

91

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PAGE 01 BEIJIN 32577 01 OF 03 240726Z
ACTION EAP-00

INFO	LOG-00	COPY-01	ADS-00	INR-10	SS-00	CIAE-00	DODE-00
	H-01	NSCE-00	NSAE-00	SSO-00	HA-09	L-03	PM-10
	AIT-02	PA-01	ED-04	OMB-01	INRE-00	USIE-00	SP-02
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 TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9472
 INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG IMMEDIATE
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 AMCONSUL SHENYANG IMMEDIATE
 AMCONSUL GUANGZHOU IMMEDIATE
 AMCONSUL CHENGDU POUCH)

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BEIJING 32577

E.O. 12356: DECL:OADR
 TAGS: PGOV, CH
 SUBJECT: STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS UPDATE

REF: (A) SHANGHAI 8147 (B) BEIJING 32085 (C) HK FBIS
 230309Z DEC 86

1. (C) SUMMARY. A SMALL STUDENT DEMONSTRATION OCCURRED
 IN BEIJING THE EVENING OF DECEMBER 23. PEOPLE'S
 DAILY PUBLISHED AN EDITORIAL DECEMBER 23 EXPRESSING
 SYMPATHY WITH STUDENTS ASPIRATIONS BUT ALSO MAKING IT
 CLEAR THAT THE LIMITS OF OFFICIAL TOLERATION WERE BEING
 APPROACHED. PD DECEMBER 24 RAN A FRONT PAGE Q AND A
 WITH THE SHANGHAI MUNICIPAL PRESS SPOKESMAN WHICH
 TOOK A SIMILAR LINE.

1.5(B), 1.5(D)

[REDACTED]
 IN CONVERSATIONS WITH THE AMBASSADOR
 DECEMBER 23, EXPRESSED THEIR VIEWS OF THE STUDENT
 CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BEIJIN 32577 01 OF 03 240726Z

SITUATION. WANG TOOK A RELATIVELY UPBEAT VIEW, WHILE
 THE TWO LIUS WERE MORE PESSIMISTIC. THE DEMONSTRATIONS
 RAISE QUESTIONS, AS THE PD EDITORIAL NOTED, ABOUT
 POLITICAL STABILITY, AND THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THE
 AUTHORITIES WILL CRACK DOWN HARD IF POLITICAL STABILITY
 IS THREATENED, PARTICULARLY IF STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS
 CONTINUE OR, WORSE, COMBINE WITH LABOR UNREST. IF THE
 DEMONSTRATIONS CONTINUE TO PHASE DOWN NATIONALLY AS WELL
 AS IN SHANGHAI, THEY MAY DO SOME, BUT NOT IRREPARABLE,

DAMAGE TO REFORM, PARTICULARLY POLITICAL REFORM; IF DEMONSTRATIONS CONTINUE THEN MANY REFORM POLICIES DEMONSTRATIONS GROW SIGNIFICANTLY, BECOME VIOLENT, OR COMBINE WITH LABOR, THEN MANY REFORM POLICIES COULD BE CALLED INTO QUESTION AND A MAJOR SETBACK OCCUR. TO DATE, HOWEVER, THE OFFICIAL POLICY OF AVOIDING THE USE OF FORCE AND EVEN MORE IMPORTANTLY, ON AVOIDING ALIENATING THE YOUNG PEOPLE ON WHOM CHINA'S FUTURE DEPENDS HAS RESULTED IN REMARKABLY SOPHISTICATED HANDLING OF THE DEMONSTRATIONS WHICH MAY SERVE TO MINIMIZE DAMAGE. END SUMMARY.

2. (U) ALTHOUGH THE STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS CONTINUE TO PHASE DOWN, THERE IS STILL SOME UNCERTAINTY AS TO THE DIRECTION IN WHICH THINGS WILL MOVE. STUDENTS AT BEIJING UNIVERSITIES WERE REPORTEDLY ACTIVE FOR THE FIRST TIME THE EVENING OF DECEMBER 23. ABOUT 1,000 STUDENTS LEFT QINGHUA UNIVERSITY AT ABOUT 2100 MOVING TOWARD OTHER UNIVERSITIES IN THE AREA. THE CROWD EVENTUALLY GREW TO ABOUT 3,000 PEOPLE. POLICE DID NOT INTERFERE AND THE DEMONSTRATION DISPERSED AFTER A WHILE. A FOREIGN JOURNALIST PRESENT AT THE DEMONSTRATION WAS STRUCK BY THE LACK OF SERIOUSNESS OF THESE DEMONSTRATORS, ALTHOUGH ONE DEMONSTRATOR CALLED LOUDLY FOR "MULTI-PARTY

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BEIJIN 32577 01 OF 03 240726Z

DEMOCRACY." ACCORDING TO FOREIGN JOURNALISTS WHO OBSERVED THE DEMONSTRATION, THE STUDENTS DID NOT LEAVE THE UNIVERSITY AREA AND DID NOT REACH TIANANMEN SQUARE.

3. (U) PEOPLE'S DAILY DECEMBER 23 PUBLISHED AN EDITORIAL IN A PROMINENT POSITION ON ITS FRONT PAGE ENTITLED "TREASURE AND DEVELOP THE POLITICAL SITUATION OF STABILITY AND UNITY." THE SAME EDITORIAL ALSO APPEARED IN GUANGMING DAILY, THE BEIJING DAILY AND THE OVERSEAS EDITION OF THE PEOPLE'S DAILY. THE EDITORIAL RECALLED BOTH THE SUCCESSES OF THE PAST EIGHT YEARS OF REFORM POLICY AND THE BITTER EXPERIENCE OF THE CULTURAL REVOLUTION. IT OBSERVED THAT STABILITY AND UNITY ARE CRITICAL TO THE SUCCESS OR FAILURE OF MODERNIZATION. IT COMMENTED THAT THE EXPRESSION OF DIFFERING VIEWS WAS PERMISSIBLE BUT THAT THE ADOPTION OF "OVERLY ENERGETIC METHODS" COULD INFLUENCE STABILITY AND UNITY, AND INTERFERE WITH THE NORMAL FUNCTIONS OF SOCIETY. THE EDITORIAL CLOSED WITH A STATEMENT THAT "YOUNG PEOPLE ARE OUR FUTURE AND OUR HOPE" AND THEY MUST BE HELPED TO UNDERSTAND THE SITUATION SO THAT THEY TOO WILL WORK FOR PEACE AND STABILITY, AND FOR THE SUCCESS OF REFORM.

4. (C) A REBUTTAL OF THE PD DECEMBER 23 APPEARED ALMOST

IMMEDIATELY ON A BULLETIN BOARD AT BEIJING UNIVERSITY. THE FIVE-PAGE 'SMALL CHARACTER' POSTER WAS IN LETTER FORMAT. NOTING THAT THE EDITORIAL WAS THE FIRST MEDIA REACTION TO THE DEMONSTRATIONS IN SHANGHAI, THE WRITER REFUTED POINTS IN THE EDITORIAL, ASKING RHETORICALLY JUST WHAT 'DEMOCRATIC CHANNELS' WERE AVAILABLE. THE WRITER SAID THAT IT WAS CLEAR FROM THE EDITORIAL THAT THERE WAS NO DEMOCRACY. THE WRITER MADE AN UNCLEAR

CONFIDENTIAL

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CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BEIJIN 32577 02 OF 03 240727Z
ACTION EAP-00

INFO	LOG-00	COPY-01	ADS-00	INR-10	SS-00	CIAE-00	DODE-00
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 03 BEIJING 32577

E.O. 12356: DECL:OADR
TAGS: PGOV, CH
SUBJECT: STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS UPDATE

REFERENCE TO AN INCIDENT IN WHICH JAPANESE BEAT A CHINESE, AND DISPARAGED THE LACK OF ACTION BY BEIJING UNIVERSITY STUDENTS. HE RAISED THEMES OF DEMOCRACY, THE LEGAL SYSTEM, POLITICAL STRUCTURAL REFORM, AND BUREAUCRATISM, RECALLED THE SEPTEMBER 28 DEMONSTRATIONS

OF LAST YEAR, AND CLAIMED THAT 80 PERCENT OF CHINESE ARE "NUMB." HE SUGGESTED THAT STUDENTS SHOULD GO TO WORK AMONG VILLAGERS TO GAIN AN IDEA OF THE CONDITIONS THERE. ABOUT TWENTY STUDENTS CROWDED CLOSELY AROUND THE POSTER AT ANY GIVEN TIME, THOUGH WITH A CONSTANT TURNOVER. THERE WAS LITTLE COMMENT AS THEY READ, AND THOSE AT THE FRONT WERE UNWILLING TO READ ALOUD FOR THOSE IN BACK.

5. (C) THE DECEMBER 24 PEOPLE'S DAILY RAN A Q AND A ON ITS FRONT PAGE FILED BY XINHUA SHANGHAI QUOTING THE PRESS
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PAGE 02 BEIJIN 32577 02 OF 03 240727Z

SPOKESMAN OF THE SHANGHAI MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT. THE INTERVIEW PROVIDED A GOOD DEAL OF DESCRIPTIVE MATTER ABOUT THE SHANGHAI DEMONSTRATIONS AND TOOK THE LINE THAT ALTHOUGH IT WAS UNDERSTANDABLE THAT STUDENTS SHOULD BE CONCERNED ABOUT REFORM, THE METHOD THAT THEY HAD ADOPTED, DEMONSTRATIONS, WAS INCORRECT. "A PORTION OF THE STUDENTS," THE SPOKESMAN SAID, "HAVE INSUFFICIENT UNDERSTANDING OF THE ACTUAL CONDITIONS OF CHINESE REFORM, AND HAVE A RELATIVELY UNCLEAR UNDERSTANDING ABOUT HOW DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS SHOULD BE IMPLEMENTED."

6. (C) THE AUTHORITIES IN BEIJING CONTINUED TO PULL OUT ALL THE STOPS TO KEEP STUDENTS IN BEIJING ON CAMPUS. A LARGE MEETING FOR STUDENT ACTIVISTS WAS HELD AT THE GREAT HALL OF THE PEOPLE DECEMBER 23 WHERE STUDENTS WERE BROUGHT TOGETHER WITH VETERANS OF THE FIGHTING ON THE VIETNAM BORDER. CITY LEADERS ALSO SPOKE TO THE STUDENTS. BEIJING RADIO STATIONS CARRIED LENGTHY ACCOUNTS OF THIS MEETING WITH REPEATED REFERENCES TO THE NEED FOR "STABILITY AND UNITY." THE BEIJING DAILY DECEMBER 24 CARRIED AN INTERVIEW WITH 84-YEAR-OLD ZHOU PEIFU, FORMER PRESIDENT OF BEIJING UNIVERSITY AND VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE "SEPTEMBER 3" SOCIETY (ONE OF CHINA'S DEMOCRATIC PARTIES), WHO SAID THAT HE COMPLETELY AGREED WITH THE PD EDITORIAL OF DECEMBER 23. HE SAID THAT STUDENTS DID NOT REALIZE THAT THEY WERE LIVING IN A GOLDEN ERA, AND THAT THEY SHOULD TREASURE STABILITY AND UNITY, AND WORK FOR THE MODERNIZATION OF CHINA.

7. (C) AT A DECEMBER 23 LUNCHEON HOSTED BY [REDACTED]

1.5(B), 1.5(D)

[REDACTED] SAID THAT THE STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS WERE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BEIJIN 32577 02 OF 03 240727Z

NOT ALL A BAD THING, THAT YOUNG STUDENTS NEEDED A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF OUTLET FOR THEIR CREATIVITY. OF COURSE, HE ADDED, SERIOUS DISORDER COULD NOT BE CONDONED. BUT THE SPIRIT OF THE DEMONSTRATIONS WAS CONSTRUCTIVE. WANG RECALLED IN THIS CONNECTION DEMONSTRATIONS HE HAD SEEN IN THE UNITED STATES IN 1980 ON AN IV GRANT. THERE THE DEMONSTRATIONS HAD BEEN CONDUCTED IN AN ORDERLY MANNER WITH RULES OF CONDUCT OBSERVED BY BOTH SIDES. [REDACTED] EARLY IN THE CONVERSATION THAT INITIAL STUDENT DEMANDS RELATED TO "SMALL THINGS" SUCH AS TUITION INCREASES. ASKED LATER ON IF STUDENTS WOULD BE GETTING MORE FREEDOM, HE SAID THAT THE EXTENT TO WHICH THEIR DEMANDS WOULD BE ACHIEVED REMAINED TO BE SEEN. HE ALSO IMPLIED THAT THE SENIOR LEADERSHIP WAS FULLY FOCUSING ON THE DEMONSTRATIONS, AND SAID THAT THEY HAD MULTIPLE SOURCES OF INFORMATION, INCLUDING BOTH PARTY AND GOVERNMENT CHANNELS.

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[REDACTED]

AUTHOR, WERE PESSIMISTIC ABOUT THE IMPACT OF THE STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS IN A DINNER DISCUSSION WITH THE AMBASSADOR AND MRS. LORD ON DECEMBER 23. THEY WERE SYMPATHETIC WITH STUDENT ASPIRATIONS FOR A MORE DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY, BUT BELIEVED THE PROTESTS WOULD PROBABLY SET BACK THEIR CAUSE. OPPONENTS OF POLITICAL LIBERALIZATION IN THE LEADERSHIP WOULD USE THE PROTESTS TO UNDERLINE THE DANGERS OF DEMOCRACY, THEY BELIEVE. THE STUDENTS WERE UNDERSTANDABLY NAIVE BECAUSE OF THEIR INEXPERIENCE AND DIDN'T REALIZE THE NEED TO PROCEED WITH CAUTION. THE AMBASSADOR PRESSED [REDACTED] ON THEIR UNQUALIFIED

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CONFIDENTIAL

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CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01
ACTION EAP-00

BEIJIN 32577 03 OF 03 240727Z

INFO LOG-00 COPY-01 ADS-00 INR-10 SS-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 03 OF 03 BEIJING 32577

E.O. 12356: DECL:OADR
 TAGS: PGOV, CH
 SUBJECT: STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS UPDATE

PESSIMISM. HE ASKED WHETHER THERE MIGHT STILL BE SOME BENEFICIAL IMPACT IF THE DEMONSTRATIONS REMAINED PEACEFUL AND AMICABLE RESOLUTIONS WERE REACHED. IN THAT CASE, THE PROSPECTS MIGHT BE BRIGHTER, [REDACTED] BUT THEY REMAINED SKEPTICAL. THE PROCESS TOWARD FREER EXPRESSION AND PARTICIPATION, WHICH THEY SUPPORT, IS CLEARLY GOING TO BE A LONG AND TRICKY ONE IN THEIR VIEW. WHEN THE AMBASSADOR ASKED HOW ELSE THE STUDENTS COULD CONVEY THEIR VIEWS TO THE AUTHORITIES DEBATING POLITICAL REFORMS, [REDACTED] ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THEY COULD THINK OF NO OTHER METHOD.

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9. (U) POLITICAL STABILITY HAS ALWAYS BEEN A CRITICAL CONSIDERATION IN CHINA. THERE CAN BE NO DOUBT THAT THE AUTHORITIES WILL CRACK DOWN, AND CRACK DOWN HARD, IF
 CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 BEIJIN 32577 03 OF 03 240727Z

STABILITY SEEMS TO BE BEING CALLED INTO QUESTION. THE XINHUA DISPATCH OF DECEMBER 21 MADE THIS CLEAR IMPLICITLY AND THE PEOPLE'S DAILY EDITORIAL OF DECEMBER 23 WAS EVEN MORE EXPLICIT. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE AUTHORITIES HAVE CONSISTENTLY TAKEN THE LINE THAT DEMONSTRATIONS ARE LEGAL, AND THAT STUDENTS (OR ANYONE ELSE) HAVE A RIGHT TO EXPRESS DIFFERING VIEWS. THE CRITICAL ISSUE FOR THE AUTHORITIES IS CERTAINLY ALIENATION--THAT IS, HOW TO AVOID ALIENATING YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE, AS PD SAID, "CHINA'S HOPE". BEIJING MAYOR CHEN XITONG EXPRESSED SIMILAR SENTIMENTS WHEN HE SAID AT A DECEMBER 22 COCKTAIL PARTY FOR FOREIGN JOURNALISTS THAT "STUDENTS ARE NOT OUR ENEMY BUT OUR DESCENDANTS." BEYOND THAT THERE IS THE

STILL MORE IMPORTANT QUESTION OF MOVING FROM AVOIDANCE OF ALIENATION TO ACHIEVEMENT OF THE COOPERATION AND SUPPORT OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN CHINA'S MODERNIZATION AND IN THE MODERNIZATION OF THE PARTY.

10. (U) THERE MAY BE AN ADDITIONAL COMPLICATION. WE HAVE HEARD FROM JOURNALISTS, AND AN ARTICLE HAS APPEARED IN THE SOUTH CHINA MORNING POST (REF C) WHICH REFERS TO A STRIKE OVER LOW WAGES WHICH OCCURRED AT THE LOYANG, HENAN TRACTOR FACTORY LAST WEEK INVOLVING AS MANY AS 20,000 WORKERS. THE WORKERS HAVE APPARENTLY RETURNED TO WORK, AND WE HAVE SEEN NO REFERENCE TO ECONOMIC OR LABOR-RELATED ISSUES IN ACCOUNTS OF BANNERS AND POSTERS CARRIED BY DEMONSTRATING STUDENTS.

11. (C) COMMENT. WE BELIEVE WITH SHANGHAI THAT A CRITICAL JUNCTURE HAS BEEN REACHED. IF THE SHANGHAI DEMONSTRATIONS RESUME AND GROW, IF LARGE STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS OCCUR ELSEWHERE, PARTICULARLY BEIJING, OR IF, WORST OF ALL, STUDENT AND LABOR UNREST COMBINE,
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PAGE 03 BEIJIN 32577 03 OF 03 2407272

THEN THE ENTIRE AFFAIR COULD BECOME A NET LIABILITY FOR REFORM WITH SERIOUSLY NEGATIVE POLICY CONSEQUENCES. A SEVERE CRACKDOWN WOULD BE INEVITABLE. IF, ON THE OTHER HAND, THE DEMONSTRATIONS PHASE DOWN AND OUT WITH THE SHANGHAI DEMONSTRATIONS AS THE PEAK, IT MAY BE POSSIBLE FOR THE REFORM LEADERSHIP TO LIMIT THE DAMAGE DONE TO REFORM, ESPECIALLY POLITICAL REFORM. IN ANY EVENT, THE QUESTION OF THE HANDLING OF THE DEMONSTRATIONS POSES ONE OF THE MOST SERIOUS CHALLENGES THE REFORM LEADERSHIP HAS YET FACED. END COMMENT. LORD

UNCLASSIFIED

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PAGE 01 BEIJIN 30122 230909Z
ACTION EAP-00

INFO	LOG-00	COPY-01	ADS-00	INR-10	SS-00	CIAE-00	EB-08
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 FM AMEMBASSY BEIJING
 TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4430
 INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG
 AIT TAIPEI
 AMCONSUL SHENYANG
 AMCONSUL SHANGHAI
 AMCONSUL CHENGDU
 AMCONSUL GUANGZHOU

UNCLAS BEIJING 30122

E.O. 12356: N/A
 TAGS: PGOV, CH
 SUBJECT: MORE STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS

REF. (A) FBIS HK 200906; (B) BEIJING 29697;

1. SUMMARY. THERE HAVE BEEN TWO STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS IN BEIJING IN THE LAST SEVERAL DAYS, ONE AT THE BEIJING AGRICULTURAL UNIVERSITY ON STUDENT ISSUES AND THE PRESENCE OF THE PLA ON CAMPUS, AND THE OTHER BY MINORITY STUDENTS IN TIENANMEN SQUARE IN PROTEST OF NUCLEAR TESTING IN XINJIANG PROVINCE. A STUDENT PROTEST HAS ALSO REPORTEDLY OCCURRED IN TIANJIN. END SUMMARY.

2. ACCORDING TO WIRE SERVICE DISPATCHES, BETWEEN 1500 AND 2000 STUDENTS DEMONSTRATED AT THE BEIJING AGRICULTURAL UNIVERSITY DECEMBER 19 OVER ISSUES SUCH AS HOUSING OF A PLA UNIT ON CAMPUS, POOR SECURITY, LACK OF UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 02 BEIJIN 30122 230909Z

CENTRAL HEATING, AND POOR CAFETERIA FOOD. THE INCIDENT REPORTEDLY BEGAN AFTER A DANCE THE EVENING OF DECEMBER 19 WHEN STUDENTS GATHERED TO ASK THE AUTHORITIES TO ARREST TWO NON-STUDENTS WHO HAD ATTACKED A STUDENT.

3. A SECOND INCIDENT OCCURRED DECEMBER 22 WHEN 200-300 MINORITY STUDENTS PARADED AROUND TIENANMEN SQUARE WITH BANNERS PROTESTING CHINA'S NUCLEAR WEAPONS TESTING PROGRAM IN XINGJIANG PROVINCE. THE DEMONSTRATORS, FROM

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE

REVIEW AUTHORITY: ROBERT J. MARTENS Page - 1

DATE/CASE ID: 27 NOV 1998 199502887

UNCLASSIFIED

THE BEIJING CENTRAL COLLEGE OF NATIONALITIES, WERE APPARENTLY MOSTLY UIGHURS, WHO OF COURSE COME FROM XINJIANG. THEY CARRIED ABOUT TEN BANNERS. AFTER CIRCLING TIANMEN SQUARE THE STUDENTS PROCEEDED TO ZHONGNANHAI, THE CENTRAL LEADERSHIP COMPOUND, FOLLOWING WHICH THE DEMONSTRATION APPARENTLY BROKE UP. LOCAL WIRE SERVICE REPRESENTATIVES WERE ABLE TO GET THE BEIJING MUNICIPALITY TO CONFIRM THAT "SOMETHING OF THIS SORT" HAD OCCURRED, BUT NO FURTHER DETAILS; THE CENTRAL COLLEGE OF NATIONALITIES HUNG UP WHEN CALLED.

4. ACCORDING TO AN AFP DISPATCH (REF A), A SMALL NUMBER OF STUDENTS STAGED A SIMILAR PROTEST IN TIANJIN ON DECEMBER 8 AT TIANJIN UNIVERSITY.

5. COMMENT. STUDENT FERMENT CLEARLY CONTINUES. WE DO FIND A BIT ASTONISHING A DEMONSTRATION IN CHINA (A) ON NUCLEAR WEAPONS TESTING; AND (B) BY A MINORITY NATIONALITY GROUP. ANOTHER INTERESTING FEATURE OF THESE DEMONSTRATIONS IS THAT THEY INVOLVE SCHOOLS OTHER THAN THE "MAJORS" LIKE BEIDA. END COMMENT.
LORD.

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*** Current Handling Restrictions *** n/a
*** Current Classification *** UNCLASSIFIED