



# *China's 1989 Uprising In Tiananmen Square*

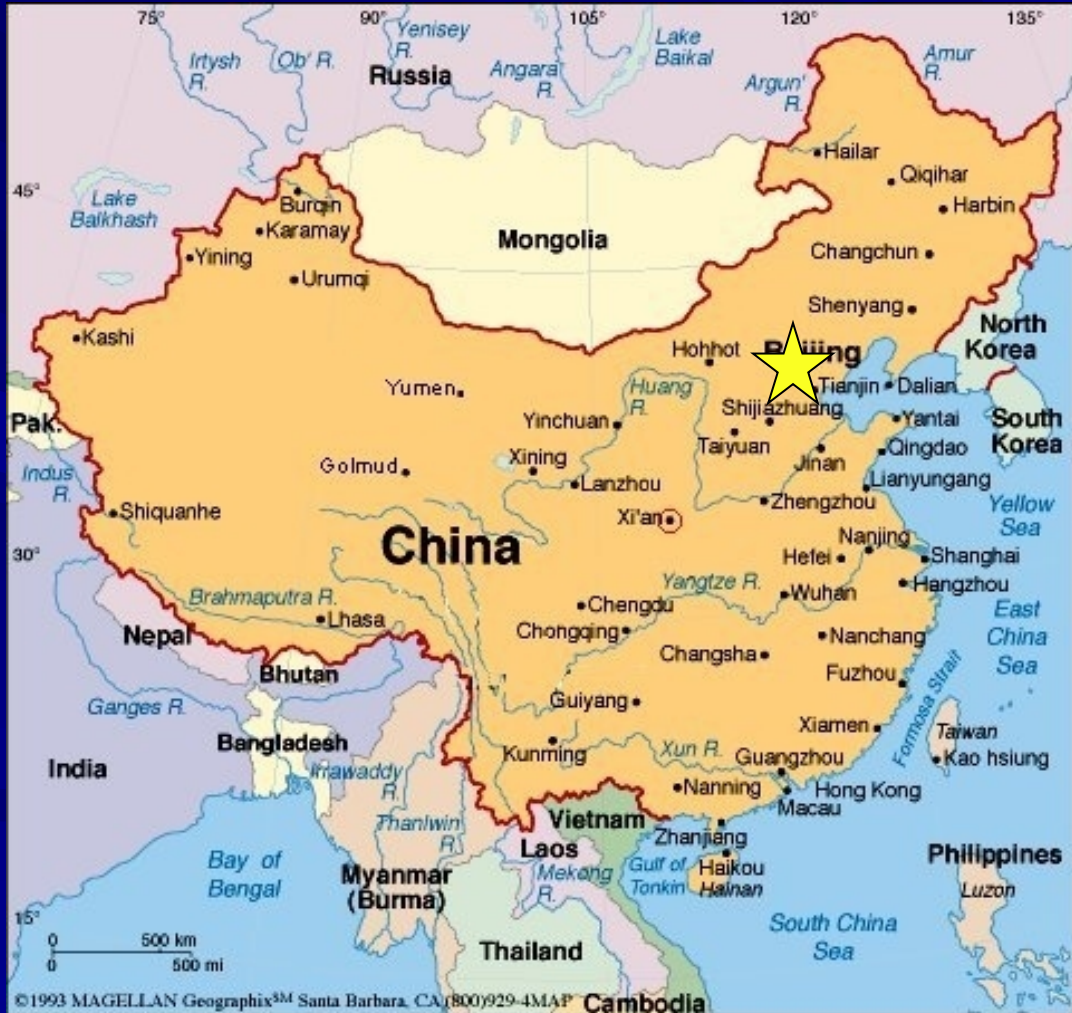
*Professor George Katsiaficas*

# Where is Tiananmen Square?

China

2008 Population:  
1,325,639,982

Minorities in 2000:  
106,430,000 or 8.4%



# Beijing's Tiananmen Square



The Gate of Heavenly Peace



# Tiananmen Square

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- Originally erected in 1417 as a location for imperial offices and other government buildings
- Leveled for its current appearance in the early 1900's after the Boxer Rebellion caused large amounts of damage to major structures







# Immense Size

- Largest open urban square in the world
- Almost 100 acres
- 90 Football fields
- Site for numerous political events and demonstrations





# Memorials

- Monument of the People's Heroes
  - Monument for those who died in the struggles to make China an independent nation
  - 10,000 tons of stone used to create it
  - 8 bas-relief panels depicting influential events of Communist China
  - Became an important gathering place for protests





# Memorials

- The Mausoleum of Mao Zedong
  - 1<sup>st</sup> President of the People's Republic of China (PRC)
  - Marxist military and political leader
  - October 1, 1949 declared the foundation of the PRC in Tiananmen Square







# May 4<sup>th</sup> 1919

- First mass movement in modern Chinese history
- Beginning of modern Chinese nationalism
- Students protested the Versailles Treaty
- Treaty stated Japan would be in control of the Shandong Province
- Boycotts and demonstrations occurred
- Inspired by Korea's March 1, 1919 Uprising

# May 4<sup>th</sup> 1919

- Students angry with the government's inability to secure Chinese interests at the Versailles Conference ending World War 1
- Awakened citizens to the poor state of China's current affairs
- Citizens wanted reform
- Police and protestors clashed
- Chinese government did not sign the Versailles treaty



# Mao's Leadership

- 1930s and 1940s – Mao's creative ideas essential to 1949 victory
- 1949 – Mao Zedong led the PRC
- 1958 – Mao encouraged the Great Leap Forward, hoping to stimulate growth of Chinese economy
- 1966 – Mao led the Cultural Revolution
- September 9, 1976 – Mao died



# Cultural Revolution 1966-1974

- While many people condemn it in no uncertain terms, others see positive aspects and maintain it should be viewed as “the history of Chinese youth gradually becoming enlightened about the nature of Chinese society.”
- Evidence persists that as a form of direct democracy—of people taking power into their own hands—it left in its wake a culture of resistance, a source of encouragement for speaking out and acting from the grassroots.







# Cultural Revolution

- The Cultural Revolution schooled thousands of people in the ethics and etiquette of street protests.
- At one critical moment in 1989, only a day before the shooting began, soldiers and demonstrators, locked in confrontation, began a singing competition—a technique commonly used during the Cultural Revolution.
- Another carryover came when workers issued a detailed expose of high Party officials' special privileges—from families' trips abroad to limousines and businesses—a direct descendent of the anti-elitism and anti-corruption of the CR. “The bureaucratic cats get fat while the people starve” read one of their leaflets.
- CR experiences enriched and supplemented centuries old notions that the Emperor ruled through a mandate of heaven (which could be retracted if power was wielded in unjust ways), that the people have the right to petition for redress of grievances and officials a concomitant responsibility to respond intelligently, and that everyone has the right to rebel against unjust dictates.

# 1976 Tiananmen Incident

- January 8, 1976 Zhou Enlai dies
- Formed the People's Liberation Army (PLA)
- Celebrated Leader of China
- Group of Communist Party leaders called "Gang of Four" prevented people from paying their respects
- Increasing disapproval of the "Gang of Four"
- "Gang of Four" thought they would lose political power

# April 5, 1976

- Within days of the first spontaneous commemoration of Zhou's life, thousands of people arrived to lay wreaths, leave poems, and otherwise mark the passing of a man whose significance hard-line "Gang of Four" party leaders played down.
- On Sunday, April 4, an estimated two million people visited the Square.
- The next day, police cleared away all the flowers and sanitized the memorial site, but people nonetheless returned to the square. Ordered to disperse, the crowd fought back when police moved in with clubs, and in the scuffles, a police van was overturned.

# 1976 Tiananmen Incident

- Police were ordered to disperse the thousands of people occupying Tiananmen Square
- Police injured and arrested thousands of protestors.





# Mao Zedong

- September 9, 1976 Mao Zedong passed away
- Deng Xiaoping took control soon after
- Government became corrupt; workers unhappy about conditions and rate of pay



# Deng Xiaoping

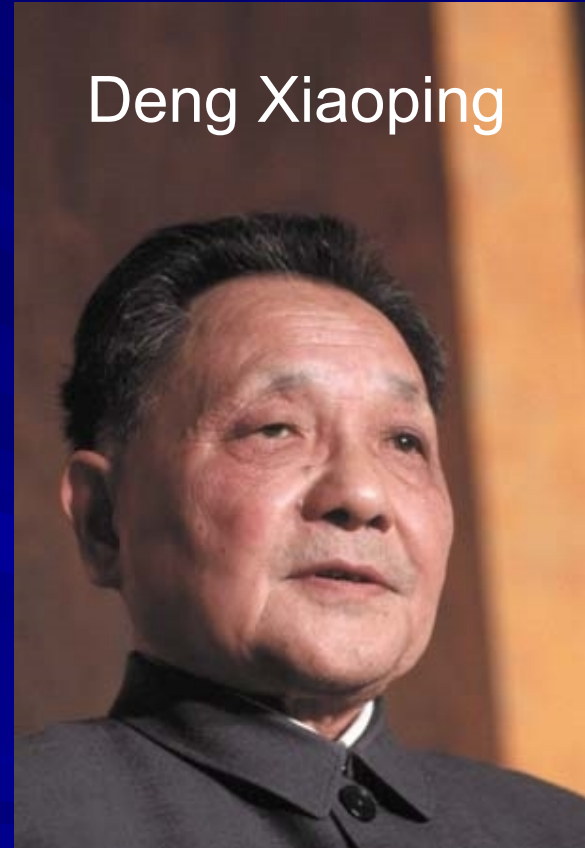
- Deng Xiaoping took over shortly after Mao's passing
- Had twice been purged by Mao
- Capitalist economic policies
- Caused resignation of Hu Yaobang
  - Deng was no longer liked
  - People believed unfair elite ruled
- Triggered Tiananmen Square Protests



# Roots of Protest

(Deng Xiaoping and Economic Reform)

- Deng came to power in 1978
- Plans for economic reform were successful for improving the country's economic status
- Radical Beijing University students incarcerated his eldest son during the CR. When Deng's son sought to escape by jumping from a fourth-floor dormitory window, he ended up paralyzed from the waist down—Deng never forgave the student movement
- Ignored political issues of the country
- Widespread corruption



<b>Year</b>	<b>Rate of Real Growth</b>	<b>Inflation of Consumer Prices</b>
1983	10.9%	2.0%
1984	15.2%	2.7%
1985	13.5%	9.3%
1986	8.8%	6.5%
1987	11.6%	7.3%
1988	11.3%	18.8%
1989	4.1%	18.0%
1990	3.8%	3.1%
1991	9.2%	3.4%



# Elite Corruption

- For the Party elite, times had never been better. Party functionaries lived daily in relations of domination and subordination.
- Party officials made huge profits on resale of commodities bought at low, state-mandated prices; they were able to buy luxury goods from abroad, send their families on foreign tours, and live in top housing.
- Party members received special consideration in courts if they were charged criminally. Last but not least, while their children had to compete for scarce seats in higher education, top Party members' children were granted special admissions.
- Both Deng and Zhao's sons were thought to be engaged in corrupt practices.

# Roots of Protest

(Citizens Become Upset)

- The citizens were not pleased with the country's new direction
- They had problems with the side effects of Deng's reforms
  - Now a greater divide between rich and poor
  - The increase in manufacturing led to increased pollution
  - Citizens believed China's culture was being corrupted



- On December 5, 1986 at Hefei's University of Science and Technology, students protested the closed process of nominations for the People's Congress.
- Within two weeks, protests in Hefei spread to more than a dozen other cities, bringing nearly 100,000 into the streets of Shanghai.
- Wall posters at Beijing University read, "We want democracy, we want freedom, we support the university student movement in the University of Science and Technology."
- Students wanted:
  1. A ban on discussion of sexual liberation at Zhongshan University in Guangzhou.
  2. Beijing University's policy of lights out at 11 p.m.
  3. Incompetent librarians who retained their positions only because of their connections to powerful party officials.
  4. Poor food service in campus cafeterias.

# 1986 Protests

- In negotiations with Beijing Mayor Jiang Zemin, student representatives pressed four issues: democracy, recognition of their movement as benefiting China, no retribution against participants, and freedom to publish their own newspapers.
- Three years later, these would remain key issues for the protesting students in Tiananmen Square.
- Party general secretary Hu Yaobang—who had opposed the 1980 upsurge in activism—was linked to the new wave of protests and forced to resign in early 1987—as were two other “leading lights of the party.” Hu’s dismissal made him a hero to students and democracy activists—despite the fact he had opposed protesters a decade earlier.



# Roots of Protest

(Hu Yaobang: Political Supporter)



Hu  
Yaobang

- The people had at least one supporter within the government
- Hu Yaobang was the General Secretary of the communist party
- Hu was forced by Deng Xiaoping to resign due to his sympathetic stance towards the protestors
- Continued to lobby for political reform after “retirement”

# 1989 Uprising

- Chinese Democracy Movement vs. Communist Party of China
- April 15, 1989 to June 4, 1989
- Hu Yao-bang died--defender of democracy and modernization
- Within an hour of Hu's death, workers gathered in Tiananmen Square to commemorate him
- Students joined: not enough reform-not happy with the political and economic policies
- Industrial workers: too much reform-causing inflation and unemployment
- Students and workers expressed their displeasure with the corrupt government

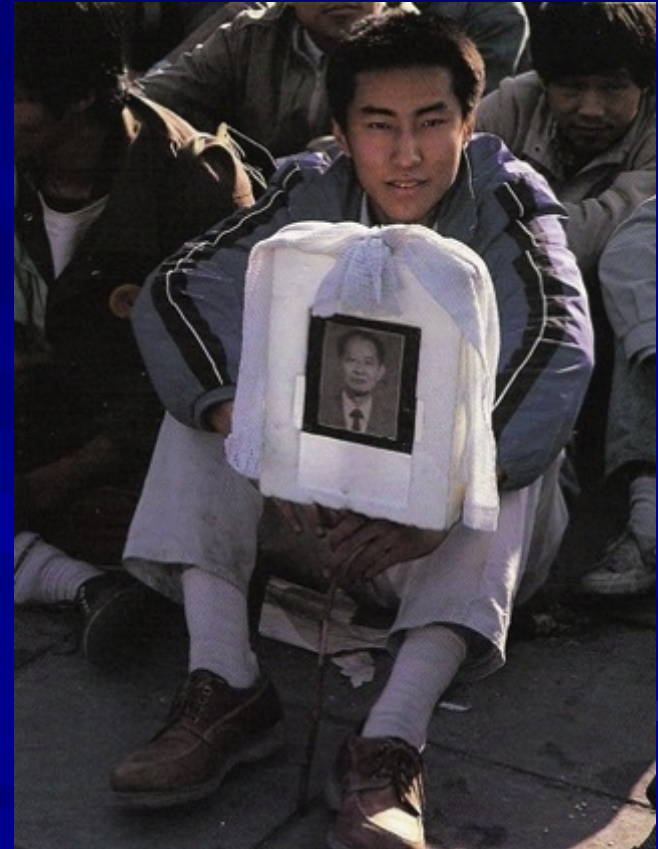
# Hu's Death

- Died April 15, 1989
- Hu Yaobang's death sparked huge gatherings
- Students started their push for democracy



# Roots of Protest (Hu's Death and Funeral)

- Hu Yaobang was attending a political meeting in April of 1989
  - He was there to voice the concerns of the citizens
- During the meeting Hu suffered a heart attack
  - Died several days latter
- When news of his death reached the Chinese people, they began to gather in the streets to mourn Hu Yaobang





**April 21, 1989**



# Protests Begin Peacefully



Hu Yaobang

- People mourned Hu's death as a form of protest
- Recent political reforms had caused dislocations



# Protests Begin

(Mourning Turns to Protest)



- People gathered in the square began to voice the concerns that Hu Yaobang had presenting when he passed away
- They wanted the government to take responsibility for the corruption running wild through the system
- Workers worried about inflation and elite corruption
- Students felt left out of the elite

# Students organize

- April 17 midnight march
- Sit-in at Zhongnanhai, a gated community where the Party elite lived.
- April 19 autonomous student union formed at Beijing University
- More than 10,000 people marched to the Square
- April 20, police broke up sit-in with clubs, injuring many students
- April 22 more than 100,000 at Hu's funeral
- April 27 more than 100,000 broke through police lines and marched to Square
- May 4 more than one million people at students' rally





**Illustration 1.4.** Sit-in protestors at Xinhua Gate, the main entrance to Zhongnanhai, the Communist Party headquarters, during the early morning hours of April 19. Clashes between the students and police would later break out. Credit: Franki Chan.

# April 22 Hu's Funeral

With more than 100,000 people in attendance, after Hu's funeral, Party leaders emerged from the Great Hall of the People to catch glances of assembled students and then quickly exited. Trying to get Party officials to meet them, students marched around the square, chanting "We want dialogue," but they were ignored. A trio of Beida students knelt on the steps of the Great Hall and held the seven-point petition above their heads for about forty minutes. When there was still no response, many students began weeping in frustration.

Their petition was for:

- 1) Reassessment of Hu Yaobang
- 1) Punishment for those responsible for the beatings at Zhongnanhai
- 1) Permission to publish autonomous newspapers
- 1) Publication of government officials' incomes
- 1) Discussion of national education policy and fees
- 1) Reconsideration of the "anti-spiritual pollution campaign"
- 1) Accurate media portrayal of the new student movement.

# Autonomous Student Union of Beijing Universities and Colleges

- Two days after Hu's funeral, about 35 students, including many of the activists who had stepped forward to formulate the seven-point petition, created the Autonomous Student Union of Beijing Universities and Colleges (ASU).
- With delegates democratically selected from fifteen (and soon thereafter from forty-one) universities, the ASU reflected a bottom-up representative system. Not only did it have a much wider base of popular support than the government-sanctioned student union, it took actions mainstream organizations were afraid to undertake—or ones they thought were incorrect.
- At their first meeting, they elected Zhou Yongjun chairperson of the standing committee by a vote of nine to Wuer Kaixi's six. The ASU quickly became the “decision-making body that could work out an agenda and strategy for the movement as a whole.”

# Workers Organize

- The clusters of workers in the Square were surprised and elated to hear that students shared their frustration with officials, and their conversations elicited suggestions that workers form their own autonomous organization.
- Hearing about the bloody end to the students' peaceful sit-in on April 20, one worker among the two dozen people clustered in Tiananmen rose to his feet and roused the group with a fiery speech denouncing the violence.
- Two days earlier, the group had broached the idea of forming their own organization, and with the police action, they edged closer to it.
- They published two leaflets exposing Party leaders' wealth, their families' corruption, and the shortsighted impact of their economic policies. How much money had one of Deng Xiaoping's sons bet at a Hong Kong racetrack? Did Zhao Zhiyang pay for his golf excursions from his own pocket? How many villas did the Party elite maintain for their private use?



# Beijing Autonomous Workers' Federation

- With these modest actions, the Beijing Autonomous Workers' Federation (BAWF) was born.
- In the weeks of upheaval that followed, the group slowly moved from periphery of the protests to central member. By the final phase of the insurgency, i.e., after martial law had been declared and students melted away, the Workers' Federation grew by leaps and bounds.
- On April 20, they were 70 or 80 people—none of whom had activist experience.
- On May 2, they had 2,000 registered members, and in the two weeks from May 20 to June 3, they signed up 20,000 new members.

# May 1989



Student flag-waver at the Tiananmen Square protests, May 1989,  
Tiananmen Square, Beijing

# Protest Continues

(Deng Xiaoping Becomes Upset)

- The numbers of protestors grew by the day
- Deng claimed that the student protestors were instigating social turmoil and that they were plotting to overthrow the communist party
- Students maintained that they were not aiming to overthrow the government but rather fix the system that was already in place



# Hunger Strike

- Early May: students staged a hunger strike after peaceful protests began.
- May 9<sup>th</sup>: 1,000 journalists joined the students in the square to push for more press freedom.
- May 13<sup>th</sup>: second hunger strike included journalists





# Movement Elite Emerges

On May 11, a small group of celebrity activists including Wuer Kaixi and Wang Dan met at a restaurant to discuss the movement's impasse.

Looking for a way to maintain momentum, they resolved to appeal to students to join a hunger strike without the approval of the autonomous student unions.

None was a spokesperson for any organization, and they soon helped spawn a dynamic inside the movement through which the fruit of students' efforts—the autonomous unions for which they had so mightily sacrificed—was thrown to the wayside and replaced by the media appeal of leaders or moral authority of those willing to “fast to the death”—as they promised to do.

On May 13, just before beginning their hunger strike, dozens of students gulped down a last lunch of beer and sausages before gathering in Tiananmen Square. Their ranks were quickly joined by hundreds more people. It was only two days before Russian leader Mikhail Gorbachev's historic visit marking an end to three decades of Sino-Soviet animosity was to take place.

Working now as celebrity activists, leaders wore shirts with their names written in large characters on them and moved around the square inside a phalanx of bodyguards, signing autographs as they passed through the crowd.



- By circumventing the organizations their movement had only recently created, these activists set a dangerous precedent—one that ultimately doomed the movement to fall short of its possibilities.
- The autonomous unions did not agree to the hunger strike, and according to some sources, hoped it would fail. When the ASU did not suit their agenda, its more famous members simply circumvented it.
- From that moment, it was only a short hop to the creation of a “Headquarters of Tiananmen Square” with a “commander-in-chief,” who led the entire movement willy-nilly down the path of “holier-than-thou” radicalism and straight into a bloody confrontation.

# May 15<sup>th</sup>

- Mikhail Gorbachev visited Beijing; ceremony was to have been held in Tiananmen Square.
- Protests moved the ceremony to the airport
- Zhao Ziyang spoke to Gorbachev about the political situation



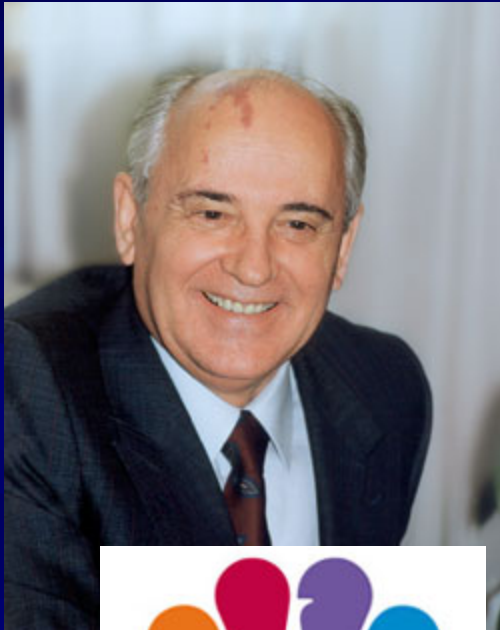


# Sino-Soviet Summit (1st Formal Meeting in 30 Years)



- A formal acknowledgment by both sides that the relations between the Soviet Union and the China had been restored
- Chinese Government wanted to avoid violence due to the impending visit by Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev
  - Did not want Soviets to cancel
  - High numbers of foreign journalist in Beijing to cover the summit
    - Too many outside observers

# World News Media Present



- Mikhail Gorbachev meets with Chinese government officials
- Takes place in Beijing
- Media positioned to cover protest.



B B C

CNN





Dan Rather (CBS News) on site in Tiananmen Square with Student Protesters.  
“It’s anarchy, but it’s organized anarchy.”

# Brilliant tactic, but strategic error.

- The hunger strike attracted wide sympathy. The cream of the crop of a single-child nation, Beida students who spearheaded it considered themselves the future leaders of the nation—as did the public that supported them. Students' dignified role in the China—a society in which everyone worked incessantly for the nation to recover its greatness—meant they lived on a pedestal.
- On the first day of their fast, 41 students collapsed.
- During this period, the movement spread across China. Of 434 big cities in China, 107 reported student protests, including 32 with participation of autonomous workers groups.



# Movement Spreads

- In Nanjing, tens of thousands of workers and students demonstrated, and some joined a hunger strike there.
- A “Goddess of Democracy” was erected in Shanghai before art students did so in Beijing.
- In Xian, one thousand hunger strikers sat down in New City Square. Delegations traveled to nearby factories to gain support. As many as 2000 students rode trains to Beijing on May 18 and 19.
- In Chongqing, 82 students began a fast in front of City Hall on May 18, copying both the Beijing tactic and the demand for a dialogue with officials.

# May 18 Beijing



- It appeared like everyone was pulled in by the “magnetic attraction of the protests—even police officers, Foreign Ministry workers, bankers, and *People’s Daily* reporters.
- 10% of Beijing—about a million protesters—were in the streets every day during Gorbachev’s three-day visit. The city was so jammed that Gorbachev never made it to the Great Hall of the People, the Forbidden City, or even to the opera.
- In this “urban Woodstock” there was room for everyone, and hundreds of thousands of people streamed into Beijing from all parts of China.
- The Beijing Military Command sent over one thousand quilts, and state-owned pharmaceutical companies contributed to the Square’s medical tents. Even the Communist Youth League sent over twenty cases of drinks.
- Modeling themselves on the Beijing scene, hunger strikers gathered in more than thirty other cities.

# Protest Continues (New Political Supporter)

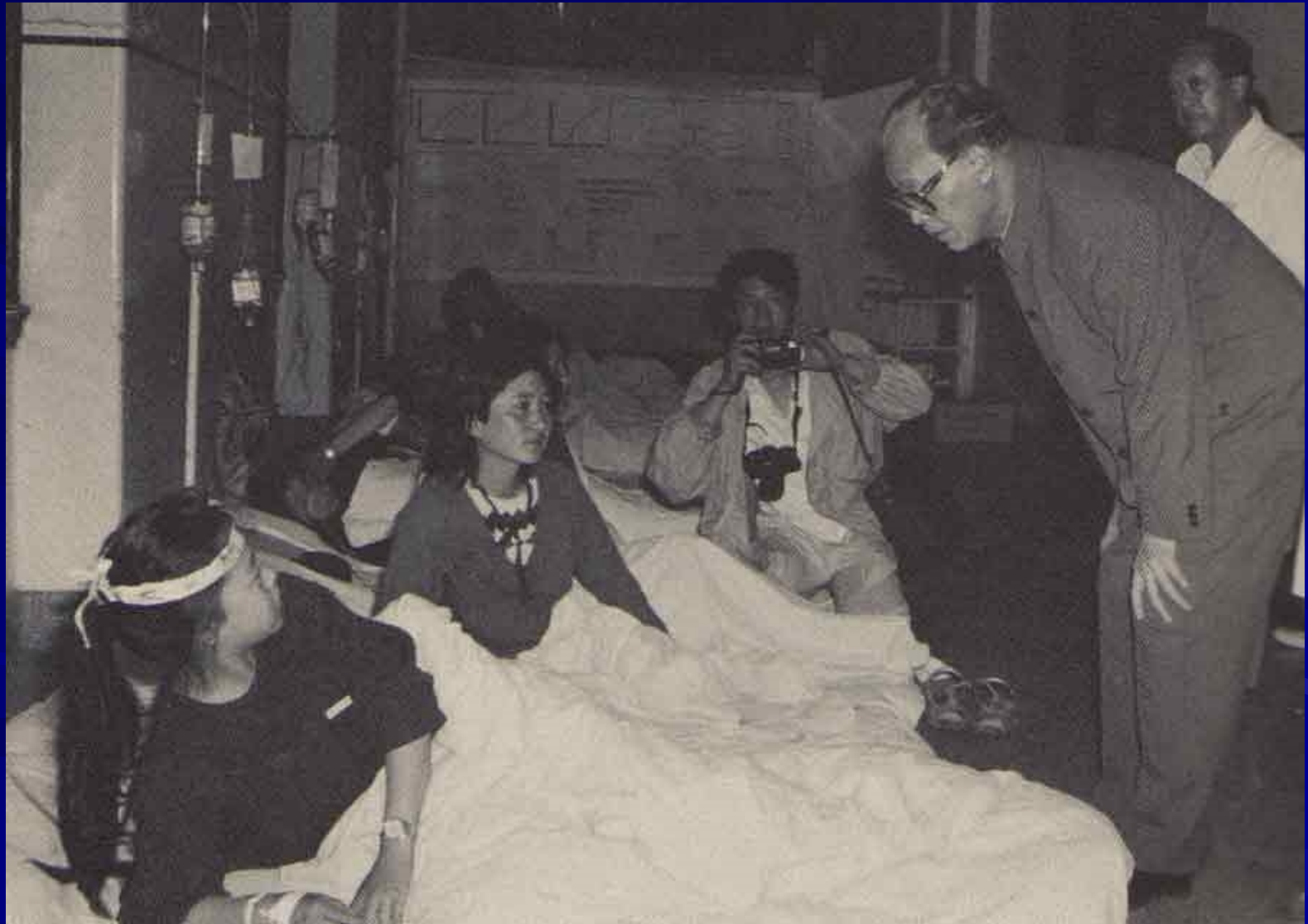
Zhao  
Ziyang



- The student protestors once again found themselves with the support of the party's General Secretary
  - Zhao Ziyang (general secretary who replaced Hu Yaobang)
- Zhao told his colleagues that he felt as if the students' grievances were reasonable
- Deng and other officials did not appreciate Zhao's stance



# Zhao Visiting Hunger Strikers in Hospital



# Gorbachev leaving on May 18



# Summit Ends (Deng Takes Steps to End Protest)

- The patience of the government ended once the Soviet Union's leader returned home
- Zhao Ziyang was asked to "retire" as General Secretary
- The remaining leaders decided that it was time to put an end to the protests



# Beijing Autonomous Workers' Federation

- On May 17, as martial law approached, they announced, “The people will no longer believe the lies of the rulers...There are only two classes: the rulers and the ruled.” In another public statement, they sounded a battle cry: “Ah, the Chinese! Such a lovable yet pathetic and tragic people. We have been deceived for thousands of years, and are still being deceived today. No! Instead we should become a great people; we should restore ourselves to our original greatness! Brother workers, if our generation is fated to carry out this humiliation into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, then it is better to die in battle in the 20<sup>th</sup>!”
- On May 17 and 18, workers flooded into the city to join the protests, at whose symbolic center sat several hundred hunger-striking students. From state-owned enterprises to collectively managed and privately owned ones, from large factories like the Capital Steel Corporation and Yanshan Petrochemical to small shops, they arrived in columns of trucks, cars, and buses, singing, drumming, beating gongs, and carrying enormous red flags and portraits of Mao.



# Protests Intensify

- On May 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> citizens overwhelmingly supported the students
- Workers were angry about unfair wages and corruption of communist leaders
- Martial law enacted on May 19th

# Li Peng agrees to Talks

- May 19<sup>th</sup>- Martial Law enacted
- Daily marches took place throughout China
- Communist officials accused students of civil unrest and anarchy
- Li Peng talked with hunger strikers on May 18



# Officials Meet with Students

- On the morning of May 18, students received word that government officials would meet them at 11 a.m. A hastily assembled delegation included celebrity leaders.
- Televised live, the meeting in the Great Hall of the People provided de facto recognition of student autonomous organizations since Li Peng, the top government official, met face-to-face with student leaders, but the encounter failed miserably. Li Peng sternly lectured the hunger strikers and insisted the Party “would not stand idly by.”
- Wuer Kaixi took over the proceedings, castigated Li Peng for being late, and treated him with utmost contempt: “We don’t have much time to listen to you. Thousands of hunger strikers are waiting. Let’s get to the main point. It was we who invited you to talk, not you who invited us—and *you* were late.”

Seconds later and plainly visible on camera, a medical team rushed in to rescue an apparently fainting Wuer as he grabbed his oxygen bag.

Wuer apparently had a knack for “strategic fainting” in public, a talent he availed himself of more than once.







# Army to Tiananmen Sq.



- After martial law passed, the army showed up to regain control of the square.
- Stopped 5 km away when met by workers and citizens
- No Violence

# Confrontation Intensifies

- May 20      Hundreds of thousands of Beijing citizens peacefully blocked the army for 48 hours and provided the troops with food, drink and flowers.
- “Flying tigers” (citizens on motorcycles) reported on troop movements.
- Zhou Ziyang out as Party general Secretary as Premier Li-Peng won struggle.
- May 21      Television broadcasts from Beijing suspended; more troops arrive; people continue to block them
- May 23      Organization of all autonomous groups formed, including workers, students, intellectuals, and citizens; met at noon everyday

# Martial Law



Deng deployed troops to Tiananmen Square

- About 150,000 troops were mobilized
- For 48 hours, citizens surrounded the military



# Martial Law

(1st Protestor / Troop Encounter)

- The troops had no clear objective given to them
- Troops moving into the square were met by a wall of protestors
- Many of the troops felt the protests were justified (many troops left the square and returned to their bases)
  - Troops claimed, “We are soldiers of the people we will never suppress the people.”



- On May 20, massive civil disobedience and resistance was mounted to martial law. Open popular dual power. Hundreds of thousands of Beijing citizens peacefully blocked the army for 48 hours and provided the troops with food, drink and flowers.
- In more than 80 cities at 600 colleges and technical universities protests occurred involving more than 2,800,000 students; and “Flying Tigers” motorcyclists reported on troop movements.
- A banner at the Chinese Academy of Social Science called on the government to resign and for an emergency session of the National People's Congress to be convened.



- Contingents of protesters represented factories and government work units, police, hotels, law courts, CCP organs and youth groups, government ministries and at least eight national government agencies, official media agencies, and university departments.
- As the standoff lasted for hours, people fed the soldiers, passed them cases of liquid refreshments, sang songs for them, and bought them popsicles. With victory inspiring them and giving them new confidence, hundreds of thousands of Beijing's citizens remained at the barricades on the 21st and 22nd and blocked renewed army attempts to reach Tiananmen Square.
- As Beijing held out, all over China, people mobilized, including 400,000 who marched in Hong Kong on May 21.





- When martial law appeared imminent, students began drifting away, but BAWF called for a one-day general strike for May 20.
- The next morning, BAWF extended their strike to last until soldiers had been withdrawn from the city. So popular was their growing leadership that some 20,000 Beijing workers signed their names to become members in the next two weeks.
- The group spawned a new structure, with separate units for organization, logistics, and information (with daily broadcasts of news and a wildly popular evening free speech forum).

- They also set up an office to interface with factories, campuses, and grassroots groups. By the end of May, they had a printing press, broadcast station in the square, picket corps, four “dare-to-die” security brigades ready to fight police incursions, and a constitution specifying a general assembly, standing committee, and executive committee.
- Beginning on May 20, they organized autonomous daily demonstrations and worked in tandem with the array of groups protesting martial law.
- They called for every work site to maintain its own self-organization, lest authorities invent a pretext to intervene by force.

- In Beijing, workers at Capital Steel Corporation, construction workers, Beijing Citizens Dare-to-Die Corps, and the Flying Tigers Motorcycle Brigade (with about 300 members) formed.
- In China's northeast, the Manchurian Tigers Dare-to-Die Corps and Mountain Dare-to-Die Corps were similarly organized along autonomous lines.
- Among writers, the Beijing Union of Intellectuals was established, attributed by one western observer to be the "first such autonomous sign of a civil society since the 1940s."
- On May 23, BAWF helped form a new confederation of all autonomous groups, including workers, intellectuals, citizens', and several student groups.



- So well did the population of Beijing come together that students easily found places to stay and food to eat.
- It was even rumored that even the city's thieves had agreed to a two-day strike in support of students' hunger strike. Crime rates for all types of offenses plummeted from mid-April to mid-May in an unprecedented drop.
- Vegetable vendors kept prices down, despite the opportunity to charge more, because as, "At such a time, everybody must have a conscience."

- As one observer wrote, “The self-organization of the Beijing citizens, the establishment of committees that organized incoming supplies and saw to the housing of thousands of students and others from out of town, removed garbage, wrote, printed and distributed publications, not only exploded the fashionable western myth that improvements in the Chinese standard of living had suddenly depoliticized the population, but also disproved, to the permanent discomfiture of our masters everywhere, that the population of one of the largest cities on the planet can organize its affairs without the interference of the government, the state, and any of its institutions.”

# Letter to Chinese Abroad

- On May 26, the BAWF wrote to all Chinese abroad:  
“Our nation was created from the struggle and labor of we workers and all other mental and manual laborers. We are the rightful masters of this nation. We should be, indeed must be, heard in national affairs. We absolutely must not allow this small handful of degenerate scum of the nation and working class to usurp our name and suppress the students, murder democracy, and trample human rights.”
- Another of their public statements exhorted Chinese people to “Storm this 20<sup>th</sup> century Bastille, this last stronghold of Stalinism!” With such eloquent and stirring words, is it any wonder that when the army began shooting, their savagery was directly first and foremost at workers.

# Student Movement Recedes

- As the student movement receded, workers took the initiative to form autonomous federations across China—in Shanghai, Wuhan, Canton, Xian, Nanjing, Hangzhou, Shenyang, Kuming, Lanzhou, Guiyang, Changsha, and Xining.



# Protests Continues

- The protests had now been carrying on for more than a month
- At the peak of the protests there were over one million participants but by June the numbers had dwindled to just a few thousand protestors
- Deng Xiaoping had been pushed to the end of his patience



# Leave the Square?



- On May 30, a general meeting in the Square decided to leave
- Chai Ling overrode the decision, declaring herself “Commander-in-chief”
- Only 10,000 students still occupied the Square

## **“Commander-in-Chief of the Headquarters of Tiananmen Square” Vs. the Movement**

On May 23 than one that sought comprehensively to unify all opposition currents: the Joint Conference of All Persons of All Circles in Beijing, including about 40 representatives of workers, intellectuals, and students.

From a series of meetings beginning on May 20 that included BASU activists, those from Outside Beijing Autonomous Federation, and individual activists like Wang Dan. BAWF members, older intellectual-activists from the 1976 and 1978 movements as well as by the Federation of Intellectuals, soon joined them.

- In a secret interview with journalist Philip Cunningham, Chai Ling admitted that,
- “What we actually hoped for was bloodshed. Only when the Square is awash with blood will people open their eyes.” Maintaining she did “not care if people say I’m selfish,” Chai Ling called for people to “overthrow the illegal government of Li Peng.”





# Government Split?

- Unable to deploy its military to clear the square, the government hesitated—and it seemed as if change might still be possible.
- On May 25, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs maintained that Zhao Zhiyang was technically still General-Secretary of the Party's central committee.
- Some 100,000 workers and students in Tiananmen Square took to chanting, “Step down Li Peng!”
- That same day, the ASU completed its long process of reorganizing itself and agreed on a new constitution. Its massive student base had considerably dwindled, and the revived group worked in the shadows of the hunger strikers and media stars who made major decisions.
- For his part, Li Peng publicly hoped “troops will successfully impose martial law.”

# Concert for Democracy

- Hong Kong benefit on May 27 concert raised millions of dollars
- Money strengthened the movement by helping provide supplies and feeling of unity.



# Workers and Students

- Students told workers, “This is our movement, and you have to obey us.”
- Without the consensus needed for action, workers felt like, “By the end, after 28 May, we didn’t advocate sympathy for the students anymore... We demanded to participate in the dialogue with the government but the students wouldn’t let us. They considered us workers to be crude, stupid, reckless, and unable to negotiate.”
- Many campus activists did, in fact, reach out to factory workers. Shida sent as many as five teams to Capital Steel to encourage autonomous workers organizations, ASU gave funds to BAWF. Student leaders, on the other hand, were reluctant enough to share the spotlight with each other—let alone with common citizens.

- Flush with funds, ASU members contacted students at Beijing's Central Academy of Fine Arts and asked them to create a statue by the demonstration on the 30th. Funds for the project were generously provided from donations.
- About 15 undergraduate art majors agreed in principle, but they insisted on reworking the ASU proposal that a larger version of the Statue of Liberty in New York—as had been unveiled in Shanghai a few days earlier.
- Such a copy seemed too “pro-American.”
- An additional objection was raised that a mere copy of an existing work did not resonate with artists' notions of creativity, so they proposed a more difficult balanced figure, a statue with two hands holding aloft a torch.
- One of the students had fortuitously been working on adapting such a model based upon one produced by Russian female artist Vera Mukhina, whose monumental sculpture, “A Worker and a Collective Farm Woman,” had adorned the top of the USSR's pavilion at the 1937 Paris World's Fair.



# Goddess of Democracy

On May 27, Central Art Academy students erected a statue facing Mao in the Square







Many people came back to Tiananmen to see the statue and enjoy the sunshine





# Tiananmen internal problems

- Every protestor had a different agenda
  - Could not agree on demands
  - Several different groups claimed to represent the protestors
  - Chai Ling declared herself “Commander-in-chief”
  - Autonomous student unions illegal and made peripheral by hunger-strikers and “leaders”

# June 2<sup>nd</sup> 1989



- First use of tear gas by the police
- First stoning of the police
- Attempts to push through the barricades are made
- Attempts to flush students off the street are made

# June 3

- At noon on June 3, troops used tear gas on protesters who had captured an ammunition truck.
- Later that day, the army again tried to enter Tiananmen Square, but crowds stopped their buses.
- People surrounded about five thousand troops, some of whom came out of tunnels under the Great Hall, and the two groups engaged in a singing contest with versions of “Without the Communist Party, There Would Be No New China.” At day’s end, troops went back into the Great Hall.
- While many people celebrated their victory, still believing that the PLA would not fire on people, a full-scale military assault was only hours away.





# Killing Begins

- That evening in the working class area of Muxidi, west of the Square, huge crowds blocked lightly armed troops who tried to advance.
- As stones flew, breaking some of their fiberglass helmets, heavily armed soldiers of the 38<sup>th</sup> Army behind them opened up with their AK-47s.
- In the ensuing confusion of battle, many people were killed, including soldiers of the 38<sup>th</sup> Army who were crushed to death by armored units of the 27th Army.

# June 3rd

- News reports stated military was taking drastic action to occupy Tiananmen Square
- Army opened fire on the protestors
- First sign of citizens using violence
- Army continued to fire through June 4<sup>th</sup>, killing and wounding thousands of people

# June 3<sup>rd</sup> 1989



- At 10:30pm tank and APC columns advanced into the city
- Shots were fired into the crowds to clear streets
- Citizens retaliated with rocks and Molotov cocktails

# Late-night Fighting

- The worst of the fighting occurred between midnight and 2 am
- The citizens were now fighting for their lives against battle-tested veteran troops
  - Troops showed little concern for citizens
- The fighting continued through the night





- About five thousand students, many of them crying uncontrollably, other singing peacefully, remained crouched around the Monument to the People's Heroes. Workers grew angry with students who broke captured guns and knives on the monument rather than use them to fight the military.
- Chai Ling was nowhere in sight, having left around 3 a.m.
- At about 4:45, students took a vote and decided to leave. Twenty minutes, later, they filed out along the southern side.

# The Fighting Comes to a Close



- Students began to leave the square
- The fighting subsided around 7 o'clock the next morning
- Isolated gunfire continued in and around the square for the next several days

- Around 7 a.m., according to Beijing's mayor, "rioters swarmed over military vehicles which had been halted at Liubukou and snatched machine guns and ammunition."
- Many martial law troops were cut off, surrounded, and beaten.
- "Mobs" attacked the Propaganda Department of the CCP Central Committee, the Great Hall of the People, the Ministry of Radio, Film and Television, and two gates of Zhongnanhai, while the "Federation of Autonomous Workers' Unions" urged people to "take up arms and overthrow the government."
- The mayor's report details "bestial" attacks on soldiers and police and damage to 1,280 police cars, military vehicles (including 60 armored personnel carriers), and buses.

- Many reports of mutilations of soldiers' corpses were made, including: to the east of Xidan intersection, a soldier was killed and his body burned; in Fuchengmen, a soldier's corpse was hung in mid-air near where he was killed; in Chongwnemen, a soldier was burned alive while people present cheered and described it as "lighting a heavenly lantern." Near the Capital Cinema on West Chang-an Avenue, platoon leader Liu Guogeng shot four people. The crowd beat him to death, burned and disemboweled his corpse, and hung him on a burning bus.



Body of Liu Guogeng





"During the rebellion, more than 6000 officers and men of the martial law troops, armed police and public security police were injured, and dozens were killed at the hands of the rioters."













# The Military Steps In





# Military Cracks Down (June 4)



大屠殺









- In many cities, people fought back against the military takeover. Despite the media blackout, reports filtered out of Beijing. Faxes from Hong Kong portraying the massacre were posted in several cities, including Shenyang and Shanghai.
- In Chengdu, violent resistance was crushed. In Hangzhou at 2 p.m. on June 4, throngs attacked the railroad station and tied up traffic. Fighting there continued until June 7 as people put wood, rocks, and steel on the tracks to block traffic. Sit-ins at major intersections blocked traffic, and a contingent of art students lowered the national flag on the provincial government building.
- In Nanjing, ten thousand people marched to mourn In the killings in Beijing.
- In Shanghai, a train ran over protesters occupying the tracks, killing six people and wounding others; people set fire to train cars and tied up railway traffic for hours.

# The Unknown Rebel



# The Unknown Rebel



- June 5<sup>th</sup> 1989
- Chang'an Avenue
- Forced the tank column to swerve around
- Reports claim he asked the tank operators why they were there and told them they were causing nothing but misery
- Pulled aside by bystanders who thought he would be run over or shot



# Split in the Army?

- In an unknown number of cases, soldiers refused to move troops as instructed.
- General Xu Qinxian, Commander of the Chinese 38<sup>th</sup> Army, was subsequently court-martialed for a failure to carry out martial law orders.
- On June 4, Beijing's deputy military commander was relieved of authority.
- On June 6 and 7, army units reportedly fought each other, but the government's forces were overwhelming and ruthless in crushing all opposition.
- More than one hundred PLA officers were later charged with having "breached discipline in a serious manner" and 1,400 enlisted men were found to have thrown their weapons and run away in the final hours.

# Search for Those Responsible



- After the square had been cleared the government began to search for the student leaders
- Thousands of arrests were made
- Government executed at least 30 people in the month that followed the breakup of the protests
  - Many on charges ranging from arson to destruction of state property

# Tiananmen Massacre

- PLA shooting indiscriminately
- 2,600 died (Chinese Red Cross)
- 400-800 died (CIA)
- 23 died (Communist Party)
- 7,000-10,000 injured
- Thousands and thousands arrested





# Beijing Mayor Chen Xitong

- Counted several dozen soldiers and police killed and 6,000 wounded.
- Among civilians, he tabulated 200 killed—including 36 college students—and 3,000 wounded.
- One of the mothers who lost her son to the violence, Professor Ding Zilin, spent years locating the closest relatives of deceased people. By mid-1995, her list included more than 130 names.
- At the end of June 2006, Ding and a group of deceased persons' relatives named 186 persons who had been killed. Although the government has yet to compensate the dead, Ding passed on financial help from abroad.



# Aftermath

- Student unions become illegal
- Communism still in place today, however the government is much more fair than previously.
- In the Fall of 1989, a new law mandated that all Beijing University students must undergo one year of military training before entering college, and the entering class was cut from 2,000 to 800. Altogether in the country, some 30,000 enrollments in humanities and social sciences were axed before the end of 1990.



# Media Buzz



- World news media exploded
- Touted China as brutal
- Used pictures not destroyed by Chinese government





# New Prosperity

- While repression was the line of first defense, the main thrust of government's two decade long response to the challenges posed by the uprising has been to provide unparalleled opportunities for prosperity and economic growth.
- Since 1989, evidence abounds of an increasing number of state-enterprise workers becoming members of the CCP. In the decade after the crackdown, ten times as many university students joined the party as in the previous decade; in 2001, as many as one third of all students applied for membership, only slightly less than the 28% of graduate students who were already members. More than 8 percent of all students were party members in 2007, compared with less than 1 percent in 1989.

# Growing Economy

China has been able to maintain an astonishing growth rate. From 1980 to 1996, it was 9.6%, and even amidst the IMF crisis of 1997, China's growth rate remained robust at 9.3%.

China's double-digit growth from 2003 to 2006 has continued to propel the country forward. Now the world's second largest economy, it is expected to reach the same level of output as the US in 2035.

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