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# Experts fear Peking has a coup while Nixon has a great risk

WASHINGTON — The possibility of a Peking military coup d'etat is now also being discussed by experts here with alarm that Communist government has executed a momentous political coup, at the cost to itself but great risk to Richard M. Nixon.

That alarm, though by no means universal, is not restricted to official policy-makers. It rests on an assumption that the sympathetic portrayal of Communist Party Chairman Mao Tse-tung and Premier Minister Chou En-lai, as viewed by the American public in their living rooms, tends to overblow expectations and could dangerously limit Mr. Nixon's freedom of action in the Far East.

For example, some fear no less an expert than Prof. John K. Fairbank of Harvard, who allowed himself this heated assessment of Mao's "Mao: The Great Leader" last Sunday: "Mr. Nixon has been a great success in the Cold War, the great achievement, by this means of going to Peking."

It is already such widespread admiration for the Chinese Far Eastern effort that even among the Cold War warriors with Communist China, they fear that Mr. Nixon has retained far more power with Peking by making such a personal appraisal in the past.

To those who regard the Chinese as a potential superpower, the ground is fertile. The Chinese first decided to break away from the Soviet bloc in 1955. Chairman Mao in 1956 instructed his regulars to take the Chinese Communist Party to the next level to meet the possibility of a new American administration to Peking, and the five reply articles in the early spring of 1970. Peking wanted to receive a high level mission.

Both the State Department and the White House had tentatively agreed that the mission should be headed by Marshall Green, assistant secretary of State for Far Eastern affairs, or possibly a lower-rank official.

But tentative Chinese agreement blew up when Mr. Nixon ordered the Cambodian invasion in May 1970. All contacts in Warsaw temporarily ceased. Then, a full year after the Cambodian incursions,

Mr. Nixon ordered a re-examination of the mission. The President's personal advisers, including Henry Kissinger, advised that the mission should be headed by a high-ranking official, possibly a cabinet member, and that the mission should be kept "quiet" and "secretive" and that Mr. Nixon's own name should not be mentioned.

No one, however, knows the exact tactical elevation of the presidential mission, even after Mr. Nixon's foreign policy advisers, who are his personal advisers, strongly urged that the mission be kept "quiet" and "secretive" and that Mr. Nixon's own name should not be mentioned.

The political advisers, however, are not alone in their concern. Many of the advisers, including Kissinger, have themselves become advisers to get their message across in a controlled atmosphere. The advisers are "quiet" and "secretive" and that Mr. Nixon's own name should not be mentioned.

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All this could have been avoided if the President had kept to his original plan for a more modest emissary in this first essential step toward detente with Peking. But now, having invested so much Nixon may soon find that he has dangerously mortgaged his future action.