

Comrade Xiaoping's original words. They cannot be changed.

Zhao Ziyang: We have to explain the true nature of this student movement to Comrade Xiaoping, and we need to change the official view of the movement.

ZHAO ZIYANG LOSES GROUND

On the morning of May 17 the Standing Committee of the Politburo met at Deng Xiaoping's home. Besides Zhao Ziyang, Li Peng, Qiao Shi, Hu Qili, and Yao Yilin, elders Yang Shangkun and Bo Yibo also attended.

Excerpts from Party Central Office

Secretariat, "Minutes of the May 17 Politburo Standing Committee meeting," document supplied to Party Central Office Secretariat for its records by the Office of Deng Xiaoping:

Zhao Ziyang: The fasting students feel themselves under a spotlight that makes it hard for them to make concessions. This leaves us with a prickly situation. The most important thing right now is to get the students to de-link their fasting from their demands and then to get them out of the Square and back to their campuses. Otherwise, anything could happen, and in the blink of an eye. Things are tense.

Yang Shangkun: ... Can we still say there's been no harm to the national interest or society's interest? This isn't turmoil? If anybody here takes the position that this isn't turmoil, I don't see any way to move ahead with reform and opening or to pursue socialist construction. ...

Li Peng: I think Comrade Ziyang must bear the main responsibility for the escalation of the student movement, as well as for the fact that the situation has gotten so hard to control. When he was in North Korea and the Politburo asked Comrade Ziyang's opinion, he sent back a telegram clearly stating that he was "in complete agreement with Comrade Xiaoping's plan for dealing with the unrest."

After he came back on April 30 he again said at a Politburo meeting that he endorsed Comrade Xiaoping's remarks as well as the word "turmoil" that appeared in the April 26 editorial.

But then, just a few days later, on the afternoon of May 4 at the Asian Development Bank meetings-and without consulting anybody else on the Standing Committee-he gave a speech that flew in the face of the Standing Committee's decisions, Comrade Xiaoping's statement, and the spirit of the April 26 editorial.

First, in the midst of obvious turmoil, he felt able to say, "China will be spared any major turmoil."