Government Moves and People's Response

The troops were first ordered to move against the demonstrators on the weekend of May 20-21 by Premier Li Peng after he announced martial law for parts of Beijing. For many protesters Li, along with the top revisionist Deng Xiaoping, was already a symbol of government policies they were opposed to. His order for martial law and mobilization of troops made him an even more hated target. People at Tiananmen Square shouted, "Deep fry Li," and, "As long as Li Peng retains his post, we will come every day!" If Li Peng commits suicide by hanging, we will not sleep!"

As soon as news of the troop movements to block any units that might come that way.

At the beginning of the week one student leader tried to convince others to leave Tiananmen Square, but he came in for wide criticism from the other students. By the end of the week there was a narrower majority when a proposal to leave the square in return for a government promise not to retaliate was voted down. The number of students staying at Tiananmen became smaller during the week, as many students scattered to block any units that might come that way.

The government moves also sparked even bolder protest actions and firmed up the determination of many activists. As soon as news of the troop movements spread, thousands rushed to main roads into Beijing and stopped army trucks and personnel carriers from heading toward Tiananmen Square. Demonstrators organized themselves into shifts so they could surround the troops and keep watch on them all day and night. At one corner agitation, went to the outskirts to help stop the troops, or returned to campuses to rest. Among the students who continued to stay at Tiananmen, about 1,000 reportedly formed themselves into a "suicide squad." One member, a 24-year-old student from Hunan Province, said, "We have sworn an oath to die rather than to be defeated, and we will do it!"

Many of the students remaining in Tiananmen Square by the end of the week came from outside Beijing. Railway workers have been giving students from the provinces free rides on the trains. The government issued a strongly worded notice to try to stop more protestors from coming in to the capital. It ordered local officials to stop students from leaving for Beijing and especially not let them get on trains without tickets.

Among workers, too, groups pledging to put their lives on the line for the movement were organized. One group of 300 called themselves the "desperation" and seemed to be made up mainly of single workers willing to go right up in the face of the troops and authorities. There were also the "kamikazes" who roamed around the capital all night looking for army convoys, carrying knives to slash the tires of army trucks.

CAMPUS LIFE TURNED UPSIDE DOWN

At the universities final exams are coming up, but campus life has been in an uproar. Students boycotted classes, and most teachers went on sympathy strikes and were not preparing any exams. A 36-year-old economics teacher said, "Before the movement, we just taught students. Now, we spend all our time in meetings trying to figure out ways to help the students. We want some results, too."

One account described the scene at Beijing University: "A loudspeaker almost continuously broadcasts the latest rumors and protest plans. The campus triangle, which is covered with posters, has become a center for exchanging news. The floors of the dormitory halls are often used for writing banners. Dormitory rooms have been converted into conference centers." A graduate student who was supposed to turn in her thesis soon told a reporter, "Because the atmosphere outside is so stirring and exciting, I can't just sit around to work on my thesis. It sometimes feels so selfish."

There were similar scenes in many other campuses across China. At one university in the southern city of Guangdong, a teacher said that in the beginning the faculty did nothing. "Now, everyone talks about support for the students, and young teachers discuss the politics of the day even in class, in the gym."

According to news reports, the Tiananmen revolt has sparked anti-government demonstrations in many other cities as well across China. Marches of over 10,000 people have been common. In Shenzhen 100,000 people, one-fifth of the population in that city, took to the streets. Shenzhen, located next to Hongkong in the south, is one of the Continued on page 14.
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...the recent upsurge has revealed and sharpened up divisions among the Chinese revisionist rulers, including in their military. Some army units reportedly refused to move on the demonstrators, and a group of high-level military officials circulated a letter admonishing the army against moving into Beijing. There should be no illusions about the Chinese military—shown in the service of a reactionary state, not a genuine people's liberation army as it was under Mao's leadership. The army is the product of inaction and confusion at the top that had to do with disagreements over how best to put down the people's revolt.

By the end of last week it appeared that Li Peng, with Deng Xiaoping behind him, had consolidated his position, reached some unity among the top political and military leaders, and seized the initiative from the demonstrators. There were reports of large numbers of new troops from other areas being moved into the Beijing area, while the numbers of people staying at Tiananmen Square dwindled.

It will take a revolution led by a Marxist-Leninist-Maoist party on the scene to lead the revolutionary struggle. But the influence of Mao and the Cultural Revolution can be seen in the way the masses of people took up the struggle and organized themselves in recent weeks.

At this point, two key points of the battle remain. The first is that it was the superintendent's letter itself that was responsible for creating the 'regrettable link' which the school board apology does not address and second, and very importantly, the letter is not an issue for the school as the limited distribution of the letter of apology indicates but must be broadly aired in the press and other media as was the original slander.