

21 May 1976

Dear Mr. Pascoe,

I found your letter and the copies of your reports on the Peking subway system on my return from a European trip. Thank you very much for sending them to me. They were most interesting and informative.

It was good to see you in Hong Kong and I hope our paths will cross again. Mr. Bush is fine and sends his regards.

With every good wish,

Faithfully,

*/s/* Vernon A. Walters

Vernon A. Walters  
Lieutenant General, USA

Mr. B. Lynn Pascoe  
Political Officer  
United States Liaison Office  
Peking

State Department review completed



**UNITED STATES LIAISON OFFICE**  
**PEKING, PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA**

April 12, 1976

Lt. Gen. Vernon A. Walters, USA  
Deputy Director  
Central Intelligence Agency  
Washington, D. C.

*Handwritten initials and a checkmark.*

Dear General Walters:

Following our discussion at Consul General Cross' house on the Peking subway system, it occurred to me that perhaps our two reports on this subject had not reached up to the higher levels of the Agency. They hardly add up to a full list of specifications on the subway system, but you may find them interesting nevertheless.

It was a great pleasure to meet you and please say hello to Mr. Bush.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "B. Lynn Pascoe".

B. Lynn Pascoe  
Political Officer

Enclosures:

1. A-5 (Peking '75)
2. A-26 (Peking '76)

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(Unclassified when detached from enclosures)

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A-5

Department of State

E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: ELTN, CH  
HONG KONG

USLO Peking

March 29, 1975

Visit to the Peking Subway

Introduction

USLO Chief Bush, accompanied by a large contingent of staff and dependents, visited the Peking Subway on March 6, 1975. The visit lasted about an hour, including a short briefing and a ride from a station located at the Peking Military History Museum to the Peking Railway Station and back. The following facts and impressions emerged.

Construction History and Current Operations

According to Mr. Li, a responsible person of the subway management committee, construction on the Peking Subway began July 1, 1965, and traffic was inaugurated on a portion of the route on October 1, 1969. The subway was not much used until 1971-72, however, and since then it has been in regular service, with 17 stations operating over a 24 kilometer, double-tracked stretch running from Peking's western suburb of P'ingkuoyuan to the Peking Railway Station. The route comes into town along the western extension of Peking's Fushingmenwai Avenue, and runs to the Peking Railway Station, its present terminus (see map, enclosure 1).

The subway is open from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. daily, with as many as eleven trains operating simultaneously at intervals of about 13 minutes on weekdays and 10 minutes on weekends. There are no expresses; trains

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stop at every station and any local citizen can ride. Trains vary in size, but usually consist of two, four or six cars linked together. Cars are 19 meters long with sixty seats and a maximum loading capacity of 80 people. They are electrically propelled, with a top speed of 80 KPH. Like all other equipment used in the subway, Mr. Li said, the cars were built in China - in this case in the northeast city of Ch'angch'un.

#### Subway's Role in Mass Transit

Li said 70-80,000 people ride the subway each day, with traffic heaviest at rush hours. Other officials emphasized, however, that the subway is not intended to serve as a major mass transit artery at this time. They said the system still has problems which need ironing out (Li mentioned high heat and humidity during the July-August rainy season, lighting system breakdowns, and others), and the trains do not always run on time. For this reason, low-cost monthly passes (such as are available to bus riders) are not sold for use on the subway. Subway riders must pay a fare of Yuan .10 (about US\$.06) per trip, which makes subway commuting an expensive proposition. For this reason, officials said, the main source of traffic on the line does not come from daily users but from suburban residents and others who use the subway occasionally for trips into and out of Peking.

#### Expansion Plans

Eventually, the subway will become a mass transit system, complementing bus and bicycle transport, the officials indicated. Construction is underway for an extension of the current line, Li said, and for a circular line as well. Although Mr. Li did not say so, it is evident from construction observed around the city that the circular route will follow the path of the old city wall, while the extension of the present route will be generally eastward from the Peking Railway Station out along Chienkuomenwai Avenue to the city's eastern suburbs. It is not clear whether the two lines will be directly linked, but judging by construction now underway they will, at a minimum, run parallel to each other for a stretch running east-west along the former location of the southern city wall. (For a map of these projected routes see enclosure 1.)

Li said the circular line will be completed by 1977.

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and the entire system will be finished by 1978. He said traffic on the present system is not computerized although there is a central control panel showing location of all trains at a given time. When the system is finished, Li said, it will be computer/controlled. In addition, he claimed, trains on the circular route will be fully automatic and will not have motormen.

#### USLO Impressions

The subway was operating smoothly during the USLO visit. Noise level was not excessive (though Li said noise was a problem), and passenger comfort--at least in the lightly loaded two-car train we rode--was good. The cars were well finished and attractive. Since the subway tracks run through separate tubes between stations, we do not know if we passed other trains during our seven stop ride. We did, however, get a close look at one train which had stopped at the Railway Station. That train was reasonably full and showed signs of frequent use. Our train was much cleaner, probably because it is reserved for VIP visits, but it too showed signs of regular use.

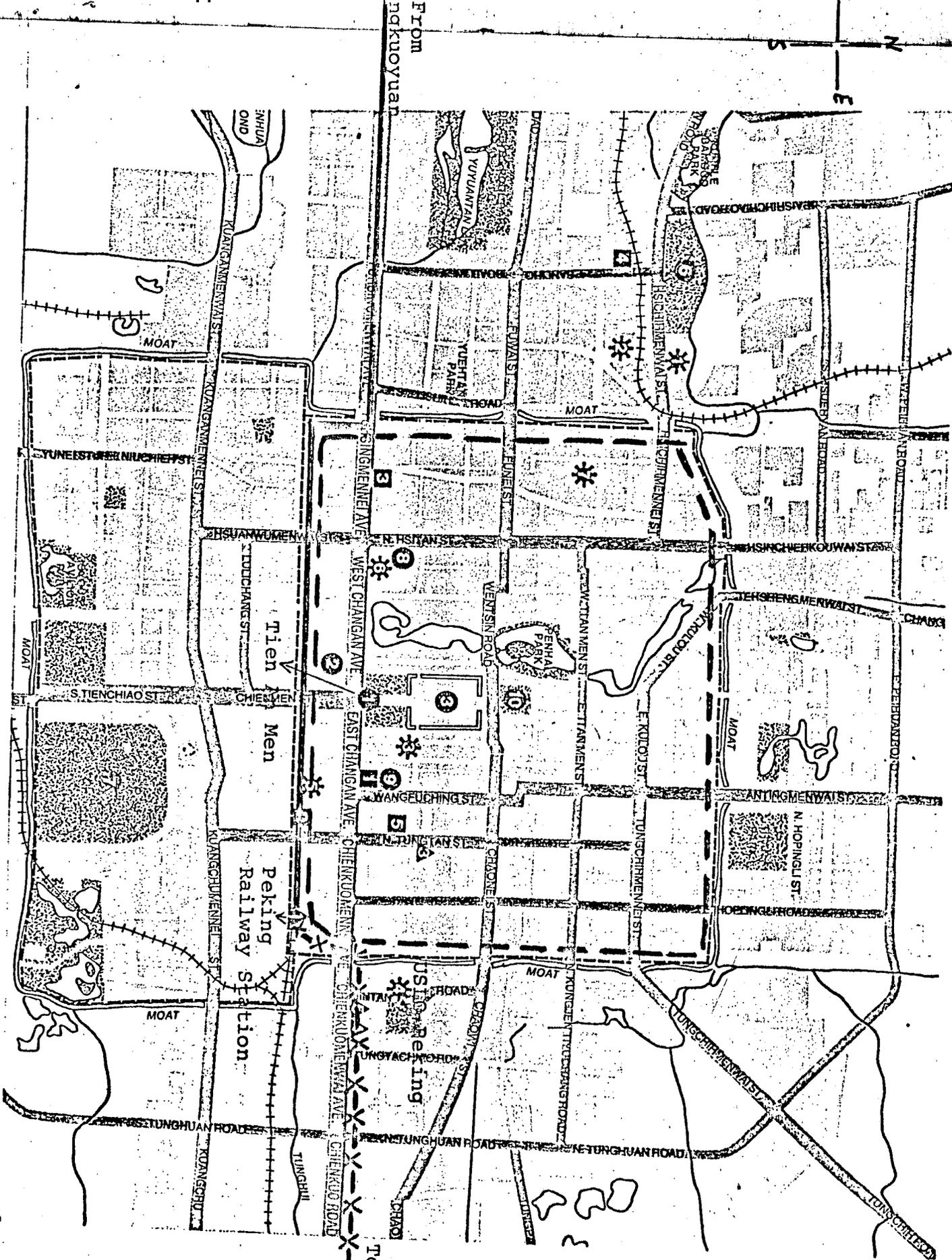
Overall, the limited system now in operation does not seem well designed for high volume operations, and this may be a contributing factor to the apparent decision by Peking authorities not to promote subway travel as a major means of transportation. The stations we saw were small by US standards, and it seems unlikely that large masses of people could be accommodated safely on the platforms. Perhaps the facilities on the new lines, particularly the circular route, will be larger.

It was interesting that the potential civil defense role of the subway was never mentioned during the USLO visit, and it was impossible to tell if the subway tubes are in any way connected to the numerous underground tunnels which have been built as air raid shelters around Peking. The subway tracks are located about 30 feet underground and would seem to provide adequate shelter in the event of a conventional attack.

BUSH

Enclosure: Map of subway route

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————— = Current Line  
 - - - - - = Projected circular route  
 -X-X-X-X- = Projected extension of current line

Enclosure No. 1

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A-26

Department of State

HONG KONG

USLO PEKING

March 29, 1976

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Peking's Subway System Revisited

75

Peking A-5

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On Saturday, March 14, 1976, a delegation of USLO employees and dependents made a tour of Peking's subway system. The visit, arranged at USLO's request, came a little less than a year after USLO's previous tour (reported in Peking A-5 of 1975). The USLO delegation, headed by Acting Chief Thayer, was hosted by Mr. Li, one of seven Vice Chairmen of the Peking Subway Revolutionary Committee, and the format of our visit exactly duplicated that of last year's. During a briefing and subsequent questioning while riding the subway, Mr. Li provided some information that revises or refines the data reported in Peking's A-5:

-- Completion of the circular line described in A-5 has been delayed from the originally projected target date of 1977 to "sometime in 1979, depending on what problems will be encountered." Mr. Li did not appear to have much confidence that even this projection will be met.

-- The final subway network will total 200 kilometers, and will be self-supporting on fares that will be no higher than corresponding Peking bus fares. The present subway fare of Yuan .10 (about U.S. \$ .06), multiplied by the 30-70,000 daily passengers (rising to 100,000 on Sundays), does not meet operating expenses, and the subway receives a subsidy from the State to meet the deficit. The projected completion date for the

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certain  
entire system is even less than that for the circular route, and figures for the ultimate capacity of the system, according to Mr. Li, are "not available." That will depend on the "development of the country" and the nature of the installations constructed.

-- The Peking Subway system currently employs about 2,000 workers, of whom one-third are classified as "technical personnel." The design and construction of the system, as well as the training of the operating personnel, appears to have been entirely in-country, using reference and research materials derived from subway systems in other major world cities. Mr. Li, for instance, one of the Vice Chairmen of the 15-member Revolutionary Committee, has never been abroad.

-- The subway tunnels are 16-20 meters deep. Mr. Li confirmed that the system is integrated with Peking's overall air raid shelter system, but did not go into details.

-- About 200 trains a day run on the present line. Peak hours are 9:00-10:00 a.m. and 3:00-4:00 p.m., and the principal users are those going from in-town offices to the "suburbs" on business. The load capacity of the cars is 60 sitting and 120 standing. Normal trains are made up of four cars, but can go up to six (This means about a maximum of about 1,000 people can be moved per train, a small number when compared to New York City subways of a dozen or more passenger cars). The gauge of the subway track is the same as that for the railroad system. Mr. Li said that there was no direct link between the subway and the Peking railroad station for passengers, but one wonders if there might be a track-to-track connection.

THOMAS

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