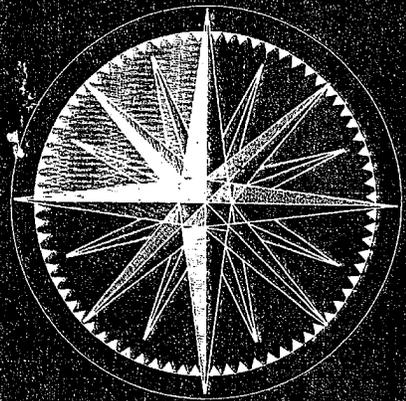


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SPECIAL REPORT

PEIPING: DIPLOMATIC HARDSHIP POST

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
OFFICE OF CURRENT INTELLIGENCE

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31 December 1964

PEIPING: DIPLOMATIC HARDSHIP POST

The number of foreign diplomats in Peiping has grown steadily in recent years and there now are more than three hundred stationed in the Chinese Communist capital. There has, however, been no corresponding increase in the amount of information available to the outside world about events in China. Despite their best efforts to penetrate the screen of isolation thrown up around them, members of the diplomatic corps remain essentially a community of the blind.

All Communist countries restrict the activities of foreign missions in an effort to maintain maximum security--and to prevent contact between their people and representatives of the outside world. The Chinese carry this policy to greater lengths than any other major power, however, and have succeeded in preventing all but the most superficial observation of their country and people by prying "barbarian envoys."

Paradoxically, the rulers of "New China" view the presence of foreign officials in Peiping much as did mandarins of the old empire during the last century. No longer able to exclude "foreign devils" from the Forbidden City, officials of the Ch'ing dynasty during the 19th century sought to keep the number to a minimum and to control the activity of those who could not be kept out by a maddening web of oriental "courtesy" and protocol. The pattern in Peiping today is little different.

The French Case

During the past year the Chinese have intensified their drive to win recognition and to establish embassies abroad. Peiping has done little, however, to encourage reciprocity. The treatment received by the French illustrates how Peiping acts when a foreign country sets up a mission in China. Paris recognized Communist China last

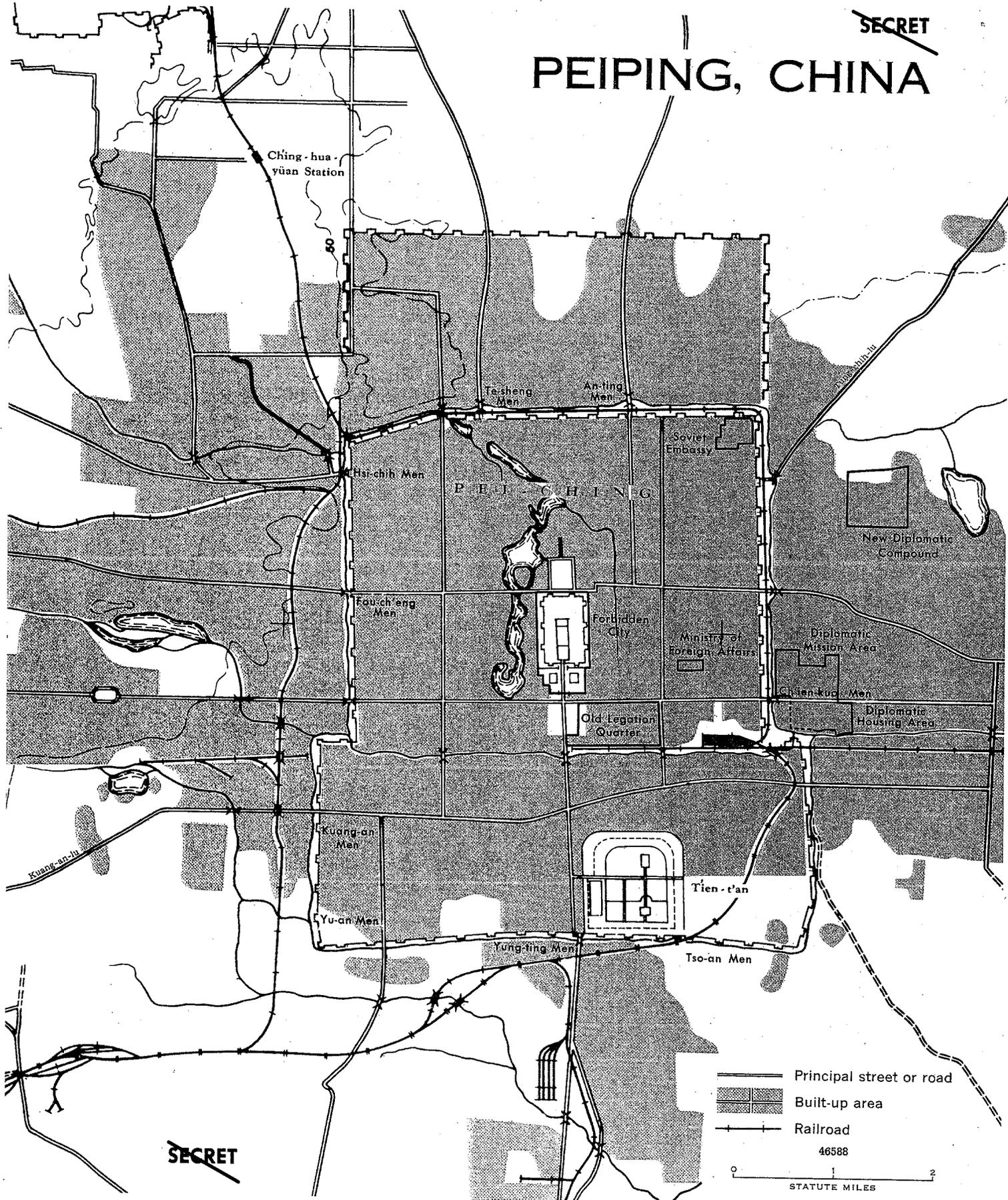
January and the French charge arrived in Peiping in February to open a new "window to the West" for the Chinese. To his dismay he quickly discovered that the Chinese did not share his enthusiasm.

The first and most irritating problem--one yet to be solved --was to obtain satisfactory buildings. The French had hoped to get their old embassy compound

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PEIPING, CHINA



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"...As to your entreaty to send one of your nationals to be accredited to my Celestial Court... This request is contrary to all usage of my dynasty and cannot possibly be entertained. It is true that Europeans, in the service of the dynasty, have been permitted to live at Peking, but they are compelled to adopt Chinese dress, they are strictly confined to their own precincts and never permitted to return home..."

Your proposed Envoy to my Court could not be placed in a position similar to that of European officials in Peking who are forbidden to leave China, nor could he, on the other hand, be allowed liberty of movement and the privilege of corresponding with his own country; so that you would gain nothing by his residence in our midst."

Letter from the Ch'ien Lung Emperor to George III

AD 1793

but the Chinese offered a dilapidated structure on the fringes of the new diplomatic quarter--located, as one foreign official remarked, "halfway to Siberia." The Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs then informed the French that they would have to foot the bill for renovations. The French refused and consequently are still "temporarily" established in two other unsatisfactory buildings in the diplomatic housing area.

The Chinese have been no more helpful with routine house-keeping problems. The French lived in hotels for months before housing was made available for them and then found that requests for assistance in obtaining essential supplies--even toilet paper--were blandly ignored. The French finally solved the problem by emergency requisitions on their consulate general in Hong Kong.

Once established, the French began to discover that normal embassy operations in China present special problems.

lack of contact with the Chinese people, the impossibility of learning what is going on in the country, the restrictions on travel, and the inaccessibility of Chinese officials. These are difficulties shared by all foreign embassies, even those of North Korea and North Vietnam, although these staunch supporters of China are treated with somewhat greater courtesy.

Travel Restrictions

Restriction on movement inside China is the problem most frequently cited by diplomatic personnel. Diplomatic "travel" normally is limited to a radius of approximately 18 miles from the center of Peiping. Permission to visit the few so-called open districts such as Hangchow, Shanghai, and Canton must be requested from the Foreign Ministry no less than three days ahead of time. Permission to visit other parts of China is almost

never granted. Travel applications are often simply ignored. The only exception to these restrictions is the summer resort at Peitaiho on the coast. Even there, however, diplomats are allowed to swim at only a few specified beaches and may not go fishing in a boat without an official escort.

Perhaps to compensate for these restrictions, the government from time to time offers the entire diplomatic corps guided tours to various parts of China. These junkets are carefully supervised to show off Peiping's successes while revealing as little as possible about actual conditions.

[redacted]
a real departure from usual routine last fall, when diplomats on a two-week tour of South China were sometimes permitted to take unescorted side trips and even to take photographs freely. Delegations of foreign visitors actually enjoy considerably more freedom to travel than the diplomats assigned in Peiping, although they too are afflicted by "guides" responsible for keeping foreigners safely on the Potemkin pathway.

The Lonely Life

Prevented from mixing with the Chinese people during travels outside the capital, the diplomats are no better off in this respect when they are in Peiping.

The Chinese Government has attempted to insulate official foreign representatives from the populace by setting up a "diplomatic ghetto" in Peiping. By the summer of 1963 most of the embassy offices had been moved to one of the cramped "modern concrete horrors" in the new eastern section of the city. Only the Dutch and a handful of others have been able to keep their comfortable old buildings in the former Legation Quarter near the center of the city.

Living quarters for most diplomatic families are in large apartment blocks clustered together in a guarded diplomatic compound. Any private Chinese citizen bold enough to call without official permission would be questioned by the policeman at the gate or by an elevator man who would take down his name and report the visit. Under these circumstances there is little contact between diplomatic personnel and the people. They are cut off even from the servants--all appointed by the government--who are often arrogant and difficult to deal with.

There have been a few exceptions to the rule of isolation but friendships between Chinese citizens and foreign officials seldom last long.

[redacted]



The diplomatic community in Peiping has trouble even in attempts to establish contact with government officials. [redacted]

[redacted] often waits for days to get an appointment at the Foreign Ministry and then rarely sees anyone higher in rank than a vice minister--of whom there are twelve. [redacted]

[redacted] have been the most frequent victims of calculated official rudeness. They are often summoned to the Foreign Ministry in the middle of the night to receive ordinary diplomatic communications or to handle other routine business.

Studied Neglect and Petty Harassment

Before the Sino-Soviet discord and the withdrawal of Russian technicians in 1960, diplomats from the "fraternal" countries got special treatment. As Sino-Soviet relations steadily worsened, however, marks of favor for bloc representatives disappeared and all embassies appear

to be treated much the same way today. This includes receiving an equal share of the petty harassments which help make Peiping a hardship post. [redacted]

When [redacted] requested investigation of a robbery in the quarters of an embassy officer, the Chinese ignored the matter--although the house was guarded by the police at all times.

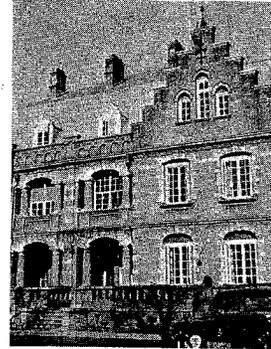
Even without the studied neglect by high Chinese officials and the petty harassment at the hands of arrogant functionaires, Peiping would still be a poor place to serve. The fundamentally puritanical attitude of the Chinese Communist leaders makes it a place of stupefying dullness. Aside from films of unflinching political purity and the traditional Chinese opera--an art form few foreigners are able to enjoy or even understand--little entertainment is available.

The only relief from the tedium of day-to-day existence is to be found at official embassy functions and informal parties at the International Club for Foreign Officials. It is at these functions that diplomats acquire most of their "information"--through an exchange of gossip with other foreigners. Now that most diplomats are included in the official freeze they have become more

DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS IN PEIPING

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| COUNTRIES | LEVEL OF REPRESENTATION | DATE DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS ESTABLISHED | NO. OF TOP FUNCTIONARIES |
|---------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| COMMUNIST | | | |
| Albania | Embassy | 3 July 1962 | 4 |
| Bulgaria | " | 4 October 1949 | 7 |
| Cuba | " | 28 September 1960 | 6 |
| Czechoslovakia | " | 6 October 1949 | 11 |
| East Germany | " | 27 October 1949 | 10 |
| Hungary | " | 6 October 1949 | 6 |
| Mongolia | " | 16 October 1949 | 3 |
| North Korea | " | 6 October 1949 | 19 |
| North Vietnam | " | 18 January 1950 | 18 |
| Poland | " | 7 October 1949 | 10 |
| Rumania | " | 5 October 1949 | 8 |
| USSR | " | 3 October 1949 | 31 |
| Yugoslavia | Embassy (Chargé) | 10 January 1955 | 5 |
| ASIAN | | | |
| Afghanistan | Embassy | 20 January 1955 | 3 |
| Burma | " | 8 June 1950 | 6 |
| Cambodia | " | 24 July 1958 | 6 |
| Ceylon | " | 22 February 1964 | 3 |
| India | Embassy (Chargé) | 1 April 1950 | 8 |
| Indonesia | Embassy | 9 June 1950 | 11 |
| Iraq | " | 25 August 1958 | 2 |
| Laos | " | 27 October 1960 | 3 |
| Nepal | " | 1 August 1955 | 3 |
| Pakistan | " | 21 May 1951 | 5 |
| Syria | " | 1 August 1956 | 3 |
| AFRICAN | | | |
| Algeria | Embassy | 3 July 1962 | 4 |
| Congo (Brazzaville) | " | 22 February 1964 | 1 |
| Ghana | " | 5 July 1960 | 6 |
| Guinea | " | 4 October 1959 | 4 |
| Kenya | " | 21 June 1964 | 4 |
| Mali | " | 27 October 1960 | 3 |
| Morocco | " | 1 November 1958 | 2 |
| Sudan | " | 1 December 1958 | 1 |
| Tanzania | " | 9 December 1961 | 1 |
| UAR | " | 30 May 1956 | 7 |
| EUROPEAN | | | |
| Denmark | Embassy | 11 May 1950 | 3 |
| Finland | " | 28 October 1950 | 8 |
| France | " | 27 January 1964 | 15 |
| Netherlands | Legation (Chargé) | 19 November 1954 | 6 |
| Norway | Embassy | 6 October 1954 | 4 |
| Sweden | " | 9 April 1950 | 4 |
| Switzerland | " | 14 September 1950 | 5 |
| United Kingdom | Mission (Chargé) | 17 June 1954 | 13 |



Netherlands Legation in Peiping's Old Legation Quarter



British Mission in New Diplomatic Compound



Entrance to New Diplomatic Compound



Apartment Facilities in New Diplomatic Compound

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forthcoming with their free-world colleagues but this has only increased the amount of rumor and conjecture in circulation.

Cloudy and Continued Cold

There is little prospect for significant improvement in the diplomatic weather any time soon. As long as the present generation of Chinese leaders remains in power, foreign ambassadors will probably continue to be regarded as a necessary evil, tolerated only because Peiping desires to have its own representatives abroad. Foreign embassies will be kept isolated as much as possible and used only as channels for routine diplomatic business.

Life in the diplomatic community eventually may become more comfortable. A British observer who visited China in September 1964 reported that many of the tensions he had noted seven years earlier when he had lived in Peiping had largely disappeared. He remarked that there now is much more casual chit-chat at diplomatic receptions and that Chinese officials are attending the affairs with less embarrassment and in larger numbers than before. It will probably be a long time, however, before diplomats posted to Peiping can expect the kind of treatment--either as official representatives of foreign governments or as people--which has become the norm in the capitals of great powers, even Communist powers, elsewhere in the world. (~~SECRET~~
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