

# Rome paper urges China to negotiate

By John Thavis  
NC News

VATICAN CITY — The Vatican newspaper, *L'Osservatore Romano*, asserted May 21 that recent protests by Chinese students are aimed at gaining more freedom and democracy, and deserve "immediate" and "concrete" answers from authorities.

"One thing is certain: You cannot stop the march of the new generations," the newspaper said in a front-page editorial.

The vast demonstrations sparked by university students in the Chinese capital of Peking, which provoked troop mobilizations last weekend, were a way of seeking "more incisive reforms, in the sense of freedom and participation," the newspaper said. The students were joined by thousands of demonstrators from other groups — ranging from Chinese Christians to Peking police.

The newspaper said the movement deserves encouragement as a part of the "revision and restructuring" of communist systems around the world.

Although the Chinese government threatened to use military force to clear the tens of thousands of protesters from Peking's 100-acre Tiananmen Square May 22, the square remained quiet as the deadline passed. Residents of surrounding districts continued to block troop convoys headed for the square.

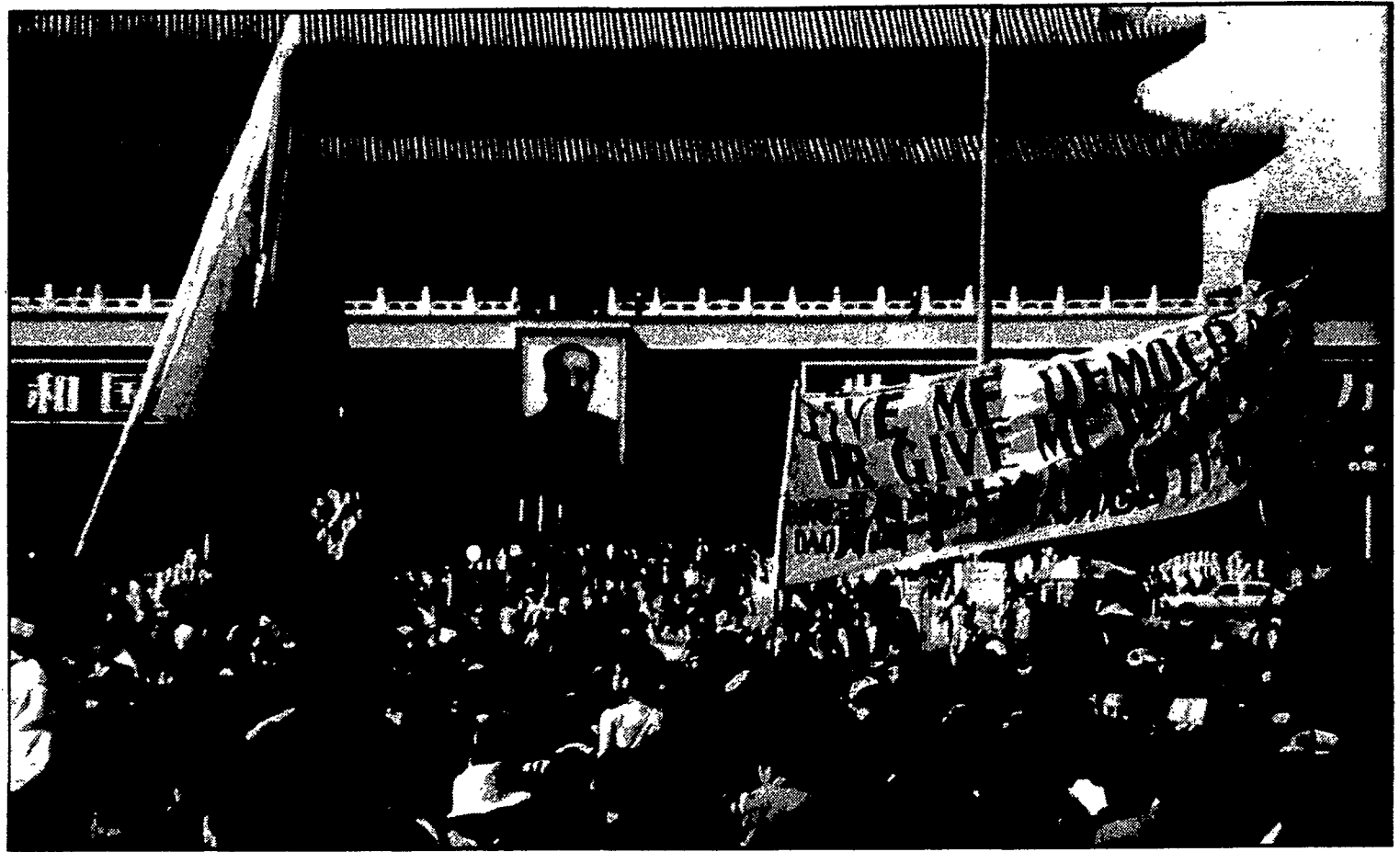
Additionally, news reports coming out of China before imposition May 21 of a blackout on foreign media said 100 senior military officers, in a letter published in the official newspaper *People's Daily*, foreswore the use of force against protesting citizens.

The Vatican newspaper said ideological stubbornness is currently being replaced by openness or "glasnost." At the same time, the effort to impose a world order on varied societies seems to have "irreparably failed," it said.

"We are in the season of a new humanism, of the solidarity of the third millennium, of a time of human and Christian advent. Everyone must do his part with strength and awareness," the editorial said.

The students' action deserves "intelligent, immediate, concrete" responses befitting "the historic conscience of a great people," it said.

The editorial praised the meeting in May between Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev and his Chinese counterparts — pro-reform



Striking Beijing University students wave banners displaying their demand for democracy in front of Tiananmen, the Gate of Heavenly Peace, during a rally Sunday, May 14, in Beijing.

Communist Party leader Zhao Ziyang, who has since apparently been toppled in an internal party struggle, and conservative premier Li Peng. It said the normalization of relations and the healing of the 30-year-old Sino-Soviet split were "positive" developments.

Unrest among Chinese students earlier spurred and official of government-approved Chinese Catholic Chinese organizations to report concern on the part of bishops that continuing protests might adversely affect state unity and stability.

The official, Anthony Liu Bainian, said 50 bishops and 25 other officials of the government-approved Catholic Church met in the Chinese capital in late April and discussed the unrest, deciding to urge Catholic parents of college students to discourage their children from participating in the demonstrations.

Liu, Chinese Catholic Church Administrative Commission vice president and standing committee member of the government-sanctioned Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association, said that although the bishops believe the students' intentions are good, they disapprove of confrontations with the government.

Reforming society should be done by dialogue through proper channels, he added.

The massive protests, the largest in China since 1976, broke out two days after the April 15 death of former Chinese Communist Party general secretary Hu

Yaobang, whom the intellectuals regard as a liberal leader.

Commemorative activities on Peking campuses turned to pro-democracy street marches and then to an ongoing boycott of classes at more than 30 universities and colleges.

An estimated 100,000 students defied a government warning April 27 and staged the biggest demonstration since the movement started.

The 12-hour march through the capital brought the city to a standstill, with steady encouragement from an estimated 1 million onlookers. Protests were also sparked in at least six other cities.

Tens of thousands of students marched again May 4, reiterating their demands for democracy and protesting what they described as "false statements" against their movements. May 4 was the 70th anniversary of the 1919 movement in which Chinese students protested for democracy and science.

The bishops said they hoped students would end the strikes as soon as possible, Liu said, adding that they worried that students might be used by people who want to disturb public order to affect the stability and unity of the society. Chinese Cabinet spokesman Yuan Mu has made similar statements.

Senior officials from the central and Peking city governments began talks with students April 30. Two of the meetings were

broadcast on television.

But leaders of the striking students said the meetings were not "genuine," arguing that most students attending were hand-picked by authorities. They said they would return to classes when their demands were fully recognized by authorities.

The student leaders specified the following list of demands, which they said would be the basis for negotiations with authorities:

- Just reassessment of the record of late party chief Hu Yaobang and a public explanation for his downfall in January 1987.
- Objective, fair reporting of student actions in the official media, referring to it as a patriotic and democratic movement.
- Prosecution of those responsible for an April 20 incident in which students allege they were beaten by police.
- Concrete steps to oppose corruption and officials who use their positions for profit.
- Speedy implementation of a press law and permission for the operation of independent newspapers.
- An increase in state spending on education and improvement of teachers' situations.
- Formation of supervisory groups in the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference to investigate government failings, including the runaway inflation of 1988.

# U.S. walks fine line on role in Panama

By Laurie Hansen  
NC News

WASHINGTON — If a kid is getting beaten up, his big brother is supposed to help him out, say those who have urged that the U.S. government take steps to oust Panama's Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega.

Others argue that past U.S. economic and military intervention in the region has accomplished little more than create suspicion and resentment among neighbors to the south. They maintain that removal of Noriega by Uncle Sam would constitute disrespect for Panama's sovereignty.

Noriega's response to the overwhelming defeat of his hand-picked candidates in May 7 Panamanian elections was to declare the vote void. Nullifying the popular results would "contribute to returning tranquility to the country," the Noriega-controlled Electoral Tribune announced.

This action, followed by television news broadcasts that brought into U.S. living rooms graphic scenes of brutal assaults of Noriega political opponents by members of the Panamanian strongman's "dignity bri-

gade," provoked indignation here, in Panama and throughout Latin America.

In a strongly worded letter read during Masses throughout the nation May 14, Panama's bishops condemned the violent attacks and the nullification of the election, which they said showed "real and grave disrespect for the dignity of all Panamanians."

Among questions the Panamanian saga raises: What kind of intervention constitutes a lack of respect for another nation's sovereignty, and what is the responsibility of the United States as a superpower in the hemisphere?

The U.S. bishops, in accord with the Panamanian bishops, have long maintained that the United States ought to refrain from "throwing its weight around" in Panama, according to Thomas Quigley, adviser on Latin American affairs in the U.S. Catholic Conference's Office of International Justice and Peace.

At the same time, he said, the bishops recognize that as a result of its superpower status, the United States has a responsi-

bility to assist other nations in the hemisphere.

It's a fine line to walk, said Quigley, especially since Panama, he notes, was essentially a "creation of the U.S." Because of U.S. interest in the Panama Canal, the United States, in 1903, assisted Panama to gain independence from Colombia.

The U.S. bishops favor use of non-military intervention, such as "working within the inter-American system" to exercise pressure south of the border, Quigley said. Unilateral military interference by the United States in Panama has been ruled out by the Panamanian bishops, he noted. Such action would cancel good will that developed between the two nations as a result of the 1977 Panama Canal Treaties, which allowed Panama to gradually take control of the canal.

But in a telephone interview from Panama, Maryknoll Sister Frances Horan said that the Panamanians are "a gentle people ... so used to the United States doing everything for them" that they are unlikely to depose Noriega on their own.



Gen. Manuel Noriega reappears in public May 18, 11 days after his candidates were trounced in presidential elections.

The United States has played such an active role in the nation as a result of the canal "and now when the crunch comes, where are they?" asked Sister Horan, who has been working in a Panamanian parish

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