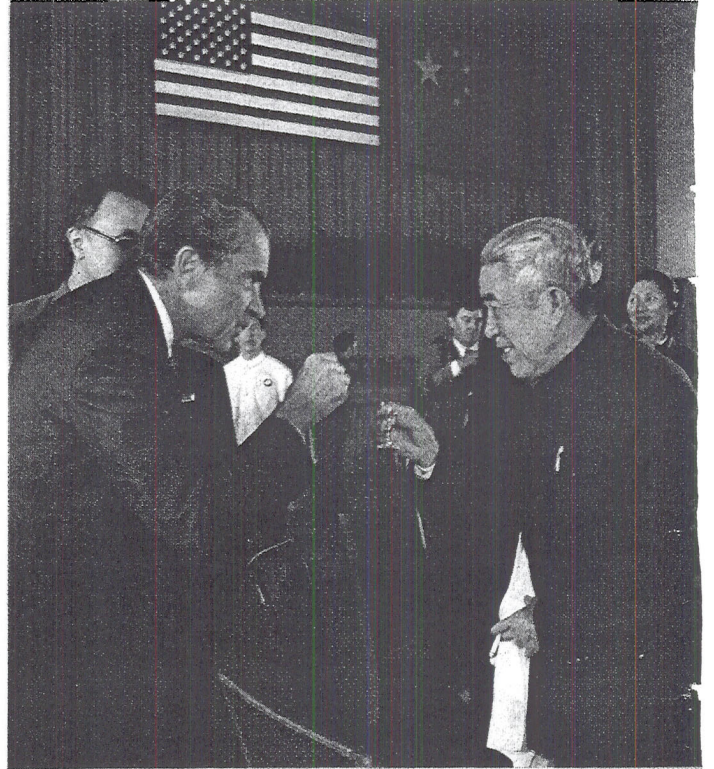
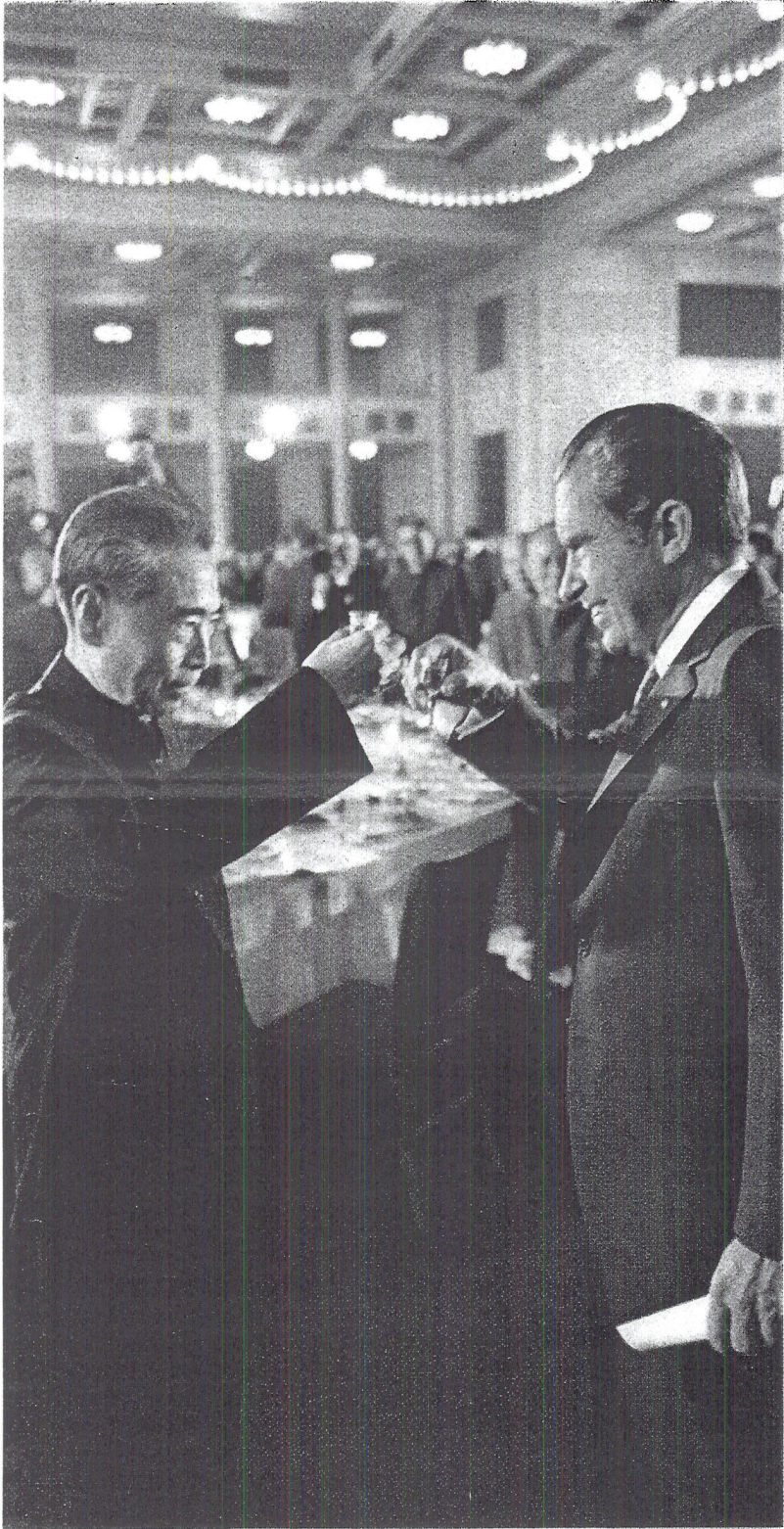
Rotund and jovial, the great revolutionary welcomed Richard Nixon to his private study as if the United States and China had been warm friends for the last quarter century, instead of bitter enemies. It was the extraordinary beginning of the most extraordinary week in the history of personal presidential diplomacy. Only an hour or two later, Nixon was locked in intense discussion with Chairman Mao Tse-tung's chief associate, Premier Chou En-lai (opposite).





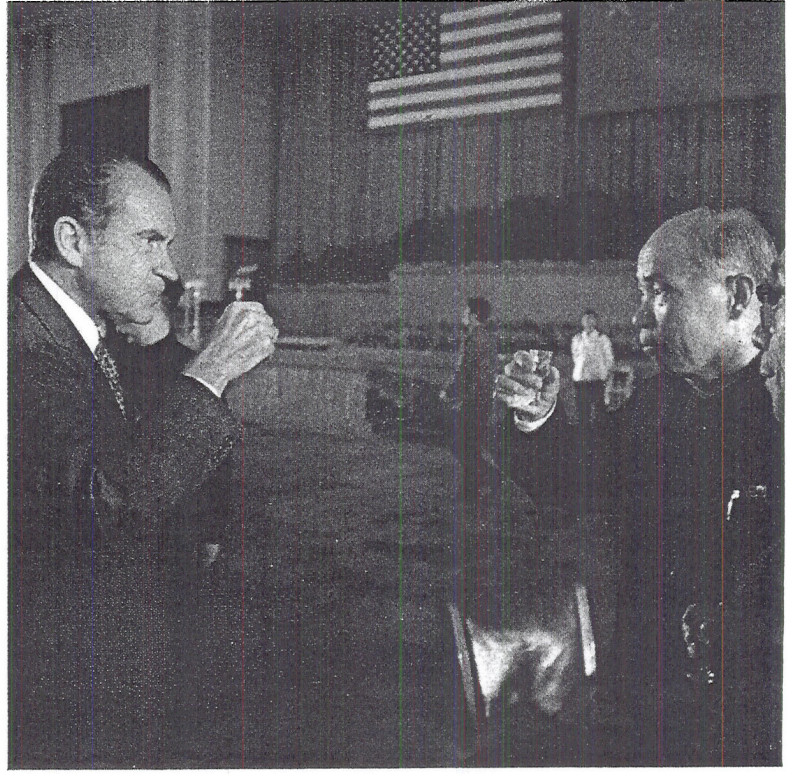


Through the scarlet-carpeted, Soviet-style splendors of the Great Hall of the People, the Nixons ascend to the banquet given for them by Chou En-lai on the first night of their stay in Peking.



Photographed by JOHN DOMINIS

The banquet had eight courses on the menu and many more on the table. A band played a medley of Chinese and American tunes (including *Turkey in the Straw*). Afterward came



the toasts, beginning with Chou and Nixon (left). Then, in a burst of geniality, the President moved from table to table randomly offering his respects to Chinese dignitaries (above).





While the President was occupied with matters of state, Pat Nixon seized the opportunity to have a good look at China—and let the Chinese have a look at her. There was a visit to the Peking Zoo, where she saw a panda (top above), and to a commune, where she struck up a tentative acquaintance with a pig (above). And in the kitchen of the Peking Hotel she talked to workers (right) and received a chrysanthemum with a grasshopper on it—carved out of a big radish (opposite).





# A President wrapped in an enigma

**PEKING**  
 Nothing has swallowed up the presidency like China. Richard Nixon is linked to America by his electronic umbrella and an occasional courier plane carefully shepherd-ed up from Shanghai, but those TV pictures America gets with the morning eggs are deceptive. Nixon is farther away than he seems, in a realm less accessible than any of us thought. There is so much meaning in what he is doing that for the moment there is almost no meaning.

He came in vast silence. It was the only such welcome for a President in history, and it was stunning. We stood under a cloudless sky hearing only the sound of each other's voices and an occasional truck in the distance. *The Spirit of '76* split the hush, snarled up to the small figure of Chou En-lai. Then the silence again. One could hear the Nixons' voices 30 yards away. The panoply of presidential power that has brought whole cities into the street cheering was shrunken to a few people, a little uncertain and no more impressive than the rest of us. Nixon going "uhhh" and talking about his inner clock. Chou's eyes steady and catlike.

The soft purr of well-oiled limousines caused a few heads to turn in the near-empty streets but that too passed almost instantly, and the most powerful nation on earth was suddenly headless. Richard Nixon, number one "imperialist running dog" for more years than one cares to remember, was off there somewhere minus helicopters, gunboats, jets, armies, police, Secret Service and Spiro Agnew, in the chambers of Mao Tse-tung, scourge of freedom and international "bandit," the man who for two decades had at least as much to do with the shape of American foreign policy as any President or the Congress.

There wasn't a ripple in the city. The band of American reporters huddled on the steps of the Great Hall of the People in the late afternoon cold, a surrealistic tableau of the press in search of a President. It was rush hour and now and then one could hear the toot of an official auto or the snort of a bus. Mostly, though, there was the thin whir of bicycles, and when the sun went down so did that tiny sound. Silence again. Even at the great banquet which Chou gave for Nixon, in the spaces between the music and toasting there was the sense of separation, of distance and wonder. The tables were like islands in some strange sea. Seated way off there at one of them was right-wing columnist William Buckley, staring at the gigantic U.S. and China flags side by side on the backdrop. He seemed in mild shock to find himself there, just then, in such company. Even farther in the distance was Nixon, trying his chopsticks on shark's fin in three shreds, up on the stage of this cavernous hall taking back everything he had said about the old adversary China for the last 20 years, loping from table to table, clinking, bowing slightly, toasting the prime minister while the central band of the People's Liberation Army played *America the Beautiful*. When he sat down he leaned over and said how beautiful the

music had been. Chou leaned back and murmured, "That was the song they played at your inaugural. I thought you would like it for tonight."

There was Pat Nixon in her red coat, a blaze against the somber blue and black worn by Chinese women, poking through the kitchen of the Peking Hotel (which has 115 chefs and helpers), declaring she was going to learn to cook Peking duck, which she didn't, and revealing that during those mysterious meetings her husband had abandoned his cottage cheese diet. She wandered through the Summer Palace, the old imperial precincts just west and north of the city, sniffing the incense, pausing to view a live picture postcard of old China. The Chinese tourists in their baggy blues made way for her silently, turned to watch her pass without a change of expression and then, just as soon as she had gone, turned again to their own business as if they were closing the world in behind her. She trudged through the gray dust of the Evergreen People's Commune, her blond coiffure catching tiny spits of snow, black shiny boots scuffing raw dirt, red coat picking up the dust, but moving on with a determined stride, impressed but not really, impressive but not really. The gap between East and West seemed beyond bridging.

The eminences of the press gathered in the dining room of the Nationalities Hotel to analyze and reanalyze nothing. The silent greeting. The talk with Mao. Chou's toast and the seven pictures of the Nixon visit in the *People's Daily*, one of those marks in the sands of history into which great meanings are read, rightly or wrongly. Columnists Joseph Kraft and Buckley, authors Theodore White and James Michener were reduced to mortal size, sifting words. In the oddest ritual of Press Secretary Ron Ziegler's career, he stated forthrightly that 200 million people in the greatest democracy on earth had no right to know, just then, what their President had talked about with Mao and Chou, the old enemies. The situation left folk heroes like Walter Cronkite and Barbara Walters standing on street corners, discussing schoolchildren and acupuncture. In the absence of instant adulation, Cronkite, Walters and ABC's entry, Harry Reasoner, tagged along with Mrs. Nixon for an afternoon, clinging to her side like courtiers, jockeying for position over her shoulder so the puffing network camera crews out ahead could get the ornate halls themselves and even Mrs. Nixon all in the same frame. But if this was bizarre, the night at the ballet was mind-boggling.

The President and Mrs. Nixon sat there with Mao's wife, Chiang Ch'ing, cosily wedged between them, bottles of fizzy orange drink and tea on the table in front, while on the stage *The Red Detachment of Women* unfolded in vivid song, dance and meaning. Despotism beat a peasant girl who ran off and joined the Communists. Together they launched their war of liberation, winning victory after victory, coming back to kill Despotism, finally marching off into the red sun with swords flashing, machine guns chattering, grenades exploding and, certainly, blood all over.

Back in a far corner of the auditorium, one could only look down and try to imagine what must be in Richard Nixon's mind, the man who even then was planning to relieve the property owners of the United States of their burden of real estate taxes, the man who had called for an end to wars and beckoned all mankind to follow him into "a generation of peace." There was no clue on Nixon's face. It was smiling, gracious, almost casual. H. R. ("Bob") Haldeman, Nixon's Prussian aide-de-camp, sat with glazed eyes as two television cameras beamed this remarkable moment back to American living rooms. Then there was the one young White House aide who later declared, "Gee, isn't this great." Perhaps. But the wisdom of France's André Malraux was more appreciated. Before Nixon left home, Malraux had said it would take 50 years to figure out what happened in China in the last week of February 1972. At least, I'd say.

# The Peking feast

Vodka first found popularity in the U.S. only when the cold war made us fascinated with things Russian. Perhaps moo shi pork will now become as familiar as cheeseburgers, as the nation goes on a China jag.

Americans are that way in foreign policy, and diplomats like George Kennan have always wished us to be more moderate in our hates and likes and more calculated in our friendships and quarrels. President Nixon showed some awareness of this American volatility when before leaving for Peking he offered contradictory instructions as to how we were to regard the trip: as a watershed, an event comparable to going to the moon, and as something from which great things were not to be expected. His own inhibitions seemed to relax more agreeably at Peking's great banquet hall; still no one would expect Richard Nixon to be easily seduced by Communists, even when savoring the biggest moment of his life.

Nixon's Peking policy has from the beginning seemed to us a spacious and far-seeing conception, in its readiness to move beyond the sterility of cold war habits and emotions. So momentous a shift in our foreign policy has caused a number of difficulties along the way: avoidable slights to Japan; a regrettable "tilt" in our foreign policy toward Pakistan when its military regime was ruthlessly trying to crush its Bangladesh population; a bewildering U.N. performance that pressured our friends to support Taiwan while we were romancing Peking. Yet the basic proposition seems sound: that the world of the 1970s will turn around the interaction of five great powers—the U.S., Russia, Western Europe, China and Japan. Photographs of the aging Chinese leadership against the visibly younger American contingent show the wisdom of getting China into the conversation now, for no one knows what insular misconceptions exist in the next generation of Chinese leadership brought up in claustrophobic isolation.

Basic to the Nixon-Kissinger notion of a five-core-

nered world is the thesis that the U.S. intends not to choose sides in the Soviet-Chinese quarrel, but there is no doubt that the U.S. at the moment is hurrying China into the Big Five club, partly as a counterweight to Russia. Thus the unprecedented gesture of a President flying halfway around the world to visit a nation and regime that the U.S. doesn't even recognize diplomatically.

So the possibilities for confusion in our foreign policy exist. They show most clearly in one key passage of the President's recent message to Congress. The President said, "Our alliances are no longer addressed primarily to the containment of the Soviet Union and China behind an American shield. They are, instead, addressed to the creation, with those powers, of a stable peace." Isn't the truth, rather, that all of us on our side do hope to enter an era of peaceful negotiations and arms reduction with the Communist great powers, but should that fail, our *alliances* are primarily and precisely addressed to containing an armed Communist threat?

Nations that can black out the news, can control the press and live without elections find it simpler than we do to carry on such a two-track policy, with all its ambiguities. Recent American diplomacy has concentrated more on the sensitive cultivation of our enemies while taking somewhat for granted our friends. We suspect this imbalance, which has been more apparent than real, won't last much longer. So far, with some fretting exceptions, our allies generally approve of our course. They seem to recognize the intelligent preparation the presidential party made; to realize that sumptuous banqueting in public was not inconsistent with plain talk in private; aware even that the mercurial American public fascination with the new dwells side by side with a shrewd awareness of reality.

The real success or failure of the Peking mission may not be visible for months or years, when it will be manifest in responses to events yet unforeseen. A long march has indeed begun.

## The people speak

One Chinese custom the President may wish he could bring back is the Communist habit of plastering the countryside with placards, expressing the unanimous views of the people on public affairs. He might want to put up a few of his own:

AMERICANS LOVE PEACE—TELL HANOI

TRADERS WELCOME—SPECIAL  
INDUCEMENTS TO FORMER ENEMIES

THE DOLLAR IS SOUND:  
DON'T SPECULATE ABOUT IT

BUSES ARE FOR RIDING,  
NOT BALANCING



MUSKIE, LINDSAY AND McGOVERN  
SIGNS ARE THE GRAFFITI  
OF A DISSIDENT MINORITY

## The busing furor

Busing may have become a subject too important to be left to the courts. The courts got into the issue in the first place because of the long unwillingness of Congress, a succession of administrations, and the public in general to address themselves to providing equal educational opportunities to black Americans. So far the Supreme Court has held only in the most general way that busing is a useful device to break up dual school segregation systems, but as lower courts wrestle with the subject they find themselves called to pass judgment on whether racial patterns were intended or just happened that way. Their agonized, piecemeal and sometimes arbitrary findings then become instant law locally, and perhaps valid precedents elsewhere, unless subsequently overturned. This seems a clumsy and uncertain way to determine and carry out important national social policy.

A lot of Americans may be willing to accept integrated schools (and in fact are quite used to them) but are up in arms against more integration if it means busing their children into inferior schools in dangerous neighborhoods. As Leonard Woodcock of the United Auto Workers says: "The bill that has become overdue is owed by every American. It cannot be paid in full by innocent young people."

Politicians find busing a hot issue; they can't avoid it; probably only George Wallace is really happy with it. The others find it hard to enunciate an answer short enough to handle a heckler but complex enough to satisfy the subject. We don't share Senator Jackson's wish for a constitutional amendment to ban busing for balance, or President Nixon's fascination with the idea—since the Constitution shouldn't be cluttered up with transitional matters. We're glad that Vice-President Agnew and HEW Secretary Richardson oppose such an amendment.

Recognizing the high emotions and political risks, Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield and Minority Leader Hugh Scott seek a congressional solution free of partisan politicking. It is high time for the congressional branch to come to the aid of the judiciary, but it won't be easy to write legislation that doesn't undo all the gains of the 1954 desegregation decision. One proposal would limit federal funds for busing to school systems carrying out court-ordered or voluntary desegregation plans; integration would continue in this fashion, but federal agencies could not otherwise require local boards to bus for racial balancing. That might take some heat out of the issue, since many blacks are not all that eager for widespread busing either. What concerns them most is inferior schooling, and improving the quality of their education. Until this is done, equal education will remain an unfulfilled obligation.