

CHINA: DEFENSE STATEMENT OF CHEN ZIMING

Introduction

This document was written by Chen Ziming in his prison cell following the February 12, 1991, announcement of his 13-year sentence for "plotting to overthrow the government" and "counter-revolutionary propaganda and incitement." Chen felt he had not been given sufficient time to defend himself during the court proceedings. Indeed, the trial date was announced a bare week before the one-day hearing, and the sentence was passed the day after that. The statement was presented to the court as part of Chen's appeal against his conviction, but was also intended to present his side of the story to a wider audience.

The original, 40,000 characters in length, was smuggled out of China and abridged versions were published in Chinese in 1991 by the California-based *Press Freedom Guardian*, a newspaper established by democracy movement activists in 1989, and the Hong Kong paper *Ming Pao*. This translation is based on the version published in four parts in the *Press Freedom Guardian*, and contains all the main points of Chen Ziming's defense of his actions.

Who has Committed the Real Crime Against History? A Brief Statement in my Defense

- Chen Ziming

In its initial verdict, the Beijing Intermediate People's Court maintains that I have committed the crimes of plotting to overthrow the government and of counterrevolutionary propaganda and incitement. This judgement is mistaken; it makes an improper use of the law, and it seriously violates the procedures for litigation codified in law.

I. The Consistent Character of my Political Career and my Motives

The people who attribute my actions to counter-revolutionary motives are the few who stick to extreme left viewpoints. In order to label me a "counter-revolutionary," they have tampered with the evidence, altered

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tape recordings and extorted confessions, disregarding any higher

principles. In order to expose their lies for what they are, to show that I have consistently supported reform and have always tried to cooperate with the government, I must give a brief account of my career to date.

I was born into an intellectual family, with four people in My grandfather's generation heading famous institutions of higher learning, including Beijing University. In my father's generation, when they were at university, they joined the party underground or related organizations. I myself left Beijing at the age of 16 to go to the border areas, and from my studies and practical experience there, I learned about farming, medicine, the natural sciences, engineering and literature. I have been deputy head of a large production team, chairman of the Graduate Student Association of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, a representative for the people of Haidian District, an assistant researcher in the Philosophy Institute of CASS and the head of the independent Beijing Social and Economic Research Institute¹.

From a young age, I have been nurtured by education in Marxism, and I have read such works as *Das Kapital*, *The Collected Works of Marx and Lenin's Collected Works* through several times. The high-minded attitude of the authors of the Marxist classics moved me deeply, as did their ideals of seeking progress for humanity and criticizing the bad things in society. As for the current state of Chinese society, my partners and I drew the following conclusion: between 1966 and 1975², Chinese society became separated from the mainstream of human civilization, this was an aberration in the 100-year history of China's movement towards modernization.

April 5th Movement³

When I was studying at the Beijing Chemical Industry College in 1975, I criticized the book Zhang Chunqiao and Yao Wenyuan⁴ had just produced, entitled *Theoretical Writings*, and for this I was sent to jail for the first time⁵. On April 2, 1976, the Chemical Industry College told me of the Beijing Public Security Bureau's (PSB) decision on my case: my problem was deemed to be of a counter-revolutionary nature, so I would be expelled from school and from the Communist Youth League, and I would be sent to Yongledian Reform

¹ The proper name of this institution is Beijing Social and Economic Sciences Research Institute. Here "Sciences" was omitted from the Chinese text.

² The period of the Cultural Revolution.

³ Also known as the Tiananmen Incident, the April 5, 1976, protests were the first known spontaneous mass demonstrations against the policies of the Chinese leadership since the founding of the People's Republic of China. Staged on the traditional day for sweeping graves and remembering the dead, the protests began as a remembrance of Premier Zhou Enlai who had died in February of the same year. Demonstrators were finally cleared from Tiananmen Square with violence, and thousands were arrested.

⁴ Two members of what became known as the "Gang of Four."

⁵ An exchange of letters between Chen and a friend containing perjorative comments about this book was discovered by the authorities.

Through Labor Farm in Tong County⁶. Before I went to the farm, I participated in the April 5th Movement. On April 5th I was pushed forward by the crowd to be their representative in negotiations and I went into the small building to talk⁷. At the same time, I placated the angry crowd and rescued the Beijing PSB Bureau Chief Qiao when he was surrounded by it. The next day, I was sent off to the farm, thus escaping arrest.

In January 1977, I and people who later became my friends put up the first slogans and big and small character posters in Tiananmen and Wangfujing calling on the party to review the verdicts on the Tiananmen Incident and on Deng Xiaoping. After that, we worked very hard to make these demands a reality, and this culminated in the decisive victory of the reformists over the whateverists⁸ at the 3rd plenum of the 11th Central Committee⁹.

***Beijing Spring*¹⁰**

From January to December 1979, I participated in the work of Beijing Spring, including: calling for the rehabilitation of Liu Shaoqi¹¹ and the so-called "Peng Zhen-Bo Yibo Renegade Clique,"¹² criticizing the criminal behavior of Kang Sheng and Xie Fuzhi¹³ and the errors of Wang Dongxing¹⁴; praising the reformist

⁶ Just outside Beijing.

⁷ The "small building" is what Beijing people call the Public Security Bureau station near Tiananmen Square. Chen went to negotiate the release of a number of protesters who had been arrested by police.

⁸ The "Whateverists," a name created by their reform-minded opponents in the party for the group headed by Hua Guofeng, were said to believe that everything Mao Zedong said was entirely correct and that they should continue unchanged the policies of Mao Zedong's time.

⁹ In 1978.

¹⁰ One of the independent magazines which grew out of the Democracy Wall Movement of the late 1970s. Beijing Spring was produced by university students, and was generally more moderate than the journals put out by other groups.

¹¹ The former President of the PRC and designated successor to Mao Zedong who was named the principal "capitalist roader" in the Cultural Revolution and died under torture during that period.

¹² Peng Zhen and Bo Yibo, contemporaries of Deng Xiaoping and now part of the gang of elders running things from behind the scenes, were both early victims of the Cultural Revolution.

¹³ Kang Sheng, before his death a member of the Politburo Standing Committee now often called China's Beria, is considered to have been personally responsible for many deaths in the Cultural

thinking and the outstanding achievements in the work of Chen Yun and Hu Yaobang¹⁵; analyzing and criticizing the predominance of leftism in economic thinking since the beginning of the PRC; and explaining the dangerousness of leading cadres becoming privileged and having special prerogatives. Although certain people in the Beijing PSB were prejudiced against us, the center at that time showed understanding towards Beijing Spring. Hu Yaobang and Hu Qiaomu¹⁶ both met with Wang Juntao, and Hu Qili¹⁷, representing Deng Yingchao¹⁸ and Peng Zhen, visited the important members of the group and held discussions with us. After that, Hu Qili and Li Ruihuan¹⁹ (who was secretary of the CYL Central Committee Secretariat at that time) often spoke with Zhou Weimin (the editor-in-chief of Beijing Spring), Wang Juntao, Han Zhixiong and others. Since we considered that our most important contributions to the future were in research, planning and construction; that we needed to continue to enrich our scholarship (I passed the entrance examination to become a graduate student in the Chinese Academy of Science's Biophysical Institute specializing in molecular biology, analyzing the structure of macromolecules through their diffraction of x-rays); and that we should trust and openly support the older, reform-oriented generation of statesmen, we decided to stop publishing Beijing Spring.

The Election Campaign in the Universities

In 1980, Deng Xiaoping gave his "August 18th Speech" announcing the reform program, which was named

Revolution. Xie Fuzhi worked closely with Kang as Minister of Public Security. Both died before the collapse of the Gang of Four.

¹⁴ Wang Dongxing, although he held high office during the last years of Mao Zedong's life as a vice-chairman of the CCP and director of the CCP Secretariat, helped in the arrest of the Gang of Four.

¹⁵ Chen Yun, now the head of a conservative faction within the party, was opposed to the lawlessness and the arbitrary exercise of power which went on during the Cultural Revolution. Hu Yaobang was the former CCP General Secretary whose death precipitated the 1989 student demonstrations.

¹⁶ An ideologue, former secretary of Mao Zedong, now considered a conservative.

¹⁷ A reformist associate of Hu Yaobang, a rising star during the 1980s who was removed from the Politburo Standing Committee after June 4, 1989.

¹⁸ Widow of Zhou Enlai.

¹⁹ Former Mayor of Tianjin, now a member of the Politburo Standing Committee responsible for propaganda.

"the Gengshen Program"²⁰ by Liao Gailong²¹. Acting in accordance with this, Zhou Weimin, Wang Juntao, Li Shengping, Zhang Wei, myself and others agreed to participate in and promote the elections for representatives to the People's Congresses from the institutions of higher education. The basic political attitude and stand behind the election movement can be exemplified by Wang Juntao. The two main slogans in Wang's election campaign speeches still remain clear in my memory: 'The past decade is the decade to be criticized, while the decade to come will be a time of construction.' In his election platform, Wang put forward several tens of constructive suggestions for political and economic reform. Now, ten years on, some 70 to 80 percent of those ideas have been or are in the process of being implemented; the remaining 20 to 30 percent will certainly be put into practice during the 1990s.

At the time of the elections, I concluded, at a meeting at People's University attended by more than 70 student candidates for election, that the reasons for the emergence of this movement and its purpose could be summed up in four points:

Firstly, to support the center's reformist direction. The impetus of the election movement had tipped the balance in the center's internal equilibrium in favor of the reformists and against the whateverists, and had created a new political balance between those favoring economic reform only and those advocating thorough-going reform. Although the center did not directly affirm the election movement, privately, the central leaders who supported the policies of reform and opening were sympathetic to it. Comrade Hu Yaobang charged a famous scientist with passing on some words to Wang Juntao, asking him to remember that Deng Xiaoping and he himself had been wronged many times but that throughout this history of tribulations, they had not abandoned their high aspirations. An associate of Zhao Ziyang once said to Li Shengping and me: 'In times of complex political struggle, you are pawns to be sacrificed, this is an unavoidable fact, but history will remember your dedication and your sacrifice.'

Secondly, it trained a generation of new political talent. Today, some people who participated in the election campaign already hold important positions. The full impact of the election campaign will be felt in the twenty-first century.

Thirdly, it raised the level of liberation of people's thinking. All kinds of rigid models and methods of thinking were criticized. Among the young intellectuals, progressive theories in social science and pragmatic and dynamic models of thinking which accorded with investigation and research into the real conditions in the country became increasingly influential, until they became the main trend in people's thinking.

Fourthly, it promoted the strengthening of the NPC system. The election campaign set a precedent for the NPC system.

I was elected as the people's representative for Beijing's Haidian District. At the memorial meeting for Comrade Yaobang in 1989, Comrade Li Chang²² told me that the reason I was never attacked in the same

²⁰ After the year-name in the traditional Chinese calendar.

²¹ A historian who was important in formulating the critique of Mao Zedong's policies put forward by Deng Xiaoping's faction as a rationale for reform.

²² Li Chang is a former Party Secretary of the Chinese Academy of Sciences. A prominent reformist, at the time of Hu Yaobang's death, Li was a member of the Chinese People's Political

way as people like Hu Ping²³ was that the party organization at the Chinese Academy of Sciences and its Graduate Studies Party Committee protected me and lightened the political pressure on me.

Initiating a Civil Service System

From 1981-1983, I researched personnel systems in China's ancient and pre-liberation periods and in Japan and Taiwan; and I studied the ideas of Lenin and Sun Yatsen on reforming government personnel systems. In June 1981, I wrote my first proposal on the implementation of a civil service system. After that, I organized the first set of sampling and model survey programs in the fields of personnel, management, administration and political psychology, gathering research results on the cadre structure, the quality of cadres, types of work and time allocation of cadres and the general psychological attitudes of cadres towards reform. With Li Shengping, I wrote the book *Professional Divisions and Personnel Management*, and with Yang Baikui and others I co-authored *The Western Civil Service System*. The bibliographies of many doctoral theses cited my books as their only Chinese-language source, while two works on 'Personnel Psychology' referred to my research results.

Planning Cooperation with Government on the Basis of Independent Development

In view of the Weng Yongxi²⁴ affair, I began to criticize the reappearance of aspects of the traditional political culture, such as 'appointing those excellent in academic work,' and 'everything being measured by one's status in the government hierarchy.' I also criticized a parallel and unpleasant political phenomenon, that of the 'third echelon'²⁵ standing on a one plank bridge and slaughtering each other, and I proposed that different social strata of civil servants, industrialists and independent intellectuals all be allowed to develop, and that some intellectuals work with the government from an

Consultative Conference.

²³ Hu Ping received the most votes in the 1980 election campaign at Beijing University. After graduation, he was forced to wait almost two years before being allocated a job, as a punishment for his outspokenness during the elections.

²⁴ Weng Yongxi was deputy head of the CCP Central Committee's Rural Policy Research Institute, an influential think-tank, in the early 1980s. In 1982, Deng Xiaoping reportedly received a letter saying that, while a student at Beijing University, in 1975 Weng had expressed support for the Cultural Revolution policy of sending young people to the countryside. Weng was dismissed from his post and sent to a remote and poverty-stricken part of Anhui Province to be a lowly county party secretary.

²⁵ This refers to the third generation of CCP leaders.

independently-developed base. In Chinese history, Sun Yatsen and Chen Duxiu²⁶ are examples of independent intellectuals who did not cooperate, while Kang Youwei²⁷ and Hu Shi²⁸ are examples of intellectuals who cooperated but lacked independence. In the past 100 years, the relationship between the intellectuals and those in power has been tense, only during the 100-Days Reform²⁹, the first two years of the Anti-Japanese War³⁰ and the first three years of the PRC were there brief honeymoon periods. I believe that the relationship between the government and the stratum of intellectuals needs to be radically changed. The two must develop independently, recognize the common areas in their goals, each shoulder their particular responsibilities, each accord the other sufficient respect, contend but not clash and cooperate but remain independent of each other.

Creating an Independent Research Institute

From 1984 onwards, Li Shengping, Jiang Hong, myself and others set up the first group of independent social science research organizations. From the start I emphasized that the ultimate goal of these independent storehouses of thought was to produce real thinkers, not mere designers. These research institutes achieved results which made people sit up and take notice. One of the first publications put out by Li Shengping and myself, the *Storehouse of Twentieth-Century Writing* was one of the largest in scope and the most complete of all the book series produced during the 'book series fever.' The *Translations of the Work of Famous Foreign Thinkers* edited by myself and Zhang Xiaoming was one of the more unusual and well-received in the flood of book series. Several tens of book series were produced in association with our institute, and the total number of books published in all kinds of series goes into the thousands.

While I headed the Beijing Social and Economic Sciences Research Institute it achieved both scientific and practical results in several tens of projects, including the following. After it took over the *Economic Weekly*³¹, within a short space of time the institute changed the paper's appearance completely, and organized a continuing 'investigation into Chinese political culture and political psychology,' which received critical praise from scholars both inside China and abroad. We set up an opinion polling center in

²⁶ One of China's first Marxists and a founder of the CCP.

²⁷ A late 19th century scholar-official who tried to reform the imperial system to bring China into the modern era.

²⁸ Hu Shi, an intellectual prominent in the 1920s and 1930s in China, was an advocate of American-style constitutional democracy and a promoter of education as a cure for China's ills.

²⁹ In 1898.

³⁰ 1937-1939.

³¹ The newspaper bought by Chen's institute in 1988.

collaboration with *Economic Daily*, establishing a nationwide sampling and survey network and organizing a number of nationwide research projects. We created the human resources evaluation and testing center, developing the earliest system for assessing the professional capacity of civil servants, and using this knowledge in making a complete set of assessment programs for people seeking employment, thus filling a critical gap in China. We organized various large and middle-sized academic conferences; and we built up a whole range of independent research activities, collecting information, initiating programs, raising funds, organizing people to perform the projects, carried out random sampling for surveys which were reported in the newspapers and published books.

From 1987 onwards, I stressed the ideal of the intellectuals and those in power respecting each other and finding ways to consult each other and reach agreement. In 1988, I again emphasized that criticisms of society must be preceded by criticisms of oneself, that intellectuals should combine passion for reform with steady progress, adopting a rational, well-intentioned, cautious and responsible attitude. The intellectual community called this position, which at the time was not in the mainstream, 'neo-conservatism' or 'fundamental conservatism.' At an academic meeting in February 1989, I heard with my own ears Wang Dan³², in his speech, describing people like Wang Juntao as the first in the first category of the five 'conservative forces' in the Chinese politics of the time. At the time, Wang Juntao and I had not yet met Wang Dan.

Promoting 'The New Thinking'

Wang Juntao and I actively promoted the wave of new thinking, emphasizing the following:

- Reform must be subordinated to development, and must serve development.
- In designing macroeconomic regulation and control mechanisms and systems, the experience of accumulation and the mastery of technology are of key importance. We opposed all kinds of superstitious modes of reform such as 'allowing profits, letting go of power, giving benefits.'
- We emphasized 'reasonable sequence, opening things up and coordination' in the process of marketization, and we were opposed to a fiscal policy relying on deficits and crudely releasing price controls in a manner bound to fuel inflation.
- The coordination of political and economic development and the way each safeguards and pushes forward the other.
- Political order and stability. We opposed chaos and rebellion.
- Making full use of the existing political system, employing, digesting and perfecting it. We opposed the blind pursuit of a new system and the creation of a completely new structure.
- In the creation of a political system, the balance of the system must come before participation. On the question of democracy, we opposed the slapdash attitude of being in a hurry to achieve it while ignoring the laying down of rules and the development of a body of precedents.
- Cultivating recognition of the importance of national interests, the spirit of the Chinese nation, and the

³² A Beijing University student who was one of the first leaders of the 1989 movement. Now serving a four-year prison term.

collective will of society, and opposing the stress on putting social benefits and individual interests before everything else.

- Continuing to hold high the banner of social justice, and protecting those strata with low incomes.
- While constructing a modern society under the rule of law, preserving and developing the excellent aspects of traditional Chinese thinking.
- Taking a practical view of the issue of faith, making full use of its spiritual purification and its function of social comfort and cohesion.
- All members of society's elite groups, while preserving their political differences, have the responsibility to create, together, a high-level culture while boycotting the hooligan-ruffian culture and the tendency to be overwhelmed by worldliness.
- A steady and gradualistic social philosophy, we opposed blind and hasty social doctrines.
- The intellectuals should not be envious of their superiors and should not flatter the masses, but should work hard to make themselves into the bridge between the government and the people.
- We opposed the new attitudes of 'the kid who sells his father's fields without a qualm,' prattling about 'without destruction there can be no construction,' the prodigal attitudes of wanting to start completely from scratch, yearning for the foreign, the absolute and the large, and we promoted the idea, 'Do not destroy things before you have exploited their full potential, do not start building something until you have tested its efficiency.'

It is truly regrettable that just at the time when my friends and I were working as hard as we could, just when, on the basis of wide intellectual contacts with people from all different walks of life, we were gradually building up the rough outlines for some of the above-mentioned ideas, a certain group of people who persist in extreme left thinking once again stabbed me in the back. Because of the interference of those people, the plans we had prepared during the first half of 1989 to launch an all-round theoretical attack on the tendency towards impatience were preempted by the appearance of the 1989 student movement. I will regret for the rest of my life that we were not able in time to exert sufficient influence over the impetuous, emotional young students.

II. My Behavior at the Time of the 1989 Student Movement

Here I will limit myself to stating my relationship with the 1989 student movement, and I will leave the refutation, explanation and clarification of the specific charges against me to my lawyer's presentation of my defense.

Judging from appearances, in my opinion, the 1989 student movement was an emotionally sincere, well-intentioned, pig-headed, mismanaged historical incident with a tragic ending and far-reaching implications for the future; its entire atmosphere, entire process and entire consequences were all infused with a tragic color, and its solemn sense of beauty will always merit the people's admiration, since it greatly enriched the spiritual civilization of the Chinese people.

The performance of 'those who can be caught' is a historical farce, while the deciding role of 'those behind the scenes' is a serious historical play; but the real historical tragedy was a combination of opposite elements: an event both fortuitous and man-made and also inevitable and fated to happen. What really made the 1989 student movement into a tragedy were all kinds of psychological factors similar to

those in *Romeo and Juliet*, all kinds of determining habits of thought which fixed the behavior of the government and the students, and which are shared by society at large; all kinds of beliefs which have been commonly accepted for a long time, but have no basis in reality. These determining habits of thought include:

- the mistaken standpoint and principle of political struggle. This originated in a fake Marxism created by Soviet hack writers starting in the 1930s. In today's China it is no longer a matter of the children copying the parents, but a genuine liking for the counterfeit Marxist tenet 'all political struggle is class struggle,' in which all political struggle is labelled as 'aimed at seizing power.'
- an overestimation of the role in the nation's political development of such large-scale mass movements as the May Fourth Movement³³ and the December Ninth Movement (1935)³⁴. This originates in the meticulous reworking and reshaping of Chinese history, particularly contemporary history, which has been carried out by historians such as Fan Wenlan.

The Responsibility the Government Bears

Both the government and the student leaders bear responsibility for the mismanagement of the 1989 student movement, and the intellectuals and other social strata are also associated with this. But the main responsibility for the tragedy can only be put on the government. Those who propagated false information and those who decided on erroneous policies cannot wash their hands of this responsibility.

History has bestowed upon those who are living and remain in the country an unavoidable duty towards those wronged, unfortunate young people who lie in their graves or have fled to other places, to plead their innocence in court. It is a good thing that Wang Juntao and I have been made the principal defendants, since we are the most prepared in our thinking for the wrong that has been done. In order to save the students from the tiger's jaws, from the start we considered the possibility that their good intentions could meet with a bad response, and we did not hesitate in sacrificing ourselves, we were prepared for the 'inevitable' by the spirit of determining to remain benevolent in the worst situations. Also, the fact that our behavior was just and legitimate gave us the most complete faith in what we were doing. From start to finish, we emphasized a sober, rational and compromising approach. With all our energy we sought to achieve understanding and mutual trust between the government and the students, in the interests of pushing forward reform and modernization. We are using our defense statements to clarify the fundamental nature of the 1989 student movement since this is a better way of restoring its basic aspect of support for reform and encouragement for democracy.

Activities During the Student Movement

³³ A mass protest movement following the granting of Chinese territory formerly held by Germany to Japan in the settlement under the 1919 Versailles Peace Treaty.

³⁴ This was a movement initiated by students in protest to Japan's encroachments into China.

My activities during the 1989 student movement included:

- Emphasizing that the intellectuals had a particular role to play, one different from that of the mass of the people. In my April 23³⁵ speech which, in the court's verdict, was quoted out of context, I said: 'Is it possible to accelerate the rebuilding of a high-level culture? Is it possible to reach agreement quickly between yourselves and the government? Can you speedily go above and beyond the dissatisfaction and grumbling of most of the common people and become a new force providing direction to the people, rather than just going along with your emotions? I believe these are the questions about the task facing the stratum of intellectuals, particularly the progressive intellectuals, of today.'
- Emphasizing clear-headedness, and calling for a rational approach. Many times I prevented the people working with me from getting directly involved in the student movement, arguing that the student movement was guided by sentiments, and that it could bring results extremely inimical to stability. At the conference of the All China Federation of Trade Unions on May 15³⁶, my friends and I clearly expressed our opposition to encouraging workers to join the student movement. On the morning of May 18, I indicated that since emotions were getting higher by the day, since slogans were increasingly extreme and the likelihood of a tragedy occurring was high, to bring stability to the situation there was an acute need for the intellectuals to stand forward and speak in a rational voice. On the morning of May 19 at the Jimen Hotel³⁷, I put forward specific proposals to the people at the meeting as to how to get the students to stop the hunger strike and vacate the square as quickly as possible.
- Praising and seeking compromise. The main consideration in this was to prevent a tragedy and protect the hunger striking students. After May 18 I did all kinds of things to find a compromise. In the twentieth century, almost everyone expresses support for democracy, but each person has his/her own idea of what democracy is. Democratic principles cannot provide a basis for political agreement. Deficiencies in the current constitution should gradually be rectified through the stipulated constitutional procedures for its alteration. I wrote a well-known article calling for 'Finding Common Ground Through Compromise, Finding Unity Through Rationality,' suggesting that unity could be found in giving ground and that daring to compromise and having the ability to retreat were positive virtues in any politician.

III. How I See the Future--The Issue of My Attitude

³⁵ Given at a meeting at the Beijing Social and Economic Sciences Research Institute to analyse the decade of reform. Chen spoke about the role of the intellectuals and the need for political reform.

³⁶ This conference was on the subject of "Reform of the Political Structure and China's Labor Unions."

³⁷ A small hotel in western Beijing where Chen and Wang Juntao were holding meetings with a variety of people, particularly intellectuals, to discuss the situation and find solutions to the stalemate between the government and the students.

The verdict on me is also a verdict on the intellectuals in the 1989 student movement. The people hope to see in this verdict those in power in China employing the spirit of seeking truth from facts, being brave enough to accept responsibility, having the goodwill to seek resolution of contradictions and showing the decisiveness of 'mending the fence when the sheep has escaped.' From today on I will see whether or not they maintain the independence and the justness of the judiciary, whether or not they are prepared to let go of old grievances with the intellectuals, whether or not they will revive the practice of treating speech as a crime, controlling all political research, political speech and political demands. The crucial problem is this: do they really want to reform or to return to the past?

The verdict on me can be decided by the reform standards, or it can be decided by the Cultural Revolution standards. The former would indicate good intentions towards the spirit of the rule of law, and the typical characteristics of the latter would be the ideas that leaders decide everything and that speech is a crime. The method of reaching this verdict will make people think about the Cultural Revolution and about the cruel fate of many of those old comrades, now almost forgotten by the people, who have, like me, been shut up in Qincheng Prison. If a precedent for using Cultural Revolution standards is allowed to be set in my case, who knows who could be the next possible victim?

The different standards which could be employed in reaching a verdict will have different political consequences. If the Cultural Revolution standards gain a new affirmation through their application to my case, this will cause even more disunity between the intellectuals and the young students on the one hand and the government on the other, and it will make the broad masses of the people even more despondent and depressed, it will mean the cadres who have supported the path of reform will be worried about their own political future, and it will send an ominous sign to the world.

My Demands of the Legal Process

I hope that the People's Court will use the examination of the charges against me as an opportunity to put progressive law into practice and to raise the quality of trial procedure. I ask that:

- the proper trial procedure be adhered to, and the regulations relating to the rights of the parties and the correct legal procedure, as laid out in the Criminal Code be observed. My most important demand is that witnesses such as Wang Dan, Shao Jiang³⁸ and Chen Xiaoping³⁹, and all testimony, be open to cross-examination and questioning. Because this affects not only myself, but also the reputation and integrity of the people whose testimony is used.**
- full explanation of the law be given. I demand that a factual standard be clearly and definitively**

³⁸ **A student leader from Beijing University, Shao Jiang was arrested in September 1989 and released unconditionally after 18 months of detention.**

³⁹ **A lecturer and specialist in constitutional law at the University of Politics and Law in Beijing, he worked with Chen and Wang at their research institute. He was arrested after June 4, 1989, and released in February 1991 after being tried and convicted of sedition.**

articulated for the crime of 'plotting to overthrow the government,' and that this standard be used to weigh my actions during the student movement. I demand that full factual evidence be presented. The indictment includes material about Wang Juntao, Chen Xiaoping, Zhang Lun⁴⁰, Wang Dan, Yan Jiaqi⁴¹, Bao Zunxin⁴² and Ren Wanding⁴³ which has nothing to do with me. This bizarre way of doing things can only lead people towards one conclusion, since the factual materials which could prove that I committed any crime—even after gross misrepresentation, falsification, fabrication, exaggeration and improper collection methods have been employed—are pitifully scarce.

My Political Expectations

I have said many times that it is acceptable for the individual to suffer some inconveniences and to have to make some sacrifices for the greater good of the nation. But I have always believed that some mild solution to this problem could be found. I call on those among the people responsible for this who have a sense of history: for the sake of the long-term stability of the nation, for the sake of unity and trust between different social strata, for the sake of the happiness of the wives, parents and children of the people involved, don't repeat the disastrous mistakes of your predecessors and create a new crop of unjust verdicts. The tragedy should not continue, salt must not be rubbed into these wounds.

I hope that when those at the highest levels of power who are far-sighted provide political guidance on the outcome of this case, they will be able to take full cognizance of the vital, profound implications for the development of the nation and for their own future of being able to reach political compromises and building political accommodation with the intellectual stratum.

⁴⁰ A sociologist who worked with Chen and Wang at their institute, Zhang Lun escaped after June 4, 1989, and is now in Paris.

⁴¹ Yan Jiaqi, a prominent political scientist, was outspoken in his support of the student demonstrations. He fled the country after June 4, 1989, and now lives in Paris.

⁴² Bao Zunxin is an influential writer and historian. He was imprisoned during the crackdown, and sentenced to five years in jail for his role in coordinating and writing a number of petitions signed by prominent intellectuals calling for the government to release political prisoners, and later, opposing martial law.

⁴³ Founder of the PRC's first human rights group in 1979, Ren Wanding was arrested after June 4, 1989, and sentenced to seven years imprisonment purely because of speeches he gave to a, by all accounts, indifferent audience in Tiananmen Square during the protest movement calling for workers and students to unite in their struggle for rights.

A small number of short-sighted people in power cannot see the importance of the intellectual stratum for political and social development. They think that as long as you hold the gun stock, you can hold dominion over the rivers and the mountains, and they are just concerned whether in the current political balance they themselves are assured of victory, but they do not know that in moulding the political future, the intellectuals are often the most important force. People's thinking has never been cut out according to the wishes of the powerful, it has grown slowly in the accumulated soil of culture. He who wins the people's hearts, wins all under heaven, but he who wishes to win the people's hearts must first win the hearts of the scholars. This is a clear lesson from ancient times.

A small number of those in power who delude themselves and trick others just pretend the current dissatisfaction and opposition of the intellectuals doesn't exist. They interpret silence as endorsement and wordless opposition as acceptance. What they don't understand is that slight shifts in the earth's crust are proper and natural phenomena, while a sudden stillness in its movements actually presages a fearful earthquake.

A small number of those in power are just prepared to let things go as long as they themselves can survive, they frequently say, to comfort themselves, 'this is the last bad thing I'll ever do, from now on I will certainly be accountable for my actions and will not do anything that goes against my political conscience.' The result of this is that a historical opportunity is lost, and they themselves will not be forgiven by history.

Words to the Intellectual Community

I hope that the intellectual stratum will adopt a more down-to-earth, pragmatic approach. Its basic political attitude should be determined by the truth, the interests of the people and the direction of history, and it should not be swept off this course by undue attention to the interests of other strata, the fate of particular people or the results of particular events. In the sphere of international affairs, the intellectuals should firmly and thoroughly repudiate all demagoguery such as social Darwinism, race Chauvinism, narrow patriotism and new fascism, and they should support the building of a new political world order and a new economic world order based on the international market, the international division of labor and international agreements. They must firmly believe that science belongs to no particular nation and that truth belongs to all of humanity, and they must throw, without any regret, so-called "class truth," "national science" and ethnocentric scholarship into the stinking shit pit of history. As for domestic affairs, they must work with the stratum of people in power, while maintaining their differences in thinking and politics, to build the national economy and improve the people's lives, to rebuild social ethics and guarantee social order; in the sphere of politics, they must support Fabianism and Gandhism, using gradualistic, steady measures to work towards development, and using non-violent, peaceful methods to heal divisions; they should admit their failings in politics, administration and management and pay more attention to cooperating with officials in the economic, financial and technological fields who studied in the Soviet Union in the 1950s, and they should pay more attention to cooperating with industrialists. During this difficult time, when our dreams have turned to ashes, I call on the intellectual stratum to be full of zeal and commitment.

Whatever the final verdict, I will not change my original intention, I will continue as I have in the past and will respond to it in the way I consistently have: respecting the law, persisting in love for others despite everything and guarding the truth.

As a constitutionalist, I respect the constitution and laws now in force, and I support only actions which are within the limits set by the constitution. I uphold the essence of the values of human civilization, such as 'benevolence,' 'forbearance,' 'compassion,' 'mercy,' 'loving others as you love yourself,' the spirit of universal love, humanism and so on. Regardless of how much I am misunderstood, wronged or subjected to injustice, I will maintain love in the face of hate, return anger with love, and consistently treat those in power as comrades and friends. During my first four months in Qincheng, I wrote a manuscript of 250,000 characters, "Looking Back on Ten Years of Reform," and asked for it to be given to comrades Jiang Zemin⁴⁴ and Li Ruihuan. I continued my responsibilities and my work as a social scientist. I maintain that while the intellectual stratum must improve itself and become more organized, at the same time, it should cooperate with the government as much as possible, and be willing to continue, in concert with the progressive people within the CCP, to commit its energy to the great task of the modernization of China.

Truth Will be the Final Victor

If I were asked to choose between personal freedom and truth, I would, without any hesitation, choose the latter. I love my wife, parents, sisters and brothers and my friends deeply, and I hope to be reunited with them all soon. But I will not sacrifice truth or abandon my moral integrity, treating them as a mere means of exchange. I advocate political compromise and social reconciliation, but I cast aside scholarship without a fixed point of view, thinking that drifts aimlessly, following the current wherever it goes, serving the state of Qin in the morning and Chu in the evening. Innumerable heroes of the Chinese United Alliance (Tongmenghui)⁴⁵, the Guomindang and the CCP established models for me in this a long time ago.

One more word: however unjustly I am treated, however great my misfortunes, I will always keep my self-confident smile, my oceans-wide good intentions and my backbone as erect as a pine tree, and I will continue to believe firmly that the strength and heat of love can melt even the hardest and most frozen of hearts.

I firmly believe that it is no crime to discuss the affairs of the nation, to participate in politics, to uphold the constitution and to support reform; the real crimes are those of fabricating information, making false charges against loyal people and scheming to turn the clock back. In the final analysis, the people will give the fullest verdict on who it was who committed the crime against history.

The 1989 student movement was a moment in Chinese history which will be the subject of songs and tears.

The tide of reform and modernization cannot be halted.

Chen Ziming, March 13, 1991

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⁴⁴ **CCP General Secretary appointed after June 4, 1989, to depose the ousted Zhao Ziyang.**

⁴⁵ **The party of Dr. Sun Yatsen.**

Sophia Woodman of Human Rights in China prepared the translation and annotation of the Chen Ziming defense statement.

**For Further Information
Sidney Jones (212) 972-8400**

News From Asia Watch is a publication of Asia Watch, an independent organization created in 1985 to monitor and promote internationally recognized human rights in Asia. The Chair is Jack Greenberg, the Vice Chairs are Harriet Rabb and Orville Schell, and the Executive Director is Sidney Jones.

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