

URGENT ACTION

EXTERNAL (for general distribution)
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Further information on UA 144/89 (ASA 17/20/89, 24 May) and follow-up (ASA 17/22/89, 26 May) — Fear of mass arrests

PEOPLE' S REPUBLIC OF CHINA: 11 people reported arrested in Beijing

The official New China News Agency (NCNA) announced on 30 May that 11 members of a team of motorcyclists, who had acted as messengers for the students, had been detained for disturbing public order. Describing the group as a 'motorcycle gang', the NCNA said its members had prevented military vehicles from entering Beijing after martial law was imposed in the capital. The group, called the 'Flying Tiger Brigade', is apparently mainly composed of private businessmen. The group acted as couriers for the student protesters, providing them with information about troops deployed around Beijing. They may be detained only for a short period if they are charged with disturbing public order, but the official NCNA report on their arrest also accused the group of distributing leaflets, spreading rumours and inciting workers to strike.

Three leaders of an independent workers' union called the Beijing Workers' Autonomous Federation which was formed recently, were reported to have been detained by police on 29 and 30 May, apparently for taking part in the 'pro—democracy' protests in the Chinese capital. However, members of the federation said they were released by police late on 31 May. The federation is said to have been inspired by Poland's Solidarity movement and claims to have several thousand members. Over 1,000 students and workers had demonstrated on 30 May in front of the Beijing police headquarters and the Ministry of Public Security, seeking information about the three reported detained, but police had neither confirmed nor denied the detentions.

Over the past few days it has appeared increasingly unlikely that the troops surrounding Beijing since martial law was declared on 19 May would intervene in the near future to disperse the protesters who occupy the centre of Beijing. On 26 May, several veteran conservative Communist Party leaders appeared on television to express their support for the conservative leaders who declared martial law, and to denounce a 'secret plot' engineered by 'a very small number of people' to create turmoil. This was believed to refer in particular to the Party General Secretary, Zhao Ziyang, who was reported to have been placed under house arrest, accused of being 'anti—party' and of stirring up the student protests for his own aims. Several other political and military leaders who had opposed martial law are also said to be under attack. On 26 May, the Beijing Garrison Command announced its support for martial law in the 'political struggle'. It was the last of China's military regions to do so.

Amidst these reports and fears of an imminent crackdown, students from Beijing decided to end their occupation of Tiananmen Square. However, over 10,000 students from outside Beijing remain camped in the square. No arrests of prominent dissidents or student leaders have so far been reported.

FURTHER RECOMMENDED ACTION: Telegrams/telexes/airmail letters:

- expressing concern about the arrest of 11 people who had taken part in the recent protests in Beijing;
- urging the authorities to make public the charges against them, or else release them;
- urging that they be released if they are being detained solely for the non-violent exercise of their fundamental human rights.

APPEALS TO:

LI Peng
Prime Minister
Guowuyuan
Beijingshi
People's Republic of China

Telegrams: LI Peng Zongli
Beijingshi. China

Telexes: 22478 MFERT CN
(Please forward to the Prime Minister)

WANG Fang
Minister of Public Security
Gonganbu
Dong Chang'an Jie
Beijingshi
People's Republic of China

Telegrams: Wang Fang Buzhang
Beijingshi, China

COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of the People's Republic of China in your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International or your section office, if sending appeals after 13 July 1989.