

'TOKYO (AP) -- A Chinese

government spokesman announced that Premier Hua Kuofeng has been appointed to succeed the late Mao Tse-tung as chairman of the Chinese Communist party, Japan's Kyodo news service reported today from Peking. The announcement followed reports that Mao's widow and three other Politburo officials were under arrest. .

Wall posters appeared in Peking last week reporting the succession of the 57-year-old Hua, but there had been no official announcement. The spokesman said it had been delayed to allow the entire Communist party organization to be informed in advance, Kyodo said.

There still was no confirmation of unofficial reports from Peking that Mao's widow, Chiang Ching, and three other high ranking officials associated with the party's radical wing had been arrested, accused of plotting a coup. These reports suggested that serious infighting was going on and that positions still might not have solidified since Mao died on Sept. 9.

The official Hsinhua news

agency had not reported Hua's appointment. In a communique on the establishment of diplomatic relations with Papua New Guinea, Hua signed as premier, Hsinhua said.

However, in a story Saturday, Hsinhua referred to the party Central Committee 'headed by

Comrade Hua Kuofeng."'

Hua, a big, friendly man relatively unknown to the outside world, first made his name in party circles as an agricultural specialist and local administrator during the 1950s. At some point, he came under the wing of Mao, who named his public security minister in 1971.

Last April he was named premier and first party vice chairman, second only to Mao, after Teng Hsiao-ping was fired as vice premier and party vice chairman. Teng, who had been expected to succeed his mentor, Chou En-lai, as premier, instead became the target of a massive campaign of criticism, accused of trying to restore capitalism in China.

Chou's death Jan. 8 touched off a power struggle between the moderates led by Teng and party radicals led by Chiang Ching.

Foreign analysts saw Hua as

a compromise candidate, and it seems 'unlikely that his elevation will settle the intraparty differences. Chinese broadcasts continue to insist on deepening the criticism campaign against Teng.

A Nationalist Chinese specialist on mainland affairs said today that the arrest of Mao's widow, if the reports are true, could be the result of an alliance between Hua and military leaders.

Tsai Wei-ping, director of the Institute of International Relations in Taipei, said the

arrest of Chiang Ching and the three others would protect both Hua and the military from radical pressures and attacks. Tsai's institute is a private political research organization.

The Yugoslav news agency Tanjug reported from Peking that life continued normally there, except for the larger than usual number of soldiers patrolling central Tien An Men Square and in front of the most important offices.

Residents in the Chinese capital, contacted by telephone from Hong Kong, said the reports of the arrests were first heard in the city Monday evening and were the topic of open conversation today.