

The evolving Tiananmen Square narrative, Part 2

written by John Parker

June 12, 2019



- [Capitalist lies on China exposed: The evolving Tiananmen Square narrative, Part 1](#)

Especially in regard to the torturous murder of soldiers, it is clear that not all of the protesters were the same. In that regard, let's look back at the aforementioned WikiLeaks leaked document in [Part 1](#) of this report. That document exposed the cable sent on June 12, 1989, by James Lilley, then U.S. ambassador to China, that gives the eyewitness report of two Latin American diplomats that there was no massacre at Tiananmen Square.

It's very significant that the author of this cable is Lilley, the U.S. ambassador to China at the time of the Tiananmen Square protests. Lilley was appointed to the position by then President George H. W. Bush, the former head of the CIA.

The Los Angeles Times, in an obituary, describes Lilley like this: "James R. Lilley, a longtime CIA operative in Asia . . . He housed top Chinese dissident Fang Lizhi in the embassy for a year and a month before the Chinese allowed Fang to leave for the United States. . . He helped insert agents into China, gathered intelligence in Hong Kong and battled against the communist takeover in Laos. He served as ambassador to South Korea, among other posts."

Add to this the [revelations brought out by Robert Rodvick on Voltairnet.org](#) regarding the role of the CIA and the picture becomes even clearer. Rodvick quotes an article in the Vancouver Sun of September 17, 1992: "The CIA Station Chief in China left the country two days before Chinese troops attacked demonstrators in the capital Beijing in 1989, after predicting the military would not act, U.S. officials said. . . The Central Intelligence Agency had sources among protesters, as well as within China's intelligence services with which it enjoyed a close relationship since the 1970s, said the officials, who spoke this week on condition of anonymity. . .

CIA helped form anti-government movement

"For months before the June 3 attack on the demonstrators, the CIA had been helping student activists form the anti-government movement, providing typewriters, facsimile machines and other equipment to help them spread their message, said one official. The CIA declined all comment."

One of those student activists was Chai Ling, who was assisted by then U.S. ambassador Lilley. She, like almost all of the primary student leaders, left China to wind up in the U.S., to enroll in elite universities here. Ling and Lilley appeared on Charlie Rose's news program on June 4, 1996 — the 7-year anniversary of the protest confrontation at the square. At no time did either of them mention the fact that the "massacre" never occurred at Tiananmen Square and Ling, in fact, took issue with some in the media who called the events at the square violence, rather than a massacre. Also, remember that former Ambassador Lilley had received the cable leaked by WikiLeaks, so he knew that there was no massacre.

The other very significant part of the interview was the exposure of Ling's role in the student protests. Rose referred to a documentary called "The Gate of Heavenly Peace" that came out in 1995 featuring Ling as one of the most prominent student leaders of the protest in Tiananmen Square. The documentary questioned whether more radical students were trying to intentionally force a violent confrontation with the Chinese government. Rose ran the clip in the documentary where Ling was quoted saying on May 28, 1989, one week prior to the Tiananmen Square Incident:

"What we actually are hoping for is bloodshed, the moment when the government is ready to brazenly butcher the people. Only when the Square is awash with blood will the people of China open their eyes. Only then will they really be united. But how can I explain any of this to my fellow students?"

Rose mercifully ends the clip there but here's the rest of what Ling said:

“And what is truly sad is that some students, and famous well-connected people, are working hard to help the government, to prevent it from taking such measures. For the sake of their selfish interests and their private dealings they are trying to cause our movement to disintegrate and get us out of the Square before the government becomes so desperate that it takes action.”

Interviewer: “Are you going to stay in the Square yourself?

Chai Ling: “No.”

Interviewer: “Why?”

Chai Ling: “Because my situation is different. My name is on the government’s blacklist. I’m not going to be destroyed by this government. I want to live. Anyway, that’s how I feel about it. I don’t know if people will say I’m selfish. I believe that people have to continue the work I have started. A democracy movement can’t succeed with only one person. I hope you don’t report what I’ve just said for the time being, okay?”

And, sure enough, hours before the soldiers entered Tiananmen Square she was whisked away and eventually wound up getting an invitation to attend Princeton University in the U.S., then to Harvard Business School to get her MBA.

The government did show it was desperate to end the occupation of Tiananmen Square, but not as Ling intended. Every effort was made to invite dialogue with other student organizations, and even with top government officials visiting the occupation.

The Chinese government had also claimed that the U.S. directly manipulated the protests with infiltrators, plans and funds to take it further than most protesters had intended.

It's fitting to compare this to the Occupy Wall Street movement in the U.S. and their treatment. The obvious difference of no one being killed in the breakups of Occupy should be put in the context of the fact that there were no weapons wielded against the police by the Occupy movement. No one from Occupy was holding AK-47s or burning and killing the police or soldiers. (See [Part 1](#) of this report - JP)

If that had happened in this land of the most trigger-happy police force in history, you can imagine the result. No, a fair comparison to the Occupy movement can only come from the treatment of the protesters while they were nonviolent. And, as compared to the U.S., China's treatment is far more humane. Not only did the government supply buses to give shelter to the Tiananmen Square occupiers when it rained, but it provided cleanup services as well, according to the book by Wei Ling Chua, [Tiananmen Square "Massacre"? - The Power of Words vs. Silent Evidence](#). The students — including their leading spokespersons Wu'er Kaixi and Wang Dan, both of whom were caught in blatant lies about the "massacre" — were given a national platform to discuss with top leaders of the Chinese Politburo Standing Committee their grievances and begin negotiations, which were rejected by the students during that nationally televised meeting that lasted one hour.

Just imagine if leading members of the U.S. Congress had held a nationally televised dialogue with representatives of the Occupy Wall Street movement, where they could speak about the problems of the 1% vs. the 99%. As things are today, it couldn't happen here. Yet we are told that this is a country that is more democratic and open. But not when it counts.

In that context, it is comical that the Wall Street Journal is now peddling their 11 photos in their May 30, 2019, issue with the foreboding title: "Images Hidden for 30 Years — Liu Jian took memorable photos around Tiananmen Square in 1989. Then he tried to forget them." The photos don't show a hint of repression. Compare that to the very real examples of police violence that can be found in photos in which the

Occupy Wall Street movement was suppressed from New York to Los Angeles.

Where did the 1989 movement in China come from?

As mentioned before, the protests were made up of various groups. Most of them were students who were joined by workers who were also upset about the overwhelming inflation eating at their wages.

However, there was a class difference in the majority of students as compared to many of the workers in Beijing who may have joined them. In the first place, the student population was just around 0.2 percent of the population at the time. At this same time, the U.S. population of students was 4 percent. Instead of representing any large majority in society, these students instead reflected the problems of privilege that arose after affirmative action to help equalize the population was rejected as part of market reforms steering towards capitalist economics and away from socialist planning.

An attempt to partly rectify that problem and allow a fairer distribution of jobs by the government was met with anger by the students in 1989. Just a year prior, it was these students who were attacking African students studying in China, probably seeing them as competition and reflecting backwardness in regards to racism, forcing the Chinese government to provide protection to the African students.

Many of these students also reflected the policy of the Chinese government to send students abroad to the imperialist countries to increase technological skills and also to learn capitalist business practices. Unfortunately, many brought back the capitalist ideology with their technical education.

Some of the workers in Beijing who joined with the protesters, however, were feeling the effects of a retreat from socialist planning with wages being eaten up by inflation, reflecting the move toward more privatized production. It's ironic that the

very students leading the movement were advocating for market policies that would have forced the workers out of jobs and job security.

Then there were the collaborators with imperialism and imperialist agents who were able to manipulate genuine frustration, encouraging it down the road of recolonization, a road the leadership in China was not willing to traverse.

What about democracy?

Democracy has to be defined because what people mean when they say it is not what is meant in defining the economic system of capitalism. Capitalist countries are usually called “democracies.” But what does that mean? A free market, that is, a privatized market, with no socialist planning regarding production. Is the workplace democratic? Can you elect the boss? Choose your own hours?

Capitalist democracy has nothing to do with the right to determine how the wealth that you and other workers create is used. That wealth, created by working people, is no longer in the hands of the majority. It’s in the hands of those who now own the productive forces — the machines and land — and control the labor force. This is made up of a rich minority who could care less about the majority’s needs for jobs, housing, food and health care. Instead, the focus is on constantly increasing profits for the rich minority. That’s democracy for the rich and dictatorship for poor and working people.

V.I. Lenin, leader of the Russian Revolution of 1917, said it best in his critique of Karl Kautsky: “It is natural for a liberal to speak of ‘democracy’ in general; but a Marxist will never forget to ask: ‘for what class?’ Everyone knows, for instance (and Kautsky the ‘historian’ knows it too), that rebellions, or even strong ferment, among the slaves in ancient times at once revealed the fact that the ancient state was essentially a dictatorship of the slave owners. Did this dictatorship abolish democracy among, and for, the slaveowners? Everybody knows that it did not.” ([The](#)

[Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky, 1918\)](#)

Always remember to ask in evaluating movements calling for “democracy” and willing to ignore the millions upon millions killed by U.S. imperialism around the world with their endless wars, nuclear bombings, assassinations, occupations and sustaining dictatorships from Israel to Saudi Arabia: Democracy for whom?

And, speaking of pictures, could we retire the Tank Man picture for this one from Palestine:





<https://www.struggle-la-lucha.org/2019/06/12/the-evolving-tiananmen-square-narrative/>