

**Houston Area
Model United Nations
Crisis Committee**

Tiananmen Square



**Crisis Directors | Sara Davidson and
Zarek Merchant**

**Houston Area Model United Nations 49
February 1 & 2, 2024**

Note to Delegates

Delegates,

Hello, and welcome to the 49th annual Houston Area Model United Nations conference! I hope you are all ready for an exciting weekend of discussion and diplomacy. My name is Sara Davidson, and I am very excited to be serving as one of your Crisis Directors for the Tiananmen Square Incident: Chinese and Western Response Committee. I am a junior at Rice University studying Political Science and German with a minor in Politics, Law, and Social Thought.

I started being involved with Model UN my freshman year of college at Rice. My high school had never offered anything like it, and I was super excited to try it. The first conference I ever was involved in was HAMUN 47 as Vice Chair to the amazing Zarek, so to be a Crisis Director now alongside him is so incredibly full circle and special to me. I am part of both the traveling team and conference planning team at Rice MUN and currently serve as the club's treasurer. I love MUN because I truly think there is no better place to combine creativity and real world problem solving while also working on public speaking, leadership, and a plethora of other valuable skills.

The Tiananmen Square protests and subsequent massacre were horrible events, and how the rest of the world chose to respond, either through economic sanctions, diplomatic relation reconsiderations, travel bans, etc. shaped the relations with China for the next subsequent years. The response that the June Fourth Incident solicited is still one that has a lasting impact today, which makes the choices made by the delegates in this committee all the more important.

I can't wait to meet each and every one of you and watch you emerge over this conference as careful negotiators, powerful speakers, and quick-thinking diplomats. My only tip is to be prepared for anything and do your research! Don't be afraid to ask questions or reach out to us for anything. Best of luck preparing and I'll see you soon!

Sincerely,



Sara Davidson

TSI: The Western Response

HAMUN 49

sld9@rice.edu



Note to Delegates

Delegates,

Welcome to HAMUN 49. We are so excited for 2 days of fruitful discourse and debate! My name is Zarek Merchant, and I am one of your two Crisis Directors for the Tiananmen Square Incident: Chinese and Western Response Committee. I am a junior at the University of Texas at Austin, as a Finance major with a concentration in commercial real estate.

My Model UN journey began in high school when I traveled and competed as a delegate with my school's delegation. I always loved the shared camaraderie that stemmed from competing alongside others on my team, and the opportunity to research and advocate for topics I was passionate about. As I came to college, I knew I wanted to give back to the MUN community I loved so much, so I served on the exec board of both HAMUN and CTMUN throughout my time at UT. Today, I am so excited to bring this committee to life as a collaboration between myself and your other CD— and one of my very close friends—Sara Davidson. Together, we hope to incite an amazing and electric HAMUN experience for all the delegates in our committees.

The Tiananmen Square Massacres and the events that followed sit within a very interesting time in our global history; it's easy to forget that they occurred just a little more than 30 years ago. Even today, US-Sino relations continue to be a prevalent issue on the national stage, meaning that many of the effects of this event are still seen throughout international relations today. As such, the resolutions you and your delegates create today are all the more important.

Sara and I are so excited to watch this committee unfold and see the creative resolutions and solutions that emerge from the discourse. I am confident all of you will emerge as powerful advocates, knowledgeable legislators, and brokers of peace.

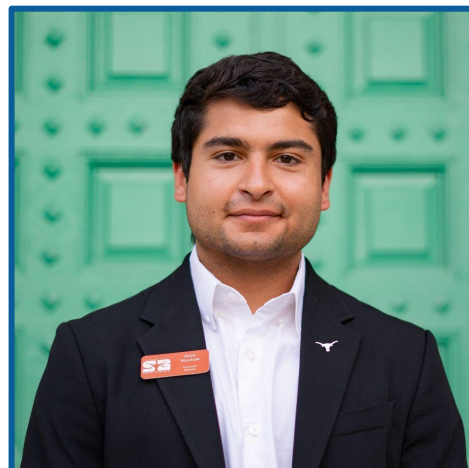
Sincerely,

Zarek Merchant

TSI: The Chinese Response

HAMUN 49

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Background Information

The June Fourth Incident

The events leading up to the Tiananmen Square protests and subsequent massacres in 1989 were marked by a complex interplay of political, economic, and social factors.

Tension had been brewing for years, with demands for political reform and greater freedoms growing among students and intellectuals. The death of former Communist Party General Secretary Hu Yaobang in April 1989 served as a catalyst for large-scale protests, as he was seen as a symbol of reform.

In a time with great economic progress, the nation was also met with inflation, corruption, and erosion of welfare. Although the demands of protestors varied, many included constitutional due process, freedom of speech, freedom of press, and democracy.

Protesters gathered in Tiananmen Square in Beijing, demanding political reform, freedom of speech, and an end to government corruption. The movement gained momentum, with millions of people participating in demonstrations nationwide.

The Chinese government declared martial law and, on June 4, 1989, ordered the military to suppress the protests in a brutal and violent crackdown. As a result, the conflict has also been referred to as the “June 4th Incident.”

The exact number of casualties remains a subject of controversy, with estimates ranging from hundreds to thousands killed: a figure that remains debated to this day.



International Response

The world's reaction to the Tiananmen Square massacres was swift and predominantly critical of China's actions. Numerous countries, particularly Western democracies, expressed shock and condemnation in the aftermath of the brutal crackdown.

The United States, for instance, imposed economic sanctions and suspended high-level diplomatic exchanges with China. The European Union also condemned the Chinese government's actions and suspended some official contacts. The EU also implemented an arms embargo, preventing the sale of arms and military equipment to the country.

International organizations, such as the United Nations, voiced concerns and called for a peaceful resolution, but the response was largely diplomatic in nature, with little concrete action taken. The situation was complicated by the fact that China holds a permanent spot on the UN Security Council and also holds veto power, making interference and condemnation near impossible.

There was a "Situation in China" response drafted that was requested to be sent to the Commission on Human Rights with information provided by the Chinese government and any other relevant sources, but the People's Republic of China UN Ambassador Li Luye called the resolution "a brutal interference with China's internal affairs."

Several countries offered asylum to Chinese students and activists who had been involved in the protests, with the most notable being the United Kingdom, which implemented the British Nationality Act to offer British Overseas Citizenship to Hong Kong residents. They also implemented Project Yellowbird to aid the escape of Chinese dissidents.

Australia had a similar program where they assisted Chinese students who wished to leave China following the events in Tiananmen Square, offering them temporary protection visas.

Taiwan also offered asylum to Chinese students and citizens who managed to escape China after the crackdown and the June 4th incident, also lifting the ban on telephone communications to encourage private contacting and countering of the news blackout that was occurring in China.

In contrast, some countries, including the Soviet Union and several authoritarian states, were notably less critical of China's response, reflecting their own concerns about pro-democracy movements.

Instead of a condemnation, the USSR called for a reform for China. The country did experience backlash with this response, as they saw a greater discussion on human rights and Soviet foreign policy as well as public demonstrations that occurred at the Chinese embassy in Moscow.

The Burma government also supported the actions of the Chinese governments, while opposition parties from within the country condemned the attack.

East Germany was another supporter of the event, with the Volkskammer even passing a resolution in support of the Chinese government's use of force. Members of the general population, however, were against this and did participate in protests against China.

The Kingdom of Thailand was a quiet supporter of the Chinese government, concerned that a greater deal taken in this matter could delay a settlement in the Cambodian-Vietnamese war.

Vietnam, too, was another quiet supporter of the Chinese government, reporting on the protests but not offering commentary on them.

These varying reactions illustrated the complexity of international diplomacy, with many nations seeking to balance their economic interests with human rights concerns. Countries each had individual motivations relating to the extent of their disapproval or support of the actions of the Chinese government, and this goes back further to the lasting history that might exist regarding diplomatic relations between the countries.

Over time, economic engagement with China continued, and diplomatic relations normalized to some extent, but the memory of the Tiananmen Square events continued to shape the world's perception of China's government and its approach to dissent and human rights. The legacy of the massacre has left a lasting impact on how the world views China's political system and approach to civil liberties.

American-Sino Relations

In February of 1989, 71% of polled Americans retained a positive perception of the People's Republic of China. However, merely four months later in June of 1989, this number dropped to 31%, as the American public denounced the People's Republic for their actions at the Tiananmen Square Protests in 1989.

One of the first shifts in US foreign policy was the condemnation of the Chinese government's actions and a call for the promotion of democracy.

In response to the events at Tiananmen Square, President George H.W. Bush, in a press conference less than 24 hours after the incident, announced a joint effort with the European Union to suspend certain forms of engagement with the People's Republic of China. The intent behind this, as the President stated, was to encourage "the democratization of communist societies" by applying pressure on "divisions within the PLA [China's People's Liberation Army]."

Clearly, the United States believed that the protests were a crucial step toward the establishment of a limited, representative government in China. By limiting certain forms of engagement, the United States not only showed solidarity with the demonstrators but also indicated its intent to support the transition from what it considered a repressive regime to a more democratic government in China.

In essence, the United States believed that democracy was a universal value and that China's attempts to suppress these ideas were morally wrong. The use of embargoes was not just a means to restrict the actions of the People's Liberation Army but also a representation of the Western belief that democracy and representation are fundamental human rights.



Despite the outrage of the American public and the restrictions on certain forms of engagement, the United States expressed interest in maintaining a long-term Sino-American relationship.

On June 20, 1989, President Bush sent a letter to Chinese Chairman Deng Xiaoping in which he requested the reception of a special emissary who could engage in candid discussions to express the US government's concerns. Within 24 hours, the Chairman accepted, and Brent Scowcroft, the United States National Security Advisor, was dispatched on a secret mission to China to rebuild trust and restore lines of communication that had been strained by international reactions.



In addition, President Bush made it clear to Chinese leadership that the restrictions would be lifted once he could justify it to the public and expressed a differing view from Congress, which was considering extending visas for Chinese students who feared prosecution upon returning to China.

Looking back at this mission, Scowcroft said, ““It was clear... that the clash of cultures had created a wide divide between us. The resentment by the Chinese of foreign ‘interference’ was omnipresent... The purpose of my trip, however, was not negotiations... but an effort to keep open the lines of communication with a people inclined to isolate themselves and whose long experience with foreigners had engendered xenophobia.”

President Bush's efforts were aimed at restoring the nation's relationship in what he believed was the country's best interests, even if it required working discreetly to mitigate backlash. Historians have speculated that these efforts were made to prevent China from reverting to its policy of isolationism and to maintain a long-term political relationship.

Nevertheless, despite efforts by President Bush, a degree of American anger did manage to threaten economic ties between China and America, particularly in the form of the Most Favored Nation policy (MFN).

Shortly after the events of 1989, China's MFN status was up for renewal in the US Congress. The failure to renew MFN would have resulted in higher tariffs and reduced imports by approximately 50%, potentially costing China billions of dollars in lost profits.

From early speculation, a majority of Congress members were hesitant to renew MFN, considering China's actions and the intensity of American anger. American legislators became entangled in the struggle between appeasing the American public and accepting China's offer, and they were unable to cooperate and pass any resolution on the renewal of MFN.

Another way foreign policy towards China was influenced was through President Bush's Executive Order 12711.

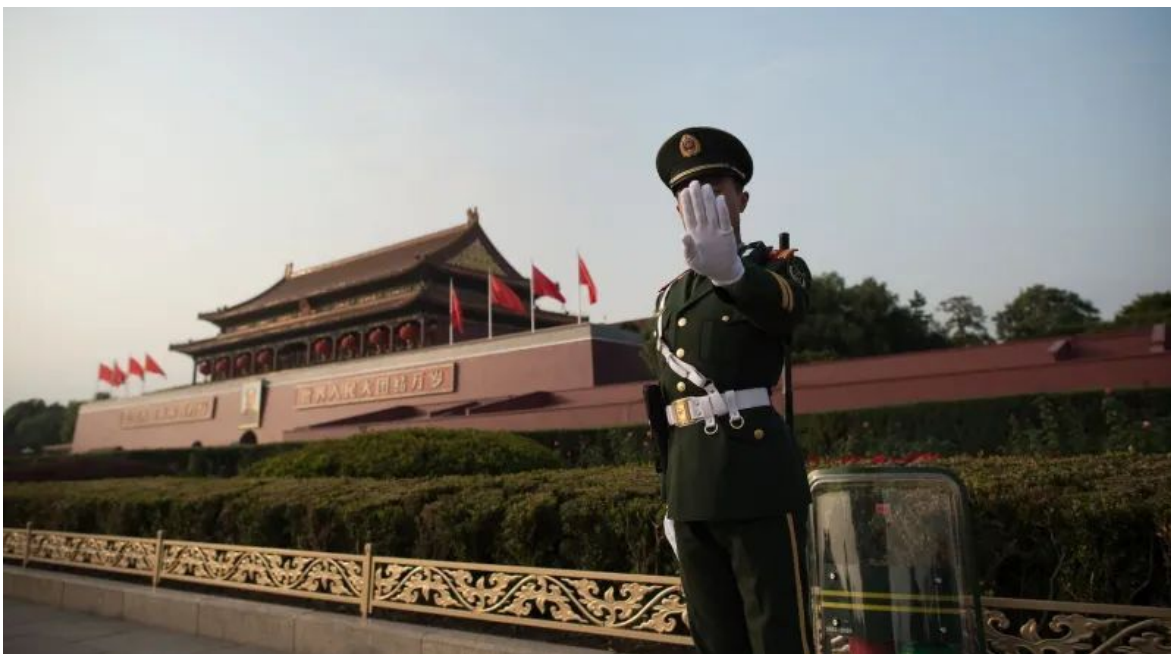
After the protests, many Chinese students in America were fearful of returning to China upon the expiration of their visas, as they could potentially face repercussions. In response, Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi introduced and passed a bill that would extend visas for Chinese students and offer the possibility of naturalization.

However, China expressed its displeasure by threatening to halt all student exchanges if the bill was passed. Consequently, the bill was vetoed by President Bush and replaced by Executive Order 12711, which was a modified version believed to accommodate some of the Chinese government's demands and protect the long-term relationship.

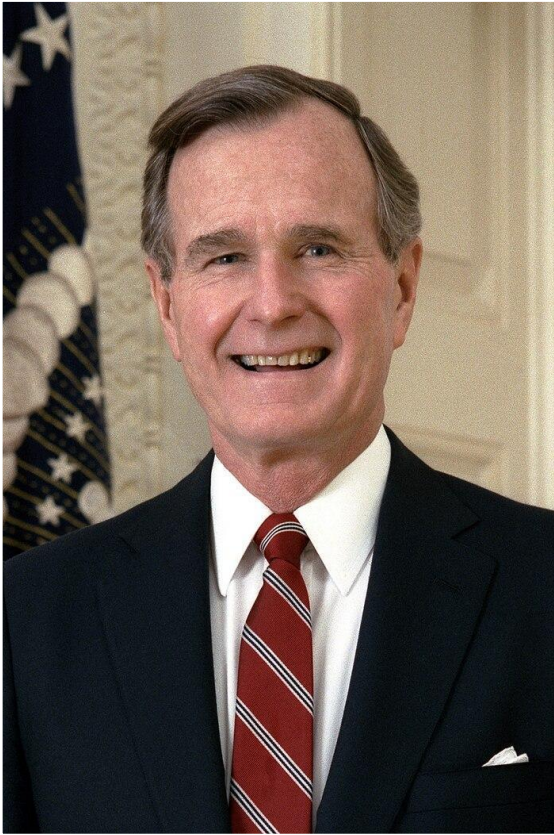


Questions for the Committee

1. How might alliances dating back to the Second World War, as well as the Cold War that followed, play into different countries' responses to the June Fourth Incident?
2. What is China's sphere of influence? How does it wield this influence as a response to this situation?
3. How does the immediate aftermath of a large scale tragedy like Tiananmen Square impact relations with a nation? What are the long term effects of a tragedy like this? How can countries balance immediately condemning the attack while maintaining long term ties with China?
4. How do countries deal with internal protests by their own citizens relating to how China responded to the June Fourth incident?
5. How can we incite change in society while also preventing and condemning sinophobia and xenophobia?



Characters: The West



George H. W. Bush

George H.W. Bush was President of the United States from 1989-1993. He imposed many of the sanctions & embargoes against China as a response to the Tiananmen Square massacre, including the official Tiananmen Square Sanctions Act that was passed in October 1990. The United States values peace & is against the spread of communist ideals, just beginning to leave behind the Cold War.



Jacques Delors

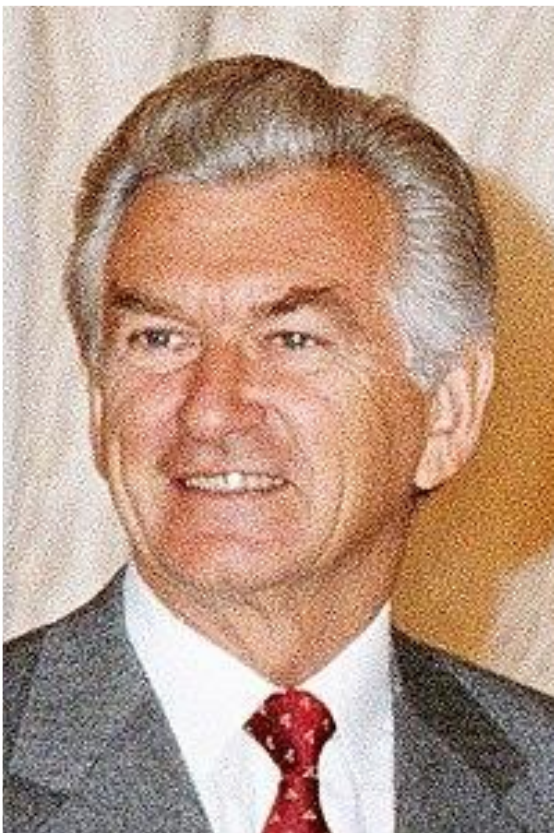
Jacques Delors is the President of the European Commission, and he helped the EU put into place an arms embargo, suspend high-level contracts, and do an overall review of individual member states aid and cooperation with China. He is from France and served as President of the Commission for 10 years, even seeing it through the historic Maastricht Treaty which formally established the EU.

Characters: The West



Joe Clark

Joe Clark was External Affairs Minister of Canada from 1984-1991. He cancelled high-level visits with China to express Canada's disapproval of the events. Clark believed that "we can only express horror and outrage at the senseless violence and tragic loss of life resulting from the indiscriminate and brutal use of force against students and civilians of Peking." Clark was also an outspoken champion of rights on other conflicts, like in South Africa and Nicaragua.



Bob Hawke

Bob Hawke was the Prime Minister of Australia. He gave a well known tearful address on television in light of the protests & massacre in which he offered unilateral asylum to over 40,000 Chinese students who were currently living in Australia. He also was part of the creation of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, showing his deep ties to his region and desire for cooperation, but not at the expense of freedoms.

Characters: The West



Szeto Wah

Szeto Wah was the Chairman of the Hong Kong Alliance in Support of Patriotic Democratic Movements of China. He led a movement in Hong Kong of large-scale protests and demonstrations in support of Beijing protestors against the actions of the Chinese government. Through the help of him and many others, perceptions of China and their treatment of citizens were drastically changed in Hong Kong.



Roland Dumas

Roland Dumas was the French Foreign Minister from 1988 to 1993. He said that he was "dismayed by the bloody repression" of "an unarmed crowd of demonstrators." Dumas was part of the larger European Union response that came out against the massacre, seeing as Jacques Delors, the President of the European Commission, was also French.

Characters: The West



Margaret Thatcher

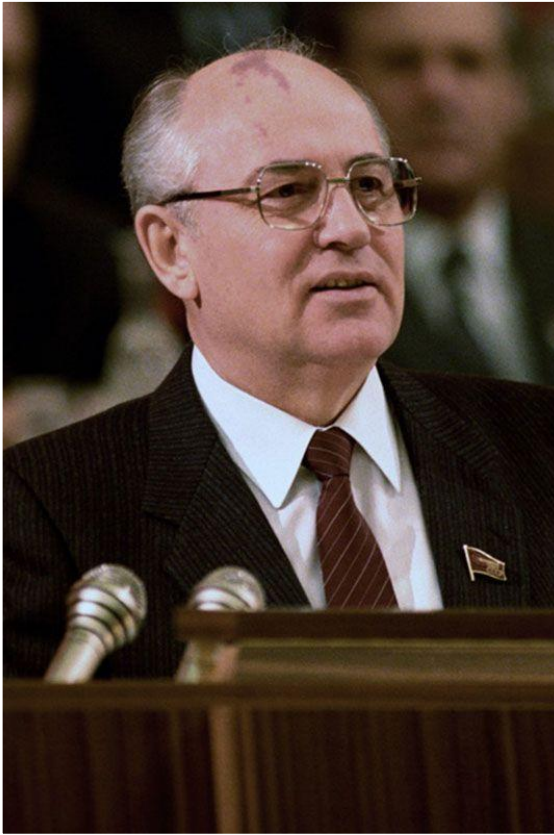
Margaret Thatcher, or the “Iron Lady,” was the first female Prime Minister of the United Kingdom and was outraged by the Tiananmen Square massacre. However, more recently released documents from the time of the incident also show a hesitancy to get involved prior to the massacre due to the importance of “protecting strategic interests,” a comment that was said with President Bush while he was on a visit to London.



Javier Perez de Cuellar

Javier Perez de Cuellar was the Secretary General of the United Nations. He was very concerned about the incident but also knew the limitations that the UN Charter placed on the organization and interfering with a Member State’s internal affairs. This was only heightened by China’s position on the UN Security Council. Cuellar tried to do what he could, but in many ways his hands were tied.

Characters: The West



Mikhail Gorbachev

Mikhail Gorbachev was the General Secretary of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. Rather than condemning the attacks, he instead called for reform to take place in China. Gorbachev saw many parallels between what was happening in China and what was occurring within his own union, and he feared that if he didn't take the appropriate measures he could face the same scale of protests.



Tom Brokaw

Tom Brokaw was a news reporter for NBC news who often reported from China and even from Tiananmen Square when giving his news. He left China just hours before the Tiananmen Square massacre began, and the coverage of this story was one of the biggest in his career.

Characters: The West



Gustáv Husák

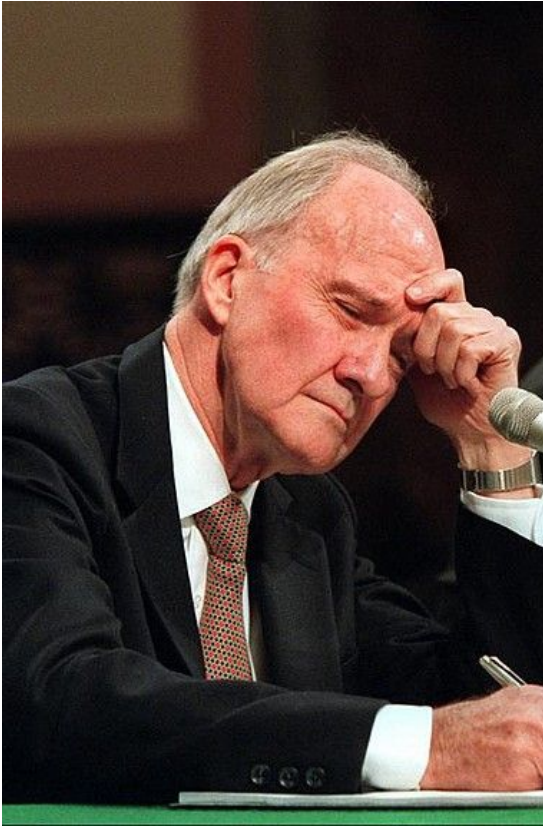
Gustav Husak was the President of Czechoslovakia and supported the Chinese government. His government expressed the idea that China would be able to overcome its current problems and further develop socialism. China, in response, said that they “highly valued the understanding shown by the Czechoslovak Communist Party and people.” Overall, this incident did not impact relations between both countries.



Egon Krenz

Egon Krenz was the General Secretary of the Socialist Unity Party of the German Democratic Republic. He was part of the GDR government that approved of the military action of the Tiananmen Square. Krenz was rewarded by being invited to a special visit to China later on, labeled as a “goodwill visit.” Members of the general population and even some members of the opposition party protested against the visit and his support.

Characters: The West



Brent Scowcroft

Brent Scowcroft served as the National Security Advisor to President George H.W. Bush and made two significant visits to China on behalf of the US in the context of the Tiananmen Square attacks. The first visit, which was initially kept secret, occurred in July 1989 and aimed to convey U.S. shock and concern about the violence in Tiananmen Square, while the second visit was intended to mend relations between the U.S. and China following the protests.



Lawrence Eagleburger

Lawrence Eagleburger was an American diplomat who served as Deputy Secretary of State in the administration of President George H.W. Bush. He played a role in U.S. diplomatic efforts concerning the aftermath of the Tiananmen Square protests. Eagleburger, along with National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft, undertook a secret visit to China in July 1989 to address the US's concerns about the violent crackdown on demonstrators in Tiananmen Square.

Characters: The West



Zhou Yongjun

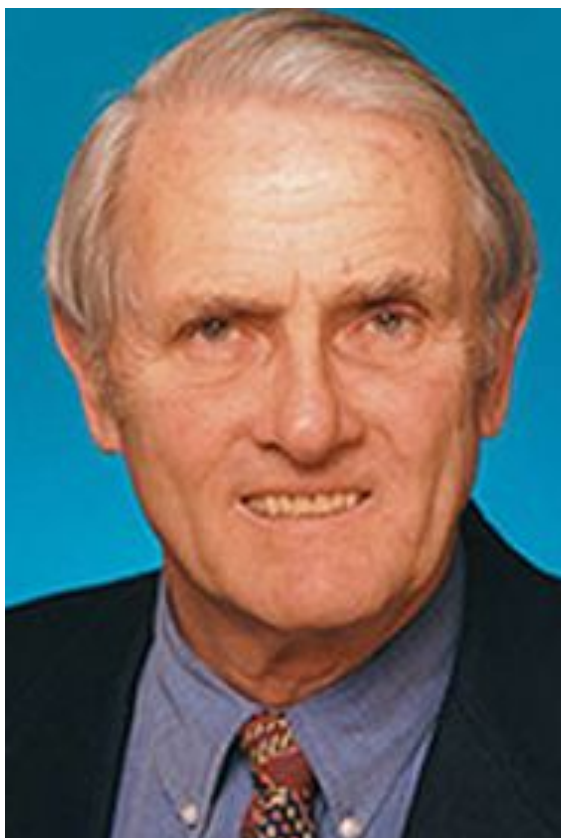
Zhou Yongjun was a student at the China University of Political Science and Law during the 1989 student protests in China. He participated in a group of students who presented a list of demands to Chinese leaders following the death of Hu Yaobang. As a result, he was arrested and spent two years in prison, losing his student status in Beijing. After fleeing to Hong Kong and then the United States in 1992, he made multiple attempts to re-enter China, eventually facing detention in labor re-education camps.



Fang Lizhi

Fang Lizhi, an astrophysics professor, embarked on a nationwide tour of universities and fervently advocated for principles of liberty, human rights, and the separation of powers within the government. Fang's influential lectures, often recorded and widely shared throughout China, helped galvanize the intellectual movement that linked the country's economic challenges to its authoritarian political system. This ultimately contributed to the Tiananmen Square protests.

Characters: The West



James Lilley

As the US ambassador to China during the Tiananmen Square incident, James Lilley provided valuable insights into the Chinese government's response to the pro-democracy protests and communicated these developments to the U.S. government. Lilley's firsthand accounts and diplomatic reports contributed to the international understanding of the Tiananmen Square incident and its aftermath.



Orville Schell

Orville Schell is an American author, journalist, and scholar known for his expertise on China. He was in Beijing during the Tiananmen Square protests in 1989, providing on-the-ground reporting for various news outlets. Schell played an important role in covering and analyzing the events as a journalist, and his insights and commentary during that critical time helped convey the complexity of the situation, the motivations of the protesters, and the Chinese government's response.

Characters: The West



Helmut Kohl

Helmut Kohl was the Chancellor of West Germany, and he condemned the massacre at Tiananmen Square. West Germany imposed political and economic sanctions against Beijing and was also part of the larger European Union response. West Germany had always prided itself on having tough standards for human rights, making this response appropriate in light of the harm caused by the Chinese.



Nicolae Ceaușescu

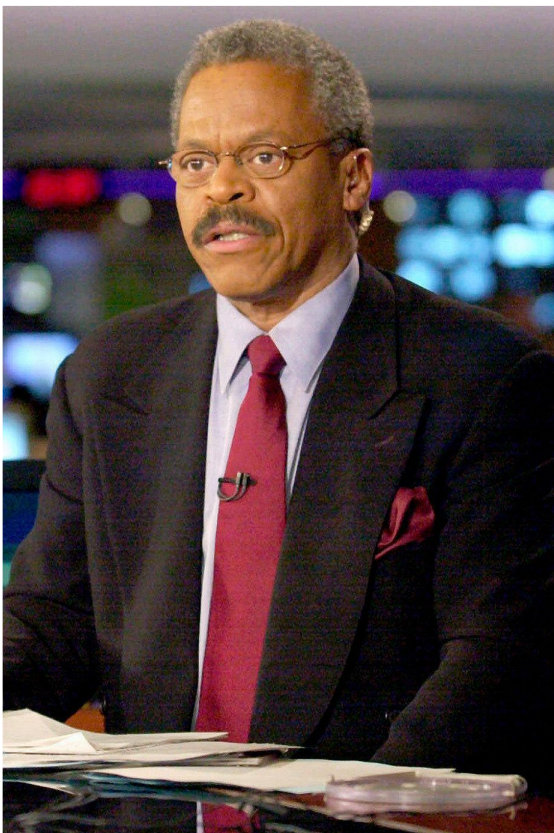
Nicolae Ceaușescu was the President of Romania and praised the military action that China took in response to the protestors. As a reward, China sent Qiao Shi to the Romanian Congress later in 1989 to help Ceaușescu get re-elected as President.

Characters: The West



John Simpson

John Simpson was a BBC journalist who reported from the Tiananmen Square in 1989. As a Westerner having firsthand accounts of the events and the tragedy that was unfolding, he is able to offer unique insights and stories to other leaders who might be struggling to sort between the truth and the propaganda that China might be projecting as a response to the events.



Bernard Shaw

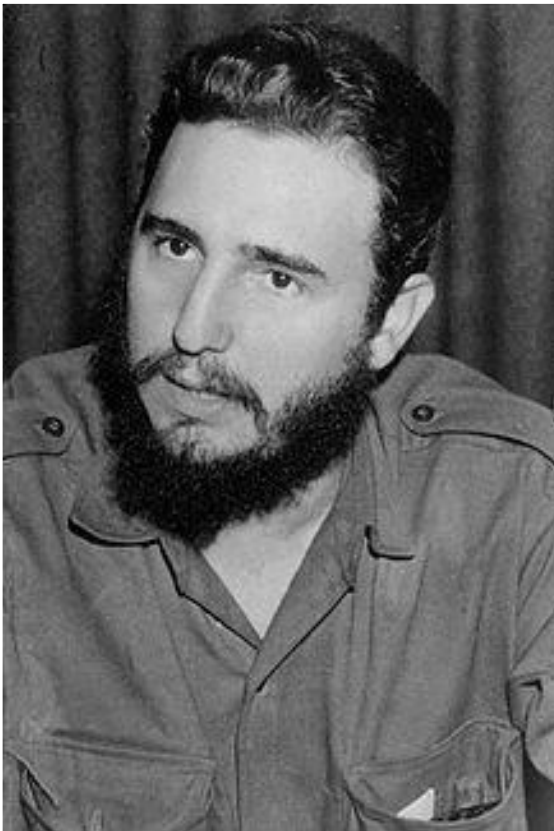
Bernard Shaw was a reporter for CNN who reported from the Tiananmen Square in 1989. He ran live broadcast of the protesting and showed what was truly happening on the ground. Shaw helped begin what is now known as the “CNN effect”. Even the US Secretary of State at the time, James Baker, commented that “Tiananmen was the first example of the power of the global technological revolution, the power of the media to drive policy.”

Characters: The West



Nancy Pelosi

Nancy Pelosi was a California representative who was an outspoken supporter of the right to protest and students who were protesting in China. In the aftermath of the Tiananmen Square massacre, she helped push the US to ensure a tough response that would show the world the values on human rights and freedom of expression that the country holds.



Fidel Castro

Fidel Castro, the leader of Cuba, supported the decision of China in wake of the Tiananmen Square massacre. He continuously had close ties with China both before and after the incident and made several visits to China to pay tributes to the “achievements” that they had made under their governmental system.

Characters: The West



Wu'er Kaixi

Wu'er Kaixi is a prominent Chinese dissident who gained international recognition for his involvement in the Tiananmen Square protests. He was a student leader and played a key role in organizing and leading the pro-democracy movement in Beijing. His impassioned speeches and advocacy for democratic reforms made him a prominent figure during the protests, and he remains an outspoken critic of China's human rights record and its handling of the Tiananmen Square events to this day.

Characters: China



Deng Xiaoping

Deng Xiaoping was a prominent Chinese leader who served as the leader of the People's Republic of China from the late 1970s until the early 1990s. He is widely recognized for introducing economic reforms that transformed China into a more market-oriented and open economy. Deng's leadership approach emphasized pragmatic economic development and modernization while maintaining strict political control and suppressing dissent, as demonstrated during the Tiananmen Square protests.



Li Peng

Li Peng was a Chinese politician who served as the Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China from 1987 to 1998. He played a prominent role in the Chinese government's response to the Tiananmen Square protests in 1989. Li Peng was known for advocating a hardline approach and was a key figure in the decision to impose martial law and use military force to suppress the pro-democracy demonstrations, which resulted in the June 4th incidents.

Characters: China



Rajiv Gandhi

Rajiv Gandhi was the Prime Minister of India, and he empathized with China during the Tiananmen Square massacre. He ordered the state television to offer only minimum coverage of the event, so as to not jeopardize the relations that India had with China. The Communist Party of India also passed a resolution supporting the crackdown on the Tiananmen Square protests.



Zhao Ziyang

Zhao Ziyang was a high-ranking Chinese politician who served as the General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party. During the protests, Zhao Ziyang sympathized with the students' calls for political reform. He advocated for a more conciliatory approach and was eventually purged from his positions by hardline leaders for his stance. After his removal, he was placed under house arrest, where he remained until his death in 2005.

Characters: China



Chai Ling

Chai Ling is a Chinese dissident and activist known for her significant role in the Tiananmen Square protests. She was one of the student leaders who played a pivotal role in organizing and coordinating the pro-democracy movement. Chai Ling became a prominent figure during the protests, advocating for democratic reforms and human rights, and her actions and speeches contributed to the international attention on the events in Tiananmen Square.



Hu Yaobang

Hu Yaobang held top positions within the CCP and had a significant connection to student protestors. He joined the CCP as a close comrade of Deng Xiaoping and championed economic and political reforms under Deng's influence, which garnered support from students and intellectuals. His resignation as Party general secretary in 1987 was prompted by opposition from powerful Party elders who disagreed with his reformist policies, and aided in sparking the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests.

Characters: China



Li Ximing

Li Ximing was a Chinese government official who played a role in the lead-up to the Tiananmen Square protests. He was part of a group of conservative officials who advocated for a military response to the student protests. Li's involvement included briefing Prime Minister Li Peng on the situation in Beijing, criticizing the student protests in a speech, and helping foreclose the option of negotiating with the students.



Yuan Mu

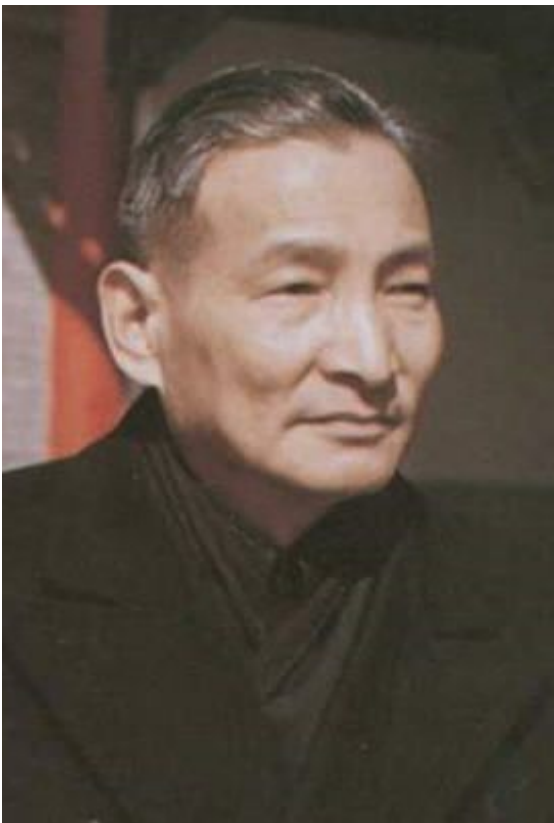
Yuan Mu was a Chinese government official and journalist. After the military crackdown, Yuan provided the government's initial response, characterizing the protests as a "counterrevolutionary rebellion" incited by "thugs and hooligans." He claimed that fewer than 300 people had died, with only 23 being students. In a subsequent interview, Yuan clarified that nobody had died in Tiananmen Square, asserting that American television networks had altered news footage to create a false impression of violence.

Characters: China



Kim Il-Sung

Kim Il-sung was the President of North Korea from 1948 to 1994. His support for the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) was evident when he hosted Zhao Ziyang—the General Secretary of the Chinese Communist Party—on a state visit to North Korea during the peak of the protests. Kim Il-sung maintained a close alliance with the CCP throughout the conflict, firmly denouncing the protests. His role as a steadfast ally to the CCP in the midst of the Tiananmen Square crisis underscored his influence in regional politics.



Chen Yun

Chen Yun became a key architect of Deng Xiaoping's policies, making him one of the most influential figures in China during the 1980s and 1990s. In fact, he was regarded as the second-most powerful man in the CCP after Xiaoping. Chen adopted a more conservative stance, which led him to slow down many reform initiatives and become a leader of the Chinese Communist Party's conservative factions as the chair of the Central Advisory Committee. He was also one of the "Eight Elders of the CCP."

Characters: China



Yang Shangkun

Throughout the 1980's and 1990's, Yang Shangkun controlled the entirety of the PLA (People's Liberation Army) alongside his brother General Yang Baibing. While he was initially sympathetic to student protests, he gradually became more conservative over time. Despite his initial hesitation, he went on to play a leading role in crushing the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests and was actually the one who planned and supervised the operations to clear the square. He was also one of the CCP's Eight Elders.



Yang Baibing

General Yang Baibing was a senior Chinese military officer who, alongside his half-brother Yang Shangkun, held significant influence within the Chinese People's Liberation Army from the early 1980s to the early 1990s. He served as a senior general and played a key role in the military's leadership as a political commissar. Yang Baibing and Yang Shangkun's combined control of the PLA had significant implications during this period of Chinese history.

Characters: China



Bo Yibo

Bo Yibo, a key Chinese political figure who served as Minister of Finance, exhibited evolving views during significant political events. Initially supporting both Hu Yaobang and the 1989 Tiananmen Square protesters, he later aligned with hardliners who advocated for Hu's dismissal in 1987 and the use of force against the protesters in 1989. Bo Yibo's role in the financial realm and his changing stance on the Tiananmen Square protests underscore his complex political journey in China's recent history.



Wang Dan

Wang Dan, born in 1969, was a politically active student at Peking University, where he organized "Democracy Salons." He played a key role in the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests, representing Peking University within the movement's organizing body. After the protests, he became a fugitive, was arrested, and sentenced to prison, and later faced another arrest and imprisonment on charges of conspiring to overthrow the Chinese Communist Party.

Characters: China



Hu Qili

Hu Qili was a prominent figure in the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and held various important positions within the party and government. During the protests, Hu Qili initially aligned with General Secretary Zhao Ziyang, who advocated for political reforms and dialogue with the student demonstrators. However, though he had initially supported Zhao's position, he ultimately sided with the hardliners and the decision to use force to suppress the student protests.



Bao Tong

Bao Tong played a prominent role during the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests and was responsible for writing many of Zhao's speeches advocating for a democratic and legal approach to the student movement. He was one of the few senior Chinese government officials to express understanding for the student demonstrators.

Characters: China



Siddhi Savetsila

Siddhi Savetsila was the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand, and he was part of helping to manage the delicate response that Thailand put out. There was greater fears of a delay in the resolution of the Cambodian-Vietnamese War that continued to be the forethought as Thailand was responding to the situation.



Nguyen Co Thach

Nguyen Co Thach was the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Vietnam, a country that quietly supported the Chinese government in response to the Tiananmen Square massacre. The country's media reported on the protests but was careful not to offer any commentary on them, and overall Thach and his workers tried to ensure a seemingly diplomatic response by simply keeping quiet.

Characters: China



Hiroshi Mitsuzuka

Hiroshi Mitsuzuka was the Minister of Foreign Affairs for Japan, and he was part of the “cautious diplomacy” that Japan expressed in light of the events at Tiananmen Square. The approach was focused on dialogue and raising human rights concerns while keeping in mind that Japan was a significant trading partner of China. They did reduce or suspend official development assistance aid that was going to China.



Lee Teng-hui

Lee Teng-hui was the President of Taiwan when the protests occurred. In light of the massacre, he said “Although we anticipated this mad action of the Chinese communists beforehand, it still has moved us to incomparable grief, indignation and shock.” He offered asylum to Chinese students and citizens who escaped China after the event and allowed for more communication to the country to counter the news blackout occurring in China.

Characters: China



Roh Tae-woo

Roh Tae-woo was the first democratically elected President of South Korea, and his response to the Tiananmen Square massacre reflected the position of being still in a new democratic situation. South Korea expressed concern and suspended some aid to China, showing both diplomatic ties and commitment to human rights. However, it was not one of the more outspoken countries, reflecting its still fragile state of democracy.



Saw Maung

Saw Maung was the Prime Minister of Burma, and he supported the actions of the Chinese government, despite facing backlash from the opposition leaders in his country. There were similar protests happening in Myanmar at the time, and there were also similar forms of oppression and even killing happening to students and citizens at the hands of the Burmese government in response to calls for democracy.

Characters: China



Ai Weiwei

Ai Weiwei is a Chinese contemporary artist, activist, and outspoken critic of the Chinese government. Born in 1957, he initially gained recognition for his conceptual art and later became involved in architecture and social activism. Ai Weiwei's connection to the Tiananmen Square incident stems from his participation as a student protester in 1989, where he documented the protests and their aftermath.



Yan Mingfu

Yan Mingfu was a Chinese official during the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests. He was sent by the Politburo to engage with the student demonstrators and journalists, initially supporting their goals for reform and dialogue. However, as the protests continued, Yan faced challenges and criticism for his handling of the situation, and afterwards, he lost significant political support.

Characters: China



Wang Juntao

Wang Juntao, a political writer and poet, was initially cautious in publishing content during the early stages of the movement. However, he became actively involved as the protests escalated. He organized meetings with intellectuals, students, and journalists, advising them on protest strategies and establishing an advisory center for students in Tiananmen Square to prevent military intervention. He also sought to help student leaders escape persecution.

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