



PRIME MINISTER

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**SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER
MEMORIAL CEREMONY FOR THOSE KILLED IN CHINA
CANBERRA - 9 JUNE 1989**

For more than a month now, the eyes of the world have been on China.

We witnessed a massive rallying of people in Beijing and Shanghai and heard the powerful expression of their will in the cause of democratic reform.

We were inspired by the idealism and courage of youth - the peaceful determination of students to create a better future, and the support that rallied around their cause from throughout Chinese society.

Our spirits were buoyed by the optimism of their vision and, no matter how far we were from the events in Tian'anmen Square, our hearts were with them.

Then last weekend, our optimism was shattered as we watched in horror the unyielding forces of repression brutally killing the vision of youth.

Unarmed young men and women were sprayed with bullets and crushed by tanks. Innocent people were shot and beaten in the streets and in their homes.

Incredibly, despite the horror and the risks, we have witnessed acts of indescribable bravery on our television screens:

- A lone man standing in front of a row of tanks, the strength of his will stalling the might of armour as it rolled down a Beijing street.
- Young people confronting lines of armed troops, not in anger, but in disbelief that an army could unleash force on its own people with such cruelty.

Thousands have been killed and injured, victims of a leadership that seems determined to hang on to the reins of power at any cost - at awful human cost.

We meet here to mourn this tragedy and to share the grief of those who have lost members of their families, their loved ones and their friends, and to express our profound sympathy to the Chinese-Australian community that has expressed its outrage at the massacre in Beijing.

We meet here to show our support for the Chinese people and to reaffirm our commitment to the ideals of democracy and freedom of expression that they have so eloquently espoused.

And we meet here reflecting on the very future of China, which in recent years had built up so much goodwill in the international community of nations, which had already come to play such a welcome and constructive role in our region, and which promised to do so much more.

It is my sincere hope and, indeed, my resolute conviction, that the values and aspirations of those who have been so brutally repressed over the past week will eventually triumph, that the death and suffering will not have been in vain, that the path of reform and modernisation will be renewed.

We all pray that moderation will eventually prevail, so that a new and better China can rise from this carnage, a China that befits the courage and determination of its people.

I call on the Chinese Government to withdraw its troops from deployment against unarmed civilians, and to respect the will of its people.

To crush the spirit and body of youth is to crush the very future of China itself.
