

# Troops move in China: revolution or counter-revolution?

by Linda de Hoyos

As of midnight Beijing time June 3, armed soldiers deployed into the streets of Beijing and to Tiananmen Square against China's protesting students had killed 40 people, and wounded 200 others. The death count is mounting hourly, as the Chinese Communist government delivers its answer to the students' hoisting of Lady Liberty, a giant statue modeled after the Statue of Liberty, in Tiananmen Square.

The move had been presaged by a full foreign reporters' blackout imposed by the government June 2; the Chinese press has been completely silent on all events in Tiananmen Square since the same day.

The midnight assault was led by four columns of soldiers in armored personnel carriers and tanks armed with sub-machine guns. According to reports, only one of the columns had reached the square, while another was fighting in the streets of Beijing against an angry populace determined to defend the students. Another column had apparently been bogged down when it was surrounded by the people of Beijing, which succeeded in opening negotiations with the soldiers and stalling their movement toward the square. Within the square, tanks reportedly rolled over the bodies of the dead, in a determined effort to force the people out by the official inhabitants of the "Great Hall of the Peoples." Meanwhile, throughout the city and the surrounding suburbs, Beijing is approaching civil war conditions. There are even indications that troops may be battling troops.

This is the third attempt since June 1 to deploy troops against the Chinese students movement, which has been occupying Tiananmen Square since April 19. The government first ordered young, almost teenaged, unarmed soldiers to move toward the square. This deployment dissolved into chaos, as the city's population simply enveloped the troops. Motorbike riders swept through the city, calling upon citizens to come into the streets in defense of the students.

A second assault occurred early in the morning of June 3. This time four columns of unarmed troops headed toward the square. Another 5,000 armed policemen were dispatched through tunnels to move into the Great Hall of the Peoples. The armed police then sprang upon the students, from within the square, trying to force them into the hands of the military.

However, this tack did not work either, as one column of troops was beset upon by 60,000 people, and, overwhelmed, was forced back into a government compound nearby.

Throughout the melee, Beethoven's "Ode to Joy" rang out through the square as the students' rallying cry.

Within the early morning, the government loudspeakers were announcing that martial law would be strictly enforced, and that citizens had better stay indoors if they valued their lives. But such threats have had no effect so far, as the people of Beijing continue to act to defend the students.

## Foreign power backs repression

The courage of the students and citizens of China in the face of totalitarian Communist repression is matched by the moral turpitude of those foreign powers associating with the People's Republic of China. Just as the foreign powers in the 19th century backed the degenerate Qing dynasty against the Taiping Rebellion, leading to the bloodiest civil war in human history, and just as Great Britain, Japan, France, the U.S.S.R., and the United States acted to thwart the republican movement of Sun Yat-sen early this century, so the foreign powers who are out to loot China's "great market" have made clear their backing for the powers-that-be in China, against the student movement and its demands for democracy based on the American Declaration of Independence and Constitution.

From Washington, D.C., Secretary of State James Baker commented on the repression taking place in Beijing, with the platitude, "It is very important that excessive force not be used" against the students, but he declined to say whether the U.S. government would apply sanctions against the P.R.C. if the troops were ordered to fire. The mealy-mouthed secretary then said, "Before we get into hypothetical [sic] situations, let's see how this most recent and extremely deplorable development unfolds. Let's see what happens over the course of the next few days before we start hypothesizing about what we might or might not do in the future."

According to Bangkok sources, the Australian and British interests have also made known their sympathy with the government of Deng Xiao-ping, as has Japan. Japan, sources

report, is terrified at the prospect of instability in the P.R.C., believing that civil war conditions in China could spark World War III. As for the Soviet Union, Mikhail Gorbachov's hysteria over the democracy movement was manifest during his trip to Beijing, and was confirmed by statements in *Pravda* matching those of Chinese Prime Minister Li Peng, to the effect that the students were being effectively isolated and that their movement would be destroyed.

Aside from his own totalitarian proclivities, it was not difficult for Gorbachov to quickly sniff out that the students movement is decisively anti-Soviet. According to students who were in Tiananmen Square, the movement was targeting the Soviet-trained Li Peng, who they believe will bring Stalinism to the P.R.C. During the May 1 celebrations, the students demanded that the government tear down a giant painting of Stalin, placed in the square for the day, or they would destroy it. The government conceded.

Soviet abhorrence of the student's republican spirit is to be expected. The pro-Deng stance of the world's great democracies in the name of stability is based on maintenance at all costs of the global condominium among the bankers of the West and Moscow, incorporating Beijing as a junior partner. However, the Western powers will not get what they bargained for.

### Whose crackdown?

According to press reports from Hong Kong, the Deng shift against his own protégé Zhao Ziyang, and in favor of Li Peng, was carried out in deference to Communist China's "old guard," Deng's comrades—none of them under 80 years old—who guide the nation's policies through the Central Advisory Committee. Beginning with Deng factional opponent Chen Yun (the political godfather of Li Peng), to Chen Yun advocate Peng Zhen, and current President Yang Shang-kun, the old guard of the P.R.C., as toothless as they might be, has come out with strident demands that the democracy movement be crushed.

The immediate beneficiaries of this turn have been the underling faction around Li Peng, which has managed to consolidate government power since the end of May. The coming to the fore of this gang does not bode well for Western business interests—despite Chinese assurances that the open door will stay open no matter what. Vice Premier Yao Yilin, another Soviet-trained ally of Li Peng, recently declared that the P.R.C. could write off American and Western assistance and could cooperate with the Soviet Union instead.

Li Peng himself has openly challenged the United States, in a speech published in the Hong Kong press. Reportedly, Li Peng asked aides to inquire into the possibility of U.S. government involvement in the democracy movement. "Social turmoil has erupted because of the spread of bourgeois liberalization over many years. It is the result of the inculcation of Western ideas about democracy and freedom. . . . For example, we know that the United States is not happy

over the visit of Gorbachov to China. Is there any American background behind this student movement?"

Furthermore, any notion that the crackdown will bring stability back to China is illusory. The power struggle that has erupted in the P.R.C. has violently disrupted the factional balance under which Deng Xiao-ping has ruled over the last 10 years. The bloodshed in the streets of Beijing on June 3, is the handwriting on the wall that this power struggle will not be settled amicably.

While the West has been pinning their hopes on Deng "the Great Pragmatist," the factional pendulum in China is now swinging against the balancer himself. According to Hong Kong and Beijing reports, Communist Party General Secretary Zhao Ziyang has been forced out of the leadership. Although a foreign ministry spokesman insists that there have been no changes in the leadership, a list of the members of the powerful military commission listed Deng Xiao-ping as chairman and Yang Shangkun as vice-chairman. There was no mention of Zhao Ziyang, although he is officially first vice-chairman, having been placed in that position by Deng as the stepping stone to becoming Deng's successor. While Zhao has been attacked by Politburo Standing Committee chairman Qiao Shi, head of the nation's security forces, for violating the four cardinal principles—that is, violating the principle of the primacy of the party—a top Zhao aide, Bao Tong, director of the party's Research Center for Reform of the Political Structure, was arrested May 28, according to Kyodo news June 1. Rumors are also flying that Zhao is under house arrest.

But, the knocking out of the Zhao wing of the party—an achievement Deng accomplished to appease his old-guard colleagues—has tremendously weakened Deng himself. According to the *South China Morning Post* June 1, the Central Advisory Committee is looking to push out Deng entirely, with the plan being backed by Yang Shangkun, who has made the most pronouncements over the last week against the democracy movement. Yang would then take over the full chairmanship of the Military Commission. This story is corroborated by reports that both Yang Shangkun and Deng were separately attempting to gain the cooperation of regional military commanders, although without much success. Either the Great Pragmatist has outsmarted himself, or he has been set up.

In either case, none of the government power formulas on the horizon represent stability for China. Already, the students are planning for the "next moment," and if the Communist Party is massively purged of its "anti-party elements" in the name of Communist orthodoxy, that will only add to the legions of cadre being built up by the student democracy movement. As a May 26 article in the pro-student *Workers Daily* warned, Anyone who might try to replace "democracy with autocracy" to create a "situation of silence" would be in danger. "Such an imposed 'silence' or 'stability' is like a sleeping volcano and will erupt sooner or later."