

Beijing butchers fear Tiananmen anniversary

by Mary McCourt Burdman

The first anniversary of the Tiananmen Square massacre on June 3-4 is looming, as the murderous Beijing regime of Prime Minister Li Peng and President Yang Shangkun, with Deng Xiaoping behind the scenes, is nervously aware. The trappings of alleged "return to normality" in Beijing are being stripped away, as April, May, and June bring a series of anniversaries of critical events which sparked the democracy movement and demonstrations last year. These anniversaries began April 5, the Qing Ming Festival for honoring the dead. On that day, Tiananmen Square was roped off and surrounded by hundreds of paramilitary riot police armed with AK-47s—the first police with modern riot-control equipment seen in China. Secret police were everywhere.

China's rulers had reason to be afraid. In 1976, thousands of people gathered in Tiananmen Square on that day to mourn the death of Prime Minister Chou En-lai and to protest the "Gang of Four," the hard-core Maoists, including Mao Zedong's wife Jiang Qing, who were attempting to seize power as Mao was dying.

There were no outward signs of protest in Beijing this year, except the sudden appearance of hundreds of crude white paper flowers—white is the color of mourning in China—blown by the wind toward people standing in front of the Revolutionary History Museum opposite Tiananmen Square. Leaflets calling for white flowers had been circulating throughout the city.

On April 15, China will mark the first anniversary of the death of the ousted Communist Party leader Hu Yaobang. Thousands of students in Beijing first came out last year to mark Hu's death, and from these demonstrations grew the mass protests of as many as 1 million people in late May.

There are indications of strong resistance to the Beijing regime inside China. A new organization, the Democratic Front for the Salvation of China, has been established by some 100 activists representing networks of hundreds more. The group's leader, Zhai Weimin, said that the death of ousted CP head Zhao Ziyang, or even of Deng Xiaoping, could be the catalyst for the movement.

Even more telling is the escape of Chai Ling, one of the best-known Tiananmen Square student leaders, and her husband Feng Congde, from China in early April. The pair had been on the run in China for 10 months before they finally escaped, most likely through Hong Kong, to France. The escape demonstrates the existence of an underground capable of hiding and moving fugitives in one of the most repressive

countries in the world.

It is for such reasons, that Chinese Procurator General Liu Fuzhi told the National People's Congress on March 29 that the public order situation was "quite grim." Liu said, "The task of maintaining social stability is very arduous."

He was not alone in asserting that maintaining the police state was a heavy task. Ren Jianxin, the president of the Supreme People's Court, who said earlier this year that the Communist Party is above the law, told the National People's Congress the same day that the courts were being urged to "step up their hard strikes," and claimed huge increases in prosecutions of "law breakers."

Ren stated that "In 1989, people's courts . . . handled 392,564 criminal cases at first instance, 25.3% more than in the preceding year. Trial of 389,597 criminal cases of first instance was concluded, a rise of 24.68% compared with the preceding year. A total of 482,658 criminals were sentenced. This figure was 30.88% more than that for criminals sentenced in the preceding year."

In prosecuting economic (white-collar) crimes, Beijing achieved such efficiency as must make the U.S. Justice Department envious: There were 76,758 cases of economic crime in the courts in 1989, trials were concluded in 75,904 cases—and 105,818 people convicted! Of these cases, 31 were "arch-offenders" who had allegedly taken huge bribes or embezzled large amounts of public funds. All were sentenced to death.

Despite the repression, the anniversaries are having an effect outside China. At least 30,000 people demonstrated in Hong Kong during the Qing Ming Festival to commemorate the deaths in Tiananmen. This was the biggest demonstration in Hong Kong since 1 million people marched in support of the Tiananmen demonstrators in May 1989.

Bush exposed

President George Bush is also being forced to mark the anniversaries. Under Henry Kissinger's influence, Bush has done nothing but bow to the Deng-Li-Yang government, as demonstrated most clearly when he vetoed, at the end of last year, a bill passed unanimously by the Congress to guarantee extended visas to any of the some 40,000 P.R.C. students in the United States. Bush had claimed he was issuing an executive order to guarantee the students' visas in America.

Bush was exposed on April 5 when White House press secretary Marlin Fitzwater admitted that the President had issued no such order. Instead, he had turned the students over to the jurisdiction of the Justice Department.

The chairman of the National Committee on Chinese Student Affairs in the United States, Haiching Zhao, reported that some students have already had difficulty returning to the U.S. after going abroad, and some are being rejected when they apply for changed visa status.

On April 11, under heavy criticism, Bush finally gave the order he had promised in January.