

China's Fear of Contagion

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Tiananmen Square and the Power of the European Example

For the leaders of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), erasing the memory of the June 4, 1989, Tiananmen Square massacre remains a full-time job. The party aggressively monitors and restricts media and internet commentary about the event. As Sinologist Jean-Philippe Béja has put it, during the last two decades it has not been possible “even so much as to mention the conjoined Chinese characters for 6 and 4” in web searches, so dissident postings refer instead to the imaginary date of May 35.¹ Party censors make it “inconceivable for scholars to access Chinese archival sources” on Tiananmen, according to historian Chen Jian, and do not permit schoolchildren to study the topic; 1989 remains a “‘forbidden zone’ in the press, scholarship, and classroom teaching.”² The party still detains some of those who took part in the protest and does not allow others to leave the country.³ And every June 4, the CCP seeks to prevent any form of remembrance with detentions and a show of force by the pervasive Chinese security apparatus. The result, according to expert Perry Link, is that in to-

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1. Jean-Philippe Béja, ed., *The Impact of China's 1989 Tiananmen Massacre* (New York: Routledge, 2010), pp. 2–4. See also Michael Bonnin, “The Chinese Communist Party and 4 June 1989, or How to Get Out of It and Get Away With It,” in *ibid.*, pp. 33–48.

2. Chen Jian, “Tiananmen and the Fall of the Berlin Wall: China's Path toward 1989 and Beyond,” in Jeffrey A. Engel, ed., *The Fall of the Berlin Wall: The Revolutionary Legacy of 1989* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 98.

3. The most famous prisoner is the recipient of the 2010 Nobel Peace Prize, Liu Xiaobo. Other examples are Liao Yiwu, who was jailed for writing a poem about June 1989 and, after his release, fled China secretly (see Liao Yiwu, “Walking Out on China,” *New York Times*, September 15, 2011); and Li Wangyang, who was arrested in 1989, rearrested after a brief release, and died in jail in 2012 of unknown causes (see “Mysteriöser Tod eines Dissidenten,” *Tagesspiegel*, June 8, 2012).

day's People's Republic of China (PRC), "Most young people have barely heard about the events of 1989."⁴

This censorship makes it all the more imperative that scholars based abroad seek answers to a tragic but important question: What motivated the leaders of the PRC to turn the People's Liberation Army (PLA) on the people in 1989? Or, phrased in general terms, what factors cause repressive regimes to take the ultimate step of ordering the military to attack unarmed protestors? Now is a particularly good time to consider this question, because evidence from the 1989 decisionmaking process has become available outside the PRC.⁵

This evidence is an improvement over widely used sources of uncertain provenance, such as the best-selling *Tiananmen Papers*.⁶ As critics have pointed out, the *Papers* are an unknown number of removes away from actual CCP sources and therefore anecdotal.⁷ Reviewing both the English and Chinese versions of the *Papers* in the flagship journal *China Quarterly*, Alfred Chan found

4. Quoted in Jamil Anderlini, "Tiananmen Still Casts a Shadow over China," *Financial Times*, June 3, 2011. Some forms of protest are beyond the reach of the party, however; on June 4, 2012, the Shanghai Stock Exchange posted an unlikely broad index fall of 64.89 points, and large crowds gathered at a commemoration in Hong Kong. See Keith Bradsher, "China Gets an Odd, Eerie Reminder of Tiananmen," *International Herald Tribune*, June 5, 2012.

5. Scholars will find more materials than those cited here in other locations, but the most useful sources for this article are in Germany (cited in the notes below) and the United States, particularly the George H.W. Bush Presidential Library (GHWBPL) in College Station, Texas. Not only has the Bush Library released a large number of documents in response to Freedom of Information (FOIA) and mandatory review requests by this article's author and others, but it has also put all declassified presidential "memcons" (memorandums of conversations) and "telcons" (memorandums of telephone conversations) on its website. Hence, any GHWBPL memcon or telcon cited below can be found in chronological order at http://bushlibrary.tamu.edu/research/memcons_telcons.php. Additional U.S. (and foreign) sources can be found on the website of the National Security Archive (NSA), <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/>. Similarly, the Cold War International History Project in Washington D.C. posts documents.

6. Zhang Liang, Andrew Nathan, Perry Link, and Orville Schell, eds., *The Tiananmen Papers: The Chinese Leadership's Decision to Use Force against Their Own People—In Their Own Words* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2001). This edited volume set a new standard for book launches when first published in 2001, because a special forty-eight page section in *Foreign Affairs* accompanied its release: Andrew J. Nathan, "The Tiananmen Papers," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 80, No. 1 (January/February 2001), pp. 2–50. See also the commentary on the significance of the joint launch of these papers in both book form and in *Foreign Affairs*, in Lowell Dittmer, "Review of *The Tiananmen Papers*," *China Quarterly*, No. 166 (June 2001), pp. 476–483. A Chinese-language version of *The Tiananmen Papers* also appeared in 2001: *Zhong guo liu si zhen xiang* (New York: Mirror Books, 2001). Note, the version of *The Tiananmen Papers* cited below is the subsequent 2002 English paperback with the same editors, title, and publisher, but updated front matter.

7. To be fair, the editors themselves point out the problematic nature of their volume, making clear that it came from a Chinese man using the cover name Zhang Liang (who is credited as an editor on the volume under that name). Zhang offered one of the editors, Andrew Nathan, "a 516-page computer-printed Chinese manuscript," which he had compiled. The editors became convinced that this typescript represented transcripts of internal CCP documents on Tiananmen Square. Zhang et al., *The Tiananmen Papers*, p. xii.

“little evidence” that the editors had “any real secret documents.” He concluded that both versions were “part fiction” and at best “secondary sources steps removed from the originals.”⁸ Expert Lowell Dittmer made similar remarks, lamenting that the editors “saw no proof that the originals existed,” instead taking the word of the man who provided them with copies and claimed that they were genuine.⁹ The same kind of provenance issues also casts shadows over what appear to be the autobiography of former CCP General Secretary Zhao Ziyang and the diary of his foe, Li Peng, the adopted son of former PRC Premier Zhou Enlai.¹⁰ Harvard University has acquired a limited amount of Chinese sources that seem reliably genuine, but they shed more light on the bottom-up protest than on the top-down reaction.¹¹

8. Alfred L. Chan, “*The Tiananmen Papers Revisited*,” *China Quarterly*, No. 177 (March 2004), pp. 190–205; quotations are from the abstract, p. 190. In a rebuttal printed in the same issue, one of *The Tiananmen Papers*’ editors implied that Chan had fallen for efforts by the Chinese Ministry of State Security to cast doubt on the *Papers*: Andrew J. Nathan, “A Rejoinder to Alfred L. Chan,” *China Quarterly*, No. 177 (March 2004), pp. 206–214. The basic conundrum, as expert Richard Baum has noted, is that the *Papers* suffer from an “inherent lack of verifiability,” barring an unlikely opening of all relevant archives. See Baum, “Tiananmen—The Inside Story?” *China Journal*, No. 46 (July 2001), pp. 119–134, at p. 130.

9. Dittmer, “Review of *The Tiananmen Papers*,” p. 476. Similarly, the historian Jonathan Spence pointed out that there had been a real Zhang Liang, namely, a historical figure from the third century B.C.E. who appears to have invented lengthy dialogues as a way of conveying his strategic analysis. As a result, Spence guessed that Zhang’s choice of pseudonym was a hint that the transcripts were invented. See Spence, “Inside the Forbidden City,” *New York Times Book Review*, January 21, 2001, pp. 10–11.

10. Zhao Ziyang’s memoir appeared as Zhao, *Prisoner of the State: The Secret Journal of Premier Zhao Ziyang*, trans. and eds. Bao Pu, Renee Chiang, and Adi Ignatius (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2009). After Tiananmen, Zhao lived out his life under a kind of house arrest, during which time he reportedly authored this book by tape dictation, hid the tapes among the toys of his grandchildren, and arranged for the tapes to be smuggled out by a variety of people. What is supposedly Li Peng’s diary appeared as *Li Peng liu si ri ji zhen xiang: fu lu Li Peng liu si ri ji yuan wen* [The true story of Li Peng’s June 4 diaries: With the original “June 4 diaries” of Li Peng] (Hong Kong: Ao yao chu ban you xian gong si, 2010). The Fairbank Collection of the Fung Library at Harvard University has a digital version. For more on the Li Peng diary, see Andrew Jacobs, “Chinese Order Stops Printing of Memoir by Ex-Premier,” *New York Times*, June 21, 2010; and Ezra F. Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2011), p. 830 n. 1. In addition to the above sources, former Beijing Mayor Chen Xitong provided interviews for a book, but only more than two decades after the event. See Bao Pu, ed., *Conversations with Chen Xitong* (Hong Kong: New Century, 2012). Finally, from Deng Xiaoping, see Deng, *Selected Works of Deng Xiaoping, 1982–1992*, trans. Bureau for the Compilation and Translation of Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin (Beijing: Foreign Languages, 1994).

11. Harvard’s Yenching Library maintains a Tiananmen Square archive containing original materials from the protest movement such as documents, photographs, big-character posters, and bloody clothing. For more details, see the Harvard-Yenching Library iSite, *Tian an men zi liao ji*, Hollis No. 008831066, Hollis Catalogue of Harvard University, <http://lib.harvard.edu/catalogs/hollis.html>. Also at Harvard, the Fairbank Center of the Fung Library maintains (among other items) a collection of Chinese-language *neibu* items, or materials intended for internal party use, in both book and DVD format, as well as extensive holdings of the *Beijing Review* and *China Daily*. For an example of work by a scholar who did manage to secure primary sources in China, see Frank

Increasingly, however, it is possible to trace the thinking of the CCP's leaders through the open records of the party's communications, and exchange of visits, with the United States, Germany, the Soviet Union (later with Russia), and other states, as recorded and analyzed in the archives of those countries. Although some of these records have been open for a while, the twentieth anniversaries from 2009 to 2011 of the events that ended the European Cold War saw the release of a much greater number, either by way of commemoration or through Freedom of Information requests.¹² These items are obviously no substitute for the CCP's own archive on Tiananmen, but, given the remoteness of the possibility that it will open to researchers any time soon, their unassailable provenance represents an important step forward.

This article reexamines the CCP's decision to use force in Tiananmen Square on the basis of these new sources. In light of space constraints, it does not revisit those parts of scholars' current understanding that are substantiated by the new evidence. For example, these sources confirm the timeline of events: (1) the unexpected death of the reform-minded former General Secretary Hu Yaobang just weeks before planned demonstrations to mark the seventieth anniversary of May 4, 1919, a milestone in Chinese anti-imperialism; (2) the rapid increase in tension when the public mourning for Hu intensified to a mass movement eventually involving an estimated 100 million people; (3) the April 25, 1989, decision by the man in charge, Deng Xiaoping, to respond strongly with a harsh editorial in the party-controlled newspaper *Renmin Ribao*; (4) a surreal standoff as the CCP had to restrain itself in advance of Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev's arrival in Beijing on May 15, 1989, for the first summit in thirty years and one meant to restore Sino-Soviet relations before the eyes of numerous foreign journalists now unexpectedly covering protests as well; (5) the May 17 decision, after Gorbachev's departure, to declare

Dikötter, *Mao's Great Famine: The History of China's Most Devastating Catastrophe, 1958–1962* (New York: Walker and Company, 2010). Dikötter took advantage of a period of relative openness surrounding the 2008 Beijing Olympics to work in provincial Chinese archives. In the wake of the political tightening-up after the Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to Liu Xiaobo in 2010 and the beginning of the Arab upheavals in 2011, however, Dikötter remarked that it would no longer be possible for other scholars to repeat his research. Dikötter, radio interview with BBC reporter Nick Higham upon Dikötter's receipt of the BBC Samuel Johnson Prize for Non-Fiction, July 6, 2011, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-14056789>. See also the review of Dikötter's book by Roderick MacFarquhar, "The Worst Man-Made Catastrophe, Ever," *New York Review of Books*, February 10, 2011, <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2011/feb/10/worst-man-made-catastrophe-ever/?pagination=false>.

12. Admittedly, these sources have their drawbacks. They are not complete in any sense, and there is no substitute for having original CCP sources. Research in them demands work in varied locations and languages.

martial law under the leadership of hard-liners Li Peng, Yang Shangkun, and Qiao Shi; (6) the escalation to the bloodshed of June 3–4 in and around Tiananmen Square; (7) Deng's public praise for the military afterward, on June 9; and (8) the June 23–24 official culmination of the inner-party process to vilify and blame Zhao for what had happened.¹³

Similarly, the important domestic considerations that inspired both the party and the protestors do not require revision here. The CCP's top decisionmaker, Deng, wanted to show that he would tolerate neither large-scale popular protest nor elite attempts—above all by Zhao—to split the party by reaching out to the masses. He also wanted to send a signal to the party's cadres throughout the vast geographical expanse of China concerning how to proceed against local demonstrators. As for the protestors, their motives included a desire for greater political freedoms and a moral outrage at corruption among party leaders and their families.¹⁴ In addition, Deng biographer Ezra

13. This sequence of events summarizes Béja, *The Impact of China's 1989 Massacre*, pp. 2–6; Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, pp. 602–632; Zhao, *Prisoner of the State*, p. 29; and Zhang et al., *The Tiananmen Papers*, pp. viii, xxxi, 56–212 (the estimate of 100 million people is at p. xxxi). Also useful is the CIA's own chronology, "CIA Research Paper, the Road to the Tiananmen Crackdown: An Analytic Chronology of Chinese Decision Making," doc. 13, September 1989, in the online collection of documents by Michael L. Evans, ed., *The U.S. "Tiananmen Papers": New Documents Reveal U.S. Perceptions of 1989 Chinese Political Crisis* (Washington D.C.: NSA, 2001), <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB47/index2.html#docs>. Note, there was a previous NSA online book on the same topic: Jeffrey T. Richelson and Michael L. Evans, eds., *Tiananmen Square, 1989: The Declassified History* (Washington, D.C.: NSA, 1999), <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB16/documents/index.html>. For the views of contemporaries as to which of these many events mattered most, see (to name a few accounts from varying viewpoints, in alphabetical order), Henry Kissinger, *On China* (New York: Penguin, 2011); Perry Link, *Evening Chats in Beijing: Probing China's Predicament* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1992); Qian Qichen, *Ten Episodes in China's Diplomacy* (New York: HarperCollins, 2005), p. 29; and Shen Tong and Marianne Yen, *Almost a Revolution: The Story of a Chinese Student's Journey from Boyhood to Leadership in Tiananmen Square* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990), pp. 323–326.

14. For the view that the main cause of the protests was a desire for democracy, see some of the contributions to Tony Saich, ed., *The Chinese People's Movement: Perspectives on Spring 1989* (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1990). For example, Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom, "Student Protests and the Chinese Tradition, 1919–1989," refers to what happened as the "Democracy Uprising" (p. 22); and Tony Saich, "When Worlds Collide: The Beijing People's Movement of 1989," refers to "democratic salons" that promoted the movement (p. 35). For the view that it was moral anger, see Elizabeth J. Perry, "Casting a Chinese 'Democracy' Movement: The Roles of Students, Workers, and Entrepreneurs," in Perry and Wasserstrom, eds., *Popular Protest and Political Culture in Modern China*, 2d ed. (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1994). She cited, in particular, one popular inspirational song as proof; the main lyric is, roughly, "Mao Zedong's son went to the front lines; Zhao Ziyang's son smuggles color television sets." See also Perry, "A New Rights Consciousness?" *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 20, No. 3 (July 2009), pp. 17–20; and Maura Elizabeth Cunningham and Wasserstrom, "Interpreting Protest in Modern China," *Dissent*, Vol. 58, No. 1 (Winter 2011), pp. 13–18. For a broader look at popular protests and their fates, see Adam Roberts and Timothy Garton Ash, eds., *Civil Resistance and Power Politics: The Experience of Non-Violent Action from Gandhi to the Present* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

Vogel has rightly emphasized the CCP's mishandling of price reform in the late 1980s, the subsequent 30 percent rise in prices, and the uncertainty over whether reforms would lead workers to lose their "iron rice bowl" of guaranteed benefits as causative factors for the protest movement.¹⁵ These findings remain significant and are not challenged by the new evidence. As a result, this article does not focus on such causes.

Rather, this essay's contribution is twofold. First, it introduces new evidence, gathered via the methodology of archival work outside of China, into the discussion among scholars studying the history and politics of the PRC. Second, it assesses what these new sources add to the current understanding of Tiananmen Square: that the European example has been understudied as a cause of the crackdown. One of the reasons that Chinese leaders were willing to take violent action was their fear of the demonstration effects of democratic changes in Poland and Hungary. They wanted to prevent similar contagion from spreading to their territory, or, to paraphrase political scientist Mark Beissinger, to block the import of modular political phenomena from Europe.¹⁶ There were, of course, democratizing trends elsewhere, such as in the Philippines, South Korea, and Thailand. In Europe, however, these trends challenged fellow communist regimes, and that made them all the more frightening. The CCP did not wish to follow the Hungarian and Polish examples in 1989, just as it had not wished to endure protests such as those in Europe in the 1950s after the death of Joseph Stalin.¹⁷ Nor did it wish to succumb to the kind

15. Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, pp. 470, 600–601.

16. Beissinger defines a modular political phenomenon as "action that is based in significant part on the prior successful example of others." Mark R. Beissinger, "Structure and Example in Modular Political Phenomena: The Diffusion of Bulldozer/Rose/Orange/Tulip Revolutions," *Perspectives on Politics*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (June 2007), pp. 259–276, at p. 259. See also Beissinger, "An Interrelated Wave," *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (January 2009), pp. 74–77. In other words, CCP leaders worried—to paraphrase theorists Peter Leeson and Andrea Dean—about democratic dominoes falling on China from abroad. Leeson and Dean, "The Democratic Domino Theory: An Empirical Investigation," *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 53, No. 3 (July 2009), pp. 533–551. For more on the subject of contagion and diffusion, see Valerie Bunce and Sharon Wolchik, "Getting Real about 'Real Causes,'" *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (January 2009), pp. 69–73; and Kristian Skrede Gleditsch and Michael D. Ward, "Diffusion and the International Context of Democratization," *International Organization*, Vol. 60, No. 4 (Fall 2006), pp. 911–933.

17. Setting China in its international context, whether historically or in current terms, is a growing trend. As Andrew Nathan observed in 2011, newer scholarship on China "has long since called into doubt any essentialism about China's 'singularity,' 'centrality,' or 'strategic patience.'" See Nathan, "What China Wants: Bargaining with Beijing," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 90, No. 4 (July/August 2011), p. 155. Examples of work that set China in the context of its relations with other countries, particularly the Soviet Union/Russia, include Thomas P. Bernstein and Hua-Yu Li, eds., *China Learns from the Soviet Union, 1949–Present* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 2010); M. Taylor Fravel, *Strong Borders, Secure Nation: Cooperation and Conflict in China's Territorial Disputes* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2008); Lorenz Lüthi, *The Sino-Soviet Split: Cold War in the Com-*

of democratic wave that would begin to sweep the Arab world more than twenty years later, in 2011.¹⁸

In other words, the European example, although it has received mention from a few perceptive scholars, deserves more attention than it has until now garnered as a factor in CCP Tiananmen decisionmaking.¹⁹ For example, none of the following items even merited an entry in *The Tiananmen Papers'* index: Hungary, Poland, Solidarity, Solidarity leader Lech Walesa, or Eastern Europe or Europe itself—and Gorbachev only in the context of his May 1989 visit to the PRC. It is useful in this context to consider a counterfactual question: Without the example of 1989 in Eastern Europe, would the Beijing leaders' response have been as bloody? Although a counterfactual can only ever be speculative (and the number of people involved was much smaller), it is worth noting that when student protests broke out in 1986, the party did not order a PLA massacre.²⁰ In 1989, however—on the same day as semi-free elections in Poland—the CCP took the ultimate step of ordering the army to kill protesters.

In particular, this article highlights three junctures at which CCP leaders expressed concern about the impact of the changing international context, particularly in Europe: (1) in early 1989, as both the Soviet Union and Poland made plans for semi-free elections that spring and summer; (2) in April and May 1989, as part of the decisionmaking immediately before the crackdown; and (3) in late 1989, as part of the assessment of the kind of U.S. countermeasures the PRC could expect afterward. At each of these critical junctures, the new evidence captures CCP leaders—including Deng—citing the potential power of

munist World (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2008); Erez Manela, *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007); Christopher Marsh, *Unparalleled Reforms: China's Rise, Russia's Fall, and the Interdependence of Transition* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 2005); Peter Nolan, *China's Rise, Russia's Fall: Politics, Economics, and Planning in the Transition from Stalinism* (New York: St. Martin's, 1995); Minxin Pei, *From Reform to Revolution: The Demise of Communism in China and the Soviet Union* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994); and Gilbert Rozman, *The Chinese Debate about Soviet Socialism, 1978–1985* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1987).

18. Daniel A. Bell, "Why China Won't Follow Arab Revolt," *New Perspectives Quarterly*, Vol. 28, No. 2 (Spring 2011), pp. 10–13. For a theoretical assessment of the significance of revolutionary moments, see William H. Sewell Jr., "Historical Events as Transformations of Structures: Inventing Revolution at the Bastille," *Theory and Society*, Vol. 25, No. 6 (December 1996), pp. 841–881.

19. Scholars and journalists who have mentioned the importance of Europe include Richard Baum, *Burying Mao: Chinese Politics in the Age of Deng Xiaoping* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994), pp. 275–280; Bonnin, "The Chinese Communist Party and 4 June 1989," pp. 33–34; James Miles, *The Legacy of Tiananmen: China in Disarray* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), p. 42; David Shambaugh, *China's Communist Party: Atrophy and Adaptation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), pp. 43–46; and Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, pp. 625–626.

20. For more on the 1986 student protest, see Julia Kwong, "The 1986 Student Demonstrations in China: A Democratic Movement?" *Asian Survey*, Vol. 28, No. 9 (September 1988), pp. 970–985.

the European example as a reason to move forward aggressively, and worrying little about the U.S. reaction afterward.

CCP Worries in Early 1989

CCP concern over events in Europe manifested itself in a series of bilateral meetings with President George H.W. Bush just after his inauguration. The new president visited Beijing in February 1989 as part of a short-notice trip occasioned by the funeral of the emperor of Japan. Bush took advantage of this funeral to visit not only Japan but also China early in his presidency, without thereby insulting other allies seeking to be favored with his first foreign visits.

Had Bush been visiting Moscow, his counterpart as political leader would have been the general secretary of the Communist Party, namely, Gorbachev. Party leadership in the CCP differed from the Soviet model, however; the general secretary, Zhao, was not the top man, nor was the Politburo the most important grouping. Its smaller subset, the Politburo Standing Committee (PSC), comprised an elite within the elite—but even the PSC was not sovereign; there was still another layer. A secret agreement among top CCP leaders at the Thirteenth Party Congress in 1987 had given the elderly Deng final say on all matters of importance, and that agreement was still fully in force in 1989. Additionally, Deng had followed the example of Mao Zedong and retained the powerful post of chairman of the Central Military Commission, even after relinquishing other titles and notionally going into retirement.²¹ Rather than subjecting himself (and his fading hearing ability) to the tedium of meetings, he ruled from home. Vogel has summarized the role of Deng, who was eighty-four years old in 1989, as follows: He “did not come out to the streets to meet the demonstrating students nor did he manage the daily details of the party’s response. But behind the scenes, he remained focused on the unfolding drama and was the decisionmaker.”²² Deng governed on the basis of advice from the PSC and a group of older party figures known as the “elders.”²³ During the cri-

21. Zhang et al., *The Tiananmen Papers*, p. lii.

22. Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, p. 595; see also pp. 245–247, 377–381, 587–594. William Overholt points out that Deng managed to stay in power after his own death: “Even in 2002, Deng ruled from the grave as his choice for top leader, Hu Jintao, was honored.” As a result, the leadership choice in 2012 represented “the first in three decades not controlled by Deng.” Overholt, “Reassessing China: Awaiting Xi Jinping,” *Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 35, No. 2 (Spring 2012), pp. 121–137, at p. 122.

23. For more on the structure of the government, party, and society in the PRC, see Tony Saich, *Governance and Politics of China*, 3d ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); Tang Tsou, “The Tiananmen Tragedy: The State-Society Relationship, Choices, and Mechanisms in Historical Perspective,” in Brantly Womack, ed., *Contemporary Chinese Politics in Historical Perspective* (New York:

sis of 1989, he assembled these elders repeatedly in his personal residence, presumably to increase the legitimacy of any decisions taken and to ensure that he would not be alone in carrying responsibility for the uglier measures. In consultation with them and hard-line PSC members such as Li Peng, Deng would make all of the fateful decisions: to declare martial law, to use all means necessary to clear Tiananmen Square, and to dismiss Zhao and replace him with Jiang Zemin.²⁴

All of this was in the future when Bush arrived in Beijing for his February 25–26 visit. Although the trip would end in public controversy—the U.S. embassy in the PRC invited the prominent dissident Fang Lizhi to a dinner, but the Chinese regime prevented him from attending—U.S. Ambassador Winston Lord privately characterized the episode as insignificant. “The Fang Lizhi banquet incident was an unfortunate but minor blemish which did no damage to the relationship,” he wrote in a cable in April 1989.²⁵ James Mann, chief of the *Los Angeles Times*’s bureau in Beijing at the time, inferred that the White House had missed seeing Fang’s name on the embassy’s list of invitees or had misunderstood his significance; otherwise it would have vetoed the invitation.²⁶

Certainly, the mood at the top level during the visit was friendly, as the new president had served as the U.S. liaison to the PRC in the 1970s and knew Deng and others already. Joking with Yang Shangkun (who enjoyed the title of president of the PRC but whose real power came from his being a confidante of Deng), Bush said that during the 1988 U.S. presidential election, he had thought of calling Yang “and asking for thirty million votes.” Yang responded, “It was a pity I could not vote. I would have voted for you.”²⁷

Yang hosted a welcoming banquet for Bush, attended by Li Peng as well, and both brought up events in Europe. Li Peng remarked that the PRC “would not welcome the kind of labor problems that Poland is experiencing with Solidarity,” and Yang expressed doubts about whether Gorbachev’s attempts at domestic political liberalization could succeed.²⁸ Li Peng made even more

Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 265–327; and Zhang et al., *The Tiananmen Papers*, pp. 1–lii. For more information on Deng’s role, see Richard Evans, *Deng Xiaoping and the Making of Modern China* (New York: Viking, 1993).

24. Zhang et al., *The Tiananmen Papers*, pp. 1–li. For more details on the meetings of the elders and their consequences, see also pp. 184–189, 256, 310–313, 365.

25. See “U.S. Embassy Beijing Cable, President’s Banquet—Chinese Guest List,” in Evans, *The U.S. Tiananmen Papers*,” doc. 5, February 18, 1989; and “U.S. Embassy Beijing Cable, Farewell and Hail,” quoted in *ibid.*, doc. 6, April 21, 1989. See also Link, *Evening Chats in Beijing*, pp. 29–33.

26. James Mann, *About Face: A History of America’s Curious Relationship with China, from Nixon to Clinton* (New York: Vintage, 1998), pp. 178–180.

27. “President’s Meeting with President Yang Shangkun of the People’s Republic of China,” memcon, GHWBPL, February 25, 1989.

28. “Welcoming Banquet in Beijing, China,” memcon, GHWBPL, February 25, 1989.

pointed remarks the next morning, categorizing Gorbachev's efforts as "dangerous," given that "the Soviet people have not gained any practical benefits from perestroika."²⁹ There was a component of unspoken irony in these meetings. According to the U.S. National Security Council (NSC), it was thanks to the work of the U.S. radio broadcaster Voice of America (VOA) over the past few years that the average Chinese person knew anything about the changes in the Soviet Union since 1985 under Gorbachev. The NSC estimated that "fifty million Chinese" listened to VOA and, as a result, the broadcaster represented the "main source of information in China on events in East Europe."³⁰ The new president, however, regarded the changes in the Soviet Union with more caution than his predecessor had.³¹ Bush agreed with his Chinese interlocutors that "Soviet satellite countries like Poland and Hungary wanting to reform more quickly than the Soviets would like" was a "major problem."³²

Li Peng also slipped in a word to the wise. Because Bush was scheduled to meet Deng next, Li Peng took pains to emphasize that "that will be the climax of your visit. He remains China's paramount leader. His habit is to talk about his subjects such as the international scene and the norms governing bilateral relations, but he leaves the details to us."³³ This "heads-up" from Li Peng sheds light on one of the controversies surrounding Tiananmen Square. Zhao gave the same disclaimer to a visiting Gorbachev in May 1989; but in the context of the unfolding crackdown, such a comment sounded like an accusation—"he's the blood-thirsty one," so to speak—and inspired Deng's fury.³⁴ Zhao tried to defend himself by saying that such disclaimers were standard in international meetings. Li Peng's comment suggests that Zhao's defense was accurate.

Complaints about the Soviet Union dominated Bush's meeting with Deng as well. Speaking at great length on the topic, Deng characterized "Czarist Russia and the Soviet Union" as the countries that had done the most harm to China. According to Deng, after World War II the Soviet Union had gained "more than three million square kilometers" of what should have been, in his opinion, Chinese territory. Indeed, the Soviet "encirclement" had inspired the PRC

29. "President Bush's Meeting with Premier Li Peng of the People's Republic of China," memcon, GHWBPL, February 26, 1989.

30. "Background: Status of Bilateral Diplomatic/Cultural Issues," GHWBPL, Douglas H. Paal files, FOIA 2000-0950-F, n.d., but from context late 1989 or 1990.

31. For the differences between the foreign policy approaches of the Ronald Reagan administration and George H.W. Bush administration, see Mary Elise Sarotte, 1989: *The Struggle to Create Post-Cold War Europe* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2009), chap. 1.

32. "Welcoming Banquet in Beijing, China."

33. "President Bush's Meeting with Premier Li Peng of the People's Republic of China."

34. Zhang et al., *The Tiananmen Papers*, pp. 184–187.

to resume contacts with the West in the 1970s. Now Deng was concerned that he could not predict “what will happen after Gorbachev comes to Beijing.” He stressed that “with regard to the problems confronting China, let me say to you that the overwhelming need is to maintain stability.” Bush expressed agreement, saying that “Gorbachev is a charming man, and the Soviet Union is in a state of change. But the byword for the U.S. is caution.”³⁵ Part of the reason that Deng criticized the Soviet Union to Bush was presumably to insert a negative note into what was, from China’s point of view, the worrisome level of cooperation between the United States and the Soviet Union in the 1980s; but the concern seems to have been genuine.

Bush ended his visit with a conversation with Zhao. Reforms in the Soviet Union remained a dominant theme in their talks. Zhao bragged to the president that, in the 1980s, the annual growth of Soviet gross national product was only 1 percent, but in China it was 8 percent. As Zhao put it, “[T]he reform trend is irreversible in China.” He qualified this observation, however, by saying that reform would be economic, not political. “If it [political reform] is carried out, chaos will result, and reform will be disrupted.”³⁶

Cracking Down in the Spring of 1989

Chaos came even without political reform. By April 1989, protestors had gathered in large numbers in Tiananmen Square. The evidence now available from 1989 captures Chinese decisionmakers citing concern about the democratic changes in Eastern Europe as one of their main motivations in deciding how to respond. Such evidence is available not only in the United States but also in Germany, or more specifically in the archives of the former East Germany (the German Democratic Republic, GDR).³⁷

In the late 1980s, both East Germany and the PRC eyed Gorbachev’s reforms with wariness.³⁸ There was a precedent for their common anxiety; rulers in

35. “President Bush’s Meeting with Chairman Deng Xiaoping of the People’s Republic of China,” memcon, GHWBPL, February 26, 1989. On PRC-Soviet relations, see also John W. Garver, “The Chinese Communist Party and the Collapse of Soviet Communism,” *China Quarterly*, No. 133 (March 1993), pp. 1–26.

36. “President Bush’s Meeting with General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party Zhao Ziyang of the People’s Republic of China,” memcon, GHWBPL, February 26, 1989.

37. For more on historical relations between the two Germanies and the PRC, see Michael Mayer, “No Unsolicited Advice: The People’s Republic of China and German Reunification, 1989–1990,” in Joanne Miyang Cho and Eric Kurlander, eds., *Encounters between Germany and Asia* (London: Routledge, forthcoming).

38. As Gilbert Rozman describes it, from 1986 to 1991 “official China grew increasingly nervous about Gorbachev’s impact.” Rozman, “China’s Concurrent Debate about the Gorbachev Era,” in

Beijing and East Berlin had shared worries about events after Stalin's death in 1953.³⁹ The East German regime had violently suppressed the protests that followed, thereby using an approach sympathetic to Mao Zedong's own. Indeed, one of the origins of Mao's 1957 anti-rightist movement was his worry that the PRC might experience the kind of unrest that had erupted not only in East Germany but also in Hungary and Poland.⁴⁰ The Sino-Soviet split had cooled relations but, by 1986, GDR leader Erich Honecker could visit Deng Xiaoping and, in the following years, share a mutual distrust of Gorbachev's reforms.⁴¹

Hence, even as most foreign governments strongly condemned the violence of June 1989, the East German ruling regime offered enthusiastic support to its Chinese counterpart. It did so despite numerous protests on the part of its own population.⁴² Disregarding its own people, the East Berlin Politburo ordered its news outlets to report that images of killing in Tiananmen Square were faked.⁴³ In return, the CCP repeatedly thanked East Germany's leaders for their strong support. As a way of expressing that gratitude, Beijing organized contacts and exchanges of visits at all political levels. For example, the Chinese embassy in Bonn held regular consultations about Tiananmen with its East German counterpart, during which embassy official Liu Qiabo repeated Beijing's concern over developments in Hungary and Poland.⁴⁴ According to Liu, Beijing worried

Bernstein and Li, eds., *China Learns from the Soviet Union, 1949–Present*, p. 469. For more on China and the Soviet Union at the end of the Cold War, see Tsuyoshi Hasegawa, ed., *The Cold War in East Asia, 1945–Present* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2011); and Artemy M. Kalinovsky and Sergey Radchenko, eds., *The End of the Cold War and the Third World: New Perspectives on Regional Conflict* (London: Routledge, 2011).

39. The author thanks William Kirby for a discussion of the history of PRC–East German relations. See also Hans Kundnani and Jonas Parello-Plesner, “Beware the New Beijing–Berlin Relationship,” *Financial Times*, May 15, 2012.

40. On the 1950s and 1960s in the PRC and Europe, see Roderick MacFarquhar, *The Origins of the Cultural Revolution*, Vol. 1: *Contradictions among the People, 1956–1957* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1974); Roderick MacFarquhar and Michael Schoenhals, *Mao's Last Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2006); and Christian F. Ostermann, *The United States, the East German Uprising of 1953, and the Limits of Rollback* (Washington, D.C.: Cold War International History Project, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 1994).

41. Portions of the transcript from Erich Honecker's 1986 visit to the PRC are in an untitled document in the East German Ministry for State Security (or Stasi) Archive (MfS), ZAIG 7081, October/November 1986.

42. There are numerous Stasi files on East Germans who expressed sympathy for the victims in Tiananmen Square. See, for example, MfS, HA XX AKG 139, 221, 292, 3137, 3953, 6388, 6643, 6827, and 7272. The letters about Tiananmen received by the East German Central Committee included one saying that “we are ashamed that our country, our government, is praising this bloodbath.” MfS, HA II 26624, letter to the Central Committee, June 6, 1989.

43. Sarotte, 1989, p. 18.

44. “Vermerk über ein Gespräch mit dem Rat der chinesischen Botschaft, Liu Qibao,” in the united Germany's Foreign Ministry Political Archive (PA/AA), from the East German Foreign Ministry

that “socialism might disappear from Europe for a long time.”⁴⁵ Liu also explained that, although Western governments were publicly criticizing the PRC for its actions and imposing sanctions, privately they were contradicting themselves: “The U.S., in particular, may use words to call for harsh measures against China; however, its actual deeds are significantly different.”⁴⁶

Similarly, members of the East German secret police, or Stasi, reported on how well they were being treated by Chinese colleagues. A relatively low-level visiting delegation in September 1989 dined extremely well and stayed in “first-class hotels,” all as thanks for the GDR’s “firm stand on the events of June.” The group was privileged with a detailed discussion of the work of the Chinese Ministry for Public Security (MPS). The Stasi learned that the MPS had 1.29 million employees, or 6.4 per 10,000 Chinese residents.⁴⁷ A Peking office of the MPS also informed East Berlin that, in the tumultuous period just before June 10, 1989, it had arrested 400 protestors in Beijing and other large cities.⁴⁸ The Stasi was also allowed to gain insight into disputes within the MPS. One Stasi agent reported that “even some people working for the MPS condemn the actions of Deng Xiaoping and Li Peng.”⁴⁹

At the top of the political spectrum, a delegation headed by Yao Yilin, a PSC member who had supported Li Peng, paid a high-profile visit to the celebrations for East Germany’s fortieth anniversary in 1989.⁵⁰ Similarly, the East

collection (MfAA), ZR 529/03, June 30, 1989. See also similar remarks in reports with the same title, in the same file, from July 14, September 7, September 28, and November 25, 1989; and in “Information über aktuelle Tendenzen der ideologischen Arbeit der KP Chinas,” PA/AA, MfAA, ZR 614/03, August 23, 1989.

45. “Vermerk über ein Gespräch mit dem Rat der chinesischen Botschaft, Liu Qibao,” November 27, 1989.

46. “Vermerk über ein Gespräch mit dem Rat der chinesischen Botschaft, Liu Qibao,” PA/AA, MfAA, ZR 529/03, September 7, 1989. See also similar remarks in reports with the same title, in the same file, from July 30 and July 14, 1989. On the trade between the PRC and West Germany, particularly in the nuclear industry, see “Information über die nukleare Zusammenarbeit BRD-VR China,” MfS, HV A 821, n.d., but from context 1989.

47. The visiting group was officially an Interior Ministry (Mdi) delegation, but such groups often included Stasi representatives as well, as suggested by the presence of this report in the MfS files. The visit report (“Teilbericht über den Besuch einer Delegation des Mdi der DDR beim Ministerium für Öffentliche Sicherheit der VR China,” in MfS, Abt. X 894, September 21–29, 1989) includes an extensive study of the Chinese Ministry of Public Security. See also the earlier East German study of the Chinese security apparatus, “Eine kurze Einführung zur öffentlichen Sicherheit in China,” PA/AA, MfAA, ZR 609/03, November 9, 1987.

48. “Information,” produced by MfAA but preserved in MfS, HA II 163, June 15, 1989.

49. “Abschrift, IM-Bericht,” MfS, HA II 574, September 20, 1989. The agent who authored this report was Ernst Schwarz, a Sinologist at East Berlin’s Humboldt University who also worked under the cover name “Karl Weber” for the Stasi. Schwarz also noted ongoing signs of the regime’s collapse in authority in 1989, such as its inability to prevent countryside residents from blocking roads and charging “tolls” to allow cars to pass.

50. A summary of Yao Yilin’s visit appears in “Vorlage für das Politbüro des ZK der SED, Berlin, den 10. Oktober 1989,” PA/AA, MfAA, ZR 2495-90.

German “crown prince,” Egon Krenz, visited China in September and October as part of the PRC’s own fortieth anniversary celebrations. Krenz, Honecker’s heir apparent to the leadership of the ruling Socialist Unity Party of the GDR, spent more than a week in the PRC despite the desperate political situation back home.⁵¹ The transcripts of conversations during this visit, combined with U.S. embassy and intelligence observations from the time period, provide insight into the decisionmaking that led to the Tiananmen Square violence.

After a brief, in-person greeting from Deng, Krenz had talks with the new general secretary (Jiang), PSC member Qiao, and other party officials.⁵² Throughout, Krenz was eager to learn from CCP leaders about how to deal with protestors and save the status quo, presumably for domestic application.⁵³ Krenz expressed to Jiang his pleasure in visiting an “impenetrable bastion of socialism in Asia” where, “under the leadership of the Communist Party, the most populous country in the world was freed from its half-colonial chains.” Jiang welcomed Krenz’s remarks, and the two agreed that the events of June 1989 had revealed the true hostile intent behind the Western strategy of “so-called peaceful evolution” in relations with China. In reality, that strategy was “an aggressive program of undermining socialism.”⁵⁴ Qiao, who had been (as noted above) one of the three leaders in implementing martial law, impressed upon Krenz how closely his party was following events in Europe. “The CCP is paying a great deal of attention to developments in Poland and Hungary,” he noted.⁵⁵ Qiao expressed his satisfaction at the East German refusal to take part in such changes.

51. His own party was losing control and, roughly a month later, would fail to prevent the breaching of the Berlin Wall. On the demise of East Germany, see Mary Fulbrook, *The People's State: East German Society from Hitler to Honecker* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2005); and Sarotte, 1989.

52. “Bericht über den Aufenthalt der Partei- und Staatsdelegation der DDR unter Leitung des Mitglieds des Politbüros und Sekretärs des ZK der SED, Genossen Egon Krenz . . . vom 25. September bis 2. Oktober 1989 in der VR China,” PA/AA, MfAA, ZR 2496-90. Some duplicates are also available at the Archive of Party and Mass Organizations of the Former GDR (SAPMO) and in Werner Meissner and Anja Feege, eds., *Die DDR und China 1949 bis 1990: Politik – Wirtschaft – Kultur, Eine Quellensammlung* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1995). On the topic of East Germany supporting the PRC in June 1989, see “Protokoll Nr. 22 der Sitzung des Politbüros des ZK der SED vom 6. Juni 1989,” DY 30, J IV 2/2/2331, in SAPMO; “SED ZK Arbeitsprotokolle,” September 5, 1989, DY 30, J IV 2/2/3238, in *ibid.*; and Meissner and Feege, *Die DDR und China 1949 bis 1990*, doc. 191, pp. 398–399; doc. 193, pp. 400–401; doc. 197, pp. 403–404; and doc. 198, p. 404.

53. East Berlin was particularly interested in the CCP’s conclusions as to the causes of the protest movement. See “Bericht für das Politbüro über die Lage in der VR China,” doc. 201, in Meissner and Feege, *Die DDR und China 1949 bis 1990*, pp. 406–407.

54. “Vermerk über das Gespräch des Generalsekretärs des ZK der KP Chinas, Genossen Jiang Zemin, mit Genossen Egon Krenz am 26. September 1989 in Peking,” PA/AA, MfAA, ZR 2496-90. Excerpts from this conversation are also available in a document with the same title in Meissner and Feege, *Die DDR und China 1949 bis 1990*, doc. 204, pp. 412–414.

55. “Vermerk über das Gespräch des Mitglieds des Politbüros und Sekretärs des ZK der SED,

Krenz's longest conversations were with a woman named Li Shuzheng, the deputy director of the International Relations Department of the CCP's Central Committee. She appears to have had the task of providing Krenz with an explanation of Tiananmen, so her comments provide insight into party thinking even though she herself was not a particularly high-ranking official. Li Shuzheng recounted how the Chinese protestors followed "the Polish example" and organized a student group called "Solidarity," although they later revoked this "clumsy" choice of name. They also demanded "legalization of their organization," which "would have—like in Poland—led to the possibility of an open confrontation with the party and the government."⁵⁶

While Li Shuzheng may have been framing her remarks in European terms for the benefit of a German visitor, it is worth noting that her words echo similar comments in what is reportedly the diary of Li Peng—an item, if genuine, that was presumably not produced for foreign consumption. According to Li Peng's diary, Deng felt certain that the protestors were "influenced by the wave of Western bourgeois liberalization . . . in Yugoslavia, Poland, Hungary, and the Soviet Union," and that "their goal is to overthrow the leadership of the Communist Party."⁵⁷ They also seem to have been influenced by the United States. A German-language instructor at a university in Beijing passed along to the GDR embassy a student protest statement from April 1989, written in English: "When in the course of human events it becomes necessary for the students . . . to fight for democracy and freedom, a respect for human rights deems it right and justified for them to make a declaration of their strike."⁵⁸

Li Shuzheng did not remark to Krenz on whether Deng and other senior leaders debated among alternative plans of action in response to Tiananmen. An official in the Chinese embassy in East Berlin, however, explained to the

Genossen Egon Krenz . . . mit Genossen Qiao Shi, Mitglied des Ständigen Ausschusses des Politbüros und des Sekretariats des ZK der KP Chinas, Sekretär der Disziplinarkontrollkommission beim ZK der KP Chinas, am 25. September 1989 im Gebäude des Nationalen Volkskongresses," PA/AA, MfAA, ZR2496/90, p. 7. Excerpts from this conversation are also available in a document with the same title in Meissner and Feege, *Die DDR und China 1949 bis 1990*, doc. 203, pp. 409–411.

56. "Gespräche des Genossen Egon Krenz, Mitglied des Politbüros und Sekretär des ZK der SED, mit Genossin Li Shuzheng, Kandidat [sic] des ZK und stellvertretender Leiter [sic] der Abteilung Internationale Verbindungen des ZK der KP Chinas," PA/AA, MfAA, ZR 2496-90, p. 9, n.d., but from context between September 25 and October 2, 1989. Excerpts from this conversation are also available in a document with the same title in Meissner and Feege, *Die DDR und China 1949 bis 1990*, doc. 207, pp. 416–419. On Li Shuzheng, see also "Vermerk über eine Information zu den jüngsten Ereignissen in der VR China," PA/AA, MfAA, ZR 615/03, July 4, 1989.

57. *Li Peng liu si ri ji zhen xiang*, p. 85.

58. "Open Letter to Teachers and Students of Beijing Foreign Studies University," PA/AA, MfAA, ZR 626/03, April 24, 1989. See also reports from various GDR foreign embassies available in SAPMO, <http://startext.net-build.de:8080/barch/Midosasearch/dy30aiv/index.htm>.

Stasi that one of the reasons why matters had gotten out of control was the length of the debate about what to do. The protests had been able "to escalate so dramatically because the leaders of the party could not agree on the form of a solution." There were ongoing conflicts between two camps: "the camp that wanted to respond to the students' demands for reforms, and the camp that wanted a violent solution." The leadership remained frozen with indecision for so long that "ultimately the violent solution became the only way to prevent a victory" by the party's enemies.⁵⁹ By April 25, 1989, Deng was backing the hard-line approach, as shown in the harsh editorial that he authorized that day.

Zhao seemed to undermine Deng's decision with public comments in early May that hinted at a preference for responding to the students. With Gorbachev arriving for the much-desired restoration of Sino-Soviet relations in mid-May, the growing Deng-Zhao confrontation had to wait, but as soon as Gorbachev left, Zhao's time as general secretary was up. As Li Shuzheng explained, the majority of party leaders felt that they could not make any concessions to the protestors (as Zhao seemed to want), because "then there [would] be a situation like in Poland," which was scheduled to hold semi-free elections on June 4, 1989. The majority felt that taking steps similar to those of the Polish ruling party and "legalizing the opposition would be the beginning of the end of socialism in China."⁶⁰

Once again, the comments of Li Shuzheng match the diary of Li Peng. Describing the same sequence of events, his diary quotes Deng as worrying about the example of Hungary, where "once [the people] caused trouble, the government backed off; and when the government backed off, the people caused more trouble. The government backed off a second time, but it still was not enough, so they backed off a third time. It is never enough, unless the Communist Party falls."⁶¹ Yao also reportedly made similar remarks, saying that "we must on no account take the Polish road or the Hungarian road."⁶² According to Li Shuzheng, on the evening of May 19, "leading functionaries" of the party, government, and army gathered to make plans for martial law. Zhao, sensing the beginning of the end, decided that he would not speak at this meeting; ultimately, he chose not to attend. Instead, earlier on the same day, he went to

59. "Äußerungen des I. Sekretärs der Botschaft der VR China in der DDR," MfS, ZAIG 7081, n.d. but from context summer 1989.

60. Li Shuzheng, conversation with Egon Krenz, pp. 10–11.

61. *Li Peng liu si ri ji zhen xiang*, p. 171.

62. Yao Yilin, speech to the CCP Central Committee, location not cited, but probably Beijing, June 13, 1989, quoted in Shambaugh, *China's Communist Party*, pp. 43–44.

Tiananmen Square to talk to the students, thereby demonstrating “the split in the party for everyone to see.”⁶³

The same sequence of events was also the focus of reports by U.S. embassy, intelligence, and State Department officials. Similar to the above materials, these suggest that mid-May was, in the words of one intelligence report, the “final break between Deng and Zhao.”⁶⁴ As mentioned earlier, the Gorbachev visit at that time (from which Russian sources are available as well) exacerbated the rupture.⁶⁵ Zhao emphasized to Gorbachev that Deng continued his “role as paramount leader and ‘helmsman’” on the basis of the secret protocol from the Thirteenth Party Congress.⁶⁶ An internal party summary of the disciplining of Zhao implied that this comment was the very first revelation to a foreigner of the secret decision of the CCP to keep Deng in charge.⁶⁷ Given that Li Peng had made the same remark to Bush in February 1989, as mentioned above—even using the same term, “paramount leader”—Zhao was obviously not the first to disclose Deng’s true status to a visiting leader.

The U.S. Central Intelligence Agency speculated that Deng worried about Zhao using such remarks to ally himself with the reformist Gorbachev in an effort to outmaneuver Li Peng—perhaps even Deng himself—and to become the crowd’s favorite.⁶⁸ Similarly, the State Department’s Bureau of Intelligence and Research classified the events leading up to the Tiananmen Square bloodshed as a “power struggle for the succession to Deng Xiaoping.” To combat Zhao, “Deng gave carte blanche to Yang Shangkun and Li Peng to enforce martial law.”⁶⁹ The U.S. embassy in Beijing provided Washington with extensive coverage of this enforcement, based on eyewitness accounts from embassy

63. Li Shuzheng, conversation with Egon Krenz, pp. 11–12.

64. See “Department of State Intelligence Brief, Current Situation in China: Background and Prospects,” in Richelson and Evans, *Tiananmen Square, 1989*, doc. 24, n.d., but from context on or about June 10, 1989. In addition to its online postings, the NSA issued a microfiche collection of thousands of telegrams and other reports on China that were sent to and from the U.S. State Department. A set is available at Harvard University, “China and the United States,” Microfiche Collection W 5868, Lamont Library.

65. Zhao, *Prisoner of the State*, pp. 46–48. For Gorbachev’s documents from the visit, see his edited collection *Отвечая на вызов времени* [Responding to the challenge of the time] (Moscow: Весь Мир, 2010), pp. 879–888.

66. Quotation in CIA, Foreign Broadcast Information Service, “Trends,” CIA Electronic Reading Room, May 24, 1989, http://www.foia.cia.gov/docs/DOC_0000444686/DOC_0000444686.pdf. For more on the secret protocol, see Baum, *Burying Mao*, p. 257.

67. *Jing xin dong po de 56 tian: 1989 nian 4 yue 15 ri zhi 6 yue 9 ri mei ri ji shi* [The shocking 56 days: The daily record of April 15 to June 9] (Beijing: Da di chu ban she, 1989), p. 122.

68. Director of Central Intelligence, National Intelligence Daily, “China: Zhao Fighting Back,” CIA Electronic Reading Room, May 11, 1989, http://www.foia.cia.gov/docs/DOC_0000444695/DOC_0000444695.pdf.

69. “Department of State Intelligence Brief, Current Situation in China.”

officials, other Western diplomats, reporters, and students. The reporting after the initial declaration of martial law on May 20 suggested an ineffectual response. As late as June 3, the U.S. embassy in Beijing described confused soldiers, seemingly unsure of what they were supposed to be doing. The troops also appeared to be disoriented by the urban environment, leading to speculation that they had been brought in from the countryside to avoid the conflicts of loyalty that Beijing-based soldiers might face when ordered to crack down. In short, the embassy concluded that “whatever the plan was, the result was a complete disaster.”⁷⁰

The reports after June 4, however, had a different tone. Their gruesome details included eyewitness accounts of beatings of those trying to flee the square and of tanks crushing those who did not manage to escape.⁷¹ The U.S. reports were unable to provide a reliable count of the dead and wounded, but the Chinese Red Cross later carried out a census of major area hospitals in an effort to find how many had been hurt. It estimated that 2,600 people had died and 7,000 were wounded.⁷² These numbers are higher than those given to the Stasi by the Chinese embassy in East Berlin in 1989—it reported that 215 soldiers and 334 protestors had died—and those published by the former Beijing mayor, Chen Xitong, who said in 2012 that several hundred had been killed.⁷³

70. “Amembassy Beijing to Secstate Washdc,” doc. 01059, fiche 202, June 3, 1989, Microfiche Collection W 5868, Lamont Library.

71. “Cable from U.S. Embassy Beijing to Department of State, Wash DC, What Happened on the Night of June 3/4?” in Richelson and Evans, *Tiananmen Square, 1989*, doc. 31, June 22, 1989. See also “Cable from U.S. Embassy Beijing to Department of State, Wash DC, Eyewitness Account of June 4 PLA Tank Crushing 11 Students and Related Early Morning Events in Tiananmen Square,” *ibid.*, doc. 30, June 22, 1989. For more detail on the violence, see Baum, *Burying Mao*, pp. 283–307; Jean-Philippe Béra, “The Massacre’s Long Shadow,” *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 20, No. 3 (July 2009), pp. 5–16; Béra, *The Impact of China’s 1989 Tiananmen Massacre*; Timothy Brook, *Quelling the People: The Military Suppression of the Beijing Democracy Movement* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1998); Craig Calhoun, *Neither Gods nor Emperors: Students and the Struggle for Democracy in China* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); Joseph W. Esherick and Jeffrey N. Wasserstrom, “Acting Out Democracy: Political Theater in Modern China,” *Journal of Asian Studies*, Vol. 49, No. 4 (November 1990), pp. 835–865; and Miles, *The Legacy of Tiananmen*. On Chinese protest movements, see Merle Goldman, *From Comrades to Citizens: The Struggle for Political Rights in China* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2005).

72. The Chinese Red Cross estimate is given in Mark Kramer, “The Collapse of East European Communism and the Repercussions within the Soviet Union (Part 2),” *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 4 (Fall 2004), pp. 33–34; see, in particular, nn. 86, 88. See also Nancy Bernkopf Tucker, “China as a Factor in the Collapse of the Soviet Empire,” *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 110, No. 4 (Winter 1995/96), pp. 501–519.

73. “Äußerungen des I. Sekretärs der Botschaft der VR China in der DDR”; and Chen Xitong, quoted in Jamil Anderlini and Enid Tsui, “Former Beijing Mayor Regrets Tiananmen Square Tragedy,” *Financial Times*, May 30, 2012. See also Tania Branigan, “Ex-Mayor: Tiananmen Was a Tragedy,” *Guardian*, May 30, 2012. In 1989 the *Beijing Review* reported that the PLA had endured 5,000 casualties and caused 2,000 to civilians, “including rioters who committed crimes and on-

Regardless of the actual number, as the U.S. embassy put it, the “military excesses and expressions of domestic and foreign outrage . . . seemed to shake the regime to its foundations; for four days there was a minimally functioning government as leaders remained out of sight, presumably debating the costs and remaining options.” The contrast to the peaceful June 4 election in Poland was stark. When Deng and other elders reappeared on June 9, 1989, to praise the army, “there emerged a shaky and discredited leadership coalition supporting the imposition of law and order through a reign of terror.”⁷⁴ The *Beijing Review*, a brief era of freedom of speech over, reported dutifully on the June 9 meeting and listed the names of all senior leaders standing with Deng and supporting the new era.⁷⁵ Summarizing events a few weeks later, U.S. Ambassador James Lilley informed Washington that “the lesson for them [the surviving CCP leaders] of media coverage of Tiananmen” is “that continuing public violence against their own people risks foreign support,” so in the future, they should “close the door to beat the dog.”⁷⁶

According to the U.S. State Department, after Tiananmen, Deng actually tried to maintain at least some status for Zhao as a way of balancing against the newly emboldened hard-liners. Li Peng and Yang had “managed to gain a fragile and limited leadership consensus” for their brutal goals during the dangerous days of spring 1989, but once the worst was over, Deng apparently worried that they might go on to endanger his economic reforms.⁷⁷ NSC China expert Douglas Paal described this evolution in Deng’s thinking to his boss, U.S. National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft, as follows: Having suppressed the uprising in Beijing, “Deng got a grip on his temper and moved to stem the political damage to himself.” In doing so, “Deng foiled the expectations of Li Peng and others to be rewarded with higher positions.” Li Peng, Yang, and their allies soon realized that they were losing out. They tried to “circumvent Deng” by appealing to the elders. They also tried to “round up all of Zhao’s supporters” and to charge Zhao “with crimes that will put [him] out of action permanently.” The hard-liners did not have sufficient support for this maneuvering, however, as shown by the Fourth Plenary of the Twelfth Central Committee on June 23–24,

lookers who did not know the truth.” See “Counter-Revolutionary Riot Quelled,” *Beijing Review*, June 12–25, 1989, p. 5.

74. “Department of State Intelligence Brief, Current Situation in China.”

75. It listed them in the following order: Yang Shangkun, Li Peng, Qiao Shi, Yao Yilin, Li Xiannian, Peng Zhen, Wang Li, Wan Zhen, and Bo Yibo. See “Deng Hails Army,” *Beijing Review*, June 12–25, 1989, p. 4.

76. “U.S. Embassy Beijing Cable, China and the U.S.—A Protracted Engagement,” in Evans, *The U.S. “Tiananmen Papers,”* doc. 11, July 11, 1989.

77. “Department of State Intelligence Brief, Current Situation in China.”

1989. This plenary session “fell short of their demands in denouncing Zhao. Deng, moreover, ordered a two-year suspension of further recriminations within the leadership.”⁷⁸ It was all in the interest of survival; as Lilley put it, “First of all, this regime wants to stay in power.”⁷⁹

The East German sources corroborate the U.S. materials on this sequence of events. They, too, suggest that Deng tried to shelter Zhao and the like-minded PSC member Hu Qili somewhat. According to Li Shuzheng, Deng proposed at the Fourth Plenary that, despite all of the events of spring 1989, Zhao should remain in the Central Committee and Hu should be removed from the PSC but not the Politburo. The plenary voted against Deng, removing Zhao from all offices and leaving Hu only in the Central Committee, not the Politburo.⁸⁰ If accurate, her claim that Deng lost a vote is intriguing. This loss could be sign of just how traumatic the preceding weeks had been and the damage that they had done to Deng’s authority. Or, Deng’s proposal of keeping Zhao and Hu may have been a trap to identify supporters who would still agree with such a motion in a plenary session. Either way, the year 1989 was clearly a painful one for Deng; what was supposed to have been a triumph to cap his later years—restoration of the Sino-Soviet relationship, before the eyes of the world’s media—had turned into a catastrophe instead. At least he had been able to secure the post of general secretary for the Shanghai party leader, Jiang Zemin, instead of Li Peng or another Beijing hard-liner—and he had prevented a “situation like in Poland” from arising.

The CCP and the Countermeasures after Tiananmen Square

An unintended consequence of the events of 1989 was a boost to certain kinds of scholarly research. As expert Guan Guihai has pointed out, it was normally “very hard for Chinese scholars of social science to obtain national research funds,” but after Tiananmen Square and the events in Europe in the 1980s, “if the research had something to do with the Soviet Union, getting money was much easier.”⁸¹ For example, a December 1990 internal party analysis of

78. “Information/Memorandum for Brent Scowcroft,” GHWBPL, Douglas H. Paal files, FOIA 2000-0116-F, August 4, 1989. For more on Scowcroft, see Bartholomew H. Sparrow, “Realism’s Practitioner: Brent Scowcroft and the Making of the New World Order, 1989–1993,” *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (January 2010), pp. 141–175.

79. “U.S. Embassy Beijing Cable, China and the U.S.—A Protracted Engagement.”

80. Li Shuzheng, conversation with Egon Krenz, p. 12.

81. Guan Guihai, “The Influence of the Collapse of the Soviet Union on China’s Political Choices,” in Bernstein and Li, *China Learns from the Soviet Union, 1949–Present*, p. 506. For more on the connections between the demise of the Soviet Union and the post-Cold War development of the PRC,

what went wrong in Europe, *Dong Ou ju bian ji shi* or *Record of Drastic Change in Eastern Europe*, blamed the Polish Workers' Party (known by its Polish initials, PZPR).⁸² The study emphasized the inability of the party to maintain a unified front as a root cause. Moreover, the PZPR's leaders agreed to semi-free elections but did not "realize the danger" that the independent trade union, Solidarity, would win an overwhelming victory.⁸³

Interestingly, *Dong Ou ju bian ji shi* claimed that President George H.W. Bush had exercised "subtle" but significant influence after the Polish semi-free election of June 4, 1989. Bush's goal, according to the Chinese study, was to ensure that Wojciech Jaruzelski, the man who had implemented martial law and cracked down on Solidarity in 1981, would be selected by the new Solidarity parliamentarians as president.⁸⁴ Although the CCP made many unlikely claims about U.S. foreign policy, in this assertion the Chinese study accords with recent research on U.S. policy toward Poland.⁸⁵ It also suggests a parallel with the U.S. response to Tiananmen Square: an emphasis on preserving existing relationships in a time of upheaval.

In 1989 Bush handled policy toward the PRC personally. He justified this attention in his memoirs by saying that "I had a keen personal interest in China and I thought I understood it reasonably well, enough to closely direct our policy toward it."⁸⁶ Bush scholar Jeffrey Engel has noted that the president's "near monopolization of China policy during the first real crisis of his administration stands in sharp contrast to the more diffuse managerial style he typically employed."⁸⁷ The thrust of the president's policy was one of continuity, and the CCP understood that, despite being galled by Western sanctions and the problems that they caused. For example, although Qiao made formu-

see Aviezer Tucker, "Restoration and Convergence: Russia and China since 1989," in George Lawson, Chris Armbruster, and Michael Cox, eds., *The Global 1989: Continuity and Change in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 157–178.

82. Yang Hua, ed., *Dong Ou ju bian ji shi* [Record of drastic change in Eastern Europe] (Beijing: Shi jie zhi shi chu ban she, 1990), available at the Fung Library, Harvard University. See also *Ju an si wei: Su gong wang dang de li shi jiao xun: ba ji dian shi pian* [Consider danger in times of peace: Historical lessons from the death of the CPSU: Eight video episodes] (Zhong yang ji wei fang zheng chu ban she: Jilin chu ban ji tuan, 2006); and Zhou Xincheng, ed., *Sulian yu Dong Ou guo jia de yan bian ji qi li shi jiao xun* [The historical lessons of the collapse of the Soviet Union and East European countries] (Hefei, China: Anhui renmin chubanshe, 2000).

83. Yang, *Dong Ou ju bian ji shi*, pp. 10–11, 23, 39.

84. *Ibid.*, p. 45.

85. Gregory F. Domber, "Skepticism and Stability: Reevaluating U.S. Policy during Poland's Democratic Transformation in 1989," *Journal of Cold War Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 3 (Summer 2011), pp. 52–82.

86. George Bush and Brent Scowcroft, *A World Transformed* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998), p. 90.

87. Jeffrey A. Engel, "A Better World . . . but Don't Get Carried Away: The Foreign Policy of George H.W. Bush Twenty Years On," *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (January 2010), pp. 37–38.

laic statements to Krenz blaming the United States for the chaos of June 1989, he also made clear that Beijing was not worried about what Washington would do next. He assured Krenz that the United States “would not go to extremes.” Qiao pointed out that Beijing had expelled American correspondents after the crackdown and that, in response, the U.S. government had taken “no real countermeasures,” implying that Beijing expected more of the same. There was indeed the problem of Fang Lizhi, who had taken refuge in the U.S. embassy, but that issue “was one that they [the Americans] had caused themselves and would have to solve themselves.”⁸⁸ According to Liu in the Chinese embassy in Bonn, West Germany represented a bigger problem because, unlike the United States, it was actually enforcing its sanctions.⁸⁹ As China expert Randolph Kluver has argued, “Deng rightly judged that Bush was unwilling to break off relations because it might drive China back into the orbit of the Soviet Union or isolation.”⁹⁰

To be sure, there was a divergence between U.S. popular and congressional attitudes and the response of the Bush administration to Tiananmen. Congress and media outlets were deeply dismayed that Bush would be so interested in accommodating China. As *New York Times* reporter Nicholas Kristof put it, “[T]he White House is subordinating human rights to its friendship with Beijing.”⁹¹ And, to cite just one example, among the correspondence from the Hill to Bush on this matter was a letter signed by 155 members of Congress urging a tough stance against China.⁹²

Bush’s immediate response to Tiananmen was to protect Sino-U.S. relations, however. As he told British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher on the phone on June 5, 1989, he had intentionally “issued a modest statement” after the massacre because of the “need to preserve the U.S.-China relationship.”⁹³ Indeed, Bush remarked after leaving office that he considered his conduct after

88. Qiao Shi, conversation with Egon Krenz, pp. 8–9. For an account from Fang Lizhi, see “My Confession,” *New York Review of Books*, June 23, 2011, pp. 23–24. For his obituary, see Michael Wines, “Fang Lizhi, Chinese Physicist and Seminal Dissident, Dies at 76,” *New York Times*, April 7, 2012, <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/08/world/asia/fang-lizhi-chinese-physicist-and-dissident-dies-at-76.html>.

89. “Vermerk über ein Gespräch mit dem Rat der chinesischen Botschaft, Liu Qibao,” September 7, 1989.

90. Randolph Kluver, “Rhetorical Trajectories of Tiananmen Square,” *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (January 2010), p. 83.

91. Nicholas D. Kristof, “Strained U.S. Ties Reported in China,” *New York Times*, October 5, 1989, <http://www.nytimes.com/1989/10/05/world/strained-us-ties-reported-in-china.html>.

92. Both the congressional letter to the White House of July 2, 1990, and the subsequent correspondence are available at the GHWBPL, box 91133-001.

93. “Telephone Conversation with Margaret Thatcher, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom,” telcon, GHWBPL, June 5, 1989.

Tiananmen to be one of the most important accomplishments of his presidency.⁹⁴ He did authorize a suspension of military sales to Beijing, a ban on high-level visits, and other restrictions.⁹⁵ Despite the calls from both the press and Congress for a tougher approach, it soon became clear from Bush's own actions that there were ways around these measures and that his intentions were conciliatory, not punitive.

For example, the president's priorities did not change when PLA troops attacked the U.S. embassy in Beijing two days after his call with Thatcher. The attack took place at about 10:00 A.M. on June 7, 1989, as Ambassador Lilley was convening a general staff meeting to discuss potential evacuation plans. Chinese helicopters circled overhead as an armor-escorted convoy of fifty to seventy trucks, carrying about twenty-five soldiers each, opened fire on the embassy. According to the later embassy reports, the PLA troops "hit several apartments in the Jianguomenwai diplomatic compound with automatic weapons fire." They shot out "windows in three apartments of U.S. embassy personnel" before finally moving on.⁹⁶ Lilley wrote in his memoirs that he had been afraid the PLA intended to enter the embassy forcibly and seize Fang. Lilley urged the State Department to tell the PRC's ambassador in the United States, Han Xu, "that if the Chinese stormed the American Embassy to get Fang, they might as well kiss the Sino-American relationship goodbye."⁹⁷

Instead of a harsh response, Bush tried to reach out to Deng on the phone on June 8. As National Security Adviser Scowcroft recalled, Bush initiated an unscheduled call to Beijing, "an extraordinary measure in that direct calls to senior Chinese leaders were something that we had never attempted before." Extraordinary, but not successful: no one of significance would come to the phone to receive the president's call. Bush was "told the time of the call (early

94. Kluver, "Rhetorical Trajectories of Tiananmen Square," p. 71.

95. For a list of the measures taken, see Robert L. Suettinger, "The United States and China: Tough Engagement," in Richard N. Haass and Meghan L. O'Sullivan, eds., *Honey and Vinegar: Incentives, Sanctions, and Foreign Policy* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2000), p. 14; and Robert L. Suettinger, *Beyond Tiananmen: The Politics of U.S.-China Relations, 1989-2000* (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2003). See also Lowell Dittmer, *Sino-Soviet Normalization and Its International Implications, 1945-1990, 1969-1989* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1992); Harry Harding, *A Fragile Relationship: The United States and China since 1972* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1992); David M. Lampton, *Same Bed, Different Dreams: Managing U.S.-China Relations, 1989-2000* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001); and Robert S. Ross, *Negotiating Cooperation: The United States and China, 1969-1989* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1995).

96. "Secretary of State's Morning Summary," in Richelson and Evans, *Tiananmen Square, 1989*, doc. 21, June 7, 1989; and "Cable from U.S. Embassy Beijing to Department of State," in *ibid.*, doc. 22, June 7, 1989. The documents agree on the basics of the attack—that a large truck convoy fired on the embassy—but differ on the number of trucks involved and whether the convoy strafed the embassy on its way to or from Tiananmen Square.

97. James Lilley and Jeffrey Lilley, *China Hands: Nine Decades of Adventure, Espionage, and Diplomacy in East Asia* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2005), p. 354.

morning in Peking) was inconvenient and that direct phone contacts between Chinese and foreign leaders were not the custom," according to expert Henry Harding. He reportedly asked "for a return call from Deng, but it never came."⁹⁸

Rebuffed at that level, Bush tried a number of other initiatives, such as having Secretary of State James Baker meet with not only Han but also PRC Foreign Minister Qian Qichen.⁹⁹ Bush also sent a letter, "straight from my heart," directly to Deng. Rather than asking Deng to restrain the PLA, Bush distanced himself from the dissident at the heart of the matter. The president took pains to point out to Deng that "Fang was not encouraged to come to our Embassy."¹⁰⁰ Bush's notes in his own diary were even blunter: "Dissident Fang is making things much worse and Fang's son showed up at a hearing under the patronage of Jesse Helms—stupid—and it just makes things worse."¹⁰¹

The clearest sign of Bush's dedication to maintaining good relations has already been described in various scholarly studies and memoirs. Briefly, Bush dispatched Scowcroft to Beijing on a secret mission on June 30–July 1, just weeks after the massacre, with a second visit in December.¹⁰² Scowcroft's guidelines noted that the manner in which the PRC's leaders chose "to deal with those of its citizens involved in recent events in China is, of course, an internal affair."¹⁰³ Once in Beijing, Scowcroft was subjected to a tongue-lashing. He had to listen to an account of how the United States was the source of the difficulties of 1989. Deng informed him that "'it is up to the person who tied the knot to untie it.'" Scowcroft's goal was to "keep open the lines of communication," however, so he was conciliatory, not confrontational. He concluded afterward that it had been a useful trip.¹⁰⁴ The Chinese press returned the favor, differentiating (as the NSC reported) "between relative 'good guys'"—namely Bush, Richard Nixon, and Henry Kissinger—and "the 'bad guys' (Congress, the USIA [United States Information Agency], the media)."¹⁰⁵

98. Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, pp. 99–102; and Harding, *A Fragile Relationship*, p. 227.

99. Harding, *A Fragile Relationship*, p. 228. On PRC-U.S. relations, generally, see Qian Qichen, conversation with the author as part of a group of White House Fellows, Beijing, May 8, 2002.

100. Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, pp. 100–111.

101. Jesse Helms was a powerful U.S. senator from North Carolina who served as both a member and later a chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee; quotation from Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, p. 103.

102. *Ibid.*, pp. 105–111. For more on the role that Scowcroft played in the George H.W. Bush administration, see David F. Schmitz, *Brent Scowcroft: Internationalism and Post-Vietnam War American Foreign Policy* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 2011).

103. "Themes," in Richelson and Evans, *Tiananmen Square, 1989*, doc. 33, June 29, 1989. The authors note that they received this document from James Mann.

104. Bush and Scowcroft, *A World Transformed*, pp. 107–110.

105. "Background: Direct Action against U.S.," GHWBPL, Douglas H. Paal files, FOIA 2000-0950-F, n.d., but from context late 1989 or 1990.

The U.S. press did not share Scowcroft's perspective. After news of his Beijing trips became public, media reports questioned why the Bush administration was violating its own ban on high-level visits to a country still under martial law (which was not lifted until January 1990). Such visits, as Harding has put it, created "an aura of duplicity" around the Bush administration.¹⁰⁶ Bush was undeterred; he vetoed legislation, sponsored by Representative Nancy Pelosi, meant to enable Chinese students in the United States to extend their stays. He also extended most-favored-nation trading status to China in May 1990. Rumors reportedly circulated "on China's oral network of 'alleyway news'" describing "a Deng Xiaoping who gloats over his ability to manipulate naïve American presidents."¹⁰⁷

Bush also backed the decision of the Japanese prime minister in summer 1990 to proceed with a large yen loan to China, although with some misgivings. He ran into conflict with the West German chancellor, Helmut Kohl, over this decision. In particular, the issue caused tensions at the Group of Seven (G-7) summit of July 1990, hosted by Bush in Houston, Texas. Kohl, supported by the French president, François Mitterrand, complained (unsuccessfully) that G-7 members were doing too much for China and too little for the Soviet Union: "We act as if reforms were taking place in China, and none in the Soviet Union. Think of the butchery in China last year. This sort of thing is not happening in the USSR now. We need a yardstick that applies uniformly both to China and the USSR."¹⁰⁸ Even Gorbachev complained about the discrepancy. While visiting Washington in the summer of 1990 for a summit meeting with Bush, he reportedly wondered aloud if he would improve his chances of getting much-desired loans and other aid from the United States if he too declared martial law.¹⁰⁹ Bush was unmoved: the relationship with China was more important to him.

Conclusion

This article has presented new evidence from international archives to show how CCP leaders—in their own words—explained their motivations for the June 1989 Tiananmen massacre. The records of these interactions suggest that the democratic changes sweeping Eastern Europe exacerbated party leaders'

106. Harding, *A Fragile Relationship*, pp. 254–258, at p. 257.

107. Link, *Evening Chats in Beijing*, pp. 302–303. See also Harding, *A Fragile Relationship*, pp. 258–261.

108. "First Plenary Session of the Sixteenth Economic Summit of Industrialized Nations," memcon, GHWBPL, July 10, 1990.

109. Mann, *About Face*, pp. 230–231.

fears of domestic chaos and party factionalism. Given that these records document Chinese leaders' conversations with foreigners, it is of course possible that their accounts were framed, or even fabricated, for foreign consumption. Wholesale deceit seems unlikely, however, because of the close fit between the party's words and its deeds. The example of Poland in particular presented a stark image of a party losing out to a mass protest movement, and that seems to have intensified the CCP's determination not to let the same happen in China. In addition, the evidence presented here shows that the CCP expected "no real countermeasures" from Washington, thus lowering the cost of taking military action.

The CCP was accurate in its assessment of the U.S. response; what is debatable is whether or not Bush chose a wise course. Supporters can claim that he did, given that the United States had few means of shaping events inside the PRC, and so preservation of an important relationship was the only realistic option. For example, Vogel praised the swift scheduling of Scowcroft's visit to Beijing after the massacre because the trip "helped avoid a rift with China and so was clearly in the strategic, cultural, and economic interest of the United States."¹¹⁰ And as China expert Odd Arne Westad has pointed out, the economic facts were hard to ignore: It was around the time of Tiananmen "that Asia again became the continent with the highest total productive output, a reversion to the situation that had existed in all of recorded history except the relatively short stretch from the 1880s to the 1980s, during which first Europe and then North America surpassed the continent."¹¹¹ Opponents counter, however, that the White House gave insufficient due to the Beijing protestors when it sent the national security adviser on a secret visit the very same month as the massacre, thereby depriving the United States of a potential source of leverage and signaling clearly to Beijing that it had nothing to worry about from Washington.

The larger significance of this case study is that it helps scholars and policymakers to understand the heightened danger in any one country during an international wave of democratization. In China in 1989, examples of the collapse of party authority abroad weighed heavily on the minds of party leaders, just as the collapses of other kinds of regimes in the Arab world in 2011–12 would worry them as well.¹¹² The European example provided a caution-

110. Vogel, *Deng Xiaoping and the Transformation of China*, p. 653.

111. Odd Arne Westad, "Conclusion: Was There a Global 1989?" in Lawson, Armbruster, and Cox, *The Global 1989*, pp. 271–281, at p. 279.

112. The events in the Arab world in 2011 and 2012 overlapped with preparations for the CCP leadership transition in 2012 and thereby contributed to anxieties at a time of change. See Anne

ary lesson to the CCP about where political reform could lead a communist country—and the party was having none of it. In other words, development abroad helped to stall reform in the PRC. Decades later, political reform still remains a remote possibility. China’s “polity is dysfunctional in the extreme, and most of the issues raised by the 1989 protests remain unsolved,” as Westad has put it.¹¹³ When the rulers of such a significant country refuse to address a crucial chapter in their own history, it is doubly important for researchers working abroad to do so.

Barnard, “China Sought to Sell Arms to Qaddafi, Documents Suggest,” *New York Times*, September 5, 2011; Geoff Dyer, “Who Will Be China’s Next Leaders?” *Financial Times*, March 4, 2011; and Edward Wong and Jonathan Ansfield, “China Grooming Deft Politician as Next Leader,” *New York Times*, January 23, 2011.

113. Westad, “Conclusion: Was There a Global 1989?” p. 280. For more on the PRC after 1989, see Timothy Cheek, *Living with Reform: China since 1989* (London: Zed, 2006), pp. 71–72; Joseph Fewsmith, *China since Tiananmen*, 2d ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Philip P. Pan, *Out of Mao’s Shadow: The Struggle for the Soul of a New China* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2008); and Barry Naughton, who has described the effect of June 1989 on China’s development as follows: “[B]efore Tiananmen, China’s leaders were willing to subordinate other national interests to society. After Tiananmen, while reformers still pursued a vision of a transformed economy, that vision was linked to, and often subordinated to, strengthened, stabilized, and more effective government power.” Naughton, “The Impact of the Tiananmen Crisis on China’s Economic Transition,” in Béja, *The Impact of China’s 1989 Massacre*, p. 156.