

By Diana Johnstone

PARIS

IF EUROPEAN OFFICIALS VOTED TO SELECT THE most offensively arrogant U.S. official, the winner of the unpopularity contest might be Richard Perle, the Reagan administration's assistant secretary of defense for international security policy. Last month an editorial in the German weekly *Der Spiegel* said that Perle, "in practice the Pentagon's foreign minister," demonstrated "a very special arrogance that is rare even among Reagan people."

Perle had just offended the Bonn government by suggesting to the *Neue Osnabrücker Zeitung* that West Germany should cut back on credits to East Germany in order to spend more money on weapons. Bonn pointed out that Perle's remarks were not even based on accurate facts: the government does not grant credits but merely guarantees bank credits. There is no money there to be saved for arms.

The Social Democratic Party's (SPD) floor leader Horst Ehmke said Perle was one of those Reagan advisers whose advocacy of a gigantic arms program was partly responsible for the gigantic U.S. debt. Ehmke suggested that instead of giving the Germans unwanted advice, Perle would do better to think up ways to "save the U.S. from bankruptcy."

Der Spiegel called Perle the "gray eminence" behind Reagan's burial of arms control. Despite his habitual rudeness and sloppy work habits, the weekly said, Reagan and Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger "pamper him like a wonderchild, almost like a genius" and allow him to get away with anything.

Perle has offended countless Europeans with his contemptuous disregard for their opinions about the arms race, with various statements indicating that the U.S. will use nuclear weapons when and where it sees fit, regardless of what European NATO countries foolishly think they want. The peace movements remember him for dismissing their concerns as just so much neurotic "Protestant angst."

Like him or not, Perle is generally considered the most powerful man in the Pentagon. However obnoxious, his statements tend to define the policy space left to the West Germans—and it is narrow indeed. A glance back at his message to the SPD helps make it clear why party leaders could not want to win this month's elections.

The SPD is torn between loyalty to NATO and alarm at the trend in NATO policy. The original ideas in the fields of foreign policy and defense that SPD specialists like Egon Bahr and Andreas von Bülow have come up with are centered on the desire for a "new phase of detente." But SPD *Ostpolitik* requires U.S. understanding and support, and is simply impossible unless it fits into U.S. policy.

Bad humor: In an address to the SPD's Friedrich Ebert Foundation in Bonn last May, Perle treated SPD policy like a big joke. Perle said he had thought of regaling the Social Democrats with fiction, but had settled for truth instead, "which is more than I can say for" the latest SPD policy statement on peace and security. Jovially, Perle said he had "learned from experience that while conservatives are sounder on policy, Social Democrats have a terrific sense of humor—which

Europe wishes Perle would shut his mouth

is a good thing for any party that is out of power and busy producing a 19-page policy statement that is likely to prolong that unhappy status."

Perle went on to describe the policy paper by SPD Security Policy Commission Chairman Andreas von Bülow as "19 pages of wishful thinking, romantic rhetoric and advice on battlefield tactics that would send a private first class into convulsive laughter—if he were certain he would never be called

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upon to implement it." The best he could say for SPD policy statements was that "none of us in office would wish to defend all of the statements made while in opposition."

The SPD looked forward to a worldwide order that would replace national defense systems. Perle took care of that: "If you have the United Nations in mind, you can count us out. But I rather doubt that you have anything in mind. World government is one of those shibboleths that appears from time to time in documents such as these on the theory that those who are for it will appreciate the sentiment and those who know better won't take it seriously."

Perle dismissed as "starry-eyed idealism" the notion that a continuation of detente could lead to peaceful competition between the Eastern and Western political systems. He reiterated the Reagan administration

view that the Soviet Union was engaging in "subversion on a grand scale." Most fundamentally, Perle refused to recognize any merit in the SPD view that each bloc, or each superpower, feels threatened by the military power of the other and that therefore a recognition of the legitimate security needs of both sides must prelude efforts to stop the arms race and move toward disarmament.

"No serious observer of the NATO alliance believes that NATO threatens the security of the Soviet Union," Perle asserted. "I believe it is time we stopped pretending that the Soviets have any plausible basis for professing insecurity at the hands of an alliance whose defensive character is its single most striking characteristic." There is only one side to the story, and the Soviets are to blame for everything, including "flagrant violations" of the ABM Treaty (see story on page 2).

Specific SPD proposals—a freeze on Star Wars, abandoning deployment of Pershing and cruise missiles, a stop to chemical weapons modernization and a nuclear weapons-free zone in Central Europe could, in Perle's view, serve only one purpose: to "harden Soviet positions on arms control." **Grain of truth:** However rude, aggressive, unfair and inaccurate, Perle's attacks on the purely declaratory nature of SPD policy statements do not entirely miss the mark. Those statements, compromises between the party's left and right wings, are criticized by both as largely meaningless. Thus Perle's

scorn brings out the impotence of a party of accommodation in a time when dominant powers reject accommodation.

He told the SPD finally that "only the spirit of Anatoly Shcharansky" could lead to the sort of free and equitable society Social Democrats say they want.

This final remark was a provocative reminder that ever since he worked for the late Sen. Henry Jackson, Perle has been involved in scuttling detente policies such as expanded East-West trade in favor of a policy of pressure on the Soviet Union to obtain greater emigration of Soviet Jews to Israel. At the Pentagon, Perle has tried to check German technology export while favoring the Israeli arms industry. The Iran arms revelations have shown that in crucial areas such as the Gulf war, the Israeli-U.S. alliance is much more functional and organic than the U.S.' relationship with most of its European NATO allies, and that Israeli policy interests seem to carry more weight.

A member of the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs (JINSA), which is dedicated to explaining and strengthening "the link between U.S. national security and Israel's security," Perle has been a key contributor to this organic alliance. Journalist Claudia Wright has reported in the *New Statesman* that Perle himself worked as a consultant for Israeli arms manufacturers in 1980 and 1981. In 1981 Perle appointed JINSA founder Stephen Bryen to a Pentagon job in charge of safeguarding export of U.S. arms and military technology from smuggling and illegal diversion to U.S. enemies.

Defense Secretary Weinberger reorganized the Pentagon's trade control section, creating a new Technology Security Center headed by Perle with broad powers to review export licenses. Perle negotiated a secret agreement attached to the March 1986 U.S.-West German accord on Strategic Defense Initiative contracts which in effect gives the Pentagon—and Perle himself—greater control over West German technology transfer. This is perceived as an attempt to curb the natural development of West German trade with Eastern Europe. At revelations of East German spying in Bonn, Perle rumbles about the security "danger from Germany."

The Star Wars agreement reached with Israel last May is not known to be so restrictive. Moreover, the exceptional free-trade agreement between Israel and the U.S. is an incitement to European companies to participate in joint ventures with Israel to break into the U.S. market.

Throughout Europe Perle is perceived as the most extreme manifestation of the Reagan administration's privileged alliance with Israel, combined with more or less open disdain for European attitudes.

The political effect of this seems to favor the right. In public, political leaders tend to be discreet about such U.S. bullying, but in private it is likely to strengthen tendencies to be tough in defending national interests. Tough, that is, in traditional—and modern—ways that were discredited in post-war Germany by the horrible excesses of Nazism, such as arms development and militarism. One nationalism feeds another. The lesson drawn by Germany's conservative leaders from the example of the Israeli-U.S. partnership is likely to be emulated in some ways—that is, to be less inhibited in pursuing old-fashioned power goals. □



Richard Perle is considered the most powerful man in Reagan's Pentagon.

By Lois Raimondo

THE GATE OF HEAVENLY PEACE GUARDS THE southern approach to the former imperial palace complex in Beijing. Over the past century, the gate has come to symbolize the paradoxical nature of China's violent struggle toward "modernization" and renewal. In recent months, with the outbreak of student protests across China, the gate has once again borne quiet witness to a power struggle between the government and the people.

Since the early rebellions against the Qing dynasty almost a century ago, China has been torn by desire for change. That tension, compounded by pressures from within and from without, have made stability within the country all but impossible. Tiananmen Square, or the Gate of Heavenly Peace, sits at the center of the capital and continues to serve as a platform, not always simultaneously, for the voice of the people and the authority of their leaders. Every year at the end of January hundreds of thousands of people gather in front of the gate to celebrate the New Year with fireworks and government-sponsored speeches.

In the fall of 1984 the government organized a different sort of party in Tiananmen Square in an attempt to deal with the country's "unmarried 30s" problem. Singles who went, by invitation, to Tiananmen were matched up by computer and encouraged to "get to know each other."

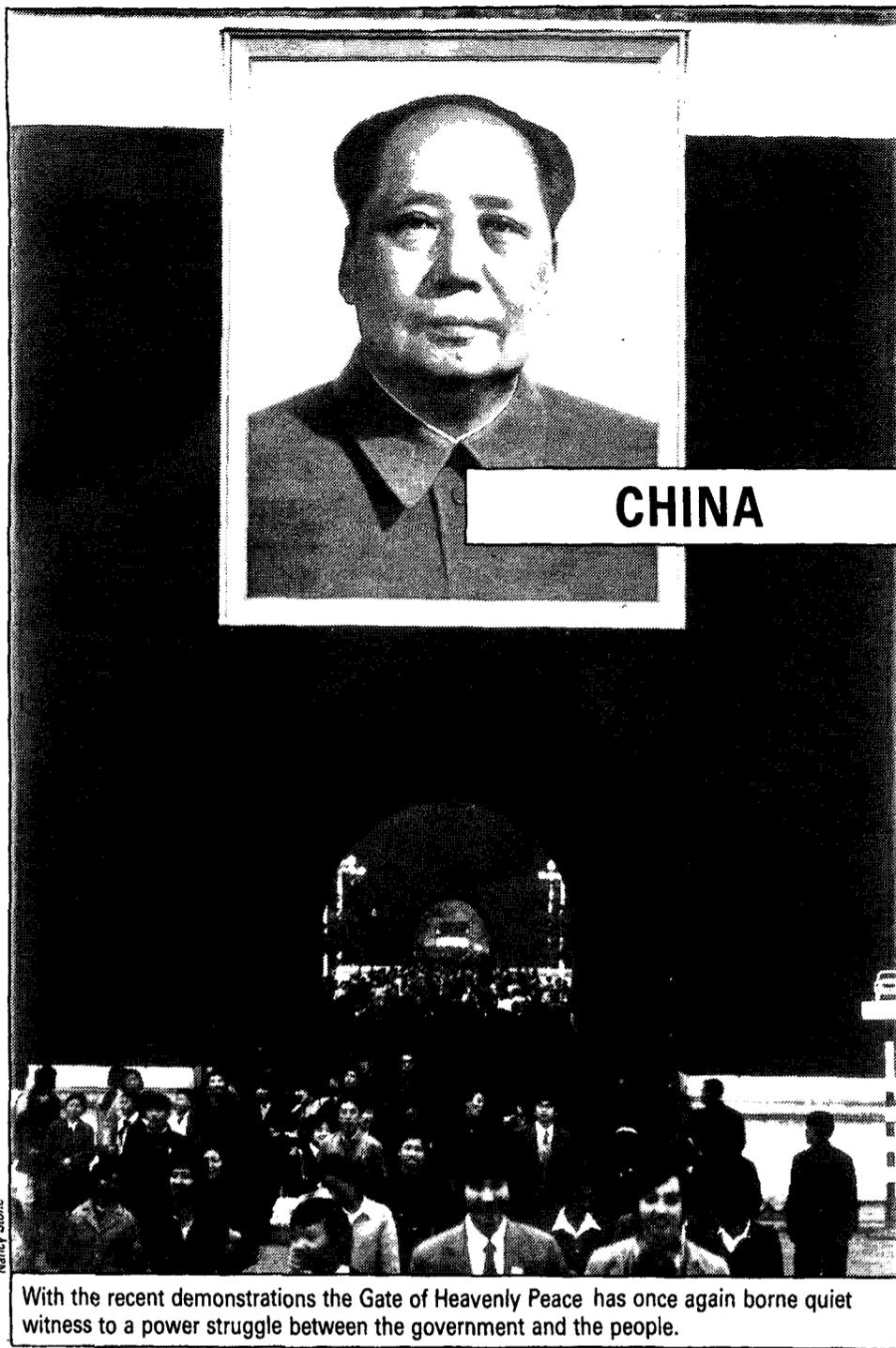
It is true that the Gate of Heavenly Peace has often been viewed as a dream to a better future. But the gate has also stood implacably for the power of the state: "the state," in the words of China scholar Jonathan Spence, "that sought sometimes to prevent such dreams, sometimes to co-opt them, and sometimes wavered uncertainly before their unpredictable force."

North of the gate, the rulers met behind high walls to decide the future of the people; in front of the gate, using it as a marker and a meeting place, political activists, students and workers gathered to protest the ineffectuality of the current regime.

After World War II and the Communist victory of 1949, the Forbidden City area became a museum. And during the Cultural Revolution of 1966 the gate became a reviewing stand in front of which marched the Red Guards, a million or more strong. Then in the late '70s, when the Maoist posters were taken down one by one, a new group of demonstrators gathered in the space between the gate and the mausoleum housing Mao's embalmed corpse to protest the restrictions on thought and movement imposed by Mao's successor governments.

History repeats itself: If one studies the series of revolutions that has wracked China for the past century, a pattern emerges. A single focus does not dominate the dynamic but, instead, an overlapping set of quests becomes clear.

With the collapse of the Qing dynasty in 1912, new structures for politics and new expression in literature and art were encouraged. At the same time, however, the quest for exploration and advancement aroused passions that divided loyalties and developed divergent power bases. The struggle for power between the Communist Party and the Nationalist Guomindang dominates Chinese history between 1924-49. During that struggle, each of these major political parties grew narrow-minded and the vision gave way to violence as weapons of censorship, harassment, intimidation and death



The gate of change swings open, but then slams shut

were employed.

Despite the encouragement that leader Deng Xiaoping has given to students and intellectuals in recent years, his most recent public statement announcing a crackdown on student protesters and "liberal-minded" intellectuals shows Deng to be a man of tradition. According to a report released by the Hong Kong-based *South China Morning Post*, Deng Xiaoping met with six senior leaders last December 30 and said, "When necessary, we must deal severely with those who defy orders. We can afford to shed some blood. Just try as much as possible not to kill anyone."

Deng's comments were included in the party Central Committee's No. 1 directive for 1987, which has been widely circulated among party members, other officials and relevant work units throughout China. Circulars from the Central Committee set the party's major agenda items, and this is the first time in five years that the party's No. 1 circular for the year does not deal with agricultural reforms.

According to *Wen Wei Po*, a pro-Peking Hong Kong newspaper, the objective of the 1987 campaign will be to demonstrate the superiority of socialism and reverse the trend to bourgeois liberalism.

With this month's purge of Fang Lizhi, Liu Binyan and Wang Ruowang, the Chinese Communist leadership demonstrated its intent to maintain the current directions in party policy.

At the same meeting that Deng demanded protests be stopped, he said, "These few years have been too lax in curbing the tides of bourgeois liberalism. Allowing some rightist influence is essential and correct, but we have gone overboard."

Many students who approved of Deng's economic reforms now face disappointment as he turns against their requests. Deng, himself a victim of the Cultural Revolution, was thought by many to be a "new" leader, not leading or needing the dictatorship apart from the people that many of his predecessors had. Students were hoping for a sympathetic listener in this man who, himself, as both student and teacher was persecuted by an oppressive Chinese leadership (see story on page 8).

will apply force when necessary. In 1957, when Deng was the party's general secretary, he helped lead an anti-rightist campaign in which hundreds of thousands of intellectuals were sent to labor camps or to work in the countryside after they had criticized the government in response to Mao Zedong's call

for "letting a hundred flowers bloom."

For thousands of years Chinese political leaders have exercised various degrees of authoritarian and feudal control over the people. Like the leaders who have gone before him, Deng seems able to put the memory of personal oppression aside and, in his own time, repress the voices who speak to him.

Voices from near and far: Hu Yaobang, a comrade of Deng's for over 30 years, was purged from the party earlier this month and replaced by Premier Zhao Ziyang. Hu and Deng had both taken part in the Long March of 1934-35 when the Communists fled to the remote north of China to escape the Nationalist forces. As party secretary, Hu was a known supporter of Deng's economic reforms and, until his ouster, was believed by many to be Deng's most likely successor.

The dynamics of the recent student demonstrations are part of a persistent pattern evident not only in China, but also in Western reports about the nation.

The protests that opened in Hefei in early December were quickly heralded in the Western press as proof that the Chinese leadership had gone "liberal." Overzealous reports of democratic gains for the Chinese people are, in part, the result of viewing events out of historical context. And they are also the result of weighing heavily the profits made by Western business people, who in recent years have come to enjoy China as a potential marketplace of one billion people.

But recent developments highlight China's historical cycles. The current government is willing to make certain changes for the moment—in this case, economic—but it will not tolerate independent thinking.

The thousands of student protesters who recently took to the streets in China do speak of mass support for change in China. The fact that the recent demonstrations were so widespread is a social barometer of the intense frustration and discontent that so many of China's youth have felt living in China today. Their dedication and commitment to change can be measured in the protest itself—coming at a time when the political pendulum of punishment swings erratically between life and death for any dissenter.

The protests' intensity and organization are a tribute to both the adaptability and the courage of a people struggling to survive in a world that is ideologically speculative and politically tumultuous.

Even after the Chinese government ordered police to use speaker systems and broadcast announcements of arrest, five years imprisonment and sentencing to hard labor for any person caught "instigating the overthrow of the proletarian dictatorship and the socialist system with counter-revolutionary slogans and leaflets," thousands of Chinese students chose to continue to demonstrate in Beijing's streets using banners and big-character posters in their protest against centralized power and their push for greater democratic freedoms for the Chinese people.

If the vociferous, six-week-long demonstrations that swept across China have ended quietly, and somewhat predictably, in front of the Gate of Heavenly Peace, then the gate has once again borne witness to the paradox of "change" in China. Because there is a long tradition in China of letting the flowers bloom, if briefly, and then crushing the petals with a heavy hand. □

Lois Raimondo recently returned from a one-year stay in China.