

Turmoil in China; Eager Not to Offend, Soviet Congress Criticizes Outside Pressure on China

By **BILL KELLER** and **SPECIAL TO THE NEW YORK TIMES** JUNE 7, 1989

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The Soviet Congress of People's Deputies today condemned outside efforts to bring pressure on China, saying that the upheavals in that country were purely an internal matter.

The statement, drafted by the Soviet leadership and rushed through the new congress without advance notice or debate, avoided any criticism of the Chinese Army's violent crackdown on protesters in Beijing, but appealed to the Chinese to continue a course of economic and political change.

It reflected the Kremlin's eagerness to avoid offending the Chinese Government, with which Moscow has just restored normal relations after a 30-year estrangement.

"Now is not the time for unconsidered, hasty conclusions and statements," the Soviet legislature said. "However high the passions run at times, it is important to search patiently for such adequate political solutions as would be determined by the aim of consolidating society."

"Of course, the events happening in China are an internal affair of the country," it continued. "Any attempts at pressure from the outside would be inappropriate. Such attempts only blow up passions and do not promote

stabilization of the situation in any way."

The statement was in sharp contrast to the measured criticism from the Bush Administration, which suspended military sales to China on Monday and urged the leadership there to exercise restraint.

Asked today about the White House response to the violence in China, President Mikhail S. Gorbachev replied sharply: "Let Bush speak for himself. I do not think we shall tell America what to do."

The statement was approved by an overwhelming show of hands in the 2,250-member congress, but some members said later that they were distressed that it included no criticism of the Chinese Army or any expression of condolences to the families of those killed.

Yuri Karyakin, a Moscow political commentator who is a member of the congress, said condemnation of killing in other countries "is not interference in other people's affairs," adding, "These are our affairs also."

"We should use our moral weight," he said. "We would not necessarily endanger our diplomatic relations. How can we talk about Latin American regimes if we are silent when such things are happening?" Gorbachev Aide's Explanation

Georgi K. Shakhnazarov, a close aide to Mr. Gorbachev, said afterward that he had personally wanted to include an explicit appeal against violence in the statement, but that it was approved before he had a chance to suggest it.

But he said that the statement's appeal for wisdom and reason was an implicit call for an end to violence.

The Soviet sensitivity toward China has been evident in the scant and generally pro-Government reporting on the Beijing unrest in the Soviet press and television since Mr. Gorbachev shook hands with Deng Xiaoping, China's senior leader, last month.

While the Western press has described the protesters as a movement for democracy, the Soviet press has confined itself to quoting official Chinese statements describing them as an unpopular minority of "counterrevolutionaries" who had mercilessly killed dozens of soldiers.

Soviet television has featured scenes of students attacking soldiers and setting fire to vehicles, omitting the footage shown in the West of soldiers gunning down unarmed protesters.

"The armed forces tried to avoid bloodshed," the Tass press agency said in an article published in most national newspapers today, paraphrasing an official

statement by the authorities in Beijing.

Viktor G. Afanaseyev, editor in chief of the Communist Party newspaper Pravda, conceded that the coverage had been minimized to avoid disrupting the normalization of relations announced when Mr. Gorbachev visited Beijing last month.

If the Soviet press carried critical coverage of the events in China, Mr. Afanaseyev said, "they could take it as an attempt to influence them, to interfere."

During his trip to China, which was repeatedly disrupted by large peaceful demonstrations in central Beijing, Mr. Gorbachev held a late-night meeting with several leading Soviet correspondents to caution them about the tone of their reporting. A Less-Than-Free Press

Although the Soviet press has been largely liberated in its coverage of domestic affairs, foreign reporting is still tightly constrained by the needs of Kremlin foreign policy.

The distinction has never been more evident than this week. While the Soviet press provided prolific details of a catastrophic gas explosion in the Ural Mountains and unrest in the Central Asian republic of Uzbekistan, it has relegated the events in China to short, back-page articles, and has not yet reported the crushing defeat of the Communist Party in parliamentary elections in Poland.

Mr. Afanaseyev excused Pravda's reporting on China today by saying the newspaper currently has no permanent correspondent in Beijing. Asked about its correspondent in Poland, he smiled and said, "He's on vacation."

Some Soviet journalists have privately chafed under the restrictions. They say that more sophisticated Soviet readers, accustomed to reading between the lines, can judge from the stilted tone of the reports that they do not fully represent reality.

Meeting briefly with reporters today outside the Kremlin walls, Mr. Gorbachev said, "Naturally we feel concern and we watch to see how these processes are developing."

Noting that in Beijing he had called for dialogue between the Government and protesters, he added: "Answers to all questions can only be decided by dialogue. I still stand for that."

Today's statement, the first official comment since the violence began, was apparently drafted in response to written requests from several legislators for a Government comment on the disruptions in China.

Mr. Gorbachev and Foreign Minister Eduard A. Shevardnadze were seen conferring this morning, shortly before the statement was read to the assembly and approved without discussion.

Vytautas Landsbergis, a member from Lithuania and president of the independent movement Sajudis, said he abstained on the vote because he felt that the statement should have said "that nothing happened there to justify killing people."

Mr. Landsbergis said he believed one reason the leadership was reluctant to condemn what happened in China was that it would raise questions about the use of force against protesters in Soviet Georgia and other republics. EAST GERMANS SEE PROPAGANDA

EAST BERLIN, June 6 (Reuters) -East Germany's official youth newspaper accused the Western press today of seeking to overturn rule in China by waging a propaganda campaign against the Beijing leadership.

"The Western media are not interested in the stabilization of China as a socialist country but rather its destabilization," said an editorial in Junge Welt, the East German Communist Party's youth daily.

A version of this article appears in print on June 7, 1989, on Page A00010 of the National edition with the headline: Turmoil in China; Eager Not to Offend, Soviet Congress Criticizes Outside Pressure on China.