

From the Archives Deng, Li Seen Winning China Power Struggle

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BEIJING -- Senior Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping and Premier Li Peng, having marshaled overwhelming military superiority in the Beijing area, appeared this morning to have won a power struggle with Communist Party chief Zhao Ziyang and other reformist leaders.

A massive buildup of troops loyal to Deng and Li appeared to be aimed not simply at imposing martial law on the capital, in keeping with a declaration issued Saturday by Li, still unenforced, but more important at ensuring that no troops would dare support Zhao, the embattled Communist Party general secretary, diplomats said Thursday.

Zhao has already been placed under house arrest, the Associated Press reported this morning, quoting unidentified sources. Another powerful reformer, National People's Congress Chairman Wan Li, was detained Thursday in Shanghai when he returned to China after cutting short a visit to the United States, the news service reported, quoting unnamed Chinese and East European sources.

A source in Hong Kong close to Zhao's family had passed word to The Times that Zhao might be arrested within the next few days and charged as a counterrevolutionary. Similar reports were carried in Hong Kong's Chinese-language press Thursday. The Times' source in Hong Kong also said Zhao's family was considering leaving Beijing.

The British news agency Reuters quoted unidentified Western diplomats as stating that hard-liners have won the struggle and have formally accused Zhao and three other key reformist leaders of forming an "anti-party clique."

The diplomats said they have heard reports that the party's ruling Politburo had met and decided to accuse Zhao and three other Politburo members--Vice Premier Tian Jiyun, Defense Minister Qin Jiwei and ideologist Hu Qili--of plotting against the party.

A spokesman for the Foreign Ministry declined to comment on the report.

A few thousand students continued to occupy Tian An Men Square at noon today. Many seemed confused about what the top-level political situation might be, but had a general sense that things were moving in favor of the

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Thursday night, a group of 288 students representing all the protesters voted overwhelmingly to continue their demonstration in the square.

Earlier Thursday, even as the shift of political momentum against Zhao began to become more evident, tens of thousands of protesters had taken to the streets in Beijing for yet another massive display of public sentiment demanding that Li and Deng step down.

Premier Li, looking rested and cheerful in his first public appearance since declaration of martial law, was shown on the state-run television news Thursday evening welcoming three new ambassadors to Beijing. He told them--and the nation--that "anyone with common sense" should realize that the reason the People's Liberation Army still remains only on the outskirts of Beijing is not that it is unable to enter the city.

In the face of blockades erected by Beijing residents, whom Li described as misunderstanding the purpose of martial law, the troops have exercised great restraint to avoid clashes, the premier said.

Li warned foreign countries--"especially those that are willing to maintain good relations with China"--not to interfere in the country's internal affairs.

But he also stressed that [China's](#) policies of economic reform and openness to the world will continue.

"The chief architect of China's reform and opening to the outside world is Comrade Deng Xiaoping and no other person," Li declared.

'Things Are Complicated'

"Things in China are complicated," Li added. "Foreign friends cannot see clearly for the time being and need to observe for a longer time before making judgments."

Reports circulating among Chinese in Beijing indicated that the country's leading dissident, astrophysicist Fang Lizhi; his wife, Beijing University Prof. Li Shuxian; and Bao Tong, a top political aide to Zhao who has been a key voice favoring political reform, were among those who may face arrest or dismissal from their official positions.

It is clear that many of the people closest to Zhao "feel threatened," a Western diplomat in Beijing said Thursday.

"There may be lists, and some of them may have been told that some of their actions were counterrevolutionary," the diplomat said. There have also been unconfirmed reports that some of these people are already under house arrest, he added.

At Least 150,000 Troops

American diplomatic sources in Hong Kong estimated that between 150,000 and 300,000 troops have been moved to the outskirts of Beijing.

Western diplomats in Beijing, without giving specific figures, implied that the number of troops is at the lower end of this scale. Any estimate as large as 250,000, one of these diplomats said, is too high.

"From a military point of view, the potential for something happening is very great," said one of the diplomats in Hong Kong. "With that number of military units in the area, I am . . . concerned that something could happen accidentally--something that wasn't planned."

It is possible that there could be unintended conflict between units loyal to Zhao and units loyal to Deng and Li, or that miscalculations or misunderstandings could lead to conflict between troops and student protesters, this diplomat said.

China's current crisis began when the reformist former Communist Party General Secretary Hu Yaobang died of a heart attack April 15. Student demonstrations of mourning for Hu quickly developed into demands for press freedom, better treatment of intellectuals and a crackdown on official corruption.

During the May 15-18 visit to China of Soviet President [Mikhail S. Gorbachev](#), the protesting students pressed demands that Chinese leaders conduct a dialogue with representatives of the demonstrators on how to promote more rapid democratic reforms.

Zhao expressed sympathy for the goals of the students, even as their demonstrations drew wider support from workers and escalated into demands that Deng and Li step down.

The source in Hong Kong close to Zhao's family said that hard-line leaders are now trying to charge Zhao with four "counterrevolutionary" crimes:

- Plotting to revise a policy of economic retrenchment decided upon last August during leadership meetings at the seaside resort town of Beidaihe.
- Rejecting the appeals of President Yang Shangkun and Li to cooperate in maintaining party unity.
- Masterminding the latest wave of student unrest in a bid to strengthen his own political position.
- Damaging party unity by calling in sick to a meeting of party, government and military leaders held in Beijing last Friday, at which Li and Yang announced that troops would be sent into the capital to put down what they described as "turmoil" caused by the student-led demonstrations.

Fate Sealed at Meeting

This source said that Zhao's fate was sealed at a meeting, held sometime after the imposition of martial law, which was attended by nine key party elders: Deng, Yang, Vice President Wang Zhen, former President Li Xiannian, Chen Yun, Peng Zhen, Nie Rongzhen, Xu Xiangqian and Deng Yingchao, widow of Premier Chou En-lai.

At this meeting, according to this source, Deng declared that the party had two choices:

-- Place the party fully under Zhao's control. This, Deng said, would ultimately lead to the party's fall from power.

-- Call in the army and educate the people about Zhao's errors.

Despite the participation of hundreds of thousands of Beijing residents in demonstrations during the past five weeks, hard-line leaders have consistently charged that only "an extremely small number" of people are actually responsible for the protests.

In an attempt to control the damage caused to the government's international image by the protests and any impending crackdown, martial-law orders include tight restrictions on news gathering in Beijing. The restrictions include bans on the conducting of interviews in a wide variety of situations, including schools, neighborhoods, government offices and factories.

With the exception of on-again, off-again bans on live television transmission--which was banned again Wednesday--authorities have made little attempt to enforce these orders.

There is some ambiguity in the restrictions that might leave room for significant print media reporting to continue even if steps are taken to enforce martial law.

But in what could be the first step toward a crackdown on foreign correspondents in Beijing, the Foreign Ministry summoned Japan's TV-ASAHI bureau chief, Hiroshi Arai, and warned him against interviewing students, the Associated Press reported.

In an additional step to exert control over the situation in Beijing, the State Council, China's Cabinet, issued "an urgent circular" Thursday instructing local government officials, police and railway workers to "adopt forceful measures to dissuade and stop students from coming to Beijing," the official New China News Agency reported.

Over the past few weeks, tens of thousands of students from around the country have traveled by train to Beijing--some without buying tickets--to join the demonstrations centered at Tian An Men Square. Several thousand demonstrators have continued to spend nights in the square, camped in a makeshift squatters' settlement of plastic tarps and city buses.

The State Council also sent a letter of solicitude, signed by Li, to the troops around Beijing, the New China News Agency reported.

"The letter hopes the troops will overcome the difficulties confronting them, successfully impose martial law, further contribute to the ending of chaos and safeguard stability and unity," the agency reported.

Li, in his televised comments to the newly arrived ambassadors, said that some army units have already been sent to the central radio and television broadcasting stations.

He also insisted that the opinions of student demonstrators "are consistent with, not contradictory to, those of the party and the government."

"But the participants do not understand the truth of the matter," he said. Li added that he was confident that this gap in understanding will be narrowed "once they do understand the truth."

Holley reported from Beijing and Mann from Hong Kong.

THE PEOPLE'S LIBERATION ARMY

Facts and figures on China's army (based on 1986-87 data):

TROOPS: Estimated 3.2 million personnel, including army, 2.3 million; navy, 340,000; marines, 56,500; air force, 470,000

TERMS OF SERVICE: Selective conscription--army, marines, 3 years; navy, 5 years; air force, 4 years; (estimated 1.35 million conscripts--men and women aged 18-22)

RESERVES: 4.4 million (obligation to age 45); army, 1.8 million; navy, 115,000; marines, 50,000; air force, 200,000

PARAMILITARY: 12 million, including people's armed police, 1.85 million; basic militia, 4.3 million (men and women aged 18-28 who have had or will have military service, serve 30-40 days per year with active forces); and ordinary militia, up to 6 million (ages 18-35, some basic training but generally unarmed)

BUDGET: \$5.47 billion

COMMAND STRUCTURE: Effective commander in chief is Deng Xiaoping, chairman of the Communist Party's Central Military Commission; defense minister, Qin Jiwei; army's chief of staff, Chi Haotian

SOURCES: The International Institute for Strategic Studies' The Military Balance 1987-88; Defense & Foreign Affairs Handbook 1986

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