

Sad but Defiant, Chinese Stand Up to Troops

By **SHERYL WUDUNN** and **SPECIAL TO THE NEW YORK TIMES** MAY 20, 1989

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The 1,000 troops looked out in bewilderment from their immobilized convoy of 21 trucks in western Beijing today to find that their world had been turned upside down.

Rather than dispersing student demonstrators, as they had apparently been sent to do, they found themselves protected by students from throngs of residents who wanted to climb on the vehicles and let air out of the tires. The students linked arms and refused to let people through, except a handful who were assigned the task of making speeches imploring the soldiers to join the cause.

"You are our army," said a Chinese businesswoman who gave her name as Linda Liu and seemed near tears as she went from truck to truck pleading with the soldiers. "You are our brothers and sisters. You are Chinese. Our interests are the same as yours. We believe you have a conscience. You must not crush the movement." 'We Are Not Afraid'

Prime Minister Li Peng's speech calling for "resolute and powerful measures to curb turmoil" had barely concluded when students rushed from all parts of the capital to the central square and vowed they would continue their fight for democracy. Later in the day there were reports of violence in the outskirts of the city, but early this morning the confrontations were peaceful.

"Even if there is bloodshed, we are not afraid," said a 27-year-old teacher from Beijing University who then joined in singing the "Internationale" as he linked arms with his colleagues.

Throughout the capital before dawn today, tens of thousands of people, stunned and worried, emerged from their homes after seeing the speech on television - parents with children, workers on trucks, teachers, intellectuals and party officials. As they wiped their blurry eyes and clasped jackets around their nightgowns, many said that they would do what they could to overcome the planned crackdown. 'We Had to Do Something'

"We're ordinary people, but we heard the speech and we decided we had to do something," said a young man whose body was one link in the human chain formed on Beijing's outer road to keep troops from passing through. "We'll keep this barricade up, because students are protesting for the things we want, and we must protect them."

Those forming the human cordon seemed somewhat disappointed that no troops were to be seen. All over the city, citizens were hailing down cars and trucks to take them to the site of the troops whom they were told would remain in Beijing for at least a few days.

Chinese were treated to a rare scene on television in the early hours today. A usually calm and expressionless Mr. Li had given his sternest speech yet, clenching his fists at times and tensing his face in a display of emotion that few ordinary people had seen in him before. Throughout the day on Friday, the television had replayed portions of a critical speech by Mr. Li to hunger-striking students in a Thursday discussion. Excitement Amid Defiance

The atmosphere all night was tense and excited, as workers defied the Government by jumping into trucks to stage demonstrations of support, shouting slogans and waving banners. Teachers rushed to Tiananmen Square to watch over the weakened hunger strikers and throw warm blankets over the students.

As the Prime Minister's speech blared again and again, the city's residents rushed to and fro in large packs, tilting their ears to catch a word from the nearest orator or passing on the latest rumor about the Communist Party leader, Zhao Ziyang, who had apparently fallen from power.

Many gathered in small groups at intersections or on the edge of Tiananmen Square to guess what might happen next and to denounce the Government action. 'Not Worth Dying For'

"This Government is crazy," said a law professor whose face was flushed with anger. "How does it think it can go against such a clear demonstration of the people's will? The more blood that is shed, the angrier people will get and the faster the Government will be overthrown. This Government is not worth dying for."

In the streets, along the human picket lines, in the tangles of bicycles, people were discussing the fate of the student movement and what it would mean for the battles the people seemed to have won for press freedom and the freedom to demonstrate and organize.

"China has a long history of submissiveness, and so the progress of this movement came as a surprise to many people," said Q. X. Chen, who had listened to Mr. Li's speech over the official loudspeaker in the central square. "But the people have gained confidence in the last few days, and they will not keep silent anymore."

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