

28 Sept. 1990

100 activists rally at China Day reception

MORE than 100 activists and students staged a demonstration outside the venue of an official cocktail party celebrating China's National Day last night as policemen armed with tear-gas stood by.

"No National Fete, Only National Sorrow!" shouted the protesters — some of whom wore masks of top Chinese leader, Mr Deng Xiaoping, and the Premier, Mr Li Peng — in reference to the crushing of the pro-democracy movement in Beijing last year.

Despite efforts to stop them, a small group of Chinese University students succeeded in breaking through the 200-strong police cordon and get near the World Trade Centre tower where the reception was held.

Some of the demonstrators shouted abuse at official guests as they arrived for the festivities.

The demonstration was organised by nine groups including the Hongkong Federation of Students, the Democracy Forum and the April 5 Action Group — a radical political group whose members came to a confrontation and scuffle with police in Causeway Bay at almost the same time last year.

At the reception, China's top representative in Hongkong, Mr Zhou Nan, sent a friendly signal on Sino-British relations by calling on the two sides to learn to respect each other and co-operate.

Speaking to more than 2,500 local dignitaries, including the Governor, Sir David Wilson, the director of the local branch of the New China News Agency (NCNA) said Sino-British co-operation would have great impact on Hongkong during the transitional period.

"On our part, we hope the two governments will always respect each other, treat each other with sincerity, and maintain a good relationship over the Hongkong issue on the basis of faithful implementation of the Joint Declaration," he said.

Mr Zhou said the achievements and progress made by China in the past 41 years were universally acknowledged, despite many twists and turns.

In an apparent attempt to create a cordial mood, Mr Zhou made no reference to the theme that Hongkong was being used as a subversive base against China, an accusation which was prevalent last year.

In his three-page speech, Mr Zhou said: "We are happy to see that the overwhelming majority of Hongkong people compatriots love their motherland and sincerely hope she will maintain a long-term stability and prosperity.

In his speech, the Governor stressed the importance to Hongkong of a good Sino-British relationship, noting that this year had seen an improvement in this area.

"I look forward to seeing this continue," Sir David said.

The Governor said there had been much contact between Hongkong and China at government level, with about 60 Hongkong Government delegations having visited China so far this year.

"Such contacts are valuable — indeed essential," Sir David said.

"I hope to see a further development of such exchange in both directions, including visits at a senior level."

Outside the reception venue, police deployed about 200 officers, some carrying tear-gas, at almost every junction in the vicinity to ensure the protesters caused no disruption.

The protest began about 6 pm when the demonstrators started marching along Great George Street and then turned left into Pater-son Street.

They were stopped at the end of the street, where an alley leads to the World Trade Centre.

Without attempting to break the barricade, as happened last year, the protesters turned back and then decided to proceed to the headquarters of the NCNA.

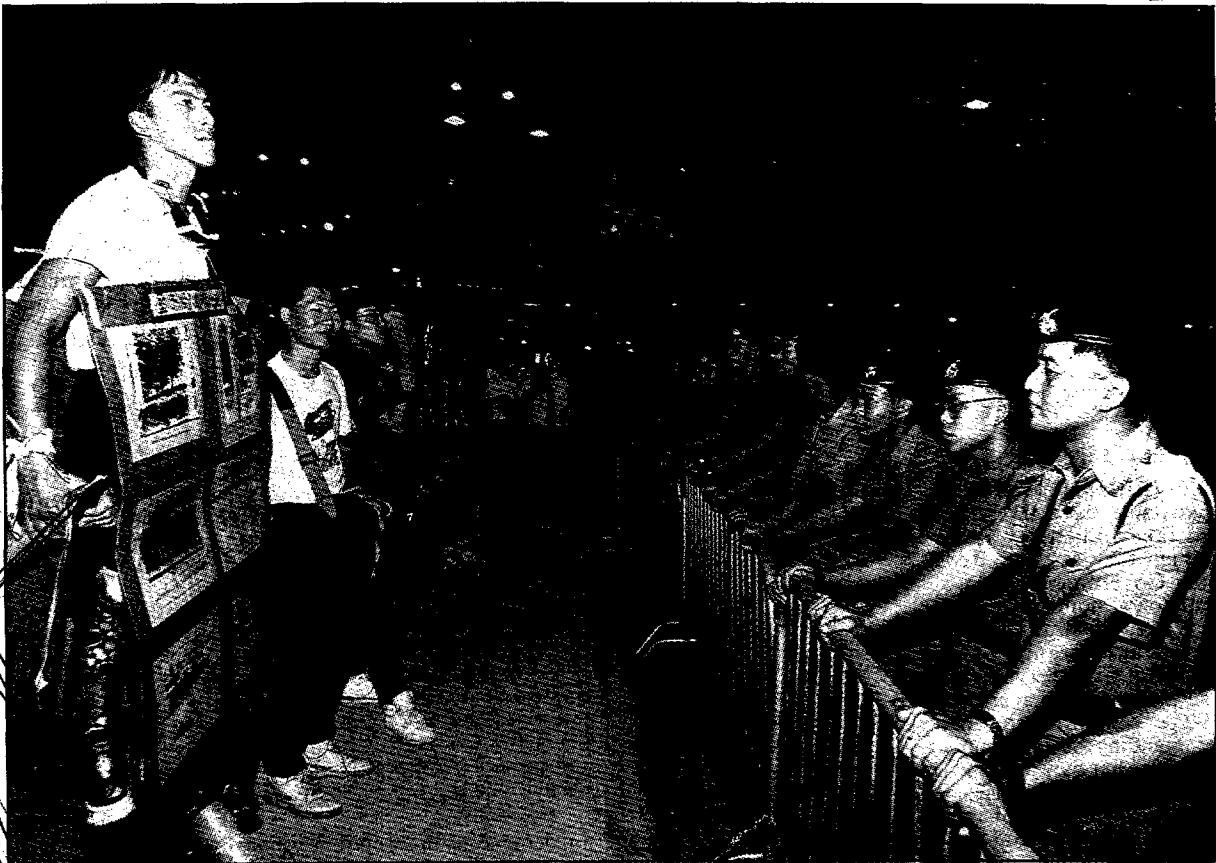
29 Sept. 1990

M. Chan



A strong police cordon keeps the protesters at bay outside the New China News Agency office in Wan Chai.

Eric Li



Protesters shout abuse at guests arriving at a cocktail party celebrating China's National Day in Causeway Bay.