

ARCHIVES | 1989

CRACKDOWN IN BEIJING; PRESIDENT SPURNS OTHER SANCTIONS

By BERNARD WEINRAUB and SPECIAL TO THE NEW YORK TIMES JUNE 6, 1989

About the Archive

This is a digitized version of an article from The Times's print archive, before the start of online publication in 1996. To preserve these articles as they originally appeared, The Times does not alter, edit or update them.

Occasionally the digitization process introduces transcription errors or other problems. Please send reports of such problems to archive_feedback@nytimes.com.

President Bush today ordered a suspension of American military sales to China in response to what he called the "violent and bloody" crackdown against demonstrators in Beijing.

After saying little during the weekend of bloodshed, Mr. Bush held a news conference this morning to take account of pressure which was mounting in Congress from both liberals and conservatives for a firm American reaction on behalf of the student "pro-democracy" movement.

While halting military sales and suspending visits of Chinese and American military delegations, the President resisted suggestions that he impose economic sanctions or withdraw the American Ambassador from Beijing. 'Bad Time to Withdraw'

Mr. Bush appeared to be seeking middle ground between Congressional calls for more severe penalties and his own instincts, based in part on his experience as head of the United States Mission in China, that Washington should not move abruptly to freeze relations with the Chinese leadership.

"I don't want to see a total break in this relationship and I will not encourage a total break," Mr. Bush said. [Excerpts from the news conference, page A15.]

"When you see these kids struggling for democracy and freedom, this would be a bad time for the United States to withdraw," Mr. Bush said. He urged Chinese authorities "to avoid violence and to return to their previous policy of restraint." Mr. Bush, in his opening comments, said: "In recent weeks, we've urged mutual restraint, nonviolence and dialogue. Instead, there has been a violent and bloody attack on the demonstrators."

But the President emphasized that he wanted to make "a reasoned, careful" set of steps "that takes into account both our long-term interests and recognition of a complex internal situation in China."

Other actions announced by Mr. Bush included a statement that the United States would engage in "a sympathetic review of requests" by any of the thousands of Chinese students in the United States to extend their stay.

White House aides said Mr. Bush's decision on military sales involved items in a package of more than \$600 million ordered by the Chinese but not yet delivered. While not likely to damage China's military machine significantly, the move was meant to be a symbolic show of Washington's anger at elements in the Chinese military involved in the bloodshed that has left hundreds dead. In his press conference, Mr. Bush noted that not all of the Chinese military seemed to support the crackdown. Disturbed by TV Film

In justifying his decision not to impose economic sanctions, Mr. Bush said he did not want to make "an emotional response" to the turmoil.

But Mr. Bush, whose closest aides said he was deeply disturbed at television news film showing Chinese citizens beaten and shot by security forces, told reporters, "I reserve the right to take a whole new look at things if the violence escalates."

Reaction from Capitol Hill was supportive, although some lawmakers urged stronger moves against the Beijing Government.

Mr. Bush's day was virtually consumed with the crisis in China. He received a stream of intelligence reports from Beijing, phoned Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher of Britain to discuss the Western response, met Congressional leaders on the United States response and spoke to a group of Chinese students in the Oval Office.

Several ranking White House aides said, however, that information coming from Beijing was uncertain. 'A Very Murky Picture'

"He's monitoring the situation as it's reported by CNN and coming in from our

embassy," said a ranking White House aide. "Quite frankly, we don't have very much information on what's happening on the scene or in the Government."

Another senior official said, "We're watching a very murky picture."

Mr. Bush, who served as head of the United States Liaison Mission to China in 1974-75, in the years before there was full diplomatic relations, told reporters, "The United States cannot condone the violent attacks and cannot ignore the consequence for our relationship with China."

The President said that he sympathized with the Chinese citizens seeking a more open society and that the momentum toward democracy was unstoppable.

"You can't put the genie back in the bottle and return to total repression," Mr. Bush said. "It would be a tragedy for all if China were to pull back to its pre-1972 era of isolation and repression." That was the year President Richard M. Nixon visited China. Growing Arms Purchases

Arms transactions between China and the United States have grown steadily since June 1984, when the Reagan Administration declared China eligible to make arms purchases.

Pentagon and State Department officials said China has purchased more than \$600 million in gear or technology in four major transactions. The bulk of these transactions remain undelivered, and those already in the pipeline have been suspended.

The largest transaction, worth \$502 million, was the sale of 55 avionics kits to modernize the electronic systems on Chinese F-8 jet fighters. Defense Department officials said the equipment - including radar gauges, computers and sensing items - had not yet been shipped to China, although State Department aides said a relatively small amount was already in the pipeline.

Another transaction included a \$28.5 million sale of technology and assistance in October 1985 to build an artillery ammunition plant. The equipment had been shipped, but production lines have not been set up in China, officials said. A third transaction involved the sale of four MK-46 torpedoes in February 1986, valued at \$8.5 million. These have not been delivered, Defense Department officials said.

Commercial Sales Included

A fourth transaction involved the \$62.5 million sale of four artillery-locating radar sets. Two were delivered in March, Defense officials said. Two others are scheduled for delivery next year.

In addition, the United States approved commercial military sales to China

last year totalling \$85 million. These sales have also been suspended. Meanwhile, Secretary of State James A. Baker 3d told Congressional leaders in a private meeting that the fate of the senior Chinese leader, Deng Xiaoping, remained uncertain and that the United States did not know whether he was ill or even alive, a senior White House official said.

"It appears that somehow the continuity of control that had been exercised has unraveled," said another White House aide., who indicated that the bulk of his day was spent trying to determine the fate of the Chinese leader and who was actually in charge.

Mr. Bush also offered "humanitarian and medical assistance through the Red Cross to those injured during the assault." Stronger Measures Urged

Lawmakers in both parties, liberals as well as conservatives, praised President Bush's decision to suspend Government and commercial military sales to China. But some, including Senators Jesse Helms, Republican of North Carolina, and Edward M. Kennedy, Democrat of Massachusetts, urged stronger measures.

Groups of lawmakers spoke to about 1,000 demonstrators, many of them Chinese students in black armbands, on the steps of the Capitol.

"I think he's taken the exact, appropriate steps," said Senator Alan Cranston, Democrat of California. "He has avoided taking extreme steps that would not contribute to the resolution of the problems."

Mr. Helms, ranking Republican on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said he would seek "contingency" legislation that would suspend trade, investment and other ties to China "if these brutal atrocities continue." The Foreign Relations Committee has scheduled hearings for Wednesday, and has asked Mr. Baker to testify.

Mr. Kennedy asked for further moves, including "a unified response with our friends and allies to block Chinese acquisition of any high-technology items with military applications."

In announcing the liberalization of immigration rules for Chinese students here, the President said American officials would look sympathetically on those who choose not to return to their homeland when their student visas expire.

The 40,000 Chinese students enrolled in the United States form the largest single foreign student group in the country, said Duke Austin, a spokesman for the Immigration and Naturalization Service.

Several students interviewed today expressed concern that if they went back

now they might be subject to reprisals for joining demonstrations in the United States.

A version of this article appears in print on June 6, 1989, on Page A00001 of the National edition with the headline: CRACKDOWN IN BEIJING; PRESIDENT SPURNS OTHER SANCTIONS.
