

## Crackdown in Beijing; Ungoverning China

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Whoever wins the power struggle now under way in the Communist Party will find the challenge of ruling China incomparably greater after this weekend.

By ordering troops to fire on unarmed crowds, the leadership has created an event that almost surely will haunt the Government for years to come. It is likely to be seen not only as a sign of the party's remoteness from popular opinion, but as a powerful rallying cry for change.

In South Korea, the Government suppressed a popular uprising in the southern city of Kwangju in 1980, killing hundreds, and the incident became an increasing burden on the authorities. "Kwangju" became a byword for the insensitivities and intolerance of the regime, and it still casts a shadow over the Korean political process. The Stuff of Legend

The massacre at Tiananmen Square this weekend seems likely to become China's Kwangju, a part of the folklore of resistance that will magnify the shortcomings of the Government and stain its prestige.

It would have been difficult for the Beijing authorities to devise a more comprehensive method of undermining their own support. The student movement for democracy, until it was violently crushed, achieved unparalleled support throughout the nation, drawing more than a million people to the streets of the

capital at one point and hundreds of thousands more throughout the nation.

"No movement in Chinese history has had such support," a physician said today as he took a break from treating students with bullet wounds. "This is different from all previous movements."

In addition, repressing students is a particularly dangerous business in China because of a traditional respect for students and scholars. Students also have a long record of being in the vanguard of the nation, so repression of students is regarded by many as almost unpatriotic. Right to Rule Undermined

A few weeks ago, it would have been difficult enough for the Communist Party to regain a moral legitimacy, the "mandate of heaven" that ever since imperial days has been the justification for political power in China. But now, after troops have killed students, it will be doubly difficult for any leader to rebuild that reservoir of good will that is at the foundation of political power in China.

It is still far from clear who the next leader will be. Prime Minister Li Peng has gained some ground in the power struggle, but he still is widely regarded as little more than the mouthpiece of several old officials who are not well-liked because of their perceived hostility toward the nation's program of economic and political restructuring.

Zhao Ziyang, the Communist Party General Secretary and Mr. Li's rival, has dropped from sight and is believed to have been stripped of his power though not of his post. One man who is often mentioned as a likely replacement for Mr. Zhao is Qiao Shi, a Politburo member whose attitudes toward political and economic issues are scarcely known.

The temptation facing any new leader will be to try to buy support, perhaps with new subsidies for food or housing. The risk of such attempts to buy support is that these will simply involve more spending and faster growth of the money supply. That would add to inflationary pressures, which is one of the nation's greatest single causes of political instability. Aversion to Unrest

There are other economic difficulties that will face a next leader, and they are likely to compound the tension between the need for austerity to deal with inflation and the need for spending to increase political support.

Strikes seem to be a growing possibility, and they could begin in connection with the killings on Tiananmen Square. There is a deep fear in the Chinese leadership of industrial strikes; already in Shanghai, a small strike began today to show support for the democracy movement in the capital.

Foreign investment and tourism are also certain to fall, after a period in which scenes of unrest in China are beamed to the West. It will take time for foreign investors to regain the image of China as a stable place.

Diplomatic difficulties may also become more complex as a result of the suppression of the student demonstrators. President Bush has deplored the use of violence in China, and such criticisms are likely to be deeply resented within the Chinese Foreign Ministry. If there is further suppression, the Bush Administration will be required, for political reasons, to take some further action. Increased Power of Military

China's next leader will also be in a more precarious position than before because in the last two weeks the army has demonstrated some independence, as have the old Communist Party advisers. They may give the next leaders less room for initiative than before.

Much of a future leader's ability to get results will depend on his moral legitimacy, and that may be difficult without a reappraisal of the student demonstrations. There is a troubling analogy with the early years of Nationalist Party rule over the unified Chinese mainland. The Nationalists, under Chiang Kai-shek, tried to establish order, and they became infamous for their harsh treatment of intellectuals and leftists.

The perception that the Nationalists were pointlessly cruel became an albatross for the Nationalists, and slowly undermined the public assessment of their right to rule as well as their ability to control strikes and other forms of unrest.

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