

The Tiananmen Papers

Introduced by
Andrew J. Nathan

INSIDE CHINA'S POLITBURO

FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER, reports and minutes have surfaced that provide a revealing and potentially explosive view of decision-making at the highest levels of the government and party in the People's Republic of China (PRC). The materials paint a vivid picture of the battles between hard-liners and reformers on how to handle the student protests that swept China in the spring of 1989. The protests were ultimately ended by force, including the bloody clearing of Beijing streets by troops using live ammunition. The tragic event was one of the most important in the history of communist China, and its consequences are still being felt.

The materials were spirited out of China by a sympathizer of Communist Party members who are seeking a resumption of political reform. They believe that challenging the official picture of Tiananmen as a legitimate suppression of a violent antigovernment riot will help unfreeze the political process. The extensive and dramatic documentary picture of how China's leaders reacted to the student protests is revealed in *The Tiananmen Papers: The Chinese*

ANDREW J. NATHAN is Professor of Political Science at Columbia University and the author of numerous books, including *China's Transition*. He is co-editor with Perry Link, Professor of Chinese language and literature at Princeton University, of *The Tiananmen Papers*, from which this article is adapted, to be published this month by PublicAffairs, New York, and in a Chinese edition later this year. Documents in the book were compiled by Zhang Liang (a pseudonym). All rights reserved.

[2]

The Tiananmen Papers

Leadership's Decision to Use Force Against Their Own People—In Their Own Words. This article is adapted from the extensive narrative and documents in that book.

THE STUDENTS' CHALLENGE

THE 1989 DEMONSTRATIONS were begun by Beijing students to encourage continued economic reform and liberalization. The students did not set out to pose a mortal challenge to what they knew was a dangerous regime. Nor did the regime relish the use of force against the students. The two sides shared many goals and much common language. Yet, through miscommunication and misjudgment, they pushed one another into positions where options for compromise became less and less available.

The spark for the student movement was a desire to commemorate the reformer Hu Yaobang, who had died on April 15. He had been replaced two years earlier as general secretary (party leader) by another moderate, Zhao Ziyang, after student demonstrations in December 1986.

Although there was a provocative edge to the behavior of students in the spring of 1989, most of them stayed within the bounds of certain pieties, acknowledging party leadership and positioning themselves as respectful, if disappointed, supporters of the party's long-term reform project.

Once begun, however, the commemoration quickly evolved into a protest for far-reaching change. On May 4, a student declaration was read in Tiananmen Square calling on the government to accelerate political and economic reform, guarantee constitutional freedoms, fight corruption, adopt a press law, and allow the establishment of privately run newspapers. The declaration said important first steps would include institutionalizing the democratic practices that the students themselves had begun to initiate on their campuses, conducting dialogue between students and the government, promoting democratic reforms of the government system, opposing corruption, and accelerating the adoption of a press law.

Zhao struggled to achieve consensus within the leadership around a conciliatory line toward the students. Senior leader Deng Xiaoping seemed willing to consider anything, so long as

the students were somehow cleared from the square in time for Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev's upcoming summit visit. But disaster struck for Zhao's moderate strategy on May 13, when the protesting students announced a hunger strike. During the next few days, the intellectuals joined in, incidents in the provinces began to erupt, and the summit that the authorities envisioned as a triumphant climax to years of diplomacy with the Soviet Union was thrown into the shadows. The huge foreign press contingent that had come to Beijing for the summit turned its main attention to the student movement.

Over the course of several weeks, the hunger strikers gained the support of tens of millions of other citizens, who took to the streets in scores of cities to demand a response from the government. The government at first tried to wait out the hunger strikers, then engaged them in limited dialogue, and finally issued orders to force them from the square. In reaching that decision, the party suffered its worst high-level split since the Cultural Revolution. Those favoring political reform lost out and their cause has been in the deep freeze ever since.

The regime has, to be sure, diminished the range of social activities it purports to control in comparison with the totalitarian ambitions of its Maoist years. It has fitted its goals of control more to its means and no longer aspires to change

THE TIANANMEN PLAYERS

DENG XIAOPING, 85: Most influential elder and chairman of the Central Military Commission (CMC). As he correctly described himself, "the core of the second generation of Chinese Communist Party leadership." Twice purged, Deng made a third return to power in 1976 after the death of Mao Zedong. He began the economic reforms that continue today. He died in 1997.

YANG SHANGKUN, 81: President of the People's Republic of China (with the right to attend Politburo Standing Committee meetings), standing vice chair of the CMC, and close comrade of Deng Xiaoping. Retired in 1993, he died in 1994.

LI PENG: Premier and member of the Politburo Standing Committee. Had

human nature. It has learned that many arenas of freedom are inessential to the monopoly of political power.

Several noteworthy books and an important documentary film have told the story of the Tiananmen events from the viewpoint of students and citizens in Beijing. The book from which this article is adapted provides the first view from Zhongnanhai—the former imperial park at the center of Beijing that houses the Party Central Office, the State Council Office, and the residences of some top leaders. Although the leaders occupied distinct official posts in a triad of organizations—the ruling Chinese Communist Party, the State Council (government cabinet), and the Central Military Commission—behind those red walls they acted as a small and often informal community of perhaps ten decision-makers and their staffs.

The eight “elders,” retired senior officials who together amounted to China’s extraconstitutional final court of appeal, joined their deliberations at crucial moments. (Bo Yibo is the only one of these elders still alive, and he is no longer politically active.) Three of the elders were most influential, and among these the final voice belonged to Deng Xiaoping, who was retired from all government posts except one and lived outside Zhongnanhai in a private mansion with his own office staff. It was at this house that the most crucial meetings of these tormented months took place.

previously served as secretary in the Central Party Secretariat and as vice premier. In 1998 he became chairman of the National People's Congress.

ZHAO ZIYANG: General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party. He previously served as premier and as party secretary in Inner Mongolia, Guangdong, and Sichuan. After the Tiananmen confrontation, he was removed from all posts and placed under *de facto* house arrest.

JIANG ZEMIN: Shanghai party secretary and Politburo member. Former minister of electronic industries and mayor of Shanghai. He succeeded Zhao Ziyang as Communist Party general secretary. In 1990 he added the chairmanship of the CMC and in 1993 the presidency. Labeled by Deng Xiaoping “the core of the third generation of leadership.”

The Tiananmen Papers

THE PAPER TRAIL

INTO ZHONGNANHAI flowed a river of documentation from the agencies charged with monitoring and controlling the capital city of Beijing and the vast nation beyond it. On a daily and hourly basis Party Central received classified reports from government, military, and party agencies and diplomatic missions abroad. The material included reports on the state of mind of students, professors, party officials, military officers and troops, workers, farmers, shop clerks, street peddlers, and others around the country. Also captured in these reports is the thinking of provincial and central leaders on policy issues; the traffic on railways; discussions in private meetings; man-in-the-street interviews; and press, academic, and political opinion from abroad.

Often such materials were distributed only to the top forty or so leaders, and many were limited even more sharply to the five-man Politburo Standing Committee plus the eight elders. (The Communist Party's Political Bureau—or Politburo—Standing Committee is the highest organ of formal political power in China, despite constitutional provisions that legally give that role to the National People's Congress.) Certain documents went to only one or a few leaders. Taken as a whole, these reports tell us in extraordinary detail what the central decision-makers saw as they looked out from their compound on the events unfolding around them, and how they evaluated the threat to their rule.

Added to these are minutes of the leaders' formal and informal meetings and accounts of some of their private conversations. In these we observe the conflict among a handful of strong-willed leaders. We learn what the ultimate decision-makers said among themselves as they discussed the unfolding events—how they debated the motives of the students, whom they identified as their main enemies; which considerations dominated their search for a solution; why they waited as long as they did and no longer before ordering the troops to move on Tiananmen Square; and what they ordered the troops to do. Perhaps most dramatic of all, we have definitive evidence of who voted how on key issues, and their reasons for those votes, in their own words.

The records reveal that if left to their own preferences the three-man majority of the Politburo Standing Committee would have voted to

persist in dialogue with the students instead of declaring martial law. At the crucial Politburo Standing Committee meeting of May 17, two of the five members, Zhao Ziyang and Hu Qili, voted against martial law. The third-ranking member, Qiao Shi, abstained. We can see from his remarks that he was not in favor of using force. But Qiao, by abstaining, and Zhao, by offering his resignation, deferred to the elders' decision in favor of martial law.

Such seeming weakness was no doubt explained by the knowledge that resistance to Deng Xiaoping would have been futile. The Tiananmen papers reveal that the Politburo Standing Committee was obligated by a secret intra-party resolution to refer any stalemate to Deng and the elders. The documents further show that Deng exercised absolute control over the military through his associate Yang Shangkun, who was president of the PRC and standing vice chair of the Central Military Commission. Had the Standing Committee refused to honor the elders' wishes, Deng had ample means to exert his authority.

Had the Standing Committee majority had its way, China's recent history and its relations with the West would have been very different. Dialogue with the students would have tipped the balance toward political reform. Instead, China has experienced more than a decade of political stasis at home and strained relations with the West.

In 1989 Jiang Zemin was party secretary in Shanghai. He committed no heinous act at that time, although his closing of the *World Economic Herald* newspaper for being too sympathetic to the student cause is still widely resented by intellectuals. What *The Tiananmen Papers* reveals is that his accession to supreme power came about through a constitutionally irregular procedure—the vote of the elders on May 27—and that the elders chose him because he was a pliable and cautious figure who was outside the paralyzing factional fray that had created the crisis in the first place. This accession route was widely suspected, but the details have never been known before. Although Jiang is not necessarily a committed political conservative, he has paid deference to the concerns of conservatives as a way of balancing contending forces and maintaining his own power.

Today's second-ranking member of the party hierarchy, Li Peng, was premier in 1989. Not only did he advocate a hard line against the

The Tiananmen Papers

students and go on television to declare martial law, as is already known, but the papers show that he manipulated information to lead Deng and the other elders to see the demonstrations as an attack on them personally and on the political structure they had devoted their careers to creating. *The Tiananmen Papers* also reveals his use of the intelligence and police agencies to collect information that was used to persecute liberal officials and intellectuals after the crackdown.

Both Li Peng and Jiang Zemin are scheduled to step down from their high-level party and state offices in 2002 and 2003. Some commentators expect Jiang will try to retain his third post, that of chairman of the Central Military Commission, thus enabling him to exert influence as a party elder from behind the scenes, as Deng did in the period described in *The Tiananmen Papers*.

WHAT'S IN A NAME

THROUGHOUT the subsequent years, the issue of how to label the student movement has remained alive. Just before ordering the troops to move, the leadership made an official determination that the incident was a *fan'geming baoluan* (counterrevolutionary riot), an even more severe label than that of "turmoil," which the authorities had applied up to then, and one that implied (falsely) that the demonstrators were armed and had shed blood. Neither designation has ever been officially withdrawn. But in deference to opinion at home and abroad, informal official usage has gravitated to the softer term "political storm" (*zhengzhi fengbo*, equivalent to "political flap"), a term first introduced by Deng a few days after the crackdown.

Since 1989, there has been a constant stream of appeals for formal reconsideration of the official determination. Ding Zilin, the mother of a student who died on June 4, has led a movement to demand an accounting. In 1999, former high-ranking Zhao Ziyang aide Bao Tong circulated a letter urging the party leaders to acknowledge the mistakes made ten years earlier, calling the opportunity to reverse the verdict the current regime's "greatest political resource" for reviving its legitimacy. On a broader canvas, the party has faced constant demands for political reform. It has responded with arrests and purges of dissidents outside the party who demanded reform. But a

The Tiananmen Papers

sharp debate over reform has also developed within the party. In the course of this debate participants on both sides started to use a technique that had previously been rare in PRC history: that of leaking documents to the outside world—a technique of which *The Tiananmen Papers* is a spectacular extension.

The party believes it has learned from Tiananmen that democratization is not an irresistible force. There is a widespread view in the West that where globalization and modernization occur, fundamental changes in the party-state system are inevitable, leading to the rise of civil society and some form of democracy. Whether this is right or wrong, the leaders in power in China do not believe it. For them, the lesson of Tiananmen is that at its core, politics is about force.

The events of 1989 left the regime positioned for its responses to later challenges, such as the Chinese Democratic Party in 1998–99 and the Falun Gong religious movement since 1999. In both of these incidents and others, the key to the party's behavior was its fear of independent organizations, whether of religious followers or students, workers or farmers, with or without a broad social base, and with or without party members as constituents. The core political issue has remained what it was in 1989, even if the sociology has been different: the party believes that as soon as it gives in to any demand from any group that it does not control, then the power monopoly that it views as the indispensable organizational principle of the political system will be destroyed.

Many in China, however, share the view held widely overseas that this kind of political rigidity cannot persist in the face of rapid social and ideological change. Can the regime muddle through and survive, or will it implode? This is the choice the backers of this book are trying to avoid. By reopening the issues that were closed in 1989, they seem to want to open a breach in the power monopoly without causing a collapse.

Documents of the sort quoted in this article and in the book from which it is adapted are available to only a tiny handful of people in China. The compiler, who brought the contents of the documents out of China, can be publicly identified only by the pseudonym Zhang Liang. Issues of safety for the compiler and his associates do not allow for public disclosure of the extensive efforts at authentication taken by

The Tiananmen Papers

co-editor Perry Link and myself. China scholar Orville Schell, dean of the Graduate School of Journalism at the University of California, Berkeley, wrote the book's afterword, which explores the issue of authentication of such documents. Schell concurs that there are convincing grounds to assume that the compiler's motivations were honest and that the documents were credible despite the impossibility of making an absolute judgment about material in a closed society like China's.

Following are excerpts from some of the key documents:

THE TIANANMEN PAPERS

Deng Xiaoping and the April 26 Editorial

On April 25, Li Peng and other officials went to Deng Xiaoping's home to report on the student demonstrations in Beijing and 20 other cities. Deng's response formed the basis of an April 26 editorial that became the party's verdict on the student movement.

Excerpts from Party Central Office Secretariat,
"Important meeting minutes," April 25:

Li Peng: Some of the protest posters and the slogans that students shout during the marches are anti-Party and anti-socialist. They're clamoring for a reversal of the verdicts on bourgeois liberalization and spiritual pollution [Communist Party jargon for Western cultural influences].

The spear is now pointed directly at you and the others of the elder generation of proletarian revolutionaries.

Deng Xiaoping: Saying I'm the mastermind behind the scenes, are they?

Li Peng: There are open calls for the government to step down, appeals for nonsense like "open investigations into and discussions of the question of China's governance and power," and calls to institute broader elections and revise the Constitution, to lift restrictions on political parties and newspapers, and to get rid of the category of "counterrevolutionary" crimes. Illegal student organizations have already sprung up in Beijing and Tianjin. ... The small number of leaders of these illegal organizations have other people behind them calling the shots.



ABBAS/MAGNUM PHOTOS

*The students gather: Paying tribute to Hu Yaobang,
Tiananmen Square, Beijing, April 1989*

In Beijing there have been two attacks on Xinhua Gate in quick succession; in Changsha and Xi'an there was looting and arson on April 22, and in Wuhan students have demonstrated on the Yangtze River Bridge, blocking the vital artery between Beijing and Guangzhou. These actions seriously harm social stability and unity, and they disrupt social order. Those of us on the Standing Committee all believe that this is turmoil and that we must rely on law to bring a halt to it as soon as possible.

Deng Xiaoping: I completely agree with the Standing Committee's decision. This is no ordinary student movement. The students have been raising a ruckus for ten days now, and we've been tolerant and restrained. But things haven't gone our way. A tiny minority is exploiting the students; they want to confuse the people and throw the country into chaos. This is a well-planned plot whose real aim is to reject the Chinese Communist Party and the socialist system at the most fundamental level. We must explain to the whole Party and nation that we are facing a most serious political struggle. We've got to be explicit and clear in opposing this turmoil.

Li Peng: ... Shouldn't we organize an editorial in the *People's Daily* right away, in order to get the word out on what Comrade Xiaoping has said?

The Tiananmen Papers

That afternoon the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) Central Committee General Office telegraphed the decision to Zhao Ziyang, party general secretary, who was on an ill-timed official visit to North Korea. Zhao wired back: "I completely agree with the policy decision of Comrade Xiaoping with regard to the present problem of turmoil."

Excerpt from the *People's Daily*,
April 26, 1989, editorial, "The necessity
for a clear stand against turmoil":

This is a well-planned plot to confuse the people and throw the country into "turmoil." Its real aim is to reject the Chinese Communist Party and the socialist system at the most fundamental level. This is a most serious political struggle that concerns the whole Party and nation.

The editorial re-ignited the waning student movement, which mounted huge next-day demonstrations in major cities. In Beijing, 50 thousand students from many campuses marched, carrying banners, including one bearing quotations from Deng Xiaoping and Lenin favoring democracy. With irony, they sang the song "Without the Chinese Communist Party There Would Be No New China," and they elicited tears from bystanders when they shouted, "Mama, we haven't done anything wrong."

In the three days after publication the State Security Ministry and Xinhua News Agency sent 36 reports to Zhongnanhai on the reactions of various social strata. Many citizens felt that the editorial was too harsh—that it "defined the nature of the incident at too high a level of seriousness" and that it was not helpful for resolving the problem. The reports described widespread sympathy and protective feelings for the students among university presidents and other high-ranking party and administrative officials. One official revealed that on his campus, two-thirds of faculty members were refusing to attend meetings to study the editorial. Others pointed out that the blame for the demonstrations ultimately lay in the failings of the party itself, without which the students would have no need to protest.

Strains Among the Leaders

On the morning of May 13 Party General Secretary Zhao Ziyang and PRC President Yang Shangkun went to Deng Xiaoping's home and reported on their recent work. Yang was Deng Xiaoping's closest confidant and business manager within the leadership. Zhao explained the positions he had taken at several Politburo meetings.

Excerpts from memoranda of conversations
supplied by a friend of Yang Shangkun who
cannot be further identified:

Zhao Ziyang: ... I've noticed that this movement has two particular features we need to pay attention to: First, the student slogans all support the Constitution; they favor democracy and oppose corruption. These demands are basically in line with what the Party and government advocate, so we cannot reject them out of hand. Second, the number of demonstrators and supporters is enormous, and they include people from all parts of society. So I think we have to keep an eye on the majority and give approval to the mainstream view of the majority if we want to calm this thing down.

Deng Xiaoping: It was obvious from the start that a tiny minority was stirring up the majority, fanning the emotions of the great majority.

Zhao Ziyang: That's why I think we have to separate the broad masses of students and their supporters from the tiny minority [who are] using the movement to fish in troubled waters, stir up trouble, and attack the Party and socialism. We have to rely on guidance. We have to pursue multilevel, multichannel dialogue, get in touch with people, and build understanding. We mustn't let the conflicts get nasty if we expect things to settle down quickly.

Deng Xiaoping: Dialogue is fine, but the point is to solve the problem. We can't be led around by the nose. This movement's dragged on too long, almost a month now. The senior comrades are getting worried. ... We have to be decisive. I've said over and over that we need stability if we're going to develop. How can we progress if things are in an utter mess?

Yang Shangkun: Gorbachev will be here in two days, and today I hear that the students are going to announce a hunger

strike. They obviously want to turn up the heat and get a lot of international attention.

Deng Xiaoping: Tiananmen is the symbol of the People's Republic of China. The Square has to be in order when Gorbachev comes. We have to maintain our international image. What do we look like if the Square's a mess?

Zhao Ziyang: I'll stress the importance of the Gorbachev visit one more time in the media this afternoon.

Deng Xiaoping: As I've said before, the origins of this incident are not so simple. The opposition is not just some students but a bunch of rebels and a lot of riffraff, and a tiny minority who are utterly against opposing bourgeois liberalization. ... This is not just between the students and the government.

Zhao Ziyang: The consensus in the Politburo has been to use the policies of guiding and dividing, winning over the great majority of students and intellectuals while isolating the tiny minority of anticommunist troublemakers, thereby stilling the movement through democratic and legal means.

Deng Xiaoping: What do the ordinary people in society think?

Zhao Ziyang: The protests are widespread but limited to cities that have universities. The rural areas aren't affected, and the farmers are docile. So are urban workers, basically. The workers are unhappy about certain social conditions and like to let off steam from time to time, so they sympathize with the protesters. But they go to work as usual and they aren't striking, demonstrating, or traveling around like the students.

Deng Xiaoping: ... We must not give an inch on the basic principle of upholding Communist Party rule and rejecting a Western multiparty system. At the same time, the Party must resolve the issue of democracy and address the problems that arise when corruption pops up in the Party or government.

Zhao Ziyang: ... When we allow some democracy, things might look "chaotic" on the surface; but these little "troubles" are normal inside a democratic and legal framework. They prevent major upheavals and actually make for stability and peace in the long run.



Zhao Ziyang and Jiang Zemin Clash

On May 10, the full Politburo clashed over how to handle the student movement. Members agreed on the danger of the situation but disagreed over Zhao's line on how it should be handled. Zhao criticized Jiang Zemin for mishandling the *World Economic Herald* incident, and Jiang stoutly defended himself. (In a private conversation a day later, Yang Shangkun and Deng Xiaoping agreed that Jiang's handling of this incident struck the right balance between discipline and reform-mindedness.)

The student movement was also divided. Although some students returned to classes, others advocated continuing the strike. New leaders emerged, and various groups presented various demands. Journalists and intellectuals spoke out, new issues were added to old ones, and demonstrations burgeoned in the provinces.

Despite the now clear divisions on strategy, the Politburo at its May 10 meeting decided to make further efforts at dialogue with the students. Dialogue had been attempted a number of times in April and May. Some efforts were rebuffed, as when student leaders during the memorial service for Hu Yaobang mounted the steps of the Great Hall of the People with a seven-item petition. No officials would meet with them.

At other times, meetings between student representatives and mid-level government officials were exercises in avoidance. An April 29 meeting between government officials and 45 student representatives was marked mostly by the officials evading questions by changing the subject.

On May 13, the students announced their hunger strike.

Excerpts from State Security Ministry, "Trends in Tiananmen Square," fax to Party Central and State Council duty offices, 11:58 PM, May 14:

Today, more than one thousand students began a hunger strike in the Square. About twenty thousand students and citizens looked on during the day, and this number grew to one hundred thousand in the evening. ... The striking students were regularly supplied with drinking water, soda, sugar, and medicine. By 10 PM more than a dozen of them had fainted or

The Tiananmen Papers

suffered stomach cramps and were rushed to first-aid centers in ambulances provided by the Beijing Government.

The Gorbachev Visit

On May 16, while Deng Xiaoping met with Gorbachev inside the Great Hall of the People, thereby bringing about the long-sought normalization of Sino-Soviet relations, tens of thousands of people from all corners of society demonstrated outside in support of the students.

On the evening of May 16, Zhao Ziyang called on Gorbachev at the elegant state guest house called Diaoyutai. It was here that Zhao made his fateful comment to Gorbachev that even though Deng Xiaoping had retired from his party posts in 1987, the party had recognized that his wisdom and experience were essential and that for the most important questions he would still be at the helm. Zhao's observation could be interpreted as a veiled way of saying that any mishandling of the student protests was ultimately Deng's responsibility, and it became one of the counts against him when he was later dismissed from the party leadership.

The Standing Committee Meets in Emergency

On the evening of May 16 the members of the Politburo Standing Committee—Zhao Ziyang, Li Peng, Qiao Shi, Hu Qili, and Yao Yilin—held an emergency meeting. Party elders Yang Shangkun and Bo Yibo also attended. The hunger strike had evoked a strong, broad response in society, and the leaders were under pressure to find a solution.

Excerpts from Party Central Office
Secretariat, "Minutes of the May 16
Politburo Standing Committee meeting":

Zhao Ziyang: ... The students' hunger strike in the square has gone on for four days now. ... We've had dialogues with their representatives and have promised we'll take them seriously and keep listening to their comments, asking only that they

The Tiananmen Papers

stop their fast, but it hasn't worked. The Square is so crowded—all kinds of excited people milling about with their slogans and banners—that the student representatives themselves say they have no real control of things.

Yang Shangkun: These last few days Beijing's been in something like anarchy. Students are striking at all the schools, workers from some offices are out on the streets, transportation and lots of other things are out of whack—it's what you could call anarchy. We are having a historic Sino-Soviet summit and should have had a welcoming ceremony in Tiananmen Square, but instead we had to make do at the airport. We're supposed to have had two sessions of summit talks today in the Great Hall of the People, but we had to meet at Diaoyutai instead. That's the kind of anarchy we're in.

Zhao Ziyang: ...When I got back from North Korea I learned that the April 26 editorial had elicited a strong reaction in many parts of society and had become a major issue for the students. I thought it might be best simply to skirt the most sensitive issue of whether the student movement is turmoil, hoping it would fade away while we gradually turn things around using the methods of democracy and law. But then on May 13 a few hundred students began a hunger strike, and one of their main demands was to reverse the official view of the April 26 editorial. So now there's no way to avoid the problem. We have to revise the April 26 editorial, find ways to dispel the sense of confrontation between us and the students, and get things settled down as soon as possible.

Li Peng: It's just not true, Comrade Ziyang, that the official view in the April 26 editorial was aimed at the vast majority of students. It was aimed at the tiny minority who were using the student movement to exploit the young students' emotions and to exploit some of our mistakes and problems in order to begin a political struggle against the Communist Party and the socialist system and to expand this struggle from Beijing to the whole country and create national turmoil. These are indisputable facts. Even if a lot of the student demonstrators misunderstood the April 26 editorial, still it served an important purpose in exposing these truths.

Zhao Ziyang: As I see it, the reason why so many more students have joined the demonstrations is that they couldn't accept the editorial's label for the movement. The students

The Tiananmen Papers

kept insisting that the party and government express a different attitude and come up with a better way of characterizing the movement. I think we have to address this problem very seriously because there's no way around it. ...

Li Peng: Comrade Ziyang, the key phrases of the April 26 editorial were drawn from Comrade Xiaoping's remarks on the 25th: "This is a well-planned plot," it is "turmoil," its "real aim is to reject the Chinese Communist Party and the socialist system," "the whole Party and nation are facing a most serious political struggle," and so on are all Comrade Xiaoping's original words. They cannot be changed.

Zhao Ziyang: We have to explain the true nature of this student movement to Comrade Xiaoping, and we need to change the official view of the movement.

Zhao Ziyang Loses Ground

On the morning of May 17 the Standing Committee of the Politburo met at Deng Xiaoping's home. Besides Zhao Ziyang, Li Peng, Qiao Shi, Hu Qili, and Yao Yilin, elders Yang Shangkun and Bo Yibo also attended.

Excerpts from Party Central Office
Secretariat, "Minutes of the May 17 Politburo
Standing Committee meeting," document
supplied to Party Central Office Secretariat for
its records by the Office of Deng Xiaoping:

Zhao Ziyang: The fasting students feel themselves under a spotlight that makes it hard for them to make concessions. This leaves us with a prickly situation. The most important thing right now is to get the students to de-link their fasting from their demands and then to get them out of the Square and back to their campuses. Otherwise, anything could happen, and in the blink of an eye. Things are tense.

Yang Shangkun: ... Can we still say there's been no harm to the national interest or society's interest? This isn't turmoil? If anybody here takes the position that this isn't turmoil, I don't see any way to move ahead with reform and opening or to pursue socialist construction. ...

The Tiananmen Papers

Li Peng: I think Comrade Ziyang must bear the main responsibility for the escalation of the student movement, as well as for the fact that the situation has gotten so hard to control. When he was in North Korea and the Politburo asked Comrade Ziyang's opinion, he sent back a telegram clearly stating that he was "in complete agreement with Comrade Xiaoping's plan for dealing with the unrest."

After he came back on April 30 he again said at a Politburo meeting that he endorsed Comrade Xiaoping's remarks as well as the word "turmoil" that appeared in the April 26 editorial.

But then, just a few days later, on the afternoon of May 4 at the Asian Development Bank meetings—and without consulting anybody else on the Standing Committee—he gave a speech that flew in the face of the Standing Committee's decisions, Comrade Xiaoping's statement, and the spirit of the April 26 editorial.

First, in the midst of obvious turmoil, he felt able to say, "China will be spared any major turmoil."

Second, in the presence of a mountain of evidence that the aim of the turmoil was to end Communist Party rule and bring down the socialist system, he continued to insist the protesters "do not oppose our underlying system but demand that we eliminate the flaws in our work."

Third, even after many facts had clearly established that a tiny minority was exploiting the student movement to cause turmoil, he said only that there are "always going to be people ready to exploit" the situation. This explicitly contradicts Party Central's correct judgment that a tiny minority was already manufacturing turmoil. ...

Yao Yilin: ... I don't understand why Comrade Ziyang mentioned Comrade Xiaoping in his talk with Gorbachev yesterday. Given the way things are right now, this can only have been intended as a way to saddle Comrade Xiaoping with all the responsibility and to get the students to target Comrade Xiaoping for attack. This made the whole mess a lot worse.

Zhao Ziyang: Could I have a chance to explain these two things? The basic purposes of my remarks at the annual meeting of the directors of the [Asian Development Bank] were to pacify the student movement and to strengthen foreign investors' confidence in China's stability. The first reactions I heard to my speech were all positive, and I wasn't aware of any problems at the time. Comrades Shangkun, Qiao Shi, and Qili

The Tiananmen Papers

all thought the reaction to the speech was good; Comrade Li Peng said it was a good job and that he would echo it when he met with the ADB representatives. ...

Now, about my comments to Gorbachev yesterday: Ever since the Thirteenth Party Congress, whenever I meet with Communist Party leaders from other countries I make it clear that the First Plenum of our Thirteenth Central Committee decided that Comrade Xiaoping's role as our Party's primary decision-maker would not change. I do this in order to make sure the world has a clearer understanding that Comrade Xiaoping's continuing power within our Party is legal in spite of his retirement. ...

Deng Xiaoping: Comrade Ziyang, that talk of yours on May 4 to the ADB was a turning point. Since then the student movement has gotten steadily worse. Of course we want to build socialist democracy, but we can't possibly do it in a hurry, and still less do we want that Western-style stuff. If our one billion people jumped into multiparty elections, we'd get chaos like the "all-out civil war" we saw during the Cultural Revolution. ...

I know there are some disputes among you, but the question before us isn't how to settle all our different views; it's whether we now should back off or not. ... To back down would be to give in to their values; not backing down means we stick steadfastly to the April 26 editorial.

The elder comrades—Chen Yun, [Li] Xiannian, Peng Zhen, and of course me, too—are all burning with anxiety at what we see in Beijing these days. Beijing can't keep going like this. We first have to settle the instability in Beijing, because if we don't we'll never be able to settle it in the other provinces, regions, and cities.

Lying down on railroad tracks; beating, smashing, and robbing; if these aren't turmoil then what are they? If things continue like this, we could even end up under house arrest.

After thinking long and hard about this, I've concluded that we should bring in the People's Liberation Army [PLA] and declare martial law in Beijing—more precisely, in Beijing's urban districts. The aim of martial law will be to suppress the turmoil once and for all and to return things quickly to normal. This is the unshirkable duty of the Party and the government. I am solemnly proposing this today to the Standing Committee of the Politburo and hope that you will consider it.

The Tiananmen Papers

Zhao Ziyang: It's always better to have a decision than not to have one. But Comrade Xiaoping, it will be hard for me to carry out this plan. I have difficulties with it.

Deng Xiaoping: The minority yields to the majority!

Zhao Ziyang: I will submit to Party discipline; the minority does yield to the majority.

Standing Committee Stalemates

At 8 PM the meeting of the Politburo Standing Committee resumed at Zhongnanhai. Committee members Zhao Ziyang, Li Peng, Qiao Shi, Hu Qili, and Yao Yilin attended. Yang Shangkun and Bo Yibo participated in their role as party elders.

Excerpts from Party Central Office
Secretariat, "Minutes of the May 17
Politburo Standing Committee meeting":

Zhao Ziyang: The question for this evening's meeting is martial law. First we need to consider whether the situation has reached a point where martial law is our only option. Will martial law help solve the problem or only enlarge it? Is it in fact necessary to impose martial law? I hope we can discuss these questions calmly.

Li Peng: The decision on martial law, Comrade Ziyang, was made by Comrade Xiaoping at this morning's meeting. I support Comrade Xiaoping's views on martial law. I believe that the topic for the present meeting is not whether martial law should or should not be imposed but, rather, what steps to use in carrying it out.

Yao Yilin: I strongly support Comrade Xiaoping's proposal to impose martial law in Beijing's urban districts. Taking this powerful measure will help restore the city to normalcy, end the state of anarchy, and quickly and effectively stop the turmoil.

Zhao Ziyang: I'm against imposing martial law in Beijing. My reason is that, given the extreme feelings of the students at this juncture, to impose martial law will not help calm things down or solve problems. It will only make things more complicated and more sharply confrontational. And after all, things are still under

our control. Even among the demonstrators the vast majority is patriotic and supports the Communist Party. Martial law could give us total control of the situation, yes; but think of the terror it will strike in the minds of Beijing's citizens and students. Where will that lead?

In the forty years of the People's Republic, our Party has learned many lessons from its political and economic mistakes.

Given the crisis we now face at home and abroad, I think that one more big political mistake might well cost us all our remaining legitimacy. So I see martial law as extremely dangerous. The Chinese people cannot take any more huge policy blunders.

Qiao Shi: I've wanted to express my view all along. We can't afford any more concessions to the student movement, but on the other hand we still haven't found a suitable means for resolving the situation. So on the question of martial law, I find it hard to express either support or opposition.

Bo Yibo: This is a Standing Committee meeting in which Comrade Shangkun and I are only observers. We don't have voting rights, but we both support Comrade Xiaoping's proposal to impose martial law. Just now everyone on the committee had a chance to express his opinion. I think we should make the opinions even clearer by taking a vote. ...

Following Bo Yibo's suggestion, the five members of the Standing Committee took a formal vote. Li Peng and Yao Yilin voted for martial law; Zhao Ziyang and Hu Qili voted against it; Qiao Shi abstained.

Yang Shangkun: The Party permits differing opinions. We can refer this evening's vote to Comrade Xiaoping and the other Party Elders and get a resolution as soon as possible.

The Elders Decide on Martial Law

On the morning of May 18, the eight elders—Deng Xiaoping, Chen Yun, Li Xiannian, Peng Zhen, Deng Yingchao, Yang Shangkun, Bo



The Tiananmen Papers

Yibo, and Wang Zhen—met with Politburo Standing Committee members Li Peng, Qiao Shi, Hu Qili, and Yao Yilin and with Military Affairs Commission members General Hong Xuezhi, Liu Huaqing, and General Qin Jiwei and formally agreed to declare martial law in Beijing. General Secretary Zhao Ziyang did not attend the meeting.

Li Peng opened by describing the split that had emerged within the Standing Committee on the evening of the 17th over the question of martial law. Bo Yibo provided additional detail. Then the elders began explaining why martial law was necessary.

Excerpts from Party Central Office
Secretariat, “Minutes of an important
meeting on May 18,” document supplied
to Party Central Office Secretariat for its
records by the Office of Deng Xiaoping:

Deng Xiaoping: We old comrades are meeting with you today because we feel we have no choice. The Standing Committee should have come up with a plan long ago, but things kept dragging on, and even today there’s no decision. Beijing has been chaotic for more than a month now, and we’ve been extremely restrained through the whole thing, and extremely tolerant. What other country in the world would watch more than a month of marches and demonstrations in its capital and do nothing about it?. ...

Li Xiannian: I feel like the rest of you, and I think it’s too bad that an accurate assessment of what’s going on here has to depend on us old comrades. We have no choice but to show concern when things get as chaotic as they are now. General Secretary Zhao Ziyang has an undeniable responsibility here. What’s the difference between what we’re seeing all across the country and the Cultural Revolution? It’s not just Beijing; all the cities are in chaos. ...

Deng Xiaoping: The April 26 editorial defined the nature of the problem as turmoil. Some people object to the word, but it hits the nail on the head. The evidence shows that the judgment is correct.

Li Peng: ... The reason Comrade Zhao Ziyang has not come today is that he opposes martial law. He encouraged the students

The Tiananmen Papers

right from the beginning. When he got back from North Korea, he came out with his May 4 speech at the Asian Development Bank without clearing it with anyone else on the Standing Committee.

The speech's ... tone was completely different from the April 26 editorial's, but it got wide distribution and had a big propaganda impact. From then on we felt it was obvious that Comrade Zhao Ziyang's opinions were different from Comrade Xiaoping's and those of the majority of comrades on the Standing Committee. Anyone with political experience could see this, and certainly the ones causing the turmoil could also see it. ...

Yang Shangkun: ... The problem we now face is that the two different voices within the party have been completely exposed; the students feel that someone at the Center supports them, so they've gotten more and more extreme. Their goals are to get the April 26 editorial repudiated and get official recognition for their autonomous federations [as opposed to the student organizations organized and controlled by the government].

The situation in Beijing and the rest of the country keeps getting grimmer. So we have to guarantee the stability of the whole country, and that means starting with Beijing. I resolutely support declaration of martial law in Beijing and resolutely support its implementation.

Wang Zhen: ... These people are really asking for it! They should be nabbed as soon as they pop out again. Give 'em no mercy! The students are nuts if they think this handful of people can overthrow our Party and our government! These kids don't know how good they've got it! ... If the students don't leave Tiananmen on their own, the PLA should go in and carry them out. This is ridiculous!

Bo Yibo: The whole imperialist Western world wants to make socialist countries leave the socialist road and become satellites in the system of international monopoly capitalism. The people with ulterior motives who are behind this student movement have support from the United States and Europe and from the KMT [Kuomintang] reactionaries in Taiwan. There is a lot of evidence that the U.S. Congress and other Western parliaments have been saying all kinds of things about this student movement and have even held hearings. ... Members

The Tiananmen Papers

of the overseas Chinese Alliance for Democracy, which we have declared to be an illegal and reactionary organization, not only voice support for the student movement but openly admit that they advise the students and even plan how to reenter China and meddle directly. ... So you see, it was no accident that the student movement turned into turmoil.

Hong Xuezhì: For a soldier, duty is paramount. I will resolutely carry out the order to put Beijing under martial law.

Qin Jiwei: ... I resolutely support and will resolutely carry out the orders of Party Central and the Military Affairs Commission for martial law in Beijing.

Li Peng Meets with Student Leaders

Also on May 18, Li Peng and other government officials met at the Great Hall of the People with Wang Dan, Wu'erkaixi, and other student representatives. Li said that no one had ever claimed the majority of students had been engaged in turmoil, but that too often people with no intention of creating turmoil had in fact brought it about.

He stood firm on the wording of the April 26 editorial and said the current moment was not an appropriate time to discuss the students' two demands. Wang Dan had said that the only way to get the students out of Tiananmen Square was to reclassify the student movement as patriotic and put the student-leader dialogue on live television.

Zhao Ziyang's Sorrowful Speech

At 4 AM on May 19, following the close of the Politburo Standing Committee meeting, Zhao Ziyang and Li Peng visited Tiananmen Square, accompanied respectively by Director of the Party Central Office Wen Jiabao and Secretary-General of the State Council Luo Gan. Knowing his political career was near an end, Zhao made remarks that brought tears to the eyes of those who heard him. "We have come too late," he said, and he begged the students to protect their health, to end the hunger strike, and to leave the Square before it was too late.

"We demonstrated and lay across railroad tracks when we were young, too, and took no thought for the future," he told the students.

“But I have to ask you to think carefully about the future. Many issues will be resolved eventually. I beg you to end the hunger strike.”

Zhao was exhausted, and his doctor urged him to rest. On the morning of May 19 he requested three days' sick leave.

Provincial Students Converge on Beijing

Many students had come from universities outside Beijing to camp. On the eve of martial law, the Railway Ministry reported to Zhongnanhai that a total of 56,888 students had entered the city on 165 trains between 6 PM on May 16 and 8 PM on May 19. The flood of students had stressed the already overstretched system. Most of the students had demanded to ride without tickets, took over the trains' public-address systems, asked passengers for contributions, hung posters in and on the cars, and even demanded free food.

Of some 50,000 students in Tiananmen Square on May 22, most were from outside Beijing, and many of the Beijing students had returned to their campuses or gone home. Official records showed that at least 319 different schools were represented in the square.

Backlash to Martial Law

When martial law was declared, it applied to only five urban districts of Beijing. But it elicited fierce opposition throughout the capital, nationwide, and internationally. Troops from 22 divisions moved toward the city, but many were stopped in the suburbs or blocked in city streets and failed to reach their destinations. In the first of what would be many similar instructions, on May 20 Yang Shangkun ordered that the soldiers should never turn their weapons on innocent civilians, even if provoked.

Provincial authorities voiced the requisite support for Beijing while taking actions locally to try to assure that nothing spectacular happened in their own bailiwicks. On May 21, student leaders in the square voted to declare victory and withdraw but reversed their decision under pressure of widespread sentiment among new recruits in the square to continue the strike.

The Elders Discuss a Successor

The same day, Deng Xiaoping again convened the party elders, since the younger generation of leaders seemed unable to manage.

Excerpts from Party Central Office
Secretariat, "Minutes of important meeting,
May 21, 1989," document supplied to
Party Central Office Secretariat for its
records by the Office of Deng Xiaoping:

Deng Xiaoping: We can all see what's happened. Martial law hasn't restored order. This isn't because we can't do it; it's because problems inside the Party drag on and keep us from solving things that should've been solved long ago. ... Zhao Ziyang's intransigence has been obvious, and he bears undeniable responsibility. He wouldn't even attend the party-government-army meeting that the Standing Committee of the Politburo convened.

When others saw that the Party general secretary didn't show up, they all knew something was wrong. He exposed the differences within the Standing Committee for all to see. He wanted to draw a strict line between himself and us in order to make his stand clear. So we've got to talk about the Zhao Ziyang problem.

Li Xiannian: I've said all along that the problem's inside the party. The party now has two headquarters. Zhao Ziyang's got his own separate headquarters. We have to get to the bottom of this, have to dig out the roots. Otherwise there can never again be unity of thought inside the Party. ... When he opposed martial law he had his own political agenda, which was to force us senior people to hand over power and step down, so that he could go ahead with his program of bourgeois liberalization. With us senior people in the way, his hands were tied and he was stuck. Zhao Ziyang is no longer fit to be general secretary.

Wang Zhen: Zhao Ziyang's never paid a whit of attention to people like us. ... What he really wants is to drive us old people from power. We didn't mistreat him; he's the one who's picked the fight. When he falls it'll be his own fault. ...

Yang Shangkun: ... We should look at the big picture and make solidarity our top priority. This isn't the right moment

The Tiananmen Papers

for replacing a general secretary. Instead we could ask Zhao Ziyang for a self-criticism and avoid making big changes on the Politburo Standing Committee. ...

Deng Xiaoping: ... In the recent turmoil Zhao Ziyang has exposed his position completely. He obviously stands on the side of the turmoil, and in practical terms he has been fomenting division, splitting the Party, and defending turmoil. It's lucky we're still here to keep a lid on things. Zhao Ziyang stimulated turmoil, and there's no reason to keep him. Hu Qili is no longer fit for the Standing Committee, either.

Chen Yun: ... Comrade Xiannian has pointed out to me that Comrade Jiang Zemin from Shanghai is a suitable candidate. Every time I've gone down to Shanghai he always sees me, and he strikes me as a modest person with strong party discipline and broad knowledge. He gets along well in Shanghai, too.

Li Xiannian: ... I noticed, after the April 26 editorial, that again it was Shanghai that took the lead in pushing the spirit of Party Central. Jiang Zemin called a meeting of more than ten thousand officials the very next day, and he yanked the *World Economic Herald* into shape. That was something! That move—given what was going on—put him under tremendous public pressure, but he stood firm, didn't budge, and stuck to principle.

Then, when the Party, government, and army at the Center declared martial law, again it was Shanghai that took the lead in action. This kind of firm attitude's hard to come by. In

political action and party loyalty, Jiang Zemin has been a constant. And of course, he's got a good knack for economic work. Shanghai's built a good economic foundation these last few years. ... I like the idea of him as general secretary.



JIANG ZEMIN

The Selection of Jiang Zemin
On the night of May 27, Deng Xiaoping and the other seven elders met for about

The Tiananmen Papers

five hours at Deng's residence to finalize a successor to Zhao Ziyang as Communist Party general secretary.

Excerpts from Party Central Office
Secretariat, "Minutes of important meeting,
May 27, 1989," document supplied to
Party Central Office Secretariat for its
records by the Office of Deng Xiaoping:

Deng Xiaoping: I've checked with Comrades Chen Yun and Xiannian, and they completely agree with my view that the new leadership team must continue to carry out the political line, principles, and policies of the Third Plenum of the Eleventh Central Committee. Even the language should stay the same. The political report of the Thirteenth Party Congress was approved by all representatives at the time. Not a single word of it can be changed. The policies of reform and opening must not change, for several decades; we've got to press them through to the end. This should be what we expect and require from the new generation of [Party] Central leadership.

Unless someone objects, I move that the new Standing Committee of the Politburo be made up of the following six comrades: Jiang Zemin, Li Peng, Qiao Shi, Yao Yilin, Song Ping, and Li Ruihuan, with Comrade Jiang Zemin as general secretary.

The motion to appoint Jiang as general secretary and to add Li and Song to the Standing Committee had been approved by the elders by a show of hands. But this violated the Chinese Communist Party Constitution, which stipulates that the Politburo Standing Committee should make such decisions.

The Elders Decide to Clear Tiananmen Square

On the morning of June 2, party elders Deng Xiaoping, Li Xiannian, Peng Zhen, Yang Shangkun, Bo Yibo, and Wang Zhen met with the Standing Committee of the Politburo, which at that juncture consisted only of Li Peng, Qiao Shi, and Yao Yilin.

The Tiananmen Papers

Excerpts from Party Central Office
Secretariat, "Minutes of important meeting,
June 2, 1989," document supplied to
Party Central Office Secretariat for its
records by the Office of Deng Xiaoping:

Li Peng: Yesterday the Beijing Party Committee and the State Security Ministry both submitted reports to the Politburo. These two reports give ample evidence that following the declaration of martial law a major scheme of the organizers and plotters of the turmoil has been to occupy Tiananmen Square to serve as a command center for a final showdown with the Party and government. The square has become "a center of the student movement and eventually the entire nation."

Whatever decisions the government makes, strong reactions will emerge from the Square. It has been determined that, following the declaration of martial law, events such as putting together a dare-to-die corps to block the martial law troops, gathering thugs to storm the Beijing Public Security Bureau, holding press conferences, and recruiting the Flying Tiger Group to pass messages around were all plotted in and commanded from the Square. ...

The reactionary elements have also continued to use the Square as a center for hatching counterrevolutionary opinion and manufacturing rumor. Illegal organizations such as the AFS [Autonomous Federation of Students] and AFW [Autonomous Federation of Workers] have installed loudspeakers on the Square and broadcast almost around the clock, attacking party and state leaders, inciting overthrow of the government, and repeating over and over distorted reports from [the Voice of America] and the Hong Kong and Taiwan press.

The reactionary elements believe the government will eventually crack down if they refuse to withdraw from the square. Their plot is to provoke conflict and create bloodshed incidents, clamoring that "blood will awaken the people and cause the government to split and collapse." A few days ago these reactionary elements openly erected a so-called goddess statue in front of the Monument to the People's Heroes. Today they are planning to launch another hunger strike in the Square.

The Tiananmen Papers

... When the turmoil began employees of the U.S. embassy started to collect intelligence aggressively. Some of them are CIA agents. Almost every day, and especially at night, they would go and loiter at Tiananmen or at schools such as Peking University and Beijing Normal. They have frequent contact with leaders of the AFS and give them advice. The Chinese Alliance for Democracy, which has directly meddled in this turmoil, is a tool the United States uses against China. This scum of our nation, based in New York, has collaborated with the pro-KMT Chinese Benevolent Association to set up a so-called Committee to Support the Chinese Democracy Movement. They also gave money to leaders of the AFS.

As soon as the turmoil started, KMT intelligence agencies in Taiwan and other hostile forces outside China rushed to send in agents disguised as visitors, tourists, businessmen, and so on. They have tried to intervene directly to expand the so-called democracy movement into an all-out "movement against communism and tyranny." They have also instructed underground agents to keep close track of things and to collect all kinds of information. There is evidence that KMT agents from Taiwan have participated in the turmoil in Beijing, Shanghai, Fujian, and elsewhere. ... It is becoming increasingly clear that the turmoil has been generated by a coalition of foreign and domestic reactionary forces and that their goals are to overthrow the Communist Party and to subvert the socialist system.

Wang Zhen: Those goddamn bastards! Who do they think they are, trampling on sacred ground like Tiananmen so long?! They're really asking for it! We should send the troops right now to grab those counterrevolutionaries, Comrade Xiaoping! What's the People's Liberation Army for, anyway? What are martial law troops for? They're not supposed to just sit around and eat! They're supposed to grab counterrevolutionaries! We've got to do it or we'll never forgive ourselves! We've got to do it or the common people will rebel! Anybody who tries to overthrow the Communist Party deserves death and no burial!

Li Xiannian: The account that Comrade Li Peng just gave us shows quite clearly that Western capitalism really does want to see turmoil in China. And not only that; they'd also like to see turmoil in the Soviet Union and all the socialist countries of Eastern Europe. The United States, England, France, Japan, and some other Western countries are leaving no stone

The Tiananmen Papers

unturned in pushing peaceful evolution in the socialist countries. They've got a new saying about "fighting a smokeless world war." We had better watch out. Capitalism still wants to beat socialism in the end.

Deng Xiaoping: Comrade Xiannian is correct. The causes of this incident have to do with the global context. The Western world, especially the United States, has thrown its entire propaganda machine into agitation work and has given a lot of encouragement and assistance to the so-called democrats or opposition in China—people who in fact are the scum of the Chinese nation. This is the root of the chaotic situation we face today. ... Some Western countries use things like "human rights," or like saying the socialist system is irrational or illegal, to criticize us, but what they're really after is our sovereignty. Those Western countries that play power politics have no right at all to talk about human rights!

Look how many people around the world they've robbed of human rights! And look how many Chinese people they've hurt the human rights of since they invaded China during the Opium war! ...

Two conditions are indispensable for our developmental goals: a stable environment at home and a peaceful environment abroad. We don't care what others say about us. The only thing we really care about is a good environment for developing ourselves. So long as history eventually proves the superiority of the Chinese socialist system, that's enough. We can't bother about the social systems of other countries. Imagine for a moment what could happen if China falls into turmoil. If it happens now, it'd be far worse than the Cultural Revolution. ... Once civil war got started, blood would flow like a river, and where would human rights be then? In a civil war, each power would dominate a locality, production would fall, communications would be cut off, and refugees would flow out of China not in millions or tens of millions but in hundreds of millions.

First hit by this flood of refugees would be Pacific Asia, which is currently the most promising region of the world. This would be disaster on a global scale. So China mustn't make a mess of itself. And this is not just to be responsible to ourselves, but to consider the whole world and all of humanity as well. ...

Li Xiannian: ... Tiananmen Square is now that root of our turmoil-disease. Just look at that thing—like neither human

The Tiananmen Papers

nor demon—that they’ve erected there in our beautiful Square! Are the people going to accept that? Absolutely not! We’re never going to get a voluntary withdrawal from the Square. Tiananmen has been polluted for more than a month now, ravaged into a shadow of itself! We can’t breathe free until the Square is returned to the hands of the people. We have to pull up the root of the disease immediately. I say we start tonight.

Yang Shangkun: The fact that we’re going to clear the square, restore order, and stop the turmoil in no way means that we’re giving up on reform or closing our country off from the world.

Deng Xiaoping: No one can keep China’s reform and opening from going forward. Why is that? It’s simple: Without reform and opening our development stops and our economy slides downhill. Living standards decline if we turn back. The momentum of reform cannot be stopped. We must insist on this point at all times.

Some people say we allow only economic reform and not political reform, but that’s not true. We do allow political reform, but on one condition: that the Four Basic Principles are upheld. [The Four Basic Principles are Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong thought, socialism, the people’s democratic dictatorship, and leadership by the Chinese Communist Party.] ...

We can’t handle chaos while we’re busy with construction. If today we have a big demonstration and tomorrow a great airing of views and a bunch of wall posters, we won’t have any energy left to get anything done. That’s why we have to insist on clearing the Square.

Yang Shangkun: Troops have moved into the Great Hall of the People, Zhongshan Park, the People’s Cultural Palace, and the Public Security Ministry compound. The thinking of all officers and soldiers has been thoroughly prepared for a clearing of Tiananmen Square. After nearly half a month of political thought work, all officers and soldiers have deepened their understanding of the severity and complexity of this struggle and have comprehended the necessity and the legality of martial law.

Li Peng: I strongly urge that we move immediately to clear Tiananmen Square and that we resolutely put an end to the turmoil and the ever expanding trouble.

Qiao Shi: The facts show that we can’t expect the students on the Square to withdraw voluntarily. Clearing the square is our only option, and it’s quite necessary. I hope our announcement



about clearing will meet with approval and support from the majority of citizens and students. Clearing the Square is the beginning of a restoration of normal order in the capital.

Deng Xiaoping: I agree with all of you and suggest the martial law troops begin tonight to carry out the clearing plan and finish it within two days. As we proceed with the clearing, we must explain

it clearly to all the citizens and students, asking them to leave and doing our very best to persuade them. But if they refuse to leave, they will be responsible for the consequences. ...

The Order to Clear the Square

At 4 PM on June 3, Yang Shangkun, Li Peng, Qiao Shi, and Yao Yilin held an emergency meeting with responsible military officials.

Excerpts from Party Central Office
Secretariat, "Minutes of the June 3
Politburo Standing Committee meeting":

Yang Shangkun: I really did not want to call this meeting. The situation has become extremely volatile—beyond what anybody's goodwill can handle. We have to settle on some resolute measures for clearing the square. Let's begin with you, Comrade Li Peng.

Li Peng: Late last night a counterrevolutionary riot broke out in Beijing. A small handful of counterrevolutionaries began spreading rumors and openly violating martial law. They were brazen and lawless, and their behavior has aroused extreme indignation among the masses. We must resolutely adopt decisive measures to put down this counterrevolutionary riot tonight. ... The PLA martial law troops, the People's Armed Police, and Public Security are authorized to use any

The Tiananmen Papers

means necessary to deal with people who interfere with the mission. Whatever happens will be the responsibility of those who do not heed warnings and persist in testing the limits of the law.

Yang Shangkun: You all get the picture now. I've also just been in touch with Comrade Xiaoping, and he has asked me to relay two points to everyone. The first is: Solve the problem before dawn tomorrow. He means our martial law troops should completely finish their task of clearing the Square before sunup. The second is: Be reasonable with the students and make sure they see the logic in what we're doing; the troops should resort to "all means necessary" only if everything else fails. In other words, before we clear the Square, we should use TV and radio to advise students and citizens to avoid the streets at all costs, and we should ask the ones who are in the Square to leave of their own accord. In short, we've got to do an excellent job on propaganda work; it has to be clear to everyone that we stand with the people, and we must do everything we possibly can to avoid bloodshed. The Martial Law Command must make it quite clear to all units that they are to open fire only as a last resort. And let me repeat: No bloodshed within Tiananmen Square—period. What if thousands of students refuse to leave? Then the troops carry away thousands of students on their backs! No one must die in the Square. This is not just my personal view; it's Comrade Xiaoping's view, too. So long as everybody agrees, then it will be unanimous.

June Fourth

Tiananmen Square lies at the geographic center of the capital city and just southeast of Zhongnanhai, where the last dynasty's emperors had their hunting park and where top Communist Party leaders now work. Beginning with the May Fourth movement against imperialism and for democracy in 1919, Tiananmen has also become a traditional site for popular protests. These protests have often been led by university students, who are especially numerous here because Beijing is the country's preeminent center of higher education.

As soldiers entered the city in plainclothes and in uniform, instead of meeting with popular understanding they encountered anger and

The Tiananmen Papers

some violence. The party leaders' hopes of avoiding bloodshed foundered on this resistance and the troops' emotional reaction to it.

The government's internal reports claimed that Deng Xiaoping's goal of no deaths in Tiananmen Square was achieved. Most of the deaths occurred as troops moved in from the western suburbs toward Tiananmen along Fuxingmenwai Boulevard at a location called Muxidi, where anxious soldiers reacted violently to popular anger.

Excerpt from Martial Law
Command, "Situation in the Muxidi
district," Bulletin (*Kuaibao*), June 3:

Advance troops of the Thirty-Eighth Group Army, who were responsible for the western approaches, massed in the western suburbs at Wanshou Road, Fengtai, and Liangxiang. At 9:30 PM, these troops began advancing eastward toward the Square and encountered their first obstacle at Gongzhufen, where students and citizens had set up a blockade. An anti-riot squad fired tear gas canisters and rubber bullets into the crowd. At first the people retreated, but then they stopped. The anti-riot squad pressed forward, firing more tear gas and more rubber bullets. Again the crowd retreated but soon stopped.

The troops kept firing warning shots into the air, but the people displayed no signs of fear. The stretch from Gongzhufen to the military museum, Beifengwo Street, and Muxidi is less than two kilometers, but the troop advance was slow because of citizens' interference. The crowd threw rocks, soda bottles, and other things, but the troops maintained strict discipline and did not fire a single shot in return.

Believing the troops would not use live ammunition, the citizens grew increasingly bold. At 10:10 PM, tens of thousands formed a human wall at Beifengwo Street to block the troops, the two sides faced each other over a distance of twenty to thirty meters. Some of the citizens continued throwing rocks and other objects. Using an electric bullhorn, the commanding officer exhorted the citizens and students to disperse and let the troops pass. When the measure failed, he decided to use force to assure his soldiers could reach their positions on time.

Infantrymen led the way, firing into the air. The soldiers—with the first two rows in a kneeling position and those in the

The Tiananmen Papers

back standing—pointed their weapons at the crowd. Approximately 10:30 PM, under a barrage of rocks, the troops opened fire. Sparks flew from ricocheting bullets. When people in the crowd realized that live ammunition was in use, they surged in waves toward the Muxidi Bridge. Their retreat was hindered by the roadblocks they had set up, and for this reason some in the crowd were trampled and badly injured.

Excerpts from State Security Ministry,
“Situation at Muxidi on the evening
of the third,” Important intelligence
(*Yaoqing*), 2 AM, June 4:

... At Muxidi Bridge the troops were stopped once again as citizens and students threw the broken bricks they had prepared in advance. A few dozen baton-wielding members of the troops’ anti-riot brigade stormed onto the bridge, where they were met with a barrage of broken bricks as thick as rain. The brigade was driven back. Then regular troops, row by row, came rushing onto the bridge chanting, “If no one attacks me, I attack no one; but if people attack me, I must attack them,” and turning their weapons on the crowd. People began crumpling to the ground. Each time shots rang out, the citizens hunkered down; but with each lull in the fire they stood up again. Slowly driven back by the troops, they stood their ground from time to time shouting “Fascists!” “Hooligan government!” and “Murderers!”

... Some soldiers who were hit by rocks lost their self-control and began firing wildly at anyone who shouted “Fascists!” or threw rocks or bricks. At least a hundred citizens and students fell to the ground in pools of blood; most were rushed to nearby Fuxing hospital by other students and citizens.

... After infantrymen had cleared the street of roadblocks, returning fire the whole time, armored cars and army trucks drove onto the Muxidi Bridge. From then on there were no more lulls in the shooting. Soldiers on the trucks fired into the air continuously until people hurled rocks or verbal insults, and then they fired into the crowd.

... Around 11 PM, armed foot soldiers, armored cars, and army trucks headed toward Tiananmen. After the troops had passed, citizens and students pushed electric buses back into

The Tiananmen Papers

the street, placing them across it, and set them on fire to block troops that were following. It was then approximately 11:40 P.M.

At midnight some citizens set up new roadblocks on the eastern approach to Muxidi Bridge. To the east of the bridge, near the subway station, lay twelve lumps of flesh, blood, and debris. The bodies of dead and wounded were being delivered continually to the door of Fuxing hospital. Some arrived on three-wheeled flat-bed carts, others were carried on wooden doors, and some came on the backs of motorcycles. One bloody corpse whose face was unrecognizably mangled was carried on a door. Virtually everyone at Fuxing hospital was cursing “Fascists!,” “Animals!,” and “Bloody massacre!”

By 1:30 AM, Fuxingmenwai Boulevard in the area of Muxidi Bridge was deserted and shrouded in deathly silence.

Lights Out in the Square

By 1 AM on June 4, all martial-law troops had entered Tiananmen Square and for three hours pressed students to voluntarily leave before the 4 AM deadline for clearing the square.

Excerpt from State Security Ministry,
“Trends in Tiananmen Square,” fifth of six
overnight faxes to Party Central and State
Council duty offices, 6:08 AM, June 4:

At four o'clock sharp all the lights in the square went out, sending its occupiers into a panic. At the same time, the Martial Law Command continued to broadcast its “Notice to Clear the Square,” now adding: “We will now begin clearing the square, and we accept your appeal to evacuate.”

The Beijing Government and the Martial Law Command then broadcast a “Notice Concerning the Immediate Restoration of Order in Tiananmen Square.” It listed four demands:

- Anyone on the Square who hears this announcement must leave immediately.
- Martial law troops will use any means necessary to deal with those who resist this order or disobey by remaining on the Square.

The Tiananmen Papers

- The Square will be under the strict control of martial law troops after it is cleared.
- All patriotic citizens and students who do not want to see turmoil in the country should cooperate with the martial law troops to clear the Square.

At this point students who were gathered on the steps of the Monument to the People's Heroes used blankets, sticks, canvas, and other things to light a bonfire on the western side of the monument. Then they began singing the "Internationale."

[Hunger strikers] Hou Dejian and Zhou Duo returned to the Square after meeting with martial law authorities. Over the student public-address system they called for an immediate evacuation. In the dark, people were saying school buses from Peking University had come to take students back to campus, but this news caused no notable reaction from the students. The area was shrouded in darkness, except for the distant flames and street lamps on Chang'an Boulevard.

Martial law troops advanced toward the monument from north to south in two columns. Soldiers of the shock brigade first smashed two AFS loudspeakers then advanced through the crowd on the western steps of the monument with their assault rifles pointed alternately into the air and at the students to frighten them off. About that time the students around the monument, who were under the direction of the General Headquarters for the Protection of Tiananmen Square, conducted a voice-vote. Those, including Hou Dejian's group, who shouted "Leave!" were louder than those who shouted "Stay!"

The leader of the command post then told the students in the Square to "prepare to leave the Square in an orderly manner under your school banners; students, citizens, workers, and citizen monitors should evacuate toward Haidian District and move toward Zhongguancun."

Around 4:30 AM the lights in the Square came back on. Students found themselves facing a large number of armed soldiers, who pressed the students closer and closer together. Tension gripped the protesters, especially when they saw rows of tanks and armored cars moving slowly through the Square from its north edge. The Goddess of Democracy, in the northern part of the Square, fell with a resounding thud. The tanks and armored cars kept advancing, knocking down and crushing student

The Tiananmen Papers

tents along the way, until they flanked the students on the east and west, as close as twenty or thirty meters away. From the northwest corner of the Square rows of soldiers wearing helmets and carrying batons kept pressing toward the students at the Square's center. Anti-riot police in protective headgear mingled with them.

About 5 AM thousands of students, protected by the linked arms of monitors, retreated toward the southeast corner of the Square via the path between the grassy area and the monument. At first they moved slowly, but they soon began to bunch up as soldiers, some in fatigues, pressed toward them swinging batons. With their path to the monument blocked by troops and tanks, they threaded their way among tanks and armored cars toward the southern entrance at the east of the Square. They made an orderly retreat, carrying school flags and singing the "Internationale." Occasionally there were shouts of "Repressive Bloodbath!" "Down with Fascism!" "Bandits! Bandits!"—even "Fucking Animals!" and the like. Some spat on the soldiers as they passed.

Dawn broke about 5:20. The bulk of the students had left the Square, but about two hundred defiant students and citizens remained and were now completely hemmed in by tanks, which advanced on them slowly and patiently, gradually forcing them back. When this last group had finally been pushed from the Square and had rejoined its citizen supporters outside, some of its members mustered the courage to shout, "Fascists! Fascists!" and "Down with Fascism!" In reply, officers and soldiers who were gathered at the Chairman Mao Memorial Hall fired their weapons into the air and shouted in unison, "If no one attacks me, I attack no one!" By 5:40 AM, the Square had been cleared.

Many investigations have established that in the entire process of clearing the Square, martial law troops did not shoot a single person to death and no person was run over by a tank.

Still, some killing of both citizens and soldiers continued during the morning hours. The populace was outraged, and rumors spread of casualties in the thousands.

In the following days the government confronted international and domestic reactions so vociferous that they threatened to fulfill Deng



AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTOS

After the tanks: Bodies near Tiananmen Square, July 4, 1989

Xiaoping's worst fear: that a bloody denouement would make it impossible to continue reform at home and the open-door policy abroad.

Nationwide Protests Continue

Between June 5 and 10, Zhongnanhai received nearly a hundred reports from the provinces on local reactions and on emergency meetings and police deployments undertaken in response. There were demonstrations in 181 cities, including all the provincial capitals, the major cities, and special economic zones. Many forms of protest, some of them violent, emerged. By June 8, the situation had begun to stabilize in some cities.

On the afternoon of June 9, Deng Xiaoping gave a talk to high-ranking officials of the martial law troops, and the State Council issued an "Announcement on Resolutely Preventing Disruption of Economic Order and Ensuring That Industrial Production Proceeds Normally." All province-level governments adopted procedures from the "Notice on Ensuring Urban Security and Stability" that the Party General Office and the State Council had issued. The Public Security Ministry's "Urgent Notice Demanding Close Surveillance and Control

of Turmoil Elements” led municipal public security offices to launch an all-out campaign to arrest student leaders and citizen activists.

By June 10, this campaign effectively throttled protest activities everywhere, and an outward calm set over the country.

The Leaders Take Stock

On June 6, two and a half days after what was now officially called “putting down the counterrevolutionary riots,” the healthier elders (Deng Xiaoping, Li Xiannian, Peng Zhen, Yang Shangkun, Bo Yibo, and Wang Zhen) met with the currently serving members of the Politburo Standing Committee (Li Peng, Qiao Shi, and Yao Yilin), plus National People’s Congress head Wan Li and the incoming Party general secretary, Jiang Zemin.

Excerpts from Party Central Office
Secretariat, “Minutes of the CCP Central
Politburo Standing Committee meeting,”
June 6, with a small number of supplements
added from a tape recording of the meeting:

Deng Xiaoping: If we hadn’t been firm with these counterrevolutionary riots—if we hadn’t come down hard—who knows what might have happened? The PLA has suffered a great deal; we owe them a lot, we really do. If the plots of the people who were pushing the riots had gotten anywhere, we’d have had civil war. And if there had been civil war—of course our side would have won, but just think of all the deaths! ...

Li Xiannian: If we hadn’t put down those counterrevolutionary riots, could we be talking here now? The PLA soldiers really are the brothers of the Chinese people, as well as the sturdy pillars of the Party and the state. ...

Yang Shangkun: We’ve paid a high price for putting down these counterrevolutionary riots. Restoring social order in Beijing should be our top priority now, and that means we’ve got a lot of political thought work to do.

Bo Yibo: I’ve got some material here—reports from all the big Western news services and TV networks about the so-called June 4 bloodbath at Tiananmen and the numbers of dead and

The Tiananmen Papers

wounded. Let me read it. Associated Press: "At least five hundred dead." NBC: "Fourteen hundred dead, ten thousand wounded." ABC: "Two thousand dead." American intelligence agencies: "Three thousand dead." BBC: "Two thousand dead, up to ten thousand injured." Reuters: "More than one thousand dead." L'Agence France-Presse: "At least fourteen hundred dead, ten thousand injured." UPI: "More than three hundred dead." Kyodo News Agency: "Three thousand dead, more than two thousand injured." Japan's *Yomiuri Shimbun*: "Three thousand dead."

The impact is huge when numbers like these get spread all over the world! We need to counterattack against these rumors right now.

Li Peng: Mr. Bo is right. Yuan Mu is holding a press conference this afternoon at Zhongnanhai to release the true facts. The General Office of the State Council reports that as of noon today the basic statistics—which have been double- and triple-checked with Martial Law Headquarters and the Chinese Red Cross—are these: Five thousand PLA soldiers and officers wounded, and more than two thousand local people (counting students, city people, and rioters together) also wounded.

The figures on the dead are these: twenty-three from the martial law troops, including ten from the PLA and thirteen from the People's Armed Police. About two hundred soldiers are also missing. The dead among city people, students, and rioters number about two hundred, of whom thirty-six are university students. No one was killed within Tiananmen Square itself.

Deng Xiaoping: ... This incident has been a wake-up call for all of us. We'll never keep the lid on if we relax on the Four Basic Principles.

... Our use of martial law to deal with the turmoil was absolutely necessary. In the future, whenever it might be necessary, we will use severe measures to stamp out the first signs of turmoil as soon as they appear. This will show that we won't put up with foreign interference and will protect our national sovereignty.

Li Xiannian: The key to stabilizing things right now is to be supertough in tracking down the counterrevolutionary rioters, especially the plotters who were organizing things behind the scenes. This conflict is a conflict with the enemy. ...

The Tiananmen Papers

Deng Xiaoping: We should mete out the necessary punishments, in varying degrees, to the ambitious handful who were trying to subvert the People's Republic. ... But we should be forgiving toward the student demonstrators and petition signers, whether from Beijing, from elsewhere in China, or from overseas, and we shouldn't try to track down individual responsibility among them. We also need to watch our methods as we take control of the situation.

We should be extra careful about laws, especially the laws and regulations on assembly, association, marches, demonstrations, journalism, and publishing. Activities that break the law must be suppressed. We can't just allow people to demonstrate whenever they want to. If people demonstrate 365 days a year and don't want to do anything else, reform and opening will get nowhere. ...

Rounding up Democracy Activists

The work of hunting down activists of the democracy movement in Beijing was shared by the martial law troops, the People's Armed Police, and the Municipal Public Security Bureau. Guidelines like the following help explain why most of those detained suffered physical abuse.

Excerpt from Martial Law Headquarters,
"Unify thinking, distinguish right
from wrong, complete the martial law
task with practical actions," June 10:

In order to dissipate the anger and antagonism that martial law troops feel toward the residents of Beijing, to clarify the muddled understanding that many people have, to isolate the tiny minority of rioters from the vast majority of Beijing residents, and to establish correct attitudes toward the people, we need to ask all the officers and soldiers to concentrate their hatred on the small handful of thugs and rioters, to smash their evil nests, to punish the rioters, and to wrap up their martial law duties through concrete actions.

The Tiananmen Papers

Issues number 26, 31, and 37 of the Beijing Public Security Bureau's Public Order Situation (*Zhi'an qingkuang*) show that 468 "counter-revolutionary rioters and creators of turmoil" had been arrested by June 10. On June 17, eight of these were sentenced to death for "beating, smashing, robbing, burning, and other serious criminal offenses during the counterrevolutionary riots in Beijing." By June 20, the number of "counterrevolutionary rioters" and "turmoil elements" who had been arrested was 831; by June 30, it was 1,103. Most of the arrestees were held in temporary detention centers or makeshift jails.

Once the situation in Beijing was under control and province-level authorities throughout the country had expressed their support, Party Central unfolded a series of measures against activists throughout the country.

Many Student Leaders Escape

Despite police efforts, people as well known as Yan Jiaqi, Chen Yizi, Wan Runnan, Su Xiaokang, Wuerkaixi, Chai Ling, Feng Congde, and Li Lu made their way out of China without a single person involved breaching confidence and collecting the rewards that such a breach would have brought.

Chai Ling, the Peking University graduate student who was general commander of the Tiananmen Square Command, evaded an arrest warrant and escaped from the country.

Feng Congde, a Peking University graduate student and deputy commander of the Tiananmen student headquarters, also evaded an arrest warrant and fled the country.

Li Lu, a Nanjing University student and commander in chief of the non-Beijing students at Tiananmen, fled to the United States.

Wang Dan, a Peking University freshman and leader of the Autonomous Federation of Students, was arrested. In 1998, he was released for a medical parole and went to the United States.

Wuerkaixi, a Beijing Normal University freshman and a leader of the AFS, fled to the United States and eventually went to Taiwan.

The Mood on Campus

A national survey conducted by the Xinhua News Agency at the end of June found university students everywhere in a mood of terror and resistance blanketed in silence.

Excerpt from Xinhua News Agency, "The ideological condition of college students nationwide," Proofs on domestic situation (*Guonei dongtai qingyang*), June 29:

Terror: A tense mood, under fear of punishment or arrest, pervades the universities. Leaders of the student movement have departed their campuses, and rumors are rampant about who is being picked up and when. The students who were most active in the movement are the most nervous. Some provinces have stipulated that even students who sat in to block traffic should be arrested, and many students have grown so insecure they cannot sleep well at night. A number of young lecturers at Wuhan University who had given speeches during the movement now are so terrified they sent their wives and children to their in-laws' homes and waited alone to be arrested at the university.

It is noteworthy that even students who only marched in demonstrations and shouted some slogans are frightened as well. One university administrator said students "thought of the recent student movement as a patriotic movement; many took to the streets to protest against official profiteering and then were puzzled when the movement was labeled 'turmoil.' Now the common mood is worry; the students are all wondering, 'Am I going to get punished?'"

A few nights ago about a hundred students were gathered at the gate of Heilongjiang University when a police car passed by. Someone yelled "Police!" and they all scattered like animals scurrying for cover. Some students have been thinking in terms of the arbitrary arrests during the Anti-Rightist Campaign and the Cultural Revolution, so when the slightest sign of something pops up, it has an exaggerated effect.

Resistance: Nationwide about one in five university students remains defiant. These students scornfully resist government decrees and oppose efforts to put down the riots. Some have

The Tiananmen Papers

adopted a “four don’ts” policy toward the domestic media: don’t listen, don’t read, don’t believe, don’t ask. Some students make obscene comments while they watch television. Some write on the walls of their dormitories and classrooms things like “Shut up!” “Thunder from the silent zone!” “China is dead!” “Where is justice?” “The government caused the turmoil!” “The truth will out some day!” “Yet another Tiananmen incident!” and so on. The students at many schools—especially the boys—sometimes seem crazed. When the lights go out at night they vent their rage with wild yelps and cries.

Silence: About one in three students maintains a purposeful silence. After June Fourth all the universities required students to reflect on their roles in the student movement. Many students kept going around in circles, willing to address only a limited number of concrete questions. On the matter of how to turn their own thinking around, they just kept silent. “I don’t know” became the answer to every question, silence the shield against every arrow. When political study sessions were scheduled, some students just put up posters in their dorms and classrooms that read “silence is golden.” The campuses had calmed down but had also turned as silent as graveyards. When the silence finally broke, students often avoided politics. They ignored the national news and turned to things like romance, mah-jongg, and other amusements.

The moods listed above affect not only students but quite a few university officials and teachers as well. It is reported that some Beijing officials and teachers, although they did not take part in the turmoil and are now actively working on the political thinking of students, cannot make their peace with phrases like “Riots took place in Beijing.” They just cannot put their hearts into uttering such language. Some feel that it is understandable if the government makes some miscalculations and if the whole economy is not set right in a day but that embezzlement and corruption are unacceptable. To share ups and downs is fine, but for you to take the ups and leave me the downs is not.

An official from Peking University reports that things are tough for people from his university. When students check in at hotels, many get pushed out the door as soon as it is known where they are from. One Peking University student who was on business in Yanqing county actually got beaten up. The job

The Tiananmen Papers

assignments for seniors graduating in 1989 have been completed, but some employers, including the Central Party School, the Chinese Association of Handicapped People, and the Beijing Committee of the Youth League, have rejected certain students. This official is afraid that gifted students will not apply to Peking University this year, which in turn could lead to lower quality in the incoming class.

The report recommended that great care be taken in applying current policy to the students and that, at all costs, the numbers of those punished be strictly limited.

Chinese society fell into a deep anomie after June 4. Numbed, people everywhere turned away from politics. The sensitive intellectual class, and especially the young students with their exuberant idealism, entered the 1990s with nothing like the admirable social engagement they had shown in the 1980s. The campuses were tranquil, and China seemed shrouded in a dour mist that harbored a spiritual emptiness. Money ruled everything, morals died, corruption burgeoned, bribes were bartered, and when all this became known on the campuses it turned students thoroughly off politics. They had lost the idealism of the 1980s and now concentrated only on their own fates. 🌐