

Upheaval in China; Bush Asks Nonviolence and Restraint

By CHARLES MOHR and SPECIAL TO THE NEW YORK TIMES MAY 24, 1989

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President Bush told the leader of China's Legislature today that he would "urge nonviolence and restraint in your present position."

Reporters who accompanied photographers into the Oval Office before the hourlong meeting began were prevented by Mr. Bush from asking questions of the Chinese official, Wan Li, chairman of the Standing Committee of the People's Congress.

The President's statement, quoted in a written White House statement issued later, seemed to be a reiteration of the cautious public statements Mr. Bush has made since students and huge crowds of people began demonstrating in Beijing for greater democracy and freedom of expression in China. Mr. Bush has made clear that he does not wish to incite students to fervor or actions that might bring violent military or police repression.

"We are strongly committed to democracy around the world," the President said. "It is the underpinning of our being as a nation." Official Leaves for China

He also said, "I urge the Voice of America not be jammed and that reporters be given open access" to events in Beijing.

Mr. Wan cut short his visit to the United States and left for China early this evening, according to the Chinese Embassy. He had been scheduled to visit

Baltimore, Orlando, Fla., and New York.

He may have been urged to assume leadership of a group of members of the People's Congress who are seeking a special session of the Legislature aimed at challenging the legality of the martial-law edict that was imposed in parts of Beijing on Saturday. Senior Leadership's Predicament

Diplomats and journalists in China have speculated that Mr. Wan is in agreement with the Communist Party chairman, Zhao Ziyang, that the student and civil protests should be met with conciliation and perhaps limited concessions. Mr. Zhao was cast into at least momentary political eclipse last week, when Prime Minister Li Peng asked army units to enter the city to restore order.

Mr. Wan is in a peculiar position. He is a longtime associate and ally of China's supreme leader, Deng Xiaoping, who is believed to have supported or even directed Mr. Li's repressive efforts. But his position is not unique; almost all the senior leaders of the People's Liberation Army are also proteges of Mr. Deng and are now reported to be stubbornly resisting his decision to crack down on civil disorder.

Mr. Wan, who is usually outgoing, has seemed to underline his predicament, and his nation's by avoiding comments to journalists since his arrival here Monday.

The White House statement said President Bush had told Mr. Wan that he remained personally committed to expanding the normal and constructive relations the United States enjoys with China.

"The world has a stake in China's economic progress, national security and political vitality," the statement said. "The United States hopes to see the continuing implementation of economic and political reforms, which undoubtedly will also help advance these goals."

When reporters tried to question Mr. Wan, the President said both had agreed only to photographs, not interrogation. That was translated into Chinese and Mr. Wan spoke a few words in that language.

President Bush grinned and - without waiting for a translation - said, "Wan Li says, 'Nice try.' "

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