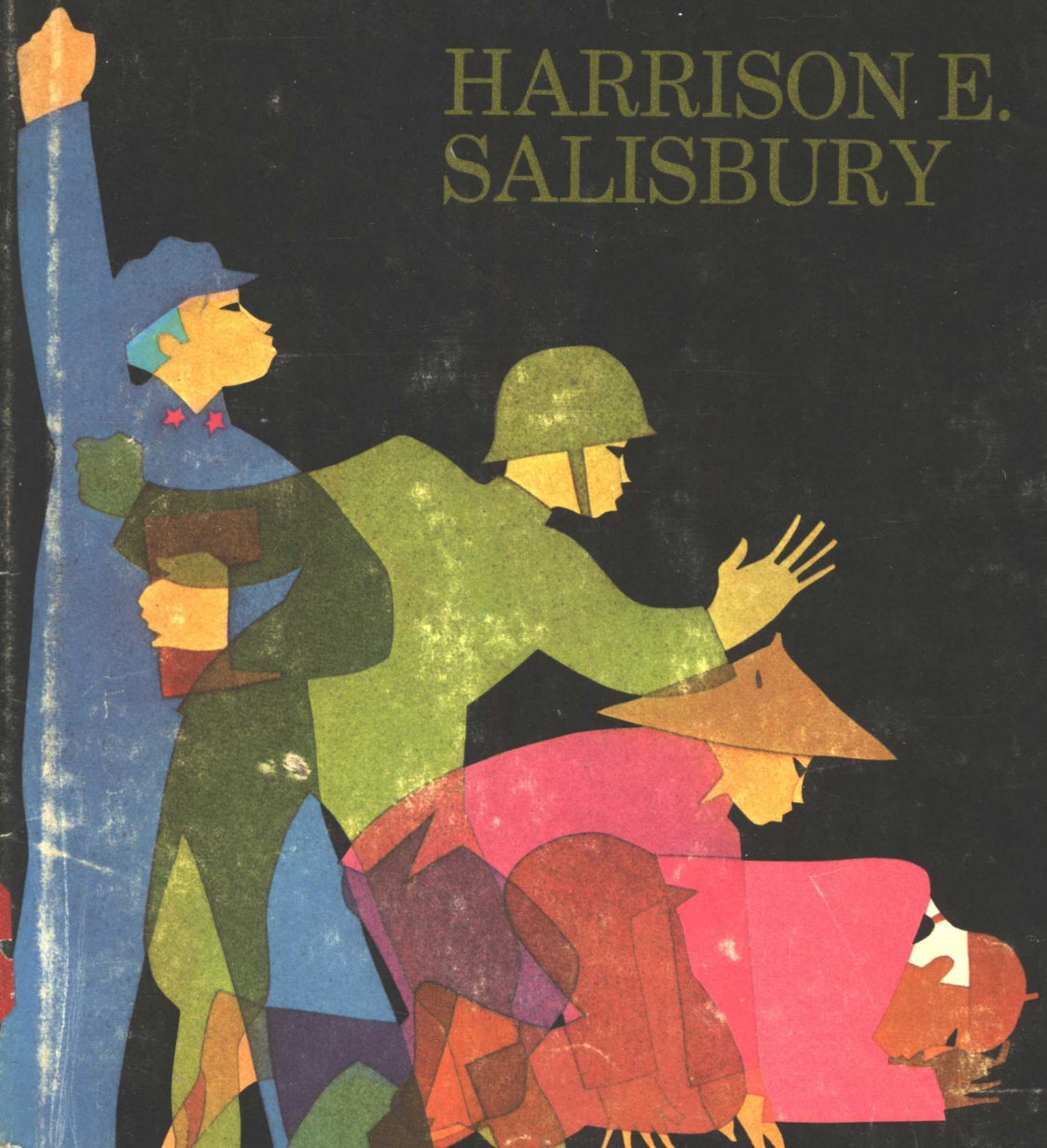


# TO PEKING- AND BEYOND:

A REPORT ON  
THE NEW ASIA

HARRISON E.  
SALISBURY



# TO PEKING— AND BEYOND

---

## A Report on The New Asia

---

*By*  
*Harrison E. Salisbury*



Quadrangle/The New York Times Book Co.

Copyright © 1973 by Harrison E. Salisbury. All rights reserved, including the right to reproduce this book or portions thereof in any form. For information, address: Quadrangle Books, Inc., 330 Madison Avenue, New York, New York 10017. Manufactured in the United States of America. Published simultaneously in Canada by Fitzhenry & Whiteside, Ltd., Toronto.

I.S.B.N. No.: 0-8129-0333-1

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 72-90467

Book design by Clinton J. Cowels

Jacket design by Diane and Leo Dillon

Photos by Harrison E. and Charlotte Y. Salisbury.

# CONTENTS

<i>1 The Sleeping Giant</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>2 Journey to Another Century</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>3 "People Were Killed"</i>	<i>27</i>
<i>4 Where It All Began</i>	<i>41</i>
<i>5 The More Luan The Better</i>	<i>58</i>
<i>6 The Countryside</i>	<i>71</i>
<i>7 Willow Grove</i>	<i>82</i>
<i>8 Big Red Steeltown</i>	<i>93</i>
<i>9 Life in Wuhan</i>	<i>105</i>
<i>10 Four Pretty Maidens of Sian</i>	<i>115</i>
<i>11 A Bull Session</i>	<i>126</i>
<i>12 All Men Are Brothers</i>	<i>140</i>
<i>13 China's Millions</i>	<i>153</i>
<i>14 The Cure of The Thousand Needles</i>	<i>167</i>
<i>15 Island of Tranquility</i>	<i>176</i>
<i>16 Entering the Hermit Kingdom</i>	<i>189</i>
<i>17 In The Bosom of The Fatherly Marshal</i>	<i>206</i>
<i>18 Vietnam—How Many Years?</i>	<i>222</i>
<i>19 The Legacy of Genghis Khan</i>	<i>233</i>
<i>20 A Roving Discussion</i>	<i>246</i>

viii  
CONTENTS

<i>21 Thermidor in Peking</i>	<i>261</i>
<i>22 The Present and the Future</i>	<i>279</i>
<i>23 The Continents Shake</i>	<i>290</i>
<i>Index</i>	<i>303</i>

**TO PEKING AND BEYOND—  
A REPORT ON  
THE NEW ASIA**



# 1

## The Sleeping Giant

The night lay on Peking like velvet, and the moon was silver. It was so quiet I heard the crunch of a bicycle tire on a dry leaf a block away and, under the shadow of the plane trees, silence flowed in an invisible stream. I have never felt a city so silent, and yet, behind the endless walls, within the narrow courtyards, the dark *hutungs*, a million people slept—or rather, not one million, but seven—in a stillness so profound I could almost hear the soft inspiration and exhalation of their breaths—men lying beside their wives on the broad *kangs*; infants nursing their mothers' breasts; children with flushed faces and open mouths, twitching in dreams, as they still ran at play; old men with wispy whiskers, awakening a dozen times to remember other days; statesmen stretched motionless, their brains sleepless with the problems of the world; students, limbs swollen with exhaustion, backs stiff, hands raw, from a day of digging in the fields; old women whose bound feet ached through their slumbers; athletes, relaxed and dreamless; diplomats, perplexed and puzzled and (I had no doubt), here and there a man or woman tight in the throes of a nightmare, gripped by Freudian guilt; criminals—but no whores and no robbers; soldiers and politicians; the whole of a great city—sleeping.

It was my first night in Peking. The hour was a little after 1 A.M., and I was moving through streets infinite in their emptiness, from a hotel whose name I hardly knew, to the Foreign Office whose location I could only vaguely guess, in a taxi whose driver knew no word of my language and of whose tongue I was equally ignorant. Not one automobile broke the muffled stillness. We came to a broad avenue—it led, I believed, to Tien-an Men, the Imperial Palace and the Forbidden City. For a moment we halted as red light changed to green, but whether this was automatic, or by the hand of a hidden traffic



## TO PEKING—AND BEYOND

officer, I could not judge. The car hesitated a moment then sped across the vast avenue and plunged into a narrow street where the curving branches of the plane trees made a canopy overhead. And again we were lost in a world of shadows. Ahead I saw a bicycle, and then another, two solitary cyclists and myself. No one else in Peking was awake.

A little more than 12 hours earlier, the Ilyushin-18 from Canton had let down smoothly through the cloud cover and leveled off over a world of ochre—ochre land, ochre villages, ochre houses, a horizon of soft ochre dust. Earth brown. As we dropped lower, I stared out the window at China. China was brown, brown as earth, villages everywhere on the vast plain, their walls geometric quadrants of baked clay, brown and ochre against the overcast sky; the houses of baked clay, their roofs earthen and ochre; rectangle within rectangle, village walls, courtyard walls, walls around each house, walls around each building, courtyards within courtyards—like the Chinese chest of drawers on my childhood desk, concealing one box within another and another within that, until you could not believe the final cube was solid, impermeable.

This was China. The villages spaced across the plain, each village within sight of three more villages, and village succeeding village, until the last was lost against the landscape. And everywhere the color of earth. The color of China.

At first I saw no green, then the wing lifted slightly and I caught a quick reflection of silver strips among the straight squares of the fields, and a thin gleam of green—rice and water, wheat and water, millet and water. The irrigated fields of north China and an arrow-straight canal. The Grand Canal. It had to be. The Grand Canal from Canton to Peking. Marco Polo saw it. Now, for a quick minute, the Ilyushin followed the canal and then left it behind, as we came down straight, no circling, on an approach to Peking over open country, the rice paddies plain and visible now, the wheat plantings geometric and meticulous, the villages coming up under the wing, the ochre of the earth redder and richer, the walls about the courtyard plots, the small earthen enclosures (pigsties), the narrow paths across the paddy fields, the highway suddenly straight and tree-lined, the landscape greener and greener with each hundred feet of descent. And then we slipped down on the Peking runway, still and quiet, taxiing past two or three TU-104's, and pulled up before the airport building. It looked familiar. I had seen it in all the Nixon television.

*The Sleeping Giant*

It had been a long, long journey to Peking, so long that I could hardly say when it began. Did it start in the mystic days before World War I, when, my hand in my mother's, we went to my favorite spot, the Chinaman's shop on Western Avenue, a block or two from our old house—a cavern, dim and mysterious and filled with the scent of ginger and lichees and candied lilacs and dried ginseng with rat's tails (I firmly believed) hanging, tied one-to-one in the window, and sallow-faced men endlessly playing cards under a dim electric bulb in the rear? That was China to a six-year-old—mysterious, romantic, inviting, frightening.

Had it begun at the university, when I studied Chinese history and "diplomatic relations" and dreamed of shipping on a freighter to the China coast and working as a reporter on the *Shanghai Morning Post*?

Or in World War II, when I set off from Moscow to make the long and perilous trip, down the Volga steppes, across the Elburz Mountains, into Persia, thence to India and then "over the hump" into China and Chungking—a trip aborted by sudden orders to return to New York?

Or did my journey stem from more recent times, from the hundred telegrams, letters and cables to Mao Tse-tung and Chou En-lai, the first one hand-delivered by myself to the Chinese Embassy in Moscow during Mao's negotiations with Stalin from December, 1949, to February, 1950?

I could not really say.

All I knew on this cool May day was that I had been on the way to Peking for so long that when I stepped out of the plane at the airport and looked up at Chairman Mao's picture, it seemed that I had seen it all before. I picked up my typewriter and briefcase and walked up the steps into the air terminal. No big thrill.

But now, 12 hours later, moving through the dark Peking streets, it came to me that I *was* in China. In the heart of China. In the Forbidden City itself. Peking. Moving through shadowy streets, not one of whose names I could recite if my life depended upon it, driving with a man who knew neither my name nor my nationality, who could take one sudden turn from this dim street into a dimmer *hutung* and I would vanish from the face of the earth, no one, Chinese or American, ever being the wiser. I could not help smiling. This was China. And it was a China I had not dreamed of.

I was not, after all, merely driving through the Peking night on

## TO PEKING—AND BEYOND

some romantic adventure. I had not flown 6,000 miles simply for the sake of letting my pulse beat faster. I had not dedicated the last dozen years of my life to journeying again and again into the Asian heartland, crisscrossing Siberia, penetrating the very core of Central Asia (Soviet and non-Soviet), traveling for months around the whole perimeter of China, visiting every country in Asia (and many of them again and again); I had not painstakingly interviewed every visitor I could find who had been into China in the last decade; sought out Chinese diplomats and newsmen in a dozen countries (enduring rebuff after rebuff in the days when no Chinese would even speak with an American); I had not devoted years to studying the tangled skein of Soviet-Chinese relations; plunged behind the lines into North Vietnam; assiduously cultivated the prickly North Koreans; turned myself into a Mongologist—I had not devoted a quarter of my adult life to the Chinese vortex and the problems that swirled around it simply from vagrant curiosity.

There was serious, deadly purpose behind all this. China and the Asian heartland—I had long since come to believe—held the key to the future of the world; to the fate of America; to the critical question of war and peace; to the nuclear issue that humanity confronts: survival. And on this ancient Chinese soil, it well might be that the dreams of mankind were being given living shape.

It is always difficult to single out a specific circumstance that can later be seen to determine a life's course. So it is with my conviction about China, my dedication to the unearthing of the real nature of China, of her relationship to her neighbors and to the world; of our relationship to her. I could say, in all truthfulness, that my interest was strongly engaged nearly 25 years ago, in the period of Mao Tse-tung's long visit to Moscow in 1949–50. Those were the silent years of Stalin, years when I was a correspondent in Russia, struggling against impossible odds to penetrate the enigma of the great dictator's design and strategy. No one there in those times could fail to sense curious and inexplicable signs in the Soviet-Chinese negotiations. Perhaps it was not entirely strange that Mao himself came to Moscow only two and a half months after proclaiming his Chinese Revolution on October 1, 1949. But surely it was unusual that he stayed in Moscow for two months or more. Never before had any Communist chief of state spent so long a time in Moscow (nor ever again would this happen). Surely it was unusual that after a few days of ceremonial visits, Mao's name dropped out of *Pravda*, and he himself fell so com-

*The Sleeping Giant*

pletely from sight that I addressed an inquiry to the Soviet Foreign Office as to whether he was still in Moscow, and, failing an answer, went out to the Chinese Embassy myself in hopes of securing some clue to his whereabouts.

And it seemed strange that, more than six weeks after Mao came to Moscow, Chou En-lai was suddenly summoned, as well, and then more weeks passed before, finally, on St. Valentine's Day, 1950, as odd a communiqué as ever formalized a diplomatic dialogue was made public in Moscow—a treaty of friendship, mutual aid and assistance, predicated not upon the obvious common enemy—the United States—but upon Japan and “any powers associated with Japan.” It was a treaty which, with the passage of two decades, looked stranger and stranger—a treaty which, for the most part, preserved Russia's special status in Manchuria and north China; which preserved the Soviet bases in Dairen and Port Arthur; which maintained the Soviet foothold on the Manchurian railroads; which established joint Soviet-Chinese companies for the exploitation of natural resources in Sinkiang—that westernmost Chinese province that Russia, by one stratagem or another, had been trying to annex for three quarters of a century; and which provided the munificent sum in aid loans (not grants) to China of \$300 million to be allotted over five years—that is, some \$60 million a year, all to be repaid at three percent interest.

What did it mean? Was it a treaty that actually bound China and Russia in eternal friendship? Did it forge an alliance of 200 million Russian Communists and 800 million Chinese Communists, an axis of titans that confronted the world with a Red monolith extending from the Bering Strait to the Elbe? That surely was the reading placed upon it by John Foster Dulles. That certainly was the verdict of the cold warriors.

Of course, they had long since concluded that China and Russia were one, that Mao was a mere pawn of Stalin, and that, as Dean Acheson proclaimed in the famous State Department White Paper of July 30, 1949:

“The heart of China is in Communist hands. The Communist leaders have foresworn their Chinese heritage and have publicly announced *their subservience to a foreign power, Russia* [my italics] which during the last 50 years, under Czars and Communists alike, has been most assiduous in its efforts to extend its control to the Far East . . . The Communist regime serves not their [Chinese] interests but those of Soviet Russia . . . We continue to believe that however

## TO PEKING—AND BEYOND

tragic may be the immediate future of China and however ruthlessly a major portion of this great people may be exploited by a party *in the interest of foreign imperialism* [my italics] ultimately the profound civilization and the democratic individualism of China will reassert themselves and she will throw off the foreign yoke."

Or, as Senator Joseph McCarthy was saying by March 30, 1950: "It was not Chinese democracy under Mao that conquered China as Acheson, Lattimore and Jessup contended. *Soviet Russia conquered China* [my italics], and an important ally of this conqueror was the small left-wing element in our Department of State."

Or, as Dean Rusk was to put it about a year later, on May 18, 1951: "We do not recognize the authorities in Peiping for what they pretend to be. *The Peiping regime may be a colonial Russian government—a Slavic Manchukuo* [my italics] on a larger scale. It is not the Government of China. It does not pass the first test. It is not Chinese."

Or, as Captain Joseph Alsop, then aid to General Chennault, put it so simply and plainly much earlier (in February, 1945): "We are childish to assume that the Chinese Communists are anything but *an appendage of the Soviet Union*" [my italics].

Thus, they (and most other Americans as well) saw the alliance as a mere ratification of the Russification of China. To them there was no China. There was merely a Red Empire; Headquarters, the Kremlin; Ruler, Stalin.

It never seemed so simple to me. It did not seem so during those faceless days in Moscow when security was so tight that, in theory, a correspondent might be sent to a labor camp if he even telephoned the Moscow weather bureau to ask if it was going to rain. Nor did it seem so as the years ran by in Russia, some even grimmer, and then, finally, lightening a bit with the death of Stalin on March 5, 1953. But we never knew. I never had any evidence to prove a case one way or the other.

To be sure, I wondered. I wondered particularly one sultry night in the summer of 1954. Chou En-lai was being entertained in Moscow by the Russian Politburo at Spiridonovka House, on his way back through Russia, having signed the Geneva agreements, which brought the fighting in Indochina to a halt. When I came upon him he was circling the table of his Russian hosts—Malenkov, Molotov, Bulganin, Khrushchev, Mikoyan, Kaganovich and the others—offering toasts to each. But he was speaking in English—a language none of them understood (although, of course, it was perfectly comprehensible to the correspondents and diplomats present—the English, the Swedish, the

Indian and other ambassadors). I thought it was very strange, and apparently the Russians did, too, for when Chou approached Anastas Mikoyan and offered a toast in English, Mikoyan said through an interpreter, "Why don't you speak in Russian, Chou—you know our language perfectly well."

Chou rejoined saucily: "Look here, Mikoyan, it's time you learned to speak Chinese. After all, I have learned to speak Russian."

Chou's remarks had to be interpreted into Russian for Mikoyan who sulkily grumbled: "Chinese is a difficult language to learn."

"No harder than Russian," Chou snapped back. "Come down to our embassy in the morning. We'll be glad to teach you Chinese."

Kaganovich then intervened with a rude remark in Russian, but Chou, continuing to speak in English, said: "There's no excuse for you people."

Was this just hijinks? Was it simply Chou's ebullience over the success (as it seemed then) of Geneva—the first international diplomatic meeting he had participated in? Perhaps, but it did not seem so to me and as the years have gone by it has seemed less and less like mere horseplay. I suspected (but could not prove in 1954) that Chou's remarks reflected a deep bitterness in Sino-Soviet relations—the existence of which no western statesmen, least of all Mr. Dulles, then in his glory, would have been prepared to admit. In fact, even to suggest such a thing at that time was to invite ridicule and contempt.

It was years before the suspicions touched off in my mind that summer night won confirmation. Not, in fact, until five years later, when I found myself, surprisingly but not by accident, in Ulan Bator, capital of Outer Mongolia, the guest of Premier Tsedenbal at a great official reception on the occasion of Nadam, the traditional Mongol holiday, July 11. As I entered the ballroom, I saw a strange spectacle. On one side of the room stood the Russian guests, on the other the Chinese. Between the two groups, rushing back and forth with determined hospitality, were the Mongol hosts, doing their best to make it appear that the party was gay and joyous. But, alas, the evidence was inescapable. One half of the party was not speaking to the other half. The Russians and the Chinese were drawn up in aloof ranks of icy hostility.

I had to make a quick choice—which side of the room would I stand on? I knew from past experience that the Chinese would not shake hands with me, let alone speak. I quickly strode to the Russian side where the Soviet diplomats and military men greeted me with

## TO PEKING—AND BEYOND

great joviality. Before the evening was over, I found myself confronting a massive Soviet officer who insisted on my drinking *Brüderschaft* to Soviet-American friendship. Then, putting one great paw around my shoulder, he leaned over confidentially and said: "Now, honestly, don't you feel more at home on *our* side? We must stand together against *them*." And lest there be any mistake, he waved grandly toward the Chinese standing polite but silent on the other side of the room.

On that evening, all doubt fled my mind as to the true and inner nature of the relationship between these two great Communist empires. Whatever they might have been in the past, they were now naked, acknowledged, deadly enemies. And if this were true—as I now was convinced—there was no single fact in world politics more important. No longer did we live in a bipolar world. We lived in a triangular world, with all the infinite complications that might bring.

To be sure, the full implications of this did not leap into my mind that evening in Ulan Bator. But I did have the wit to realize that I had got on to what must be the most awesome development in world politics since the rise of Hitler. And, as I suppose is inevitable, I found very quickly that not only was it extraordinarily difficult to get anyone to listen to my story (although it was, of course, published in *The New York Times*) but so far as the officials who concerned themselves with such matters—the White House, the State Department, Defense, the CIA and the rest—my words and my evidence and my conclusions were treated as a rather poor joke. Everyone *knew* that the Sino-Soviet alliance was the Gibraltar of the Communist world. Everyone *knew* that Communism was a monolithic doctrine. No one was really interested in the social notes from Ulan Bator. They did not fit Washington's preconception.

All this changed with time—quite rapidly, too; within a year or so the first open polemics between Moscow and Peking began. But if this brought the rift between Soviet Russia and Communist China into the open, it by no means clarified its meaning for us as Americans, or for the Russians, for the Chinese, for their Asian neighbors or for the world.

Nor were those implications by any means clear even now, on this night in May, 1972, some two months after President Nixon's visit to Peking and on the eve of his trip to Moscow. China had moved. The United States had moved. The Soviets had moved. But

where did this leave the pieces on the chessboard of the world? What *really* was the nature of China and what *really* were her intentions?

This night, as I drove through Peking's darkened streets, one million Soviet troops stood on the alert on China's northern frontiers: in deep concrete ravelins along the Amur and the Ussuri, in mobile missile bases south of the Gobi in Mongolia, at strategic air stations east of Baikal, in armored concentrations near Khalkin-gal, in rocket silos positioned in the mountains of Mongolia, in hardened installations in eastern Kazakhstan. "They are not there for a simple excursion," a Chinese had told me only a few hours earlier. And I had already seen in that hasty cab ride through the Peking streets the carelessly strewn pre-stressed concrete arches, the house-high stacks of bricks and the long steel girders that were stockpiled for one of the most massive construction projects of our day—the Peking anti-nuclear, air raid-shelter system.

The evidence of a continent in precarious balance was everywhere. The Sino-Soviet frontier was not the only trouble spot. The dust had hardly settled from the India-Pakistan war, and the agonies of Bangladesh were vivid in my mind.

Southward, in the Indochinese archipelago, the horror of war, lately easing, was now rising to a new crescendo, as President Nixon multiplied the B-52 strikes, razed the bomb-shattered towns and cities of North Vietnam yet once again, and blockaded Haiphong and the Vietnam coast. The world trembled on the brink of disaster. The errand that had sent me off through the darkness of this Peking night was a formal Chinese protest against the President's acts. Minutes later, I was standing in the bright lights of the Foreign Office, receiving a copy of the Chinese declaration, then hurrying back once again through the empty streets to the Tsin Chiao Hotel, climbing the staircase to my fifth-floor room (no elevators running at this hour), calling a sleepy Chinese telephone operator, giving the number of *The New York Times*, and, a half hour later, miraculously dictating to New York China's warning that President Nixon was guilty of a "grave new step," and pledging China's support to North Vietnam so long as the war went on.

At 2:30 A.M., I put down the telephone and sat for a few moments in silence. I had turned off the light and, from the window, I could see far out over the low walls and courtyards of the Peking expanse. My hotel was a biggish building, one of several put up in the heyday of



Soviet-Chinese collaboration to house some of the thousands of Russian technicians and engineers who were sent to help China industrialize, and whose sudden withdrawal in August, 1960, marked the real opening of the Moscow-Peking cold war. The building towered over the Peking houses at the back of the old legation quarter.

Looking out over the city bathed in the gentle silver of the moon, I thought again of the millions of sleeping people, and I thought, too, of the millions throughout the country—the greatest population of any nation, greater than any the world had ever seen, a force that was epic in its totality, tidal in its sweep, a force of which I knew so little. Nothing was older on the earth, no human society was older than the Chinese nation. It had endured 5,000 years before the first white colonists had settled in the United States. It had been an advancing civilization when the red men were first penetrating North America (having probably come from within a thousand miles of the spot where I now sat). China had been China when the Roman legions fought blue-clay spattered Picts in the wilderness we now know as pastoral England. What presumption on my part to think that, within a few moments of time, I might begin to understand the deep and complex forces from which the fabric of Chinese policy and the structure of a New Chinese society were being constructed.

And yet it seemed to me that there could be no more vital task than to apprehend in some measure the density, the velocity, the viscosity, the sheer magnitude of the Chinese spirit. For it took little wit to see that, before my very eyes, within my own lifetime, the whole fulcrum of the earth had shifted from the west toward China.

I was born into a world that revolved around the four poles—London, Paris, Berlin and Moscow. Nothing else mattered. Washington was a provincial outpost. India a colony. Japan an upstart. China a debauchee tottering toward final ruin. Africa did not exist.

But after World War I this all had changed, although few statesmen realized it. Lord Grey of Fallodon was more right than he knew when he said in August, 1914: "The lamps are going out all over Europe. We shall not see them lit again in our lifetime." They were going out not just for his time. But for our era. Perhaps they did not light immediately in Asia, but when Russia plunged out of the old imperial system and Japan became the equal of any European power, the world's weight shifted to the east.

How could we have been so naïve, I thought, as to suppose that World War II was about Europe? Of course the Europeans thought