The Tiananmen Papers: An Editor's Reflections*

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The coercive repression of peaceful, unarmed demonstrators in Beijing on the night of 3–4 June 1989 is one of the starkest human rights violations of recent times. For a government to kill peaceful, unarmed citizens is a violation of the "right to life" that is provided in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international human rights instruments. In addition to the immediate cost in lives – my co-editor Perry Link and I consider the death toll to be still an open question, because the only related document in the collection is the self-interested report of the Beijing Party Committee to the Politburo – Tiananmen set a repressive political course for years to follow. June Fourth marked a sharp clash between alternative futures. On that night China made a decisive turn away from liberalization and back toward an authoritarian kind of politics.

The incident started as a spontaneous memorial to Hu Yaobang, the students' favourite pro-reform politician, who died on 15 April. As the leadership responded indecisively, the demonstrators broadened their focus to demand that the Party attack corruption more vigorously, and they attacked conservative leaders for abusing power. Hoping to increase pressure on the government on the eve of Mikhail Gorbachev's historic summit visit to Beijing, the students declared a hunger strike in Tiananmen Square on 13 May, and a large proportion of the city's population came out to support them. *The Tiananmen Papers* reveal that demonstrations spread to 341 cities.[1] The Party might have fallen from power had it not found a way to restore control. One faction, headed by General Secretary Zhao Ziyang, wanted to do so by negotiating with the demonstrators, which would have opened a path to some sort of accommodation between regime and society. A military crackdown was the hard-line course advocated by Premier Li Peng and eventually preferred by Deng Xiaoping and his colleagues among the Elders. That decision brought a more conservative leadership to power in Beijing, damaged China's relations with the West and closed the path to major political reforms for over a decade.

The decision against political reform made by the leadership has not gone unchallenged in the intervening years. The Compiler's Preface to *The Tiananmen Papers* shows that people inside the Party favouring political reform have repeatedly petitioned the Party to recognize that it

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1. The number does not appear in the book, but the Compiler later calculated it from material in the book.

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made a mistake. Only when this demand went long unanswered did some Party members take the unusual, by their own account desperate, step of bringing their case to the outside world in the hope of forcing the leadership to admit that China had been going down a wrong road. The result of this decision was the publication in January 2001 of *The Tiananmen Papers* in English (New York: Public Affairs), and in April 2001 of the longer Chinese manuscript on which *The Tiananmen Papers* was based, a book called *Zhongguo liusi zhenxiang* (*June Fourth: The True Story*) (New York: Mirror Books).

The reaction of the Chinese government is the main theme to be discussed here, because I think it reveals much about the state of Chinese politics today. Why has the government responded with a strange combination of silence and repression? What is at stake? What can be learned from the reaction about the political battle over China's future?

As a prior question, however, I want to review what is in the book and what is not. An understanding of the book's impact depends in part on an understanding of what it contains. The two volumes, over 1,000 pages, of the Chinese edition quote from only some 600 or so documents, clearly too few to be a complete record of 51 days in the life of any country, let alone one as far-flung and complicated as China. Selection was inevitable. If the selection processes were distorted or biased in favour of one faction and against another, that would affect the political response. Knowing how the book was constructed will also help readers to make more informed, critical use of its contents. Some of what follows also touches on the authenticity of the material. But I do not want to argue that point except insofar as it overlaps with the issue of selection bias. Since most specialist readers seem at least provisionally to accept the authenticity of the material, the less discussed issue of selectivity is more interesting.

The Contents of the Book

Describing the selection processes that shaped the book brings to mind my mentor, John Fairbank's, pioneering historiographical work, *Ch'ing Documents: An Introductory Syllabus*.[2] In his seminar based on this book, Fairbank taught generations of students about what might be called the "natural history" of archives: the processes of bureaucratic record-keeping, the genre conventions of different kinds of documents, the systems of document transmission and preservation, all of which determine what raw material makes it into the archives and survives for historians to look at. Only after these processes have taken place do historians have a chance to exercise whatever further principles of selection they may impose.

The materials in *The Tiananmen Papers* are no different. They, too, have gone through a series of processes, each of which brought the final product further away from the raw material of what happened, and each

2. Two volumes, Third Edition, East Asian Research Center, Harvard University, 1965.

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of which did so in some systematic way. How does this affect what can be learned from the papers? How does it affect the official response? In particular, has the Compiler done anything to bias the contents of the book, so as to favour his own political faction and its programme? Or does the book tell a story that is as true as any incomplete representation can be?

The processes that the materials in the book have gone through can be broken down into five steps. Some of this is common sense, but without considering it the material in the book cannot adequately be evaluated.

The first process was the step from historical action to documents. Out of the flux of human behaviour, certain events were selected by certain persons working for certain bureaucracies to be recorded in certain kinds of documents which follow certain rules of form and content. Examples in this project are reports from the Ministry of State Security on events in the Square, reports from the State Education Commission on attitudes on the campuses, reports from the military on attitudes among the troops, and reports from provincial Party committees on events in the provinces. Fully to decipher these documents one needs to understand the rules that govern the creation of each of them in the Chinese communist system. There are conventions of form – for example, all such documents emphasize the correctness and legitimacy of the regime and the breadth of its popular support. On the other hand, there was also a considerable commitment to accuracy – averaging out across all the bureaucracies, one is generally impressed with the honesty of the reports the central authorities received. That said, the reporting agencies display a bias toward reporting signs of threats to the regime and thus tend to select for information that focuses on criticisms of the regime, overseas involvement or other disturbing signs of potential trouble.

Another example of how documentary conventions affect content are the minutes of Politburo, Politburo Standing Committee, and Elders' meetings, which provide some of the most dramatic passages in the book. As described in Orville Schell's Afterword, such minutes are created by professional minute takers, who employ a certain writing style which is not the same as the spoken language that presumably was used during the actual meetings. I am told that somewhat stilted, unnatural language is characteristic of minutes in many governments, and for similar reasons. No one wants government minutes which reflect the way that leaders actually speak.

Some information gets into the document flow, and some does not. For example, certain private conversations got into the record when they were recalled in depositions for the Fourth Plenum of the 13th Central Committee that met in June 1989, or in certain other ways (for more details, see the Introduction to the *Papers*). Since senior Elders Deng Xiaoping, Chen Yun and Li Xiannian were not required to make such depositions, conversations among the three of them do not (so far as I know) form part of the documentary record.

The second step in the transition from raw events to our book was the selection, from all the documents created day by day in the vast Chinese

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bureaucracy, of the relatively few to be transmitted up the various chains of communication to Zhongnanhai. For, as stated in the Introduction, the documents in the book were selected from those that found their way into Zhongnanhai – which means, to be more specific, documents sent to the State Council or Party Central, which are the two agencies located in that compound.

What does this exclude? First of all, it excludes the vast internal flow of documents within bureaucracies that takes place before those bureaucracies pull together the information that they want to report to the Centre. To take an important example, if the military did studies of the death toll after the crackdown and did not send them up the system and over to Zhongnanhai (the Central Military Commission is located outside Zhongnanhai), then those studies could not have appeared in our book. Likewise, from a given province, there are reports from the Party Committee to Party Central but not the many documents that must have come from below into the offices of the Party Committee, or the documents that flowed within each of the various bureaus of the Party Committee. Also missing are raw intelligence materials – records of tapped phone calls, searches, tailings of suspects, debriefings of sources. They were probably not sent over to Zhongnanhai in raw form, although it is also possible that the Compiler did not have them or chose not to publish them.

The Compiler had nothing to do with these first two processes of selection. Before he became involved, therefore, the material that he worked with had already become much reduced from the raw facts of history, and reduced in ways that introduced both possibilities of error (such as false statements that certain intellectuals were inciting the students or false estimates of the importance of foreign support), and two distinct categories of biases – the biases governing the creation of documents, and those governing their selection for transmission to Zhongnanhai. The reason I thought it important to dwell on these two processes is that I believe they explain some of the lacunae, biases and errors that have attracted attention in discussions of the book.

The Compiler comes into the picture with the third stage of the process – the creation of what I have described as the Compiler's "trove" – the set of documents with which he worked to create the Chinese edition of the book. How did the Compiler create his trove, and how did this process contribute further to selection biases in the eventual book? (And, we might ask, did the process of removing the contents of the trove from China lead to any truncation, abridgement or deterioration in its contents?) Unfortunately, this is the part of the story about which I can say the least, because of my concern for the security of the Compiler and others involved.

The Compiler, however, has given me permission to reveal one important point that I did not discuss in the Introduction. The documents that he used were not collected after the events but during them. It is therefore not necessary to pay any attention for present purposes to issues of archiving: what might be selected for inclusion in the Party archives, what might be weeded out, how documents are kept there, rules of access,

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whether the archives have been tampered with, and so on. This also precludes the possibility that anybody tampered with the documents before they came into the Compiler's hands, since he acquired them contemporaneously with events.

There is more to say about this phase, which is returned to below after briefly dealing with the fourth and fifth stages, which are already described in the Introduction. The fourth stage was the Compiler's selecting and transcribing from the trove enough material to create the 516-page computer-printed Chinese manuscript which is now publicly available as *Zhongguo liusi zhenxiang*.[3] The fifth stage was the process by which I, as co-editor, selected about one-third of the contents of the Chinese manuscript for inclusion in the English book. I describe both these processes in the Introduction. Now that the Chinese edition is out, anyone who reads Chinese can review what I did in the fifth stage, so it need not be discussed further now.

But to return to the third and fourth stages, the ones that involved the Compiler, while the material was in his hands, did the Compiler cook the books? In one sense, yes. The third and fourth stages – from document flow to trove to manuscript – certainly involved purposeful processes of selection. I described in the Introduction my advice to the Compiler as to how to select materials from the trove for inclusion in the manuscript: they should tell a coherent story and focus on the decision-making process in Zhongnanhai, including the information coming in to the Centre that most strongly shaped the leaders' perceptions of their environment. The end product shows that he followed my advice. But did he also, at any stage in his possession of the materials, tamper with them by adding or deleting material in a tendentious way or by manipulating material to achieve a misleading effect?[4]

Although I did not myself directly participate in his work in these stages, I am confident that he made a fair and honest selection of materials. As with the question of authenticity discussed in the Introduction to the book, some of my reasons for thinking this cannot be replicated by readers, but some can. Here are four reasons why critical readers should conclude that the Compiler did not violate his expressed goal of presenting an unbiased record.

First, there is the absence of suspicious lacunae in the story. The lacunae that there are, of the sort mentioned above, are not suspicious, because they are explicable in terms of what is known about the creation of the original materials. Yan Jiaqi, who was not only a participant in the events of 1989 but who has written major books on both the Cultural

3. Apparently my identification of this 516-page manuscript as the source that I worked with to create the English edition was the source of the persistent misunderstanding that the documents were removed from China in digital form, something neither I nor the Compiler has ever stated.

4. There is also the question of transcription errors. Perry Link and I did discover some as we worked with the manuscript, and those that we discovered were corrected. The Compiler discovered and corrected a few others in proofreading for the Chinese edition. There must be some transcription errors and typos that remain, but I doubt that there are many.

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Revolution and the April Fifth (1976) incident based on reconstruction of events from publicly available documents and interviews, states on the basis of his experience that it would be impossible to reconstruct such a complete and detailed record of June Fourth in the same way.[5]

Secondly, there is the lack of contradictions among documents. Imagine the complexity of taking an original historical record and fixing it so as to make some participants look better than they were and some worse. This would require removing, altering, or adding passages which would then stand in contradiction to references in other documents. The process would be endlessly complicated and would leave traces. I do not think you will find such traces.

Thirdly, there has been confirmation from independent sources that the material has not been tampered with. There are over 600 participants named in the book, mostly in Ministry of State Security reports and reports from provincial Party committees. So far a score or so of these people who are in the West have confirmed the accuracy of the material that relates to them.[6] In some cases such participants have noted small, telling details that demonstrate that the material was not altered. Tang Boqiao, for example, who was a leader of the student movement in Hunan, was able to compare the book's transcription of a document that he wrote with a copy he brought with him from China, and found the transcription to be exact. He also noted that the Compiler had refrained from correcting a contradiction between two Hunan provincial security department reports on different dates, the first stating that three college students were arrested, the second reporting that only middle and technical school students had been arrested. Tang reports that years later, he met one of the college students involved, who told him the local authorities had indeed arrested him and two colleagues, but had decided to hide from the Centre the fact that college students were arrested and had therefore released them with warnings never to talk about what had happened.[7]

Hu Jiwei, a member of the NPC Standing Committee at the time of Tiananmen, has published in Hong Kong an article hailing publication of

5. Yan Jiaqi, " 'Zhongguo "liusi" zhenxiang' de zhenshixing" ("The authenticity of 'The true story of "June Fourth"' "), reproduced from *Xinwen ziyou daobao*, 12 April 2001, at http://www.chinesenewsweek.com/50/Feature/3865.html.

6. Among many, see *Shijie jibao*, 16 April 2001, p. A2, on reactions of Yan Jiaqi, Chen Yizi, Wu Jiaxiang, Su Xiaokang, Wang Juntao, Li Lu and others. See also a long series of reports on Chinesenewsnet.com posted in April and May after publication of the Chinese edition of the book. This is a website run by He Pin, the publisher of the Chinese edition of the book. It has carried extensive reporting on reactions to the book, pro and con. Chinesenewsweek.com is another website run by He Pin. It is in magazine format and carries longer articles that are deemed more important.

7. Ji Zhenqiu, "Zhongguo 'liusi' dangshiren zhengshi 'Zhongguo "liusi" zhenxiang' wenjian zhenshixing" ("People involved in the 'June Fourth' events attest to the authenticity of 'The True Story of China's "June Fourth" ' "), report carried on Chinesenewsnet.com, at http://www.chinesenewsweek.com/47/Feature/3592.html. The document Tang refers to is found in the Chinese edition of the book, pp. 293–94, the two security department reports on pp. 168 and 190.

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the book and tacitly confirming its contents insofar as he knows them.[8] Xu Jiatun, director of the Xinhua News Agency in Hong Kong at the time of the incident, is quoted as judging the material to be 70–80 per cent authentic.[9]

Most dramatically, an unknown source has released the text of Bao Tong's September 1989 statement to interrogators, which at six or seven points confirms specific details from *The Tiananmen Papers* that had previously been unknown publicly.[10] In contrast to the other judgments cited so far, this is not a retrospective affirmation of *The Tiananmen Papers*' authenticity. It is a contemporaneous document, which was not available to the Compiler when *The Tiananmen Papers* were being prepared for publication. Similarly, on 4 June 2001, the National Security Archive (an academic research centre based at George Washington University) issued 13 declassified U.S. government documents from 1989 that it labelled "The U.S. 'Tiananmen Papers'.").[11] Especially relevant is a 24-page CIA report entitled "The road to the Tiananmen crackdown: an analytic chronology of Chinese leadership decision making" issued in September 1989, which tends to confirm the events reported in *The Tiananmen Papers*.

Of course the key actors have not spoken. However, if there had been prejudice in the selection or transcription of documents, it is likely that disfavoured participants might have taken steps to correct the record, perhaps by leaks of their own.

Finally, the Compiler's avowed political purposes required him to make an honest selection. This is the most important point and also the most closely related to the larger theme of the book's impact and the government's reaction. True, the Compiler comes from the reform side of the Party and wants reform to look good. But his strategy is not to rehabilitate particular leaders of the past who are in any case no longer viable, but to use the truth of history to appeal to the sitting members of the Politburo – most of whom have never seen the vast bulk of the documents in the book and hence do not know the full story of events in 1989 – and to move them to acknowledge the mistake made years ago by their predecessors, who were, with the exception of Li Peng, people other

8. Hu Jiwei, "Zhi Yibo he Zemin liang tongzhi shu" ("Letter to Comrades [Bo] Yibo and [Jiang] Zemin"), *Kaifang*, March 2001, pp. 42–44.

9. Lu Keng, "Ruhe jiedu 'Zhongguo liusi zhenxiang' " ("How to interpret 'The True Story of China's "June Fourth" ' "), www.chinesenewsweek.com, *Duowei zhoukan*, No. 48, 23 April 2001, reprinted from *Zhongguo shibao*, at http://www.chinesenewsweek.com/48/Feature/3698.html.

10. "Bao Tong zai xuechao he dongluan qijian yanxing de jiaodai" ("Bao Tong's confession concerning his words and actions during the student movement and turmoil period"), *Xinbao*, 23 April 2001, p. 22; for list of points where this supports *The Tiananmen Papers*, see Zhang Liang, "Liusi xiangguan xiemi luxu you lai" ("More documents on June Fourth continue to leak out"), *Pingguo ribao*, 30 April 2001, and "Bao Tong chujing gengduo weixian" ("Bao Tong's circumstances are more dangerous than before"), *Pingguo ribao*, 1 May 2001.

11. The National Security Archive, http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB47/index2.html.

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than themselves. Tampering with the documents would not achieve this effect, because it would create a product that would be easy to discredit.

In short, it is not that the project is above politics but that it is part of politics that guarantees the integrity of the Compiler's selection work. The strategy itself required a true rather than a false account, a fair one rather than a biased one. That this strategy has been successful is evident from the fact that there has been speculation that almost every conceivable actor might have behind the leak, ranging from Zhao Ziyang or Li Ruihuan on the liberal side through family or staff of the late Deng Xiaoping or the late Yang Shangkun to Jiang Zemin and Li Peng on the conservative side. Evidently there is no obvious selection bias that can clue outsiders as to whom the Compiler favours. These would have created weaknesses the authorities could have capitalized on. They could have pointed to the bias, put out a better story, discredited the Compiler's purposes. Or they could have sat by quietly as the book self-destructed under the scrutiny of the foreign academic and journalistic communities, and as 1989 participants overseas pointed out gaps and inconsistencies.

The Reaction of the Chinese Government

Instead, the official reaction can be broken down into five categories. First, the government has issued a pro forma denunciation of the work as a fabrication. Upon learning of the impending publication of the English-language book, on 9 January Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhu Bangzao issued a statement which said, in part:

> The Communist Party of China and the Chinese Government have already made the correct conclusion about the political disturbances that took place in Beijing at the end of the spring and the beginning of the summer in 1989, and that conclusion will not change. The practice over the past decade has proved that the prompt and decisive measures that the CPC and the Chinese Government took at the time were "highly necessary to the stability and development of China." The CPC Central Committee, with Jiang Zemin at the core, is united. Any attempt to play up the matter again and disrupt China by the despicable means of fabricating materials and distorting facts will be futile.[12]

Because the statement did not explicitly say that *The Tiananmen Papers* were fabricated, reporters pressed Zhu to clarify at his regular press conference later the same day. After turning the question aside several times, he finally responded, "I have already indicated here that these are fabricated materials that distort facts. How much clearer would you have me be?"[13] The "any attempt to fabricate" formula was repeated by the Foreign Ministry spokesperson at the time of the National People's Congress meeting in March and once again by the minister himself in response to a question at a press conference, but so far as I know it has not been repeated or elaborated. In addition, Jiang Zemin twice made informal remarks to foreign visitors obliquely denigrating the book.

12. *Beijing Review*, 25 January 2001, p. 11.
13. John Leicester, "China calls Tiananmen Papers fakes," AP Online, 9 January 2001.

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In fairness to the government spokespersons, their weak indictments should not be taken as tacit acknowledgments that the Tiananmen materials are authentic. They could have no firm way of knowing this until after the Chinese edition was published in April and they had had it studied. There were reports that the Party had assigned a committee to design an extensive rebuttal of the book.[14] If so, apparently the group's research produced too few points of vulnerability to make this possible. Instead, a series of articles was published in the Hong Kong *Xingdao ribao* in late May–early June under the pseudonym "Xiao He," attempting to discredit the book largely through an ad hominem attack on Zhang Liang.

Xiao He (whom the Compiler promptly identified in a published rejoinder as the pen name of a writing group under the Ministry of State Security[15]) alleges in his series of articles that he knows who Zhang Liang is; that he and Zhang Liang participated in a small group of idealistic intellectuals who had compiled information on June Fourth from classified but relatively accessible internal Xinhua News Agency reports as well as from publicly available sources; that Zhang Liang had absconded with the materials, mislabelled them as ministry and Party committee reports, fabricated some additional materials, and issued the whole collection as a book under his own name.[16] In a major concession, this line of attack acknowledged that 95 per cent of the material in the book was accurate, although claiming it was mis-sourced. It focused on raising doubts about – without directly refuting – the remaining and especially important 5 per cent, consisting of high-level meeting minutes and conversations, material the pseudonymous Xiao He acknowledged never having seen himself, and on questioning the Compiler's motives.

It is of course still early days, and the regime might be preparing a more weighty, detailed analysis of flaws in the work. But given that the material is in fact authentic, such a tactic would be difficult to bring off. It would require publishing either fuller documentation or false documentation, and in any case would play into the Compiler's hands by drawing more attention to June Fourth as a subject of discussion. For now, the Xiao He series remains the high point of the frontal attack on the book's credibility.

Secondly, the government has tried to suppress circulation of the book and information about it. Various agencies (the Propaganda Department, the security police, the customs authorities and so forth) have issued

14. See e.g. Willy Lam, "China plans 'Tiananmen' rebuttal," CNN website, 19 March 2001. Such a rebuttal might have followed along the lines of Lin Ke, Xu Tao and Wu Xujun, *Lishi de zhenshi* (*The Truth of History*) (Hong Kong: Liwen chubanshe, 1995), a book-length refutation of Dr Li Zhisui's *The Private Life of Chairman Mao* (New York: Random House, 1994). *Lishi de zhenshi* was published in Hong Kong, and never circulated in mainland China.

15. " 'Xiao He' zhe qishi shi Luo Gan zouzu" (" 'Xiao He' actually is a pawn of Luo Gan"), *Pingguo ribao*, 31 May 2001, p. E11. In addition, a self-identified friend of the Compiler writing under the pen name Yan Zhen offered a strong refutation of Xiao He's arguments in an article serialized in *Xingdao ribao* starting on 7 June 2001.

16. These charges appeared in a series of articles in *Xingdao ribao* on 28, 29, 30, 31 May and 1 June.

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orders forbidding people to transport or reprint the book. According to one report, the Party ordered "seven forbiddens" (*qi buzhun*) which included not reading the book, not reading about it on the web, not buying it, carrying it into China, or printing it.[17] Customs officials intensified searches of luggage and confiscated copies of the book, and it was reported that the authorities threatened a death penalty for anyone caught pirating it (surely the most energetic PRC defence to date of intellectual property rights). Officials are ordered to search for copies of the book bound in false covers. A businessman named Li Hongmin was reportedly detained in June on suspicion of distributing copies of the book over the Internet.[18]

This effort may have been successful in limiting circulation of the book so far. Although I am told that it is much sought-after in Beijing, I have seen only one report of its being pirated (in two provinces, Guangxi and Qinghai), which I cannot confirm.[19] But information about it seems to have spread widely. Its publication was intensively reported in the international press, and some of this discussion must have found its way into China. The book was widely discussed on the web, its contents were excerpted there (before April, back-translated from English into Chinese and hence not the authentic language of the original documents), and the entire text in Chinese has been posted on at least two websites.[20] In April, Radio Free Asia broadcast excerpts from the Chinese edition; it had already broadcast numerous programmes discussing the work, as did VOA, BBC, and other foreign radio stations on their Chinese language programmes. On 4 June CNN broadcast a half-hour interview with the Compiler. For some reason, this was not blocked for transmission into China. The CNN website received thousands of hits for the transcript of the interview, and it was reprinted in most major Chinese-language newspapers in Hong Kong and in several English-language newspapers around the region.[21] I do not have other information on how widely news of the project has circulated in China, but I expect it will gradually spread.

Thirdly, the regime has launched a general security crackdown. This is not in response to *The Tiananmen Papers* alone, but to a series of developments that the authorities apparently see as inter-linked. In January, shortly after publication of the book, Jiang Zemin called a Politburo meeting at which he characterized the book as a purposeful assault by anti-China, anti-communist forces in the U.S., allied with anti-Party elements in China, to increase pressure on China and split the leadership. Starting in January, the Politburo member in charge of security work, Luo

17. Reported in Hong Kong *Xinbao* as summarized on Chinesenewsnet.com, 14 April 2001.

18. Reported by AP and AFP, 2 July 2001.

19. Xia Wensi, "Zhonggong jueyi liusi yong bu fan'an" ("The CCP resolves never to reverse the verdict on June Fourth"), *Kaifang*, No. 174, June 2001, p. 11.

20. These are freenet-china.org and Dacankao (bignews.org). I have not personally inspected either site.

21. Personal communication, Mike Chinoy, 6 June 2001.

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Gan, who is a close associate of Li Peng, gave a series of speeches on the worsening security situation.

In one such speech, in March, Luo said, "our struggle with enemy forces has entered a new era this year. Foreign enemy forces have stepped up strategies to Westernize us, to split us. At home, our struggle with the elements who stubbornly uphold bourgeois liberalization rises and falls." He cited eight adverse trends as distinct yet linked elements of this complex struggle: the plot to incite efforts to reverse the verdict on June Fourth; the activities of *Falungong* and other cults; efforts by foreign enemy elements to move the focus of their work from overseas to inside the country, and of overseas hostile forces to link up with domestic hostile forces; the trend of establishing companies and carrying out political activities under cover of doing business; efforts to take advantage of Beijing's application for the 2008 Olympics to demand political freedoms; the trend of taking advantage of internal contradictions by inciting laid-off workers to organize; plots for separatism in the border areas and the creation of violent terrorist incidents; and an increase in the activities of illegal, dissident pro-democracy and pro-human rights organizations.[22]

Starting in January, the authorities expanded their standing black list, formerly of several dozen names, to 273. Persons on the list are supposed to be denied entry or detained and investigated. Besides some foreigners, the list includes Chinese overseas scholars in the following four categories: those suspected of having ties with the Taiwan government or intelligence agencies; those suspected of ties to foreign intelligence agencies or who have revealed important information overseas about Chinese politics; those who are thought to have made public overseas sensitive military or state security information; and those with high connections in China who allegedly talk too much with foreigners about sensitive Chinese political information. No one knows whose names are on the list. But there has been a wave of arrests of scholars of Chinese origin who work or are active overseas – people like Gao Zhan, Li Shaoming, Xu Zerong and Wu Jianmin. What they are suspected of having done is not clear. They may have been arrested just so the security people can show that they are working hard to do their jobs.

Also part of the general crackdown has been a step-up of surveillance of the web. Since publication of the book's Chinese edition in April, the authorities have closed more websites and arrested more web entrepreneurs than usual. I do not believe these moves are directly connected to *The Tiananmen Papers*, but they are part of the general tightening in response to the publication of the *Papers* in tandem with other perceived threats.

A related event was the launching of a society-wide "strike hard" anti-crime campaign, announced by Luo, Jiang and other top officials at an April 2001 national conference on security work. Under campaigns of

22. Source on Luo Gan's speech: Zong Hairen, "Luo Gan jianghua suowei helai?" ("Why is Luo Gan speaking and acting as he is?"), *Xinbao*, 6 March 2001, p. 9.

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this sort, arrests increase and sentences are stricter. This campaign also is not explicitly linked with the issue of Tiananmen. But it is part of the general effort to shore up the regime's authority at a time when it seems to be under broad attack, and it provides an opportunity to warn and arrest persons perceived as enemies of the regime.

Fourthly, the regime has conducted a secret, high-level search for the leakers. Upon studying the book, the authorities quickly became aware that the leakers either are themselves, or are backed by, highly placed officials in the capital. On 21 January, the Supreme People's Court announced an "interpretation" (presumably of the Criminal Law or the State Secrets Act or both) which applied the death penalty to "the crime of stealing, worming out, purchasing, or illegally supplying state secrets or intelligence overseas … in cases where damage to the state and people is especially severe and the circumstances are especially evil."[23] A secret investigation was launched, which has involved tapping phones, searching offices, tailing, and in some cases detaining and interrogating, very high-ranking officials, and their associates, family members and staff. In contrast to the arrests of scholars, all this is has been kept very quiet. I believe that if the investigation succeeds in locating some of the people involved, they will either be punished in secret, or perhaps not punished at all, because some of them may be untouchable.

Finally and most interesting, the regime has focused its main efforts on shoring up the consensus within the Party, especially at high ranks, that the verdict on June Fourth was correct and cannot be reopened, much less reversed, lest doing so should destabilize the country and undermine economic development. I have already noted that this was the main point in the official Foreign Ministry statement on the book, which placed the issue of authenticity in a secondary position. At the January 2001 Politburo meeting Jiang Zemin asked each member to *biaotai* – to express his unanimity with the Centre on the non-reversibility of the June Fourth verdict. A Politburo meeting in February confirmed the same point and again required officials throughout the country to reaffirm their support for the June Fourth crackdown. Also in February, Jiang delivered the same message to high-ranking cadres from around the country at an unusual Central Work Conference.[24] The government is said to have prepared a long video documentary on the crackdown to be shown to officials around the country, again with the theme that the repression saved China from instability and made possible the achievements of the past 12 years.

In taking this tack, the government has met the Compiler head-on, on the very issue on which he has thrown down his challenge: was the June

23 "Chumai guojia jimi zuigao pan sixing – Gaoyuan jieshi shemi anjian wenti" ("Death sentence for selling out state secrets – interpretation by the Supreme Court on the question of cases involving secrets"), Xinhuawang dispatch at http://dailynews.sina.com.cn/c/173968.html.

24. Erik Eckholm and Elisabeth Rosenthal, "China's leadership pushes for unity," *New York Times*, 9 March 2001, p. A1. They reported that about 2,000 cadres participated; I believe the number is more like 600.

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Fourth crackdown correct or a mistake. Why is the issue so important that it must be intensively addressed within the Party, even at the risk of playing into the Compiler's hands? Evidently the legitimacy of the top leaders – and of the arrangements they are now busy making for the political succession in 2002–2003 – is tied up with the issue of June Fourth, just as the Compiler asserts. If June Fourth was wrong, then Jiang Zemin's rise to power was wrong and it is wrong that Li Peng is still in power. (However, I would like to clarify again as I have elsewhere that the timing of the work's publication in relation to succession politics was fortuitous; in fact, the Compiler's original intent was to publish the Chinese version on the tenth anniversary of Tiananmen in 1999.) The leaders are apparently aware how fragile their legitimacy is, not only among the public but within the higher Party ranks as well. Their response shows their felt vulnerability to the stroke that the Compiler and his backers have delivered. The weakness of their authority stands revealed in their reaction.

So does their internal division. Although the effort to maintain surface unanimity has so far succeeded, no member of the senior leadership has sided forcefully with Jiang Zemin and Li Peng. Instead, other ranking officials have kept a distance from attacks on the book, some by travelling out of Beijing at the time of the Chinese edition's publication, some by making elliptical remarks about the truth of history or about their interest in reading the Hong Kong press, some by shrugging off the book as a trivial project aimed at financial gain and having no weighty significance. Moreover, that Jiang Zemin's and Li Peng's ill-wishers are still active in high places is indicated by the fact that an important source for information about the post-publication developments is a series of articles published by Zhang Liang, the pseudonym of the Compiler, and by an author writing under another pseudonym, Zong Hairen, in three Hong Kong publications.[25] In short, Jiang Zemin and Li Peng are manning the fort in Beijing pretty much alone.

25. Articles by Zhang Liang up to the time this article went to press: "Liusi bu pingfan, tianli nanrong!" ("It would be a gross injustice if the verdict on June Fourth were not reversed"), *Xinbao*, 10 January 2001, p. 14; "Lishi buneng mosha, chuangteng buhui yanwang" ("History cannot be suppressed, the injuries cannot be forgotten"), *Xinbao*, 11 January 2001, p. 16; "Wo keyi bu zuoshi, danshi wo haiyao zuoren – zhuiyi Hu Yaobang" ("I can refrain from acting, but I must still be a human being – recalling Hu Yaobang"), *Xinbao*, 17 April 2001, p. 22; "Wo buru diyu, shei ru diyu? – huainian Zhao Ziyang" ("If I don't enter Hell, who will enter Hell? – reminiscing about Zhao Ziyang"), *Xinbao*, 18 April 2001, p. 15; "Gao Jiang: qingshi liuming de zuihou jihui" ("Warning to Jiang: your last chance to leave a good name to history"), *Xinbao*, 19 April 2001, p. 14; "Quan Li: mo rang zisun beishang chenzhong de baozhuang!" ("Urging Li: don't leave your descendants to bear a heavy burden!"), *Xinbao*, 20 April 2001, p. 33; (the series of four articles listed just above was also broadcast on Radio Free Asia, 10–14 April 2001); "The Olympics can help reform," *New York Times*, 30 March 2001, p. A23; "Lishi zhong jiang zuochu gongzheng panjue" ("History will make a fair judgment in the end"), *Kaifang*, April 2001, pp. 33–36; "Dui lishi he renmin fuze" ("Be responsible to history and the people"), *Shijie ribao*, 15 April 2001; "Buying wangque de jinian" ("A memorial that should not be forgotten"), broadcast on VOA Chinese service, 15 April 2001; "Liusi xiangguan xiemi luxu you lai" ("More documents on June Fourth continue to leak out") *Pingguo ribao*, 30 April 2001; "Bao Tong chujing gengduo weixian" ("Bao Tong's circumstances are more dangerous than before"), *Pingguo ribao*, 1 May 2001; " 'Xiao He' zhe qishi shi Luo Gan zouzu" (" 'Xiao He' actually is a pawn of Luo Gan"), *Pingguo ribao*, 31 May 2001, p. E11; "Li Peng cuxiao Zhongguo liusi

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It remains to be seen whether the Compiler's goal of promoting democratization will be achieved. So far the result has been the opposite: a reaffirmation of the verdict on June Fourth and a tightening of repression. The obstacles to democratic change are enormous. Even if such change were to commence, it is not well understand what the reformers would do if they came to power. Zhao Ziyang in 1989 used language like "guiding" (*shudao*) and "dialogue" (*xieshang*), which points to a vision of politics far from the Western idea of democracy.

Yet in a larger sense, both the contents of *The Tiananmen Papers* and the fact of their publication reveal why democracy and human rights are (as the Tiananmen Square protestors argued) central to China's future. The demand to be peacefully heard wells up again and again from the Chinese people. As China develops this is bound to be more true rather than less. Dissenters within and outside the regime will continue to insist on being heard. If there are no channels within the system, they will go outside. The pressures both between society and regime, and within the regime, cannot be handled without coming to terms with the demands raised 12 years ago in Tiananmen Square.

footnote continued

zhenxiang" ("Li Peng promotes the Tiananmen Papers"), *Pingguo ribao*, 1 June 2001, p. E15; "Zaori taohui tianli gongdao" ("Recover justice as soon as possible"), broadcast over Radio Free Asia, 1–4 June; "Wuwang 'liusi,' miantao fuche – jinian 'liusi' shi'erzhounian" ("Do not forget June Fourth, avoid the mistakes of the past – memorializing June Fourth on its 12th anniversary"), *Xinbao*, 4 June 2001.

Articles by Zong Hairen: "Luo Gan jianghua suowei helai?" ("Why is Luo Gan speaking and acting as he is?"), *Xinbao*, 6 March 2001, p. 9; "Jiang Zemin moshi shengming shijin mixin" ("Jiang Zemin cares little for human life and has completely lost popular support"), *Xinbao*, 21 March 2001, p. 27; "Jiang Zemin pihu Jia Qinglin, Ruan Chongwu" ("Jiang Zemin protects Jia Qinglin and Ruan Chongwu), *Kaifang*, May 2001, pp. 41–44; "Li Peng pihu Jiang Chunyun, Liang Guangda" ("Li Peng protects Jiang Chunyun and Liang Guangda"), *Kaifang*, June 2001, pp. 18–21.

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