

Remember Tiananmen Square

Thirty-five years ago, on the night of June 3, 1989, the Chinese Communist Party murdered thousands of democracy demonstrators in Tiananmen Square. It is an event that resonates even today and needs to be remembered.

Compared to the 35 million deliberately starved to death in the 1950s and the millions killed in the Cultural Revolution of the 1970s, the number of victims of the Tiananmen Square massacre hardly registers. Yet by 1989 the Chinese Communist Party had put on a kinder, gentler face, and many expected it to begin moving toward democratic rule.

But we were wrong. Instead, the winds of freedom that were blowing through the Soviet Empire terrified the rulers in Beijing. The democratic demonstrators were crushed by the Red Army in one bloody night.

The communists had survived 1989, but another terror gripped them in 1991 as they watched the American Army effortlessly destroy the best military technology in the Communist Block during the First Gulf War. The Red Army was no match for the Americans because, like the Russians and Iraqis, China could not match American spending on defense and technology. To compete, China had to become richer, but the communist/socialist economic system produced only poverty. The solution came from leader Deng Xiaoping, who put China on a path to adopt a modified version of the capitalist system.

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First, Deng went to the Red Army and got its leaders to agree to capitalist reforms if they got more funding. Then he went to the coastal city governors and got them to agree to fund the Red Army in exchange for supporting capitalism. Finally, Deng won support of the Communist Party by promising to use

the Red Army and the increased capitalist wealth to keep it in power. Deng redefined socialism to be any economic system that worked—that is, capitalism—and popularized the saying “To be rich is glorious.”

Deng’s plan worked beyond his wildest dreams. By removing the dead hand of socialism and allowing people to own property and keep the fruits of their labor, Deng ignited the greatest economic boom in human history. Hundreds of millions of people have moved out of poverty and into the middle class. China has become an economic powerhouse and is the second largest economy in the world.

But as the Chinese economic miracle unfolded, the world forgot about Tiananmen Square. Once again the world began to believe that China would move toward democracy. Once again, we were wrong.

We failed to notice the success of the rest of Deng’s plan. The Red Army, enriched by its own capitalist companies and higher taxes, has built a modern Air Force and Navy. And, embodied by its new power, the Red Army has taken over the international waters in South China Sea, threatening its neighbors and American power in East Asia. The Red Army has also moved into Hong Kong as a part of the Chinese Communist Party’s plan to crush democracy there as it did at Tiananmen Square. And now, China is threatening to invade Taiwan.

Thanks to China’s capitalist prosperity, the CCP is more entrenched in power than ever. Worse, one man, XI Jinping, has succeeded in amassing power as Mao Zedong did. And, like Mao, he is determined to crush all other competing organizations in China. The church, which many believe will grow from 100 million to 250 million over the next 20 years, is one of his main targets.

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Some churches have been put under control of atheistic CCP members and those that refuse are under attack. Thousands of churches have been closed, and over a million Christians suffered persecution every year. New laws recently put in place require religious leaders to follow communist doctrine in their churches. The state forbids Christian education of children, and Christian teachings are banned even in many churches. Advanced technology such as facial recognition is used to identify and persecute Christians.

Not content to wage war against Christians, the communists are now warring against the Word of God itself. Christian websites and Bible apps were blocked recently. Further, Bible sales have been banned from online shopping platforms, including Amazon. The CCP is also writing its own version of the Bible. In the communist version, Jesus stones the woman caught in adultery rather than forgiving her.

So sadly, the CCP is back to Tiananmen Square-style repression.

So remember Tiananmen Square, and remember to pray for Chinese Christians like Early Rain Church Pastor Wang Yi. After he and his wife were arrested in 2020, Wang Yi said, "The rulers have chosen an enemy that can never be imprisoned—the soul of man. Therefore they are doomed to lose their war."

Amen.

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