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AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
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AMEMBASSY TOKYO
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AMCONSUL CHENGDU POUCH

SECRET BEIJING 16971

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CINCPAC FOR FPA FINKEY

E. R. 12356: DECL: OADR
TAGS: PHUM, PGOV, PINR, CVIS, CH
SUBJECT: TFCM01 - EYEWITNESS CHINESE ACCOUNT OF JUNE
4 PLA TANK CRUSHING 11 STUDENTS AND RELATED EARLY
MORNING EVENTS IN TIANANMEN SQUARE

REFS: A) FBIS 042106183003, B) BEIJING 16846

1. SECRET ENTIRE TEXT.

2. SUMMARY: [REDACTED]
UNIVERSITY STUDENT WHO SPENT THE NIGHT OF JUNE 3-4 IN
TIANANMEN SQUARE DESCRIBED ON JUNE 28 EVENTS AND
DEATHS HE HAD WITNESSED, INCLUDING AN EARLY MORNING
INCIDENT DURING WHICH 11 STUDENTS WERE CRUSHED TO
DEATH BY A PLA TANK AT THE INTERSECTION OF LIUBUKOU
AND CHANGANJIE. END SUMMARY.

3. [REDACTED]

A
NUMBER OF OTHER DEMONSTRATORS HAD SEEN WHAT HE HAD
SEEN ON JUNE 3-4, THE STUDENT DECLARED, BUT MOST WERE
TOO FRIGHTENED FOR THEMSELVES AND THEIR FAMILIES TO
TELL THE TRUTH NOW. HE CONTINUED THAT AFTER THE
TANKS WENT BY, HE WENT OVER TO COUNT THE FLATTENED
CORPSES OF HIS COLLEAGUES SO THAT HE COULD BEAR
RELIABLE WITNESS LATER IN HOPES OF ULTIMATE JUSTICE
AND RETRIBUTION FOR THE KILLINGS.

NO RUBBER BULLETS

4. THE STUDENT SAID THAT ON JUNE 4 AROUND 2 A.M. HE
WAS POSITIONED IN CHANGANJIE, THE AVENUE OF LASTING
PEACE, JUST NORTH OF THE EAST END OF THE GREAT HALL

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OF THE PEOPLE. HIS YOUNGER BROTHER WAS ELSEWHERE IN
THE SQUARE; THEY HAD BOTH BEEN THERE FOR MANY DAYS.
ON THE NIGHT OF JUNE 3, THE STUDENTS BELIEVED THAT
WHEN TROOPS CAME IN TO TAKE THE SQUARE, THEY WOULD
FIRE RUBBER BULLETS. CONSEQUENTLY, MANY OF THE
STUDENTS IN THE FIRST LINE OF BARRICADES ON THE EAST
AND WEST SIDES OF CHANGANJIE HELD UP PADDED COATS TO
PROTECT THEMSELVES FROM THE PROJECTILES. HOWEVER,
THE FIRST LINES OF STUDENTS FELL AFTER THE TROOPS
OPENED FIRE. THE STUDENT SAID HE HAD ALSO BEEN
CONVINCED THAT RUBBER BULLETS WOULD BE USED. HE HAD
A SICKENING FEELING WHEN HE NOTICED THE BULLETS
STRIKING SPARKS OFF THE PAVEMENT NEAR HIS FEET. HE
SAID THAT HE SAW MANY STUDENTS FALL DURING THE
ENSUING HOUR. HE BECAME ENRAGED AT THE DEATHS OF HIS
COLLEAGUES, HE SAID, AND THREW BRICKS AT THE ONCOMING
TROOPS OUT OF A DESIRE FOR REVENGE AND A HATRED FOR
WHAT THEY WERE DOING, EVEN THOUGH HE KNEW THERE WAS
NO MATCH. "IN BATTLE, YOU STOP THINKING AND JUST
FIGHT", HE SAID.

5. WHEN THERE WERE A NUMBER OF CASUALTIES, THE
STUDENT SAID HE AND ANOTHER STUDENT USED A MAKE-SHIFT
STRETCHER TO CARRY THE DEAD AND WOUNDED TO THE
NEAREST RED CROSS AREA, WHICH WAS LOCATED IN THE
SQUARE'S NORTHWEST CORNER. HE SAID THAT HE HIMSELF
MADE NO FEWER THAN A DOZEN TRIPS, AND HE RECKONED
FROM THE STATE OF THE WOUNDED THAT ONLY TWO OF THOSE
HE CARRIED WOULD SURVIVE. HE CITED ONE LOCAL
RESIDENT WHO HAD BEEN EXCEPTIONALLY BRAVE. EVEN AS
THE TROOPS CONTINUED TO FIRE BETWEEN APPROXIMATELY 2
AND 3 A.M., THE RESIDENT MADE 11 JOURNEYS ON HIS
THREE-WHEELED CART FERRYING WOUNDED FROM A FIRE ZONE
TO THE RED CROSS AREA.

VOTING ON THE EXODUS

6. WHEN CONTINUED RESISTANCE WAS CLEARLY FUTILE,
PERHAPS AROUND 4 A.M., THE STUDENT SAID THAT THE
LEADERS ANNOUNCED OVER THE BROADCASTING SYSTEM THAT
THEY WOULD PUT TO A VOICE VOTE WHETHER EVERYONE
SHOULD STAY OR VACATE THE SQUARE. THE STUDENT SAID
THAT THE VOICES SHOUTING "STAY" WERE ACTUALLY JUST AS
NUMEROUS AS THOSE WHO VOTED "LEAVE", BUT THE LEADERS
ANNOUNCED THE MAJORITY DECISION AS "LEAVE". THE
STUDENT SAID THAT MOST OF THOSE WHO VOTED TO STAY
WERE OUT-OF-TOWNERS WHO HAD COME IN FOR THE
DEMONSTRATIONS AND WHO REALLY HAD NOWHERE ELSE TO
GO. AFTER TALKING WITH THE TROOP COMMANDERS SENT IN
TO CLEAR THE SQUARE, THE STUDENT LEADERS AGREED TO
VACATE THE SQUARE ALONG A SOUTHEAST CORRIDOR FROM THE
CENTRAL MONUMENT. [REDACTED] THAT A
FEW THOUSAND ("JIANGANG") ACTUALLY EXITED VIA THE
CORRIDOR.

7. THE STUDENT ALSO SAID THAT THEY LEFT BEHIND BOTH
LIVING AND DEAD DEMONSTRATORS. HE SAID THAT AMONG
THE DEAD, HE HAD LEARNED FROM OTHERS, WERE TWO RED
CROSS WORKERS DRESSED IN THEIR UNIFORMS WHO WERE
NONETHELESS GUNNED DOWN. HE ALSO SAID THAT NO ONE
DARED ADMIT THIS FACT NOW, INCLUDING THE RED CROSS.
HE IS CONFIDENT THAT EVENTUALLY THE TRUTH WILL BE
TOLD.

8. THE LARGE GROUP OF STUDENTS THAT EXITED THE
SQUARE TURNED WEST ON QIANNENDAJIE, PASSING THE
KENTUCKY FRIED CHICKEN AND THE BEIJING DUCK

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INCOMING
TELEGRAM

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RESTAURANTS. THEY TURNED NORTH ON LIUBUKOU ROAD.
THE GROUPS WERE ORGANIZED, FOR THE MOST PART, BY
THEIR INSTITUTIONS OF STUDY, WITH BEIJING UNIVERSITY
AT THE HEAD FOLLOWED BY QINGHUA UNIVERSITY, THE
UNIVERSITY OF POLITICS AND LAW, TIANJIN UNIVERSITY,
ETC. AS THE BEIHA STUDENTS ROUNDED THE CORNER ONTO
CHANGANJIE, THEY, AND THE STUDENTS BEHIND THEM
SUCCESSIVELY, SHOUTED AT THE FOUR TO SIX STATIONARY
TANKS FACING WEST ON CHANGANJIE THAT THE TROOPS WERE
BEASTS AND FASCISTS.

9. THE STUDENT SAID THAT WITHOUT ANY WARNING THE
TANKS STARTED TOWARD THEM. ON THE NORTH SIDE OF THE
STREET, TANK NUMBER 180 (PRESUMABLY, BUT NOT
NECESSARILY, OF THE 5TH TANK DIVISION, WHICH IS KNOWN
TO HAVE ENTERED THAT NIGHT FROM THE WEST), SUDDENLY
DID A U-TURN NEAR THE TELEGRAPH BUILDING ENTRANCE,
WHERE THE STUDENT AND MANY OTHERS HAD RUN FOR REFUGE.

10. THE STUDENT SAID THAT ONLY THE TELEGRAPH
BUILDING OFFERED A BREAK IN THE METAL FENCE ON BOTH
SIDES OF THE STREET, SO HE WAS FORTUNATE TO ESCAPE
INTO THE FULLY CROWDED ENTRANCE WAY. TANK NUMBER 180
THEN RACED BACK ("QUICKER THAN A PUBLIC BUS NORMALLY
GOES") INTO OTHER ONCOMING STUDENTS MARCHING WEST.
THE STUDENT SAID ONE OF HIS COLLEAGUES ATTEMPTED TO
LEAP THE SOUTH FENCE, BUT ONLY SUCCEEDED IN BANGING
ONTO THE FENCE. HIS LEGS WERE CUT OFF. (SEE REF A'S
ANTE-PENULTIMATE PARAGRAPH FOR ANOTHER VERSION OF
THIS INCIDENT.)

11. AFTER SOME SORT OF GAS BOMB WAS THROWN FROM A
TANK (SEE BELOW) AND ALL THE TANKS HAD PASSED, THE
STUDENT SAID HE WALKED OVER FROM THE TELEGRAPH
BUILDING ENTRANCE TO COUNT THE BODIES SO THERE WOULD
BE AT LEAST ONE RELIABLE WITNESS LATER TO THE
KILLINGS. HE SAID THAT THE BODIES WERE SMASHED FLAT,

12. IN ALL -- JUST AS IN A DONALD DUCK CARTOON --
EXCEPT THAT HE NOTICED THE BRAINS SQUISHED OUT BESIDE
THE FLATTENED HEADS. A FEW BICYCLES IN THE GROUP
WERE SMASHED TO CARICATURES OF VEHICLES. THE SIGHT
WILL NEVER LEAVE HIM, HE SAID, AND HE HOPED THAT BY
REPORTING IT, SOMEDAY JUSTICE WOULD ULTIMATELY BE
DONE IN AVENGING THESE DEATHS.

THE USE OF GAS

13. THE STUDENT SAID THAT ONE OF THE OTHER TANKS,
NOT NUMBER 180, HAD PASSED BY HIS GROUP AND LOBBED
OUT A KIND OF GAS BOMB. HE SAID HE COULD NOT SAY
WHAT THE GAS WAS, EXCEPT THAT THE SMOKE WAS YELLOW
AND ANYONE WHO CAUGHT A WHIFF HAD VERY SORE GLANDS
("SANGZI") IN THE THROAT. NO ONE CRIED, HE SAID, SO
HIS COLLEAGUES HAD CONCLUDED THAT IT WAS CHLORINE --
NOT TEAR -- GAS. HE COULD NOT SAY POSITIVELY WHAT
THE GAS WAS.

OTHER RECOUNTED EVENTS (SEE REF B)

14. [REDACTED] ASKED THE STUDENT WHY IT TOOK FROM 5
A.M. TO 6 A.M. TO GO THE RELATIVELY SHORT DISTANCE
FROM THE SOUTHEAST CORNER OF TIANANMEN TO THE CORNER
OF CHANGANJIE AND LIUBUKOU. THE STUDENT SAID THAT
PROGRESS WAS VERY SLOW BECAUSE SO MANY BEIJING
RESIDENTS LINED THE QIANMEN AREA AND, CRYING,
INSISTED ON SHAKING AND HOLDING HANDS WITH EACH OF
THE STUDENTS COMING OUT FROM THE SQUARE.

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14. THE STUDENT SAID THAT HE LATER LEARNED [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] THAT OTHERS HAD DIED IN
THE SQUARE AFTER THE MAIN BODY OF STUDENTS AND
DEMONSTRATORS LEFT. THE YOUNGER BROTHER'S
CLASSMATE'S ELDER [REDACTED]

BEHIND. ACCORDING TO THIS THIRD/FOURTH HAND ACCOUNT,
SOME OF THE STUDENTS WHO STILL REFUSED TO LEAVE AFTER
6 A.M. WERE CRUSHED TO DEATH WITH METAL TRUNCHEONS
ABOUT 4 FEET LONG. ALSO, ACCORDING TO THE SAME
SOURCE, AROUND 7:30 A.M. A SMALL NUMBER OF BODIES
WERE STACKED TOGETHER AND BURNED. THE STUDENT WAS
UNABLE TO GIVE ANY FURTHER DETAILS; HE SAID HE DID
NOT KNOW THAT THOSE REPORTS WERE TRUE ALTHOUGH HE
PERSONALLY BELIEVED THEM.

IN HIDING

15. [REDACTED]

16. COMMENT: THE STUDENT'S ACCOUNT PROVIDES
EYEWITNESS EVIDENCE OF SOME DEATHS ON EITHER EDGE OF
THE NORTH END OF TIANANMEN SQUARE AND OF THE DEATHS
OF 11 STUDENTS ON CHANGANJIE AFTER THE PLA SWEEP.
ELEMENTS OF HIS ACCOUNT DO VETAIL WITH THE OFFICIAL
VERSION, E.G., THE SOUTHEAST CORRIDOR PEACEFUL EXIT
OF A MAJORITY OF THE STUDENTS LEFT IN THE SQUARE
AROUND 5 A.M. HIS ACCOUNT OF THE LIUBUKOU-CHANGANJIE
CRUSHING OF 11 STUDENTS BY PLA TANK NUMBER 180
TALLIES WITH REPEATED ACCOUNTS OF A MASSACRE IN THAT
AREA THAT CIRCULATED WIDELY AND QUICKLY (E.G., REF
A). IN HIS TELLING, THE ONLY PROVOCATION BY THE
STUDENTS WAS THE CHANTING TAUNT "BEASTS! FASCISTS!".
WE FIND HIS ACCOUNT OF THAT EPISODE CREDIBLE. HIS
ACCOUNTS OF OTHER INCIDENTS ARE WORTH RECORDING AS
OTHER EVIDENCE BECOMES AVAILABLE. LILLEY

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