

Editorial

Where is Bush's morality?

On Nov. 30, the White House announced that President Bush would veto the Pelosi-Armstrong bill which would allow Chinese foreign students to remain in the United States for up to four years after graduation, if they feared persecution upon their return to the mainland. Under current immigration law, these students would have to return to China immediately after finishing their studies. If Bush's veto is allowed to stand, 40,000 Chinese students face imprisonment, torture, and death.

The moral necessity for enacting the bill could not be clearer. The majority of these students have been active in U.S. demonstrations and other public activities in the days leading to, and following, the Tiananmen Square massacre. These foreign students know that all of their demonstrations were systematically filmed by agents of the Chinese Department of Public Security. They know that if they now returned to China they would share the Tiananmen martyrs' fate.

The Chinese government has hardly concealed what these students' fates will be. Many of the Chinese student organizations in the United States have already been branded "counterrevolutionary." Anyone should understand what that means.

As one spokesman for the Independent Federation of Chinese Students in the U.S. put it: "The Chinese students who actively organized and participated in the student-led pro-democracy movement in the U.S. during last spring and subsequent months counted on the U.S. government to provide them with protection against likely political retribution from the Chinese government. Now they are deeply disappointed that nothing has been done so far that will make such protection dependable and reassuring. Some of them are even fearful that if no such protection is forthcoming, they may have to abandon their pro-democracy cause overseas and fall in line with the Chinese government's hardline policies."

In a rare display of morality, the Senate and House voted 95-0 and 403-0, respectively, on behalf of the Pelosi-Armstrong bill. No congressman, at least, voted for murder.

In attempting to explain the President's action, White House spokesmen have fretted that the Beijing regime threatened to cancel the Fulbright Scholarship program, which allows American students to study in China, in retaliation. Arguing that the measure was unneeded, Bush has even claimed "I believe that China, as its leaders state, will return to the policy of reform pursued before." A cynical Bush merely wanted to show Beijing that he is still committed to former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger's "China card."

One aide to a U.S. senator expressed the point well: "In the 1930s, Roosevelt refused to accept Jews fleeing the Nazis, who were then sent back to the gas-chambers. Later, President Truman sent back thousands of Ukrainians and Russians in the U.S.-Occupied Zone of Germany to their deaths in the gulags. How is Bush any different? Bush knows that blood will flow."

Unfortunately, this is not the first time that the President has expressed revolting inhumanity toward the Chinese people. Although U.S. intelligence agencies had informed Bush that a spring massacre was in preparation, the White House did nothing. A public statement, even a privately conveyed threat that the U.S. would break off diplomatic relations, could have blocked the killings. The P.R.C. is too economically and militarily dependent on the U.S. not to have responded. In the days after the massacre, Bush denied any strong sanctions against the Beijing regime, claiming such actions would be counterproductive.

Moreover, Bush's longtime crony—and apparent controller—Henry Kissinger, praised the Beijing regime for its bloody action, claiming that it was necessary. Meanwhile, Kissinger's firm, Kissinger Associates, has made a bundle in its business with China. Deputy Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger and National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft are former Kissinger Associates partners. In October, Kissinger was in Beijing, meeting with the bloody dictator Deng Xiaoping, on behalf of the President; a reliable source says he promised the Bush veto.

It was a signal not just to Deng, but also to Gorbachov: Kill as many as you want.