



Press Statement

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Message on the Seventeenth Anniversary of the Tiananmen Square Massacre

Seventeen years ago, beginning on the night of June 3 and continuing June 4, 1989, the Chinese government brutally suppressed peaceful demonstrations by its own citizens who were supporting political reform and democracy. Those in and around the Square, as well as those in and out of China who sympathized with the goals of the demonstrators, have repeatedly called on the Chinese government to undertake a reassessment of the tragic events of that night.

Seventeen years later, such a reevaluation is long overdue. The U.S. urges China to provide a full accounting of the thousands who were killed, detained, or went missing and of the government's role in the massacre; we also urge China to address the ongoing violations of the rights of victims and their families and to make public the list of those still in prison. The U.S. has encouraged China to move toward the kind of political reform called for by many of those involved in the Tiananmen Square movement.

The United States welcomes a confident, prosperous, and peaceful China in the community of nations. But, as the President has emphasized, a country's economic progress is only a part of its overall national greatness. No country, especially one which is playing an increasingly important role in world affairs, should fear an examination of its past, nor prevent its people from exercising their basic rights to accountable government and free speech, assembly and worship.

It is in China's own interest to clear the record and achieve its true potential by linking its efforts to modernize and prosper with greater freedoms for the Chinese people.

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