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Trials

15 February 1991

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA : WANG Juntao
CHEN Ziming

Chen Ziming and Wang Juntao, two intellectuals who have been castigated by the Chinese official media as the "masterminds" of the 1989 pro-democracy protests, were each sentenced on 12 February 1991 to 13 years' imprisonment and an additional four years' deprivation of political rights. Both were charged with "plotting to overthrow the government" and "counter-revolutionary propaganda and agitation". They have been adopted as prisoners of conscience by Amnesty International.

Chen Ziming, 38-year-old director of the Beijing Research Institute of Social and Economic Sciences (RISSES), went on trial on 11 February 1991. According to friends, he was informed that he was being prosecuted barely a week before his trial started and began a hunger-strike on 7 February to protest the short notice he was given to prepare his defence.

Wang Juntao, a 32-year-old economist at the RISSES and editor of the now banned Economics Weekly, went on trial on 12 February and was sentenced the same day. In early February 1991, his family was informed that he was ill with hepatitis and he was reportedly transferred from prison to a hospital.

Despite his illness, he was brought to trial shortly after. According to various sources the authorities had planned to conclude the trials of prominent 1989 dissidents before the Chinese New Year, which starts this year on 15 February.

Both men were found guilty of "bringing together illegal organizations and conducting a series of activities to subvert the government". During the 1989 protests, they were close to student leaders and played a leading role in the formation of the Capital All Circles Consultative Joint Conference, a coalition of various groups created in late May 1989 after martial law was imposed in Beijing. They went into hiding after the 4 June 1989 crackdown and were arrested in south China in November 1989.

Both had also taken part in previous pro-democracy movements since 1976 and had openly advocated democratic reforms for many years. This is believed to be as significant a factor in their imprisonment as their involvement in the 1989 events.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telexes/express and airmail letters:

- expressing concern at the sentences passed against Chen Ziming and Wang Juntao
- both of them prisoners of conscience jailed for the peaceful exercise of fundamental human rights;
- urging the authorities to release them immediately and unconditionally.
- expressing concern that they did not receive a fair and open trial in accordance with international standards and urging the authorities to ensure that all future trials are open to the general public and conducted in accordance with international standards.

APPEALS TO:

LI Peng Zongli (Premier)
 Guowoyuan
 Beijingshi
 Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo
 People's Republic of China

Telexes: 210070 FMPC CN or 22478 MFERT CN

CAI Cheng Buzhang (Justice Minister)
 Sifabu
 Sanlihe
 Beijingshi
 Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo
 People's Republic of China

Telexes: 210070 FMPC CN or 22478 MFERT CN
 (Please forward to Cai Cheng Buzhang)

REN Jianxin Yuanzhang
 President, Supreme People's Court
 Zuigao Renmin Jianchayuan
 Beijingshi
 Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo
 People's Republic of China

COPIES TO:

JIANG Zemin Zhongyang Weiyuanhui Zongshuji
 Guowuyuan
 Beijingshi
 Zonghua Renmin Gongheguo
 People's Republic of China (Party General Secretary)

SHAO Huaze Zong Bianji (Chief Editor, People's Daily)
 Renmin Ribao
 Jintaixilu No. 2
 Chaoyangmenwai
 Beijingshi
 People's Republic of China

and to diplomatic representatives of the People's Republic of China in your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 29 March 1991.