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PASS: [REDACTED]
SERIAL: DIADIN 108-25A

TEXT

SUBJ: CHINA: STUDENT PROTESTS. (U)

DOI: 18 APR 89 (AS OF 2050 EDT)

TEXT: 1. [REDACTED] THE RESPONSE OF PUBLIC SECURITY FORCES TO STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS FOLLOWING THE DEATH OF FORMER GENERAL SECRETARY HU YAOBANG HAS BEEN RESTRAINED. HOWEVER, AN ESCALATION OF STUDENT PROTESTS WILL MOST LIKELY TRIGGER A GOVERNMENT CRACKDOWN.

2. [REDACTED] THOUSANDS OF STUDENTS FROM BEIJING'S UNIVERSITIES GATHERED IN TIANANMEN SQUARE TO MOURN HU YAOBANG AND TO CRITICIZE THE CURRENT LEADERSHIP AND ITS POLICIES. POLICE PRESENCE IN THE SQUARE WAS HEAVY BUT REPORTEDLY NOT INTIMIDATING. STUDENTS ARE SAID TO HAVE TRIED TO FORCE THEIR WAY INTO THE COMMUNIST PARTY HEADQUARTERS IN BEIJING BEFORE DAWN ON THE 19TH, BUT THEY WERE DRIVEN AWAY BY SECURITY PERSONNEL. NO ARRESTS OR INJURIES WERE REPORTED.

3. [REDACTED] COMMENT: GOVERNMENT TOLERANCE OF STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS WILL IMPROVE THE IMAGE OF THE CHINESE LEADERSHIP. HOWEVER, SUCH TOLERANCE MAY INTENSIFY THESE ACTIVITIES, SHARPEN CRITICISM OF THE LEADERSHIP, AND INCREASE DEMANDS FOR DEMOCRACY. MANY STUDENTS AND INTELLECTUALS WILL TURN OUT FOR HU'S FUNERAL ON THE 22D AND FOR THE 70TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MAY 4TH MOVEMENT. CONCERN OVER ADDITIONAL STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS MAY CAUSE BEIJING TO TAKE FORCEFUL STEPS TO MAINTAIN ORDER.

4. [REDACTED] THE NEED TO RETAIN CONTROL OF THE INTERNAL SITUATION AS THE SINO-SOVIET SUMMIT APPROACHES WILL COMPLICATE MATTERS FOR THE CHINESE LEADERSHIP. FOREIGN PRESS REPORTS OF HARSH TREATMENT OF STUDENTS AND INTELLECTUALS DEMANDING POLITICAL REFORMS, ALONG WITH BAD PUBLICITY RESULTING FROM THE IMPOSITION OF MARTIAL LAW IN TIBET, WILL HURT CHINA'S INTERNATIONAL IMAGE AND EMBARRASS BEIJING. GENERAL SECRETARY ZHAO ZIYANG MAY BE FORCED TO ORDER A CRACKDOWN ON STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS, POSSIBLY AT THE EXPENSE OF LOSING THE SUPPORT OF SOME LESS CONSERVATIVE ELEMENTS IN THE GOVERNMENT, TO SHOW HIS STRENGTH AS A LEADER.

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ADMIN [REDACTED]
PREP: [REDACTED]
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DECL: OADR
END OF MESSAGE

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