

'China backs German bid for U.N. seat'

BEIJING, DEC. 7. The German Chancellor, Gerhard Schroeder, said on Tuesday that the Chinese President, Hu Jintao, endorsed Germany's campaign for a permanent seat on the U.N. Security Council.

Speaking to reporters after meeting the Chinese leader, Mr. Schroeder said Mr. Hu supported "bigger responsibility (for Berlin in the Security Council). That means Germany's application for a permanent seat."

Earlier in the day, Mr. Schroeder pressed the German bid in a speech to business leaders, saying the United Nations must change to "reflect the realities of the world of today."

Beijing circumspect

Chinese officials did not immediately comment on Mr. Schroeder's meeting with Mr. Hu. Beijing has said Berlin

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should play a bigger role in the United Nations, but it hasn't explicitly called for a permanent German place on the Security Council.

China is one of five current permanent members — along with the United States, Britain, France and Russia — with power to veto U.N. actions.

Earlier this month, a U.N. panel presented two options for expanding the Council: adding six new permanent members or creating a new tier of eight semi-permanent members — two each from Asia, Africa, Europe and the Americas.

Germany has joined Brazil, India and Japan in lobbying for permanent seats. A possible Council expansion has been on the U.N. agenda for more than a decade but it has been facing many obstacles. — AP

China rejects Taiwan peace initiative

Press Trust of India

14/10 5-3 china
BEIJING, Oct. 13. — China today rejected as “grave provocation”, the peace overtures of Taiwan President Chen Shui Bian, saying Taipei must acknowledge Chinese sovereignty over the island as a pre-condition for dialogue.

Mr Chen, in his National Day speech on 10 October had said that he had the intention to ease tension and confrontation across the Taiwan Strait. But had obstinately stuck to his separatist stand of “one country on each side” across the strait, China’s central government spokesperson Mr Zhang Mingging told reporters.

“In his speech, Chen Shui Bian preached that ‘The Republic of China is Taiwan and Taiwan is the Republic of China,’ which

was an open and audacious expression of Taiwan independence,” Mr Mingging said.

The speech is being seen as a grave provocation to peace and stability across the strait, he said.

He said Mr Chen continues to deny the fact that Taiwan is a part of China and had wantonly stigmatised and viciously attacked the motherland to fuel tension across the strait, Mr Zhang said.

The spokesperson emphasised that the “one-China” principle, which implies that Taiwan is part of the People’s Republic, is a precondition for the resumption of talks and dialogue.

“We have repeatedly called for an early resumption of dialogue and talks across the strait on the basis of the ‘one-China’ principle,” he said.

THE STATESMAN

14 OCT 2004

Re-adjusting regional security strategy

LET him who tied the bell on the tiger take it off – whoever started the trouble should end it.” That is how China’s ambassador to Singapore recently asked his host country to repair the ties damaged by a Singapore leader’s visit to Taiwan. Although Singapore has maintained unofficial ties with Taiwan since it normalised relations with Beijing in 1990, the Chinese ambassador said he was “shocked, disappointed, and baffled” by then Deputy Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong’s unofficial visit to Taipei. Lee was about to take over as Premier. In the larger scheme of things, this may prove to be a passing cloud, but the incident puts in sharp relief a remarkable transformation of Chinese power in the region. How China will be wielding its newly acquired power in the coming months and years will be keenly watched in South-east Asia. Will China’s rise be as peaceful as Beijing claims, or will it give in to the temptation of throwing its weight around?

Ever since South-east Asia emerged out of the tumultuous post World War II decades, it has had to deal with problems of development, ethnic strife and the threat of Maoist insurgency. Yet, since the 1980s, the region has also emerged as a dynamic economy, and a reform-minded China has grown into an economic dynamo and the region’s potential great power.

Over the last 15 years or so, China’s gross domestic product has grown at annual rates of around nine per cent, with a large swath of the coast from Hainan to Shanghai producing rates even higher. This, in turn, has supported annual double-digit increases in military expenditures. Growing armed forces budgets have been broadly committed to a program of military moderni-

sation and professionalisation, with a heavy emphasis on modern technology and personnel sufficiently educated to use it. Expert observers foresee a Chinese military capable of projecting force on a sustained basis beyond China’s coastal periphery within 10-20 years. By any measure, China has emerged with startling suddenness as a regional power still in the early stages of its ascent.

It is an axiom of realpolitik that policy and strategy must be based on the capabilities of other actors – particularly rivals and potential adversaries. While any precise measure of China’s national capabilities will be elusive, the trend and the potential are quite clear. China’s capabilities are multi-dimensional: economic, military and increasingly diplomatic and political. The days of rigid, ideologically strident Chinese “diplomacy” have long since been superseded by a cosmopolitan sophistication that would do Zhou Enlai proud. The growth of Chinese power assumes added significance from the fact that for the first time since the height of the Ming Dynasty, China is without any threat from its traditional strategic rivals, Russia and Japan. Beijing has the strategic luxury of exerting power to its south without fearing for the security of its northern, western and eastern borders. Finally, for South-east Asia, Chinese power has an additional potential dimension – the presence of large (and economically potent) ethnic Chinese populations in almost every major urban centre.

Capabilities are one thing; intentions are another. Here, the crystal ball suddenly becomes very murky. Chinese officials have been very insistent that China’s intentions toward South-east Asia are entirely benign – nothing other than to join with the region in a common endeavor

As the rise of China alters the geopolitical landscape, countries in both hemispheres must devise foreign policy accordingly, says MARVIN OTT

our of economic development and regional peace and security. Beijing has energetically pushed trade and investment ties, including a centre-piece China-Asean free trade agreement. Bilateral framework agreements for cooperation on multiple fronts have been negotiated with every South-east Asian government. Political and diplomatic interactions at all levels have become a regular, even daily, feature of the news. Also Beijing has made clear

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its desire to extend co-operation into the security sphere. China has become a primary supplier of economic and military assistance to Burma, Cambodia and Laos. Meanwhile, Chinese officials and scholars seek to allay unease by noting that the traditional tribute system of China’s imperial past was, by Western standards, quite benign.

Nevertheless, doubts arise on several grounds.

First, history strongly suggests that when new great powers arise, the implications for smaller or weaker nations on their periphery are not always pleasant. Examples include Germany and Central Europe, Japan and East Asia, Russia and Central Asia and the Caucasus, and the USA and Latin America. It remains to be seen whether China is uniquely immune to the

temptations of state power.

Secondly, as Maoism and Marxism have lost their ideological appeal, the Chinese leadership has turned to nationalism to legitimate authoritarian rule. This has included a comprehensive programme of state-sponsored patriotism in the schools and mass media nurturing a sense of Chinese victimisation (“a hundred years of humiliation”) at the hands of the West. In recent years, these powerful emotions have focused on Taiwan and the notion that the USA and Japan allegedly stole China’s national patrimony.

Territorial irredentism is a potent political force, and there are growing fears that Beijing, against all sane counsel, could actually resort to force against Taiwan. In 1992, the Chinese People’s Congress codified in legislation Beijing’s claim that the South China Sea is rightfully the sovereign territory of China. Since the flare-up in the Mischief Reef dispute in the mid-1990s, China has soft-pedalled its claims. But it has not disavowed them and continues to strengthen outposts in the Spratley Islands.

Another sign that Beijing is concerned with more than economic growth is the hawkish language used by Chinese academics. Officially sanctioned Chinese scholars characterise US strategic intentions toward China as “encirclement” and “strangulation.” They identify South-east Asia as the weak link in this chain and the point where China can break through and defeat Ameri-

can attempted “containment.” In private, Chinese diplomats have been known to use the Churchillian phrase “soft underbelly” to refer to South-east Asia.

On yet another front, China’s ambitious programme for harnessing and exploiting the Mekong River will have an important side effect, intended or otherwise: Downstream states, like Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam, will be hostage to Chinese decisions concerning water flow. The Mekong is as much the economic lifeblood for these nations as the Nile is for Egypt.

Finally, the very agreements and linkages with South-east Asia that Beijing cites as evidence of benign intent may also be seen as a web designed to tie these states to China. Contemporary Burma comes close to fitting the profile of a Chinese client state. When Singapore’s Deputy Prime Minister visited Taiwan, a semi-official commentator from Beijing promised that Singapore would pay “a huge price” for such temerity.

What emerges from this picture is a multifaceted strategic challenge to South-east Asia. Chinese diplomats have worked assiduously and successfully to portray that challenge as opportunity and not threat. Recent public opinion polling shows clear evidence of their success. China registers favourably with publics throughout most of South-east Asia. This coincides with a precipitous drop in favourable opinions of the USA since the advent of the Iraq war.

The durability of these sentiments is a question. What is certain, however, is that growing Chinese power must be at the centre of any regional security strategy formulated by the South-east Asian states — and by the USA.

The articles by Prestowitz and Ott appeared in *Yale Global Online* and are reprinted with permission. The third article of the series, *Growing Sino-Indian trade ties will be published in these columns tomorrow.*

Relief for China over Hong Kong outcome

curator
19 *40-13*
HONG KONG, SEPT. 13. Pro-democracy Opposition figures gained more clout in Hong Kong's legislature with three new seats, but fell short of expectations and resumed grumbling on Monday about a system they call unfairly rigged.

Although the Opposition remains stuck mainly with the power to criticise, it gained a loud new voice with the stunning election win by Hong Kong's top protester, "Long-hair" Leung Kwok-hung, who is known for burning flags and raising a ruckus in his trademark Che Guevara T-shirt.

Several hours after Mr. Leung had been declared a winner he launched his latest demonstration, chanting slogans outside Government offices on Monday afternoon.

Mainstream pro-democracy figures did not perform as well as forecast and Hong Kong's top pro-Beijing party had a surprisingly strong showing. The Opposition camp won 25 of the territory's 60 seats, up from 22 in the current legislature.

The outcome likely was a relief for China, whose leaders had worried that Hong Kong's Government, led by the unpopular Chief Executive, Tung Chee-hwa, might find itself paralysed if the Opposition had somehow won a majority, but the result was nowhere close to that.

"Beijing will think the election results are quite positive," said Ma Ngok, a political scientist at the University of Science and Technology.

Critics quickly took aim at problems such as polling stations that ran short of ballot boxes on Sunday, prompting some people to give up without voting, and the Hong Kong electoral system that gives special interest groups the right to pick 30 of the territory's 60 lawmakers.

Analysts had predicted the pro-democracy camp could claim 25-28 seats.

Opposition figures won 18 of the 30 seats that are directly chosen by ordinary voters, and just seven of the 30 seats picked by special interest groups, such as business leaders, that tend to back Beijing.

A record 1.78 million people cast ballots — for a record 55 per cent turnout. — AP

China warns Taiwan of Straits conflict

China Daily/ANN

BEIJING, July 30. — A cross-Straits military conflict before 2008 cannot be ruled out if Taiwan leader Mr Chen Shui-bian continues to push hard for his pro-independence timetable, a senior Taiwan affairs official has warned.

Mr Wang Zaixi, vice-minister of the Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council, also said the current cross-Straits political stalemate will remain during Mr Chen's controversial second term unless the leader accepts the one-China principle.

In an interview with China Daily yesterday, he said the biggest threat to

cross-Straits peace and stability comes from Mr Chen's plan to write a new "Constitution" through referendum in 2006 and enact the document in 2008.

Mr Chen has not substantially changed his sep-

'We cannot rule out the possibility of a military conflict if Mr Chen pursues his pro-independence timetable'

aratist scheme although he used the term of "constitutional re-engineering" in his 20 May inauguration speech to cover up his plot to promote formal independence for the island, according to Mr Wang.

"New tensions may arise and even a serious crisis in the cross-Straits situation, if Mr Chen obstinately pursues his timetable," the official said at the sideline of a seminar on cross-Straits ties. "We cannot completely rule out the possibility (of a military conflict) though it is not at all what we hope for."

Beijing has stood for a peaceful reunification between Taiwan and the mainland while not committing itself to foregoing the use of force in case of the island declaring independence.

Wang, however, stressed that Beijing has been making great efforts to reduce the possibility of a military conflict by containing separatist activities.

China rejects full democracy for HK

Associated Press
Hong Kong, July 3

CHINA SAID on Saturday it would stick by a decision ruling out the direct election of Hong Kong's next leader, rejecting a demand by tens of thousands of the territory's people who had marched in protest two days ago.

A top mainland official in Hong Kong said China's top legislative panel had made its position clear when it said in April that Hong Kong could not democratically choose the successor to Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa in 2007 or all lawmakers in 2008.

"The National People's Congress had made a final decision", said Li Gang, deputy head of Beijing's liaison office in Hong Kong. "As the top judicial authority, its decisions cannot be changed, so to try to attempt something that's impossible is irrational".

That wish for change had been expressed by the thousands of people who turned out for the peaceful pro-democracy march on Thursday, with many holding out hopes that Beijing would change its mind and move more swiftly on political reforms. Organisers said



A pro-democracy march in Hong Kong on Thursday.

530,000 people were there, while the police put the figure at 200,000.

Hong Kong, a former British colony, has enjoyed Western-style civil liberties since its handover to Chinese rule in 1997, but only

limited democracy.

Tung was picked by an 800-member committee loyal to Beijing. Voters will choose 30 of 60 lawmakers in the September elections, with the remaining seats to be filled by representatives of special interest groups, such as business executives, doctors and bankers.

Beijing and the Hong Kong government are worried that the pro-democracy sentiment sweeping through the territory will be bad news for Tung's legislative allies. They fear they could end up with a Legislative Council that won't back Tung.

AP

Heroes of Tiananmen

IN the terrifying days after the crackdown, Wang Dan, No. 1 on China's Most Wanted list, was shunted out of Beijing by his friend, Wang Juntao. Dan was incapable of sleep and was losing his self-control. Unable to stand life on the run, he returned to Beijing and was immediately arrested. He spent most of his 20s in jail, a strange fate for the earnest history student whose "crime" had been to organise a democracy salon in 1988, inviting guest speakers to speak once a week (the US Ambassador came once) and editing a magazine not contentious by any standards other than those of the Chinese government.

But in the end, the "most wanted" epithet helped him by making him the most high-profile political prisoner in the country. In 1998, he was allowed out to the USA on medical parole, part of negotiations that accompanied Bill Clinton's visit to China that year. Even in prison, he received special care, normally having a cell to himself. "I'm not joking," he says, "I enjoyed life in jail quite a bit - because I had time to read and they treated me well." What he is bitter about is his mother, who received the more usual Chinese prison treatment. She still does not walk normally as a result of the 50 days she spent squashed in a crowded cell. "My mother did nothing: she was arrested just because she was my mother."

In a way, he has taken up life where he left off in 1989: he is a PhD student at Harvard, studying history again. His main goal now is to get Beijing to allow back to China the dozens of people exiled for their role in the 1989 movement. He hopes that the UN and Western governments will put pressure on Beijing.

The unknown: One image from the student protest dominates the history books. A lone man walks on to Beijing's main thoroughfare in broad daylight on 5 June as a column of tanks advances into the city centre. He is holding a plastic bag and stands still in the middle of the road. The tanks halt and eventually try to pass him on the side, but he moves with them. After several agonising minutes, another man hurries him off the road. All of it was filmed by a TV camera on a building high above. Newspapers around the world carried his picture the next day.

The mystery man was never identified, despite becoming a global poster boy for human courage. He might simply have slipped back into the crowds around Tiananmen Square, or he might not. He could still be working in a factory in Beijing making slippers or bicycles. Or he could be in a labour camp. Meanwhile, he has appeared in a Wim Wenders film, been lionised by presidents and pressed on to T-shirts. Time magazine proclaimed him one of the 20th century's top 20 leaders and revolutionaries, along with Mao Zedong. The Chinese government has cited the fact that the man was not run over by the lead tank as an example of how carefully the army proceeded. Eyewitnesses, however, say that away from the cameras plenty of tanks squashed protesters.

The idealist: "I went to the USA three months ago, directly from jail," says Wang Youcai. He was a graduate student in physics in 1989, and the ghastly events of 4 June prompted him to abandon everything to set up the Opposition China Democracy Party.

"Our goal was to institutionalise a multi-party system," says Wang. "It was a peaceful, reasonable, open



Fifteen years ago, the world recoiled at images of China's brutal crushing of student protest. OLIVER AUGUST speaks to some of the 21 leaders whose names constituted the government's most-wanted list

and moderate platform that did not directly challenge the top Chinese Communist Party leaders." He is a visiting scholar at Harvard University. Of his feelings in 1989, he has little recollection. "Maybe when China becomes a democracy I'll be able to speak about it."

The steadfast: Five of the Top 21 Tiananmen Square leaders still live in China. Ma Shaoqiang is one of them. He decided to stay despite harassment by the authorities and the unexplained death of a university friend in police custody. "I didn't want to leave because I would become a stranger to China and could not see the changes in society... I may not love the Communist Party or socialism, but I very much love the land where I grew up," he says. After his arrest in 1989, he spent three years in prison for counter-revolutionary activities, an experience that scarred his health but has not dented his political convictions. Ma will hold a one-day hunger strike as he has done every anniversary since he left prison.

In 1997, his Tiananmen friend Yu Zhuo died in the custody of the

tributed to the death of her father later that year, but she still says that, given the chance, she would participate in the 1989 protests again. "I wouldn't be able to stand back," she says.

She still regrets that she was unable to persuade the other students to leave and avert disaster. "I lacked political experience," she says. "There are certainly ways to convince your comrades, to get people on your side."

With the help of strangers, she escaped from China and, like many exiled dissidents, is doing a PhD at a US university. She contrasts her situation with that of those who lost children and spouses in 1989 but remain in China. "They can't even talk about it; they can't freely visit the cemetery where they buried their beloved ones."

The American dreamer: From Li Lu's Park Avenue office, you get a bird's-eye view of the Empire State Building. He looks the successful financier that he is: he runs a hedge fund and a venture-capital fund. When he escaped to the USA, the radical student leader - remembered for his impromptu marriage on Tiananmen Square (he wanted to experience sex and marriage before he died) - simply started anew. He worked hard, becoming the first student to graduate from Columbia with simultaneous degrees in business, in law and from the undergraduate college, and has repaid the benefits.

Yet, for well over a decade, he suffered from nightmares. Li Lu helped to lead the last group of students out of the square early in the morning of 4 June - but a part of his phalanx was crushed on the way out.

The diehard: After the crackdown, the Chinese government accused the democracy activist and editor of a liberal newspaper, Wang Juntao, of being the "black hand" of the Tiananmen movement, one of two behind-the-scenes manipulators. He had been in prison before and in trouble with the authorities for years, and so made a more convincing evil genius than the young students.

If democracy was the crime, he was guilty as charged: it is his life's goal. "I jumped into the democracy movement in the 1970s and planned to contribute my whole life to the project," he says. His involvement in the 1989 protests (which often involved urging restraint on the

Amnesty demand

June 3. — China should conduct an independent inquiry into the 1989 massacre of pro-democracy demonstrators on Tiananmen Square, rights group Amnesty International demanded today ahead of the 15th anniversary of the event. "Those found responsible should be tried and brought to justice," the London-based group said. Amnesty "calls on the government to release all those who are still held in connection with the Tiananmen crackdown and who never received fair trials," it added. Beijing, however, remains unrepentant, with a foreign ministry spokesman arguing that such "decisive measures to stabilise the situation" were necessary for economic growth and the nation's emergence on the world stage. — AFP

headstrong students) led to a radical change of location for a man who had never thought of going abroad. He went from prison into exile in the USA in 1994. "It was a hard starting point for me: I was 36 and had to begin to learn a new language and the American way."

Still, the PhD he is doing in political science at Columbia University is useful. Studying how democracy has evolved in other countries will help him in his life's work. "Some day, when I return to China, I can do much better than before," he promises.

The rock star: Cui Jian's song, *Yi wu suo you* (Nothing to my name), was the anthem of the 1989 protesters. The singer visited the students in the square and was worshipped by them. Though he was not directly involved and wasn't named among the "most wanted", Cui Jian was banned from performing in the capital for many years. Only recently have the authorities allowed him back into the limelight. Cui Jian, is careful with his remarks about Tiananmen. "Fourth June was about anger and young people are always angry," he says. "In all societies and times, some people feel angry and there is always a dark side in any society."

The prisoner: Zhang Ming is the only one of the top student leaders who is still in prison, although the reasons for his incarceration are far from clear. He was originally jailed from 1989 to 1992 for his part in the protest. After his release, he could not get a job and set up his own business. In September 2002, the State Security Ministry charged him with "harming state security with dangerous methods". He was given a quick trial without meaningful access to a lawyer. His seven-year prison sen-

tence states that he has been convicted for "abuse of executive privileges", which usually means corruption.

Now in jail in Shanghai, he has carried out two hunger strikes to draw attention to his case, which have ruined his health. Last week, Human Rights Watch said it had learnt that Zhang may be given a retrial.

The doer: Few of the exiled protest leaders can claim to have had as much direct impact on China as Han Dongfang. In 1989, he was a worker, not a student, but like many ordinary Beijing residents, he sympathised with the students. In the full glare of the international media, he went to Tiananmen Square to found the first independent labour union in the People's Republic of China. When the tanks came, he was arrested and imprisoned. In 1993, he moved to Hong Kong, where he started his own human-rights group called Labour Bulletin, focusing on abuses of farmers and workers.

Three times a week, Han gives a 10-minute address on Radio Free Asia on recent cases of abuse. At the end he recites his telephone number for people to phone in more grievances, and promises them advice. This has made him a one-man clearing house for human-rights violations throughout the country.

The pundit: Wuer Kaixi was the most brazen student leader on the square. In May 1989, the curly-haired revolutionary from a Turkic minority turned up in his pyjamas at the Great Hall of the People and berated Prime Minister Li Peng for being late for their meeting. Fifteen years later, the former hunger striker is a roly-poly media pundit in Taiwan.

Eight years ago, Kaixi went to the island, China's arch-rival, and married a local woman, with whom he has two children. He says: "Without a doubt 4 June turned me into a stronger person and it broadened my horizon." He keeps in touch with the mainland, talking with friends on the telephone and reading newspapers from Beijing and Shanghai on the internet.

Others: Several of the student leaders have found solace in religion. Zhang Boli attended a seminary and is now a pastor in the USA. He wrote a book, *Escape from China*, about his 1989 experiences and his conversion to Christianity while on the run. Liu Gang, No. 3 Most Wanted, took a degree in computer science from Columbia and lives in New Jersey. He didn't want to be interviewed because he still feels sick everytime he talks about 4 June.

In May 1989, as the students launched the hunger strike that would help to precipitate the ultimate crackdown, Chai Ling was at the forefront of the hysterical rhetoric. "We are prepared to face death for the sake of truth," she said. "The oath written with our lives will brighten the skies of our country." Today, she is chief operating officer of an internet company in Cambridge, Massachusetts, having attended Harvard Business School. She is married to an American and tries to avoid talking about 4 June.

Wang Zhixin and Hai Weimin remain in China as they serve time in prison and occasionally write protest letters. Tang Tao was released from a four-year sentence last year, whereabouts of Xiong Wei, Zhengyun and Zheng Xugang are unknown.

— The Times



Students spell out their protest on a Hong Kong pavement, remembering those who died in the crackdown. — AFP

Public Security Bureau in Wuhan. When Ma asked uncomfortable questions about his friend's death, the police started harassing him. Ma lost several jobs because of police pressure and eventually moved from Beijing to Shenzhen, the relatively liberal port city near Hong Kong, where he now works as a marketing advisor.

The voice of reason: Wang Chao-hua hasn't seen her son in 15 years, and believes that the pressure of being watched by the authorities con-

movement, one of two behind-the-scenes manipulators. He had been in prison before and in trouble with the authorities for years, and so made a more convincing evil genius than the young students.

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Fear of history repeating itself

Beijing's response to sporadic political activism suggests that it's still worried about the long-term fallout of the Tiananmen massacre, says OLIVER AUGUST

THE university dormitory where Wuer Kaixi planned the 1989 Tiananmen Square demonstrations is now a haven of consumer comforts. On the 15th anniversary of the massacre that ended the protest, the green-walled room with four bunk beds features three television screens, four mobile phones, broadband internet access for £4 a month and a picture of the Argentina football team.

The four students who occupy Room 339 have no interest in campaigning against the lack of democracy in China. Instead, they download a Hong Kong police film and watch it from the lower left bunk where Kaixi slept in the tumultuous spring of 1989. The students have the chance to travel abroad, become rich and choose where they want to live, thanks to a government policy to buy off the middle classes.

Here at Beijing Normal University, the events of 15 years ago seem a distant memory. "Bygones are bygones," one of the four students said. "There were special circumstances in 1989... I can't say it won't happen again, but it's unlikely."

Nevertheless, the Beijing authorities are taking no chances before the anniversary on Friday. Many embittered victims from 1989 remain active and millions of Chinese have been left behind by their country's economic reforms. Meaningful political liberalisation

has not taken place.

The police have put hundreds of political activists and former student leaders under house arrest, cut telephone lines to their flats and even sent some on forced "holidays" under armed guard to prevent commemorative protests. Security checks at Tiananmen Square are aimed at keeping away the few known protest leaders who evaded detention.

Pang Meiqing, who campaigns on behalf of victims of the massacre after being shot in the back on 4 June 1989 met *The Times* in a hideaway near Beijing's Forbidden City. He said: "They went to my home, my parents' home, and searched my friends' homes."

Former Beijing student leaders who live elsewhere in China have been told that they cannot travel to the capital. Ma Shaofang, who lives in the southern city of Shenzhen, said: "The Shenzhen public security bureau knew I recently came to Beijing and they told me I had to be back by 20 May."

Hu Jia, an activist who recently placed flowers at Tiananmen Square, was prevented last week from leaving his flat by six policemen. His telephone line was cut when he men-

tioned the police presence and officers told him to go on a holiday to Anhui province until 10 June. "They said I had to pay for me and my mother and they would pay their own expenses."

House arrests will prevent the Tiananmen Mothers, a group of victims' relatives, from filing a complaint on 4 June at the Supreme People's Procuratorate against Li Peng, the former Prime Minister. Ding Zilin, the group's leader, and several other members have been confined to their homes since last week.

The scale of the government's response to China's sporadic political activism seems to suggest that it is still worried about the long-term fallout of the event that Chinese simply refer to as *liu si*, or six-four, meaning 4 June.

The economy has been growing at a record pace over the past decade and millions of Chinese live comfortable middle-class lives - especially the student generation that protested in 1989.

And yet anger over the massacre is still just below the surface. Ye Guozhe, who vividly recalls the killing, said: "I know my phone is bugged, but I am not afraid because I have



front of a monument flanking the entrance to Mao Zedong's mausoleum in Beijing. — AFP

d nothing wrong. It is the Communist Party that has committed many crimes." Analysts say that lingering anger over the crackdown is not a problem for Beijing at the moment. But during a future domestic crisis, a ploy caused by an economic downturn, the spectre of Tiananmen Square could re-emerge.

— The Times, London.

China threatens to destroy Taiwan

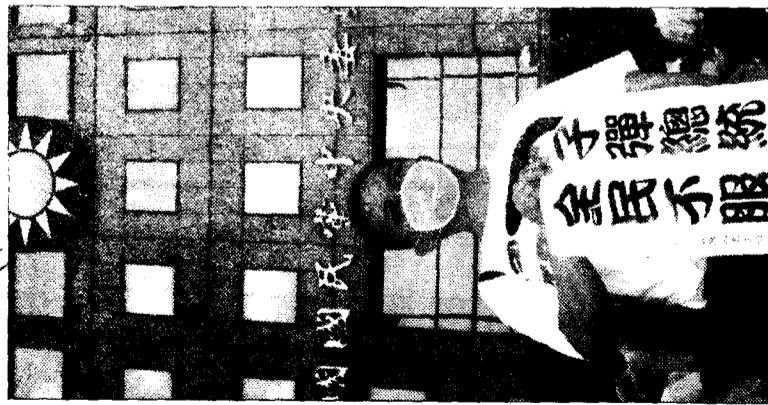
Oliver August/ The Times, London

BEIJING, May 18. — China has threatened Taiwan's recently re-elected President with "destruction" if he pursues his pledge to achieve greater independence from the mainland.

Beijing's menacing statement comes before Mr Chen Shui-bian announces his second-term agenda at his inauguration on Thursday. Analysts have said that if he fulfills his poll promise to draft a new Constitution and have it ratified in a referendum by 2008, there could be war.

Yesterday's statement, issued by the Chinese Cabinet's Taiwan Affairs Office, said: "The Taiwan leaders have before them two roads. One is to pull back immediately from their dangerous lurch toward independence. The other is to keep following their separatist agenda to cut Taiwan from the rest of China and, in the end, meet their own destruction by playing with fire."

Beijing threatened an attack. "If Taiwan leaders move recklessly to provoke major incidents of Taiwan independence, the Chinese people will crush their schemes firmly and thoroughly at any cost."



A supporter of the Opposition Kuomintang displays a poster reading "do not support the bullet President" to protest against Mr Chen Shui-bian's inauguration. — AFP

Threat overheated, says Taipei

TAIPEI, May 18. — Chinese warnings against Taiwan independence were "presumptuous and overheated", but would be studied for signs of change in Beijing's policy toward the island, Vice-President Ms Annette Lu said today. Ms Lu's comments were Taiwan's first official response to a statement issued yesterday by China, which threatened to "firmly and thoroughly" crush any moves toward independence.

The outspoken Taiwanese Vice-President told reporters: "This way of speaking by the Beijing authorities is presumptuous and overheated." She added that President Chen Shui-bian would make a further response to China in his inaugural address on Thursday. She said Beijing's latest words could be taken "as a declaration of war or peace". — AP



Taiwan Vice-President Ms Annette Lu

Beijing welcomes WHO decision

China today welcomed the eighth successive rejection of Taiwan's attempt to join the World Health Organisation as an "observer" as part of the island's move for independence, adds PTI.

Facts have proven that any attempt by the Taiwan authorities to create "two Chinas" and "one China, one Taiwan" in the WHO is doomed to failure, a Chinese foreign ministry spokesman said.

It was the eighth successive rejection by the WHA to such proposals since 1997. The WHO is a specialised agency of the UN and only sovereign states may join it. According to WHO regulations, Taiwan, as part of China, is not eligible to participate in the WHO, he said.

Recognise sovereignty, Dalai Lama told

Ahead of the Dalai Lama's visit to Taiwan, China today asked Tibet to acknowledge its sovereignty over Tibet as well as Taiwan to kick-start dialogue on the vexed Tibet issue. "We have repeatedly urged the Dalai Lama to recognise Taiwan as part of Chinese territory and give up his position of seeking independence of Tibet. Only by doing so, the central government of China can have dialogue with the Dalai Lama," a foreign ministry spokesman said.

Asked to comment on the Dalai's upcoming trip to Taiwan to participate in the inauguration of President Chen on Thursday, the spokesman claimed that Tibet and Taiwan were part of Chinese territory. "Tibet has been Chinese territory since ancient times."

China flexes naval muscles

Hong Kong, April 30 (Reuters): Eight Chinese warships sailed into the city today in the largest show of military force by Beijing since 1997.

The visit appeared aimed as a warning to Taiwan after the re-election of a pro-democracy President in March and as a show of force to Hong Kong, where many have been calling for greater democratic freedom. "We, the Chinese People's Liberation Army, are ready at any time to obey our motherland's orders," vice-admiral Yao Xingyuan, commander of the visiting fleet, told reporters.

More than a thousand Chinese sailors in gleaming white uniforms crammed the dock area of the base as the flags of China and the PLA fluttered in the breeze.

Beijing fears the re-election of Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian will mean the island edging closer to a formal declaration of independence. Chen's plan to adopt a new constitution in 2008 is just one step Beijing perceives

as moving Taiwan towards independence.

A pro-Beijing newspaper in Hong Kong today said China was expanding the military's top decision-making body to seven members to "suit the needs of modern warfare". Analysts said the move signalled Beijing's readiness to go to war over Taiwan. The visit came days after Beijing defied public calls and ruled out universal suffrage for elections for Hong Kong's leaders in 2007 and all legislators in 2008. The move sparked protests in the city and more are being planned.

"The PLA has made great contributions to Hong Kong's long-term prosperity and stability," Hong Kong leader Tung Chee-hwa said at a welcoming ceremony for the warships. The fleet is here for six days.

Memories of PLA soldiers cracking down on pro-democracy demonstrators in Beijing's Tiananmen Square in June 1989 remain vivid here. More than a million took to the streets to protest the repression.

THE TELEGRAPH

1 MAY 2004

USA, BRITAIN CRITICISE BEIJING'S POLL POLICY ON HONG KONG

China tells West to shut up

AP & AFP

US visa firm closed

HONG KONG, April 27. — China has told the USA and Britain to mind their own business over its refusal to allow full democracy for Hong Kong any time soon. The outburst came after Washington and London criticised Beijing for blocking political reform in Hong Kong.

"We are Chinese," Chinese foreign minister Mr Li Zhaoxing told reporters in Shanghai today. "Are you clear on that? Hong Kong is China's Hong Kong." Mr Li added: "Do you think Hong Kong was democratic under British rule? Did the British raise concerns about that? Did the Americans raise concerns? No. Why don't you take a look at this double standard?"

The mainland's most powerful legislative panel told Hong Kong citizens in a ruling yesterday that they

BEIJING, April 27. — China has fired another shot in a visa row with the USA, with officials saying today that a US embassy-run visa consulting service in Shanghai has been shut down. The move is the latest in a spat that began with a tighter US visa policy following the 9/11 attacks. The All China Visa Information Office was shut down by local police on 23 April, despite it receiving more than 10,000 calls a week for visa information, a US embassy spokeswoman in Beijing said. — AFP

cannot democratically choose a successor to unpopular Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa in 2007. Beijing also said Hong Kong will be allowed to directly elect only some, and not all, its lawmakers in 2008.

Expressing disappointment over China's policy, the US State Department said: "It (Beijing's decision) doesn't adequately reflect the

expressed wishes of the Hong Kong people for universal suffrage and democracy... The USA will continue to watch the situation closely with the goal of supporting democracy."

Britain, too, has protested China's decision, saying it violated solemn promises of autonomy for the erstwhile British colony. Yesterday, Foreign Office minister Mr Bill Rammell said he would meet Beijing's ambassador to voice Britain's concerns with the decision.

600 quarantined: Though two confirmed SARS patients are recovering in China, authorities are on "high alert" and quarantined more than 600 people in Beijing and Anhui province, adds PTI from Beijing. During the past 24 hours China did not report any new SARS infection, the health ministry today said, adding that the two confirmed patients — one each in Beijing and east China's Anhui province were recovering quickly.

Some freed, more held

Reuters
Dubai, April 13

AL JAZEERA Arab television aired a tape on Tuesday of four men described as Italians being held by a hitherto unheard of Iraqi Islamist group, which demanded that Italy withdraw its forces from Iraq.

The four men in civilian clothes were shown seated on a floor and holding up their passports, surrounded by gunmen whose faces were covered by traditional Arab headscarves. The name on one passport could be seen as Fabrizio Quattrocchi.

"The Italian government...should vow and give guarantees to withdraw its forces from Iraq and give a time schedule and to free Muslim clerics in Iraq", a voice on the film said, adding the men were captured in Fallujah. The abductors were calling itself the Mujahideen Brigades. The name appeared to be new

and slightly different from that given by men who are holding three Japanese hostage.

Meanwhile, five Ukrainians and three Russians were freed on Tuesday, and seven Chinese nationals — seized separately near Fallujah — were freed on Monday. "Twenty minutes ago, the financial director of the company called from Iraq and said the eight hostages had been released and were at home", said Alexander Abramov, general director of the Interenergoservis company.

Japan remained on tenterhooks over the fate of three Japanese civilians abducted last week near Fallujah. The seven Chinese men abducted by gunmen in Fallujah were freed late on Monday, the Chinese government said. Meanwhile, the US military said two American soldiers and seven employees of US contractor Kellogg, Brown & Root were missing in Iraq.



REUTERS

Two of the seven released Chinese nationals eat in a temporary resting place in Baghdad on Tuesday.

March of 10000 asks Beijing to return power to the people

HK protests test China patience

Chin
5-3
12/9

Hong Kong, April 11 (Reuters): More than 10,000 people took to the streets of Hong Kong today to protest against Beijing's ruling that it alone will determine the shape and timing of elections in the city.

In a move sure to irk China, the protesters marched to Beijing's representative office in Hong Kong chanting "Return the power to the people" and "One man, One vote".

The protesters, including women, children and people in wheelchairs, punched their fists in the air and waved banners that read "One country, two systems fail completely" and "Return the power to the people". They also carried balloons with a caricature of Hong Kong chief executive Tung Chee-hwa.

"The reason why I'm doing this is for the future of my child, for her freedom," said housewife Bonnie Cheung, who brought her young daughter to the protest.

It was the first mass protest organised after China's parliament revised clauses in Hong Kong's constitution last week,

giving Beijing full control over how and when the city chooses its leaders and lawmakers.

"It's an attack on Hong Kong's legal system and its autonomy," Martin Lee, one of the city's leading democracy lawmakers, said of Beijing's ruling.

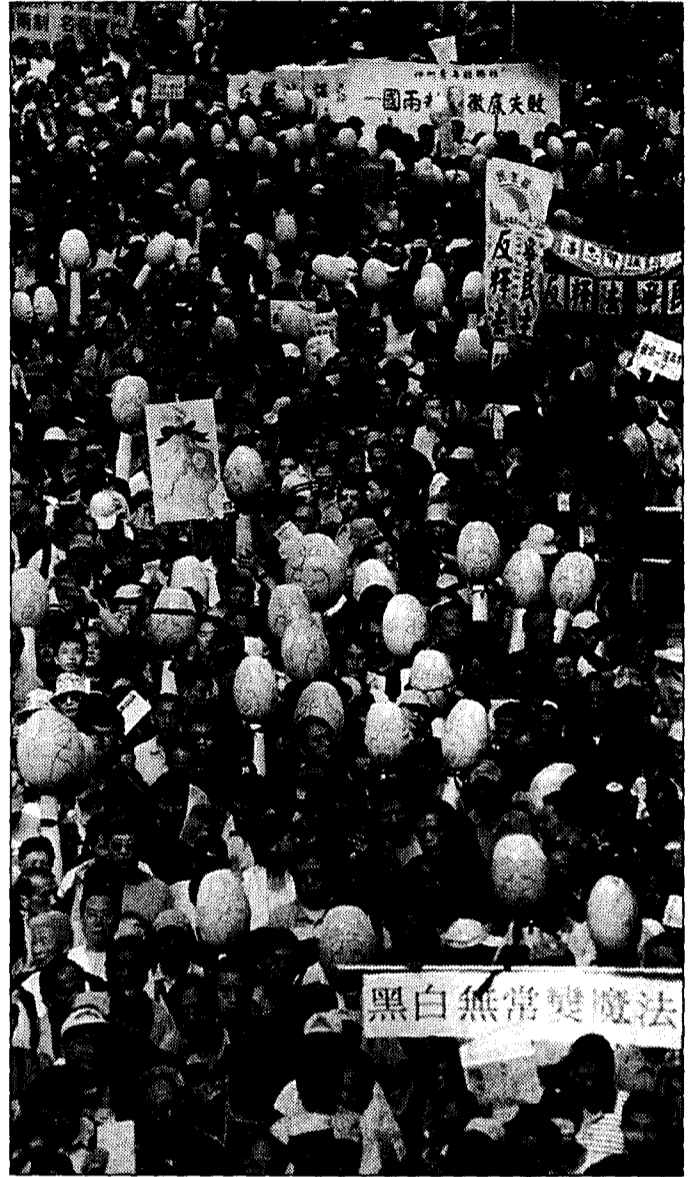
Organisers said about 20,000 people had joined the march. Police said they would not provide a number. The marchers dispersed peacefully after tying black ribbons to the gate of Beijing's liaison office to symbolise their anger.

The protest also drew hecklers.

"All of you disgusting people, you should all be shot," one old man shouted at the marchers.

Hong Kong's government said in a statement it had noted the concerns of the people over China's interpretation of the city's constitution.

Last July, about 500,000 people took to the streets of Hong Kong over Beijing's demand for an anti-subversion law. The protest, which forced the planned law to be shelved, shocked the Chinese leadership.



Demonstrators in Hong Kong, some carrying inflatable dolls depicting Hong Kong Chief Executive Tung Chee-hwa, at the rally on Sunday. (Reuters)

TELESTATION 12 APR 2001

China tightens HK grip

Ch *W*
Beijing/Hong Kong, April 6 (Reuters): China, fearing growing calls for greater democracy in Hong Kong, tightened its grip on the city today by ruling that it alone will determine the shape and timing of elections.

The widely expected ruling came as a blow to pro-democracy activists in Hong Kong ahead of legislative assembly elections in September.

But some analysts in the city said Beijing's move could backfire, triggering a protest vote in favour of pro-democracy groups in the September poll.

"Beijing is assuming total control over political change in Hong Kong," said Hong Kong political commentator Andy Ho.

"It is trying to cool aspirations for democracy here, telling Hong Kong that it has control, but instead of doing that it is heating things up."

Financial markets were, however, unruffled and there

SIA *214*
was little sign of tension in the former British colony returned to Beijing in 1997.

A top committee of China's parliament today passed a review of Hong Kong's "Basic Law", or constitution, giving Beijing full control over the territory's political reform.

Tsang Hin-chi, a Hong Kong member of the top-level Standing Committee of China's National People's Congress, said the ruling was for the good of the people.

"It is very mild and very clear," he said. "People should not blindly oppose it, but put the best interests of Hong Kong people first."

Hong Kong's constitution says the city's nearly seven million people can directly elect their leader and all their lawmakers from as early as 2007 — something they have never done before either under the British or after the handover.

But that prospect is remote now that Beijing has the overriding authority to decide if electoral changes are even needed.

In Hong Kong, about 30 pro-democracy activists marched to government headquarters. Some carried wreaths symbolising the death of democracy.

"Down with the interpretation!" they shouted.

Hong Kong leader Tung Chee-hwa pleaded for understanding at a news conference, saying Beijing's move was necessary for better understanding of the constitution.

"No harm has been done to the "one country, two systems" principle," he told reporters, referring to the high degree of autonomy promised after the handover.

Senior Chinese officials will arrive in Hong Kong tomorrow to explain the interpretation to the city's legal experts and lawmakers, he added.

THE TELEGRAPH 7 APR 2004

China releases AIDS activist

Beijing, April 5 (Reuters): China freed a noted AIDS activist detained for two days over his plans to commemorate democracy protesters who died in the 1989 Tiananmen Square crackdown, Chinese sources said.

Hu Jia, a crusader for AIDS awareness and other causes, was detained on Saturday after writing an article in which he appealed for justice for the Tiananmen victims and declared his intention to hold a memorial service near the square.

He was freed today after his case came under foreign media spotlight. "He got out at 3:15 this afternoon (0715 GMT)," said one source close to Hu, who told Reuters Hu was at his side.

"But he cannot talk right now. He hasn't eaten for two days," he said of Hu, 30, a vegetarian who has written that the Tiananmen massacre led him to take up Buddhism.

Police and state security are on alert for protests ahead of the 15th anniversary of the June 4, 1989, crackdown, when troops and tanks converged on the central Beijing square to disperse protesters, killing hundreds or possibly thousands.

Last week, state security detained three prominent members of the "Tiananmen Mothers", a group of women activists who lost sons or husbands in 1989, and held them for five days. One of them had tried to ship T-shirts commemorating the anniversary into China.

In March, police questioned Jiang Yangyong, the 72-year-old doctor who blew the whistle on China's 2003 SARS coverup, after he sent a letter urging the Communist Party to reappraise the 1989 demonstrations. The official line remains that the protests constituted "a counter-revolutionary rebellion". Hu wrote the article reflecting on his experiences in 1989 after a recent meeting with Jiang and a key AIDS activist, doctor Gao Yaojie.

"The present government should render justice to the innocent victims of June 4, 1989, who died from the violent actions of the military," he wrote.

"Their families should be paid compensation. June 4 should be declared a national day of mourning with the flag at half staff. The government should acknowledge that this was a serious catastrophe, a great mistake by the government in power at the time." He wrote that he planned to hold a memorial at Beijing police headquarters just off Tiananmen Square on April 15, anniversary of the 1989 death of former party chief Hu Yaobang, whose death triggered the nearly two months of student-led protests.

Beijing newspapers published a new city government notice on Saturday warning that people carrying banners, chanting slogans, blocking public transport, immolating themselves or otherwise disrupting public order will be dealt with according to law.

THE TELEGRAPH

6 APR 2004

Ex-minister shot dead ahead of Lanka polls

Colombo, March 27 (Reuters): Two people, including a former cabinet minister, were shot today as violence flared ahead of Sri Lanka's general election next week, police said.

The election, fought over how to pursue peace with the island's separatist Tamil Tiger rebels, had been relatively peaceful until now but could turn more violent in the run-up to the April 2 vote.

Thiyagarajah Maheswaran, the Hindu affairs minister in the outgoing government, was seriously wounded when he was shot while campaigning in downtown Colombo tonight, police said. The returning officer for Batticaloa on the east coast, Ratnam Monagurusamy, was shot about two hours earlier in a separate incident.

"He is in serious condition and was flown to Colombo for treatment. He's still alive," said Gamini Nawaratne, deputy inspector of police. No one claimed responsibility for the attacks and it is not known if they are linked. "This is awful. It was relatively peaceful until now. I fear that things may get out of hand," said Kingsley Rodrigo, executive director of People's Action for Free and Fair Elections.

China angered by huge Taipei protest

Taipei, March 27 (Reuters): In Taiwan's biggest protest, half-a-million supporters of defeated presidential challenger Lien Chan jammed Taipei today to dispute his loss, and China said it would not tolerate turmoil on the island.

A sea of yellow raincoats filled the square around the office of President Chen Shui-bian as demonstrators defied a chilly drizzle to demand a recount in last Saturday's poll, which Chen won by 30,000 votes out of more than 13 million cast.

Dressed in black for mourning and standing in front of a huge sign reading: "Democracy is Dead", Lien told the crowd he wanted a recount in the island's third ever direct presidential vote and an inquiry into the election-eve assassination attempt against Chen that he said cost him victory.

In defiant mood, Chen vowed to step down at once if his rival could prove the failed assassination in which a bullet gashed his abdomen had been staged and challenged Lien to find the world's best sniper to re-enact the shooting.

"If they can create the same kind of wound, A-Bian will immediately resign from the presidency," he told Lien and his run-



Opposition supporters protest near a replica of the statue of liberty in Taipei. (AP)

ning mate, James Soong

The re-elected President countered Lien's demands, offering to agree to a retallyng of last Saturday's hotly disputed vote if Lien Chan filed a lawsuit contesting the result

The political crisis has paralysed one of Asia's most vibrant economies and the stock market dipped 10 per cent last week.

Lien taunted the President. "Our common demands are very

simple: immediate recount. I want to ask Mr Chen Shui-bian: what are you afraid of? Stand up!". Chen was unruffled.

"There is no need for the other side to provide evidence," he told his first news conference since winning a second four-year term, agreeing to a recount by legal process.

Chen can agree immediately because he would be the defendant in any such lawsuit, which can now be filed after the election commission officially declared the result on Friday.

But the President's voice shook with rage when he described his humiliation at suspicions he staged the mysterious shooting that many believe swung the closely fought election. "I never staged this shooting incident and there is nothing to hide," Chen said.

Chen and Vice-President Annette Lu were both slightly wounded by two bullets from a homemade gun as they campaigned in southern Tainan on the afternoon before the election. No arrest has been made but police yesterday issued grainy security video of a balding middle-aged man in yellow jacket and blue trousers who left the scene in haste on a motorcycle.

Adhere to One-China principle: Wen

By P. S. Suryanarayana

SINGAPORE, MARCH 14. The Chinese Prime Minister, Wen Jiabao, today called on the U.S. and the international community to "faithfully live by their commitment to One-China (principle) and make due contributions for the maintenance of the stability of Taiwan Strait and (for) peaceful reunification of the Chinese motherland".

Expressing the 'hope' that the U.S. and other countries would act in this spirit ahead of the proposed referendum in Taiwan on March 20, Mr. Wen said, at a press conference in Beijing today, that China would "exert (its) utmost safeguard stability in the Taiwan Strait". He did not, however, spell out how this would be done in the specific context of the move by the Taiwanese leader, Chen Shui-bian, to hold a plebiscite that Beijing tends to interpret as being aimed at "Taiwanese independence". Beijing wants non-sovereign Taiwan to be reunified with the Chinese mainland on the basis of 'historical' realities and in line with the One-China principle.

Mr. Wen said China would "exert (its) utmost" to promote "three direct links" with Taiwan in trade, shipping and mail. People-to-people contacts and economic linkages would also

be promoted. Addressing China's 'compatriots' in Taiwan, he said Beijing would 'exert' itself in yet another direction "to press ahead with an early resumption of dialogue and negotiation between the two sides of the Taiwan Strait on the basis of One-China".

He reaffirmed China's firm opposition to "any attempt by any people to split Taiwan from the rest of China through any means". Maintaining that the Taiwanese issue "is an internal affair of China", he affirmed that Beijing's sovereignty over Taiwan "has been explicitly recognised in the Cairo Declaration and Potsdam Proclamation". This principle was also "universally recognised by the international community".

Pointing out that Mr. Chen's move for a referendum was "aimed at Taiwanese independence under the pretext of promoting democracy", Mr. Wen said any such plebiscite would "undermine the One-China principle" and "pose a threat to the stability in the Taiwan Strait area". Mr. Wen expressed 'appreciation' for the U.S. President, George W. Bush's recent call to the Taiwanese leader to desist from efforts that could endanger the status quo as regards the territory's credentials as a non-sovereign entity.

ব্যক্তিগত স্বীকৃতি চলেছে চিনে

বৌজিং, ৫ মার্চ— প্রায় ৫৫ বছর ধরে কঠোর থাকা চিনা কমিউনিস্টরা এবারই প্রথম দেশের সংবিধান সংশোধন করে ব্যক্তিগত মালিকানা সম্পত্তির অধিকার দিতে চলেছে। সেই সঙ্গে এই প্রথম কিছুটা প্রতীকিক ভাবে আরও একটি পরিবর্তন আসা হচ্ছে। মানবাধিকারকেও কমিউনিস্ট চিন সাংবিধানিক স্বীকৃতি দিচ্ছে। এর দিন ধরে কমিউনিস্টরা ব্যক্তিগত মালিকানা সম্পত্তির অধিকারকে স্বীকার করতে রাজি না হলেও আর্থিক-সামাজিক ও রাজনৈতিক সংস্কারে পথে পথে চিনা কমিউনিস্ট পার্টি তাদের বিপত পার্টি কংগ্রেসেই পুঁজিপতিদের কমিউনিস্ট পার্টিতে সদস্যপদ দিতে শুরু করে। এ বার আরও এক খাপ এগিয়ে কমিউনিস্ট চিনে ব্যক্তিগত মালিকানা সম্পত্তির অধিকারকেও সাংবিধানিক স্বীকৃতি দিতে চলেছে, যা নিঃসন্দেহে প্রতীকিক হলেও বৈপ্লবিক সিদ্ধান্ত।

আজ এখানে পার্লামেন্টে অধিবেশনের প্রথম দিনে চিনা প্রধানমন্ত্রী ওয়েন জিয়াবাও তাঁর দীর্ঘ ভাষণে চিনের আগামী দিনের যে কর্মসূচির সূত্র রেখা দিয়েছেন, তাতে চিনের গত দুই দশকের উন্নয়নের স্রুতগতিতে কিছুটা রাশ টানার চেষ্টা ধরা পড়ছে। আর্থিক সংস্কার ও উন্নয়নের জেরে দেশের শহর ও গ্রামের মানুষের আয়ের যে বৈষম্য বেড়ে চলেছে, তা কিছুটা কমানোর চেষ্টায় এ বার গ্রামের দিকে চিনা সরকার বেশি করে নজর দেওয়ার কথা বলেছে। এক ঘণ্টা ৫০ মিনিট ধরে প্রধানমন্ত্রীর ওই স্বল্পতায় পার্লামেন্টের সদস্যরা সবচেয়ে বেশি হাততালি দিয়েছেন যখন তিনি কৃষিক্ষেত্রে করের বোঝা কমিয়ে আরও বেশি ভর্তুকি দেওয়ার কথা ঘোষণা করেন। ওয়েন জিয়াবাও জানিয়েছেন, আগামী পাঁচ বছরের মধ্যে ধাপে ধাপে কৃষিকর কমিয়ে একেবারে তুলে দেওয়া হবে। সেই সঙ্গে কৃষি উৎপাদন বাড়ানোর জন্য গ্রামাঞ্চলে ৩৬২ কোটি ডলার বিনিয়োগ করা হবে এবং ১২০ কোটি ডলার ভর্তুকি দেওয়া হবে। প্রধানমন্ত্রী স্বীকার করেন গত দশকে আর্থিক উন্নতি হলেও গ্রামাঞ্চলের মানুষের আয় তেমন বাড়েনি। নতুন কর্মসৃষ্টি এবং সামাজিক নিরাপত্তার দিকটি অবহেলিত। —রয়টার্স

চিনের নীতির বিরুদ্ধে মানব- প্রাচীর তাইওয়ানে

তাইপেই, ২৮ ফেব্রুয়ারি—
তাইওয়ানের প্রতি চিনের হঠকারিতার
প্রতিবাদে দেশের প্রেসিডেন্ট চেন সুই-
বিয়ান ও তাঁর ২০ লক্ষ সমর্থক আজ পূর্ব
চিন সাগরের ছিপটির দৈর্ঘ্য জুড়ে একটি
মানবশৃঙ্খল তৈরি করেন। তাইওয়ানের
দিকে তাক করে রাখা ৫০০ চিনা
ক্ষেপণাস্রের প্রতিবাদেই আজকের এই
মানবপ্রাচীর।

সাম্প্রত গভীর সঙ্কটে রয়েছে চিন-
তাইওয়ান সম্পর্ক। চিনের একটি রাজ্য
হিসাবে গণ্য হতে রাজি নয় তাইওয়ান।
অন্যদিকে, চিনের দাবি, তাইওয়ান তারই
একটি আঞ্চলিক রাজ্য। তাই তার
কোনওরকম অবাধ্যতাই সমর্থন করা হবে
না। তাইওয়ানের উত্তরে মিয়াওলি শহরে
চেন ও তাঁর সমর্থকরা প্রার্থনা জানিয়ে
আর সাদা পায়রা উড়িয়ে প্রতিবাদ
দিবসের সূচনা করেন। তারপরই হাতে
হাত রেখে তৈরি করা হয় বিরাট
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শান্তির প্রাচীর। বিশ্ববাসী যাতে
তাইওয়ানের সমস্যা বুঝে তাকে রক্ষা
করতে এগিয়ে আসে, তাই জন্যই এই
প্রাচীরের পরিকল্পনা।' চিন থেকে বেরিয়ে
আসার বিষয়টিকে উপলক্ষ করেই চেন
পরবর্তী নির্বাচন লড়তে চান। এই প্রলে
গণতন্ত্রেরও পরিকল্পনা আছে চেনের।

চিন অবশ্য আগেই জানিয়েছে, এই
গণতন্ত্র থেকে স্বাধীনতার কোনও প্রয়াস
শুরু হলে যুদ্ধ অনিবার্য। — রয়টার্স

China concerned over N-transfer report

Press Trust of India

Pak Opp raps pardon

BEIJING, Feb. 17. — Amidst reports that some nuclear documents in Chinese language, showing designs for assembling an implosion-type nuclear bomb, were sold to Libya by a Pakistani trading network, Beijing today said it was "seriously concerned" over it. In a departure from the past, China also did not deny the report on Chinese-Pakistani link with Libya's nuclear weapons programme.

"The Chinese side is seriously concerned by the related reports and we are trying to get more information on this issue," foreign ministry spokeswoman Ms Zhang Qiyue told reporters here.

Asked if she could deny the *Washington Post* report, Ms Zhang said: "At present, we have seen only news reports. I don't have any additional information to add at this moment."

The foreign ministry response came a day after the top US expert on arms control Mr John Bolton gave a guarded reaction to a report in the *Post* which said that the Bush administration had documents showing China was involved in Pakistan's nuclear programme, an allegation long suspected by Washington but denied by Beijing.

The report also said the documents were found in Libya and some included text in Chinese as well as detailed

ISLAMABAD, FEB. 17. — Pakistani Opposition parties have sought to put the government on the mat in the wake of mess in the country's nuclear establishment arising out of Dr AQ Khan's proliferation activities and the Presidential pardon to the scientist.

Suggesting that there was something fishy behind the pardon, a number of questions were raised about the way the government granted it when investigations were not complete and also why the government called it a conditional pardon. PPP's parliamentary leader Mr Raza Rabbani asked why Dr Khan was granted pardon in "such a haste" when government had at that stage stated that investigations had not been completed. Mr Rabbani's remarks come close on the heels of comments by party chief Mrs Benazir Bhutto in US media that Khan was being made a "scapegoat" and pointed to the involvement of the army top brass in the clandestine transfer of nuclear technology to Libya, Iran and North Korea.

Seeking to put the government on the mat, the Opposition members moved 10 adjournment motions on the issue. — PTI

instructions for assembling an implosion-type nuclear bomb that could fit atop a large ballistic missile.

"We hold the clear-cut position that we are opposed to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and its means of delivery," Ms Zhang said.

A 'programme' for Chinese expansionism

WHATEVER its ultimate purpose, Pyongyang's suspected nuclear project is keeping both Koreas trapped in tough diplomatic games with the big powers. The battles grow more embarrassing because they not only concern current and future geopolitics and security in the region, but also their remote past.

China's five-year programme to study the history of its northeastern provinces is reportedly aimed at integrating a vital portion of Korea's ancient past into its national history. The controversial "Northeast Asia Project" of the Chinese Institute of Social Sciences may involve not only a single dynastic period but also damage the origin of the Korean nation fatally.

A sad irony, however, is that neither Seoul nor Pyongyang seems to be in a position to lodge a strong objection to this political assault disguised as an academic endeavour. Both the North and South have a big stake in Beijing's brokering role in the stuttering six-nation talks on how to resolve the nuclear crisis peacefully through dialogue.

Assuming that the decade-old nuclear dispute may be finally nearing a settlement, diplomatic or otherwise, China's intention behind its expensive research project seems even more menacing. Imagine that Koguryo (or Goguryeo according to the new Romanisation system adopted by the South Korean government) is recognised as one of the peripheral vassal states founded by an ethnic minority group in ancient China. Korea will undoubtedly lose far more than a proud early chapter of its history.

One important reason is that the northern warrior state, founded in BC 37 in Manchuria by a band of archers from Puyo (or Buyeo), who were the ancestors of the present-day Koreans, moved its capital southward to Pyongyang in the fifth century. By successfully claiming Koguryo, China may hope to have a voice in the fate of the northern half of the peninsula following the possible collapse of the North.

This is why many Koreans sniff an eerie conspiracy in China's about-face to insist on its historical sovereignty over what it had acknowledged as a Korean kingdom for cen-

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A Beijing-backed project on the past makes the
Koreas' future tense, writes LEE KYONG-HEE



A painting depicting a slice of Korean history. — Internet photograph

turies.

With its territory once covering much of today's three northeastern Chinese provinces, where ethnic Koreans form large autonomous districts, Koguryo developed into a strong military state through continuous confrontation with China. Some 12,000 tombs and the remains of hundreds of mountain fortresses scattered around the region attest to the gallantry of Koguryo warriors who defeated the invading forces of the Sui and Tang, both powerful Chinese empires.

It is simply incredulous that the Chinese assert that the famous wars fought by Koguryo to expel the numerically over-

whelming Chinese armies were internal conflicts that took place within their borders. Even more ridiculous is that China now contends that all the early Korean states based in its present territory, including Old Goguryo, the first kingdom established by the founding forefather of the Korean people, were part of China.

"The Chinese are apparently preparing for Korean unification that may follow the North's implosion," said So Gil-su, head of the Association of Koguryo Studies in Seoul. An economic historian at Seokyeong University, he has run the private entity for research in the history of the ancient kingdom for over a decade.

Toward the year-end, Prof. So led a group of South Korean historians on a tour to the fortresses and tombs dated to the Koguryo period around Jian, the second capital of the kingdom in southern Manchuria. The tour marked the 2,000th anniversary of the moving of the capital there by the early rulers of the kingdom. But the Chinese authorities denied them access to important historical monuments.

"We were not even allowed to enter the local museum," So said. "That was not all. We were followed around and watched by Chinese security officers."

Still, the Korean visitors could confirm that the Chinese government had been working hard to clean up the environment around the historical sites. No wonder, as Beijing has been preparing for a bout with the North Koreans in the 28th session of the World Heritage Commission, scheduled to be held in June in the southern Chinese city of Suzhou.

Both countries have applied to register scores of Koguryo tombs as Unesco World Heritage sites. North Korea submitted 63 tombs, including 16 with murals, in 2001. China hastily followed suit and applied for registration of 39 tombs, including 13 royal and 26 aristocratic burial sites, and two fortresses last year. In the meantime, Beijing strongly opposed placing the tombs in North Korea on the World Heritage List.

Coming on the heels of the bad news from China, reports about Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi's surprise visit to the Yasukuni Shrine on New Year's Day also sent a weird message. The Japanese leader's repeated visits to the war shrine constitute psychological attacks on the Koreans, due to their historical implications. This time, his trip seemed like a more brutal offensive because it came right after Seoul lifted its last import bans on Japanese popular culture.

Koizumi apparently took advantage of the volatile situation here and of Japan's role as a major partner in the nuclear talks. It is a pity that the divided peninsula faces a double aggression from the tragic spectre of history.

Taiwan rift

More headaches for Beijing

2004 might just open a new hotspot in the world's catalogue of conflict zones: Taiwan. Chen Shui-bian, the Taiwanese president, has signed a law which allows the holding of referendums on matters of great public import, and will be holding one in March on whether China should remove hundreds of missiles that it has pointed at Taiwan. If the resolution passes, and the phrasing makes it obvious it will, there could be a separate vote on whether Taiwan should seek formal independence from China. President Shui-bian has also said his party will rewrite the constitution to reflect an independent Taiwanese identity if he wins the presidential elections, also scheduled for March. Either action would bring Taipei into collision with Beijing, as China has warned that it will use force if Taiwan makes any move towards declaring independence. A conflict would draw in the United States, which is already deeply embroiled in Afghanistan, Iraq and Korea and can do without another crisis on its hands. Accordingly President Bush has said, in a warning meant for the Taiwanese president, that both sides must do nothing to alter the status quo.

The problem is that few Taiwanese see themselves as Chinese any more. Under the former Kuomintang dictatorship it was an article of faith that Taiwan would be reunited with the mainland — the difference with Communist China being that reunification was supposed to occur under the auspices of Chiang Kai-shek rather than Mao Zedong. However Taiwan has existed as an independent entity for half a century and started democratizing in 1987; its per capita income is ten times China's. All this has made being ruled from Beijing an unattractive prospect for Taiwan's young people, and it was inevitable that some politician would take advantage of this sentiment sooner or later. Beijing has made its case worse by firing missiles in anger near the island during an earlier spat in 1996. A popular analogy doing the rounds in Taiwan now is that just because Americans speak English it doesn't follow that they are British; likewise, just because Taiwanese speak Chinese it doesn't follow that they are Chinese.

A poll by a Taiwanese newspaper showed that 62 per cent of those who responded regard themselves as Taiwanese, as opposed to only 16 per cent in 1989. Despite Bush's rebuke, Shui-bian has refused to stand down from his referendum plans, and a victory by him in forthcoming elections could portend trouble for Beijing. Ultimately Beijing may have to eat humble pie on the issue, as it cannot forget that Taiwanese businessmen have invested \$100 billion in the mainland. The Communist Party will eventually have to choose between two options equally unpalatable to it at present: democratise China, or forget about Taiwan.