

World and Nation

China arrests students, expels reporters

From Associated Press reports

BEIJING — Authorities announced Wednesday the arrest of two of 21 student leaders wanted for roles in the pro-democracy movement and ordered three Western reporters expelled for their reporting on the martial law crackdown.

Given three days to leave were two American correspondents, John Pomfret of The Associated Press and Voice of America bureau chief Alan Pessin, and British Broadcasting Corp. Far Eastern correspondent Brian Barron.

The order came as authorities intensified their criticism of the United States and pressed on with a nationwide clampdown on dissent that has already netted more than 1,000 arrests.

Communist authorities have criticized VOA, whose short-wave broadcasts are an important source of information for Chinese, as spreading "distortions." They have also condemned Washington for sheltering Chinese dissident Fang Lizhi and his wife at the U.S. Embassy.

Authorities also announced today the arrest of 32 participants in pro-democracy protests, which ended June 3-4 with a military assault on Beijing's center in which hundreds of unarmed civilians were killed.

The Communist Party newspaper, the People's Daily, warned the United States in a harsh front-page editorial today to "stop interfering in China's internal affairs and not do anything to harm bilateral relations."

"Anyone who tries to put pressure on the Chinese government is not sensible and is shortsighted, and will gain no advantage in the end," the editorial said.

China has launched an unremitting attack on the United States for sheltering Fang and his wife, Li Shuxian. They sought protection after the army assault that cleared central Tiananmen Square of students who had occupied it for three weeks.

Police today called in Pomfret and Pessin and ordered them expelled.

Police accused Pomfret of violating martial law regulations on reporting and meeting with the leaders of the independent student organizations that led seven weeks of protests for a freer China.

"Pomfret used his journalism credentials for illegal activities and used illegal methods to get state secrets," the Beijing television news charged. "He protected the leaders of student groups and exchanged information with them."

Pomfret, 30, has worked for The AP since 1986 and has been based in Beijing since 1988. He studied in China from 1980-82 and speaks fluent Chinese.

"I did my job as a journalist and I worked hard," Pomfret said. "It's a shame that these are the results I get."

Pessin, 33, said police accused him of engaging in reporting aimed at distorting facts, spreading rumors and instigating turmoil and "counterrevolutionary" rebellion.

"The only motive we have is to tell the truth as best we can. Governments do not always like that," said

Pessin.

Barron, who is based in Hong Kong, has been covering the unrest in China of the past several weeks.

The official Xinhua News Agency today issued its first detailed account of the assault on Beijing, saying nearly 100 soldiers and police died and thousands were wounded. It said about 100 civilians were killed and nearly 1,000 injured.

The figures were lower than those given last week by a government spokesman, who said nearly 300 people were killed, including many soldiers. Chinese witnesses and Western intelligence estimates say about 3,000 people were killed, most of them civilians.

National television said one of 21 student leaders of the pro-democracy movement, Zhou Fengsuo, was arrested in the central city of Xian after being turned in by his sister and her husband, who works at an air force academy.

Pictures of Zhou, a 22-year-old physics student at Qinghua University in Beijing, and the other activists were flashed on television Tuesday and today and appeared in today's newspapers with appeals for people to turn them in.

The evening television news showed Zhou sitting in a police station being questioned.

A later report said Xiong Yan, 24, a graduate student of law at Beijing University, also was arrested but gave no details. He also was shown being questioned.

The other 19 student leaders were believed to be at large.

The government accused the 21

of "inciting and organizing counter-revolutionary rebellion in Beijing" during the movement for a dialogue with the government, free speech and an end to official corruption.

Xinhua also attacked a 33-foot-tall statue modeled on the U.S. Statue of Liberty that the students erected in Tiananmen Square, as "an attempt to stir up worship of American-style 'freedom and democracy.'"

The offensive against foreign criticism was begun Tuesday by Premier Li, who accused "a small number of nations" of using China's political troubles to "spread all kinds of rumors, stir up anti-China sentiments and put pressure on us."

In a speech to senior officials, Li said, "We must warn them sternly: the Chinese people will not yield to this kind of pressure."

Reforms blamed for Soviet crime increase

From Associated Press reports

MOSCOW — Gangs taking advantage of relaxed controls under President Mikhail S. Gorbachev's reform programs have contributed to a 32 percent rise in the Soviet crime rate since January, officials say.

Gorbachev has acknowledged that the restructuring he initiated since coming to power four years ago could lead to more crime.

Maj. Gen. Anatoly Smirnov of the Interior Ministry told a Moscow news conference Tuesday that "the relaxation of discipline" and shortages in basic commodities had fueled an increase in murder and other serious

crimes.

Official figures show street crime increased over the same five-month period in 1988 by 83 percent, property crimes by 53 percent and murder by 26 percent, Smirnov said.

Nine Soviet policemen were killed in clashes with criminals in May alone.

Shortages that have worsened steadily under economic experiments begun in recent years have created a demand for stolen goods that spurs robbers on, according to the Smirnov.

He said the country's rail, air and river transport systems have become increasingly crime-ridden, especially with robbery and mugging.

The ministry also noticed a "rise in the aggressiveness of certain citizens," the general said.

One crime-fighting experiment has shown good results, Smirnov said. In the Russian city of Gorky, where two policemen were murdered this winter and residents were afraid to leave home at night, creation of workers' militias to back up police cut the crime rate's growth by 38 percent.

Gorbachev told Communist Party leaders in a speech this spring that they should keep in mind that "any extension of democracy and humanization of life should go parallel with an uncompromising struggle against

criminal elements."

Police Col. Gennady Chebotarev said Tuesday that organized crime got its start in the massive "shadow economy" of theft, embezzlement and unofficial wheeling-and-dealing that has thrived since the 1970s.

He said organized groups of criminals have also begun to foster ties with international crime, particularly with computer imports, antiques, gold and jewels. Computers are in heavy demand in the Soviet Union, and speculators can make huge profits by buying and selling even relatively cheap computers.

Early transition of power set for Argentina

From Associated Press reports

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina (AP) — President Raul Alfonsín says economic chaos is forcing him to resign five months before his term ends, and President-elect Carlos Menem said today he is willing to assume office early.

"We are willing, totally willing, to assume the direction of the Argentine republic on that date, and my hope is that the president of the nation will put on me the presidential sash," Menem told Radio America.

Alfonsín said Monday evening he

would leave office on June 30 because of Argentina's economic crisis and his inability to handle it, given his party's loss to Menem in the May national elections.

"The government's room for action during the months that remain of its mandate is too narrow to face the problems with a chance for success," Alfonsín told the nation in a televised address.

But Menem, a populist champion of the working poor, said he was taken by surprise by the announcement and said it would be "impossible" for him

to take office five months early. He said that it required legislation that could not be enacted in time.

It looked likely at that point that Menem's younger brother, Eduardo, who is provisional president of the Senate, would act as interim president until Menem's change of heart today.

The six-year term of Alfonsín, whose civilian administration replaced a discredited military dictatorship, officially ends Dec. 10.

Because Menem, 58, and Alfon-

sin, 62, have disagreed on how to improve the economy, little has been done to curtail inflation, which hit 78.5 percent in May. Interest rates and unemployment also continue to rise.

The economic problems have been fueled by Argentina's \$59 billion foreign debt. Problems in repaying the debt and meeting demands by foreign creditors also caused rioting in Venezuela in February, and have been blamed for instability in Brazil, Peru and other Latin American nations.

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