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## Chinese Students, in About-Face, Will Continue Occupying Square

By NICHOLAS D. KRISTOF and SPECIAL TO THE NEW YORK TIMES MAY 30, 1989

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Reversing their earlier position, thousands of university students resolved on Monday to maintain pressure on the Government by continuing their round-the-clock occupation of Tiananmen Square for at least three more weeks.

In an emotional scene at the square in the heart of Beijing late Monday night, a crowd of nearly 100,000 workers and students cheered the arrival of a 27-foot sculpture modeled after the Statue of Liberty. The statue, made by local art students and dragged to the square in several pieces on tricycle carts, was called the Goddess of Democracy and Freedom, to distinguish it from the Statue of Liberty in New York Harbor.

The exuberance was a reminder of some of the students' past triumphs in rallying large numbers of people around the nation to support their demands for a more democratic system and less corruption. In recent days, the movement seems to have slumped from a combination of weariness and uncertainty about how to respond to the rise of a hard-line faction in power struggles within the Communist Party leadership. **New Mood of Defiance**

With the number of students occupying the square slipping steadily, student leaders on Saturday had called for a retreat to the university campuses. But on Monday, displaying a new mood of defiance, most of the students remaining on the

square declared that to leave would be an admission of defeat. They resolved to stay at least until a meeting of the standing committee of the National People's Congress on June 20.

The tens of thousands of students occupying Tiananmen Square at the height of the demonstrations has dwindled to fewer than 10,000, and the lack of garbage collection has left it increasingly dirty and foul smelling. Most Beijing area students have already left, so that those remaining are from other parts of China. The students' occupation of the square is in its third week.

The decision to remain in the square, and the arrival of the statue, seemed to raise the protesters' spirits and create a new sense of the possibilities of the movement.

"She signifies hope for China," said Y. H. Yang, a 22-year-old teacher who was in the crowd. "But she's behind schedule in reaching the square, and she's coming by tricycle. That is symbolic of the slowness and backwardness of the democratization process in China." Public Relations Coup Seen

It was not clear how the Government would react to makeshift monument, one that dominates the eye of anyone traveling along the capital's main east-west thoroughfare, the Avenue of Eternal Peace. Officials will probably be tempted to take it away, but the students say that the only way to dismantle it would be to smash it. The statue is made of plaster and plastic foam.

The students regard the statue as a public relations coup: either it will remain and symbolize the democracy movement and official weakness; or the authorities will be in the embarrassing position of sending the police to attack the Goddess of Democracy and Freedom with sledgehammers.

By naming the statue a goddess, the students win a little extra cachet for their creation. Chinese folk beliefs include a pantheon of gods, from the Kitchen God to the God of Fishermen. Goddess With Caucasian Face

On the other hand, the Goddess closely resembles the Statue of Liberty, to the point of having Caucasian features and a large Western nose. A few spectators said they thought it might have been more appropriate for her to have Chinese features, but nobody seemed too concerned about such particulars.

"We don't care if she resembles Westerners or Chinese," said T. X. Wang, a 29-year-old factory worker. "The most important thing is that she symbolizes our common hopes for democracy."

Perhaps because many of the fainter-hearted students already have left, the mood on Tiananmen Square now is markedly more resolute than just a few days

ago. The students have cleaned up the square to some extent, and they insisted that they would remain indefinitely.

"Tiananmen Square has become a symbol of democracy in China," said Chen Di, a 23-year-old student from Shenyang. "We can't abandon it." Arrivals and Departures

Mr. Chen's classmate Liu Gang interjected: "If we left, the student movement would certainly lose. And if we stay, the Government will be forced to make a choice. Either it will agree to a dialogue with students, or it will stage a crackdown. And if it chooses the crackdown, it will lose support."

Most of the students acknowledge that most of the students will drift away in the coming days and weeks, but some say that new ones will come and take their places. Each day hundreds of new students arrive to join the sit-in at Tiananmen Square, but for now even larger numbers are leaving the capital each day.

As the movement's momentum has waned, local residents who had heaped food and blankets on the demonstrators seemed to be cutting back on their material support. Still, offerings of sustenance continued.

"The students are patriotic, and we must support them," said Xue Yuhai, a 74-year-old fruit seller who had just bicycled over with several tubs of food to give to the students. "We'll continue to give contributions as long as there are students here."

One of China's retired leaders lent his support Monday to Prime Minister Li Peng in his power struggle with the Communist Party leader, Zhao Ziyang. Peng Zhen, the former head of the National People's Congress, supported Mr. Li's military crackdown against the democracy movement and without naming anyone he seemed to attack Mr. Zhao by criticizing "the very small number of conspirators and bad elements who took advantage of the situation to create turmoil."

Still, Mr. Peng's speech was not as hard line as might have been expected, since he is regarded as one of the retired leaders most suspicious of rapid liberalization.

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