

FEB 23 1972

Massive Media Coverage

SFChronicle

By Stanley Karnow
Washington Post Service

Peking

China's leaders turned the spotlight on President Nixon yesterday with unprecedented domestic press, radio and television coverage apparently calculated to communicate to the Chinese population the advent of a new era in Sino-American relations.

The President was also given a significant signal of Chinese receptivity to a potential accommodation with the United States when he and his aides were accompanied to the theater yesterday evening by Chiang Ching, the wife of Communist party Chairman Mao Tse-tung.

In an extraordinary gesture the official People's Daily yesterday devoted its entire front page to the President's visit, with a banner headline and a large photograph of Mr. Nixon shaking hands with Mao, who enjoys a god-like status here.

COVERAGE

The newspaper printed a total of seven photographs and eight stories on the Nixon visit in its first two pages.

The only editorial comment was in the form of a boxed Mao quotation asserting that "we firmly advocate that all countries" should observe the "five principles of coexistence" and respect each other's "sovereignty and territorial integrity."

This has been construed to mean that Peking would establish diplomatic relations with the United States on condition that the Taiwan problem is resolved in the Communists' favor.

The President was given the same extensive press coverage in the Liberation Army Daily, the military

See Back Page

From Page 1

newspaper; the Peking Daily, the organ of the capital's governing Revolutionary Committee, and the Kwang Ming Daily, an art and literary journal.

COMPARISON

Foreign diplomats and journalists here said that the attention being paid to Mr. Nixon in the media is incomparably bigger than that accorded Romanian President Nicolae Ceaucescu, who came here last June, even though relations between China and Romania are close.

The local television station broadcast a special ten-minute silent film yesterday evening showing the President's meetings with Mao and Premier Chou En-Lai Monday as well as other scenes of Mr. Nixon in Peking. Radio stations around the country also broadcast news of the President's presence throughout the day.

The appearance of the People's Daily in the afternoon caused a sensation in the city as throngs of Chinese crowded around the newspaper's main office in an effort to buy copies. The newspaper's only edition, which went on sale at 1 o'clock, completely sold out in three hours.

RUSH

Elsewhere in the city, Chinese jostled each other for a glimpse of the newspaper displayed in special street showcases. The demand for the journal was reminiscent of the rush last week for foreign and classical books put on sale by the Chinese authorities for the first time since Mao's turbulent cultural revolution erupted six years ago.

Members of the President's staff were surprised and overjoyed by the coverage accorded Mr. Nixon in China's government-controlled press. Some admitted that they had been seriously worried by the lack of crowds to welcome the President on his arrival here Monday.

They said the deliberate coolness of Monday's reception prompted them to speculate that the Chinese leaders might be planning to act tough toward Mr. Nixon. They were also concerned that the President's visit here might look like a failure to television viewers in the United States.

REASON

Last night, however, White House aides explained that the Chinese decision to receive the President without public fanfare Monday mirrored Peking's lack of official diplomatic relations with the U.S.

The President's advisers were further delighted when Mao's wife emerged alongside Chou En-lai to lead the Nixon group to a performance of a revolutionary ballet entitled "Red Detachment of Women."

The move to associate Chiang Ching with the President's visit was interpreted as a strong endorsement by Mao of the current attempt to reach a Sino-American reconciliation.

AMAZED

If they were startled to hear a Chinese Army orchestra playing "Turkey in the straw" at the banquet for the President here Monday night, veteran China specialists in the U.S. delegation were even more amazed by the incongruity of Chiang Ching sitting between Mr. and Mrs. Nixon at the theater inside the Great Hall of the People yesterday evening, for Mao's wife is considered to be among the most implacable leftists in the Peking hierarchy.

Formerly an unsuccessful movie actress, now in her mid-50s, Chiang Ching first met Mao about 1940 when she went to Yen-an, then the Communist headquarters. Her real name is Luan Shu-meng, but Mao reportedly endowed her with the pseudonym Chiang Ching, which signifies "Green River," and was taken from a Tang dynasty poem.

After marrying Mao, she lived in relative obscurity until 1965, when she became one of the leading radical activists in the cultural rev-

**More Nixon-China
news on Pages 6 and 7**

olution. On several occasions during that tumultuous period she exhorted the Red Guards to employ force against Mao's adversaries.

SPEECH

In one speech, she denounced moderation and declared that "peaceful coexistence corrupts."

But yesterday evening, dressed in a neatly tailored navy blue pants suit, she looked like a benign matron as she chatted through an interpreter with the Nixons and explained the action on the stage.

"The Red Detachment of Women," the spectacle they watched, is a ballet depicting the overthrow of a cruel landlord by female Communist partisans. Originally written as an opera in the early 1960s, it was later "revolutionized" under Chiang Ching's auspices.

She has been at the forefront of the drive that accelerated during the cultural revolution and still persists to eradicate traditional and liberal vestiges in Chinese art, literature, music and theater, and to infuse them with the Maoist ideology of "class struggle."

SUPERB

The ballet production, magnificently choreographed and danced before a superb decor, is an exemplary specimen of revolution theater. Oddly enough, the President seemed to enjoy this demonstration of anti-capitalist violence.

At one point he was seen grinning as a fierce girl guerrilla drew a bead on a target bearing the face of Chiang Kai-shek, the Chinese Nationalist leader. The president has said, in reference

to Chiang, that his present policy of seeking a detente with Peking would not be made "at the expense of old friends."

Prior to his evening at the ballet, the President and his national security adviser, Henry Kissinger, spent four hours with Premier Chou En-lai and Marshall Yeh Chien-ying, the vice chairman of the Chinese Communist party's Military Affairs Commission.

SUBJECTS

Although no information concerning their discussions has been disclosed, it is presumed that the meeting served to introduce the subjects they planned to cover in more detail in subsequent sessions.

Secretary of State William P. Rogers met with Chinese Foreign Minister Chi Peng-fei. Their encounter is believed to have been more ceremonial than substantive, however.

The lineup of Chinese leaders who have met with the President so far is regarded by observers here as a clue to the present Peking hierarchy, which has been buffeted within recent months by a severe power struggle.

Noting the absence of several key Chinese leaders, observers surmised that the power here is currently concentrated in the hands of Chou and such high government officials as Vice Premier Li Hsien-nien and Marshal Yeh Chien-ying, who apparently represents the regional army commanders supporting the premier.

The actual importance of Mao's authority is difficult to measure. His prestige is enormous. But he appears to stand above the daily exercise of power, and instead plays an Olympian role, approving or vetoing rather than making decisions.