

Vietnam deploys dancers to foil protests

By Chris Brummitt
The Associated Press

HANOI, Vietnam — Anti-China protesters hoping to lay wreaths at a famous statue in the Vietnamese capital were obstructed by an unusual sight of ballroom dancers and an energetic aerobics class held to a thumping sound system.

The demonstrators suspect the government deployed the dancers as a way to stop them from getting close to the statue and make their speeches inaudible. The few who tried to get close to the statue of Ly Thai To, the founder of Hanoi and a nationalist icon, were shooed away.

The protesters were marking the 35th anniversary of a bloody border war between China and Vietnam, where anger over Beijing's increasingly assertive territorial claims on islands in the South China Sea that Hanoi insists belong to it is already running high.

Relations with China, Vietnam's ideological ally and major trading partner, are a highly sensitive domestic political issue for Hanoi's rulers. They don't want anger on the street against China to



spread to other areas of its repressive rule.

Nguyen Quang A, a well-known dissident, and others attending the rally in Hanoi said the government deployed the dancers at the statue of Ly Thai To, and at another statue nearby, to prevent them gathering there. The tactic appeared to be part of a low-key approach to policing the

event to avoid confrontation. There were scores of plainclothes security officers at the rally, but very few wearing uniforms.

Quang said he asked the dancers to stop for a few minutes but they refused.

Last year the government organized old women to hold a street protest to prevent a visiting U.S. government official from

BALLROOM BLOCKADE. A Vietnamese couple ballroom dances close to a statue in the Vietnamese capital of Hanoi. Anti-China protesters hoping to lay wreaths at the statue believe the dancers were deployed by the government to stop them from gathering. The Vietnamese government is wary of public protests, and normally seeks to quash them. (AP Photos/Chris Brummitt)

reaching a dissident's home, where he was due to talk to him about Hanoi's human-rights record.

Around 70 people took part in the rally close to Hoan Kiem Lake in downtown Hanoi.

They shouted anti-China slogans and took video and photos of each other to be posted on dissident blogs and Facebook pages. After about 90 minutes, they managed to lay their wreaths commemorating the Vietnamese dead in the war at a pagoda before dispersing.

Earlier anti-China protests in the capital have resulted in scuffles or demonstrators being dragged into busses. The government is keen to avoid such images spreading on social media because they make it seem it is defending China against nationalist anger, which is widespread among many Vietnamese.

Huge Filipino charity walk breaks Guinness records

MANILA, The Philippines (AP) — A Philippine Christian sect has broken two records for organizing the largest charity walk in an effort to raise funds for survivors of last year's Typhoon Haiyan (also known as Typhoon Yolanda), according to a Guinness World Records official.

Guinness adjudicator Kirsty Bennett said 175,509 members of the Iglesia ni Cristo took part in the record-setting walk along a scenic Manila bayside boulevard. The previous record was set in Singapore in 2000 when 77,500 people walked to promote healthy living.

Bennett told a news conference in Manila that Iglesia ni Cristo members in 28 other countries also held similar walks over the weekend, with the number of participants reaching 519,221 worldwide — a record for the largest charity walk in multiple venues. The previous record was set in Canada, where 231,635 people took part in a charity walk at various sites in 2007.

"It is a huge achievement," Bennett said before presenting a Guinness certificate to the Christian sect's leaders as the group's members applauded.

An Iglesia spokesman, Edwil Zabala, said his group organized the walk to raise funds to be used for constructing homes and providing livelihoods to thousands of homeless Typhoon Haiyan survivors still living in tents and makeshift homes nearly four months after the disaster.

The typhoon, one of the strongest on record to hit land, tore across the central Philippines on November 8, 2013, leaving more than 6,200 people dead and nearly 1,800 missing.

The storm destroyed or damaged more than a million houses and displaced more than 4 million mostly poor villagers.

The charity walk aimed to urge Filipinos and foreign governments to continue helping survivors.

"We're concerned that donor fatigue may set in," Zabala said. "If we abandon them now, many can't still stand back fully on their own."

Thousands of people walk along a road beside Manila Bay in the Philippines as they join the largest charity walk to raise funds for survivors of last year's devastating typhoon. (AP Photo/Iglesia ni Cristo)



Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Goal

Federal Fiscal Years (FFY) 2014 - 2016

Notice of Proposed DBE Goal:

ODOT proposes an overall DBE goal of 12.29% for Federal Highway Administration-funded projects for FFY 2014 - 2016. The agency expects 9.61% of the overall goal to be met through neutral measures, and 2.68% through race- and gender-conscious measures in accordance with the agency's USDOT-approved DBE program waiver currently in effect. This calculation is made in accordance with 49CFR Part 26. The final FFY 2014 - 2016 DBE goal will be submitted to FHWA for review on March 31, 2014. The proposed goal and its rationale are available for inspection during normal business hours at the ODOT Office of Civil Rights for 30 days, beginning February 14 to March 17, 2014. ODOT and USDOT will accept comments on the goal until March 31, 2014. ODOT will consider all comments, quantitative and anecdotal data in determining the final goal, which will be posted at: www.oregon.gov/ODOT/CS/CIVILRIGHTS.

Written comments:

Submit by mail, fax, or e-mail to: ODOT, Office of Civil Rights, Attn: DBE Program Manager, 355 Capitol St. NE, MS 31, Salem, OR 97301, Fax: (503) 986-6382, E-mail: OCRinfrequest@odot.state.or.us

Public Meetings:

ODOT will review the proposed goal calculation and hear comments from the public. All interested parties are invited to attend two public meetings to discuss the proposed FFY 2014-2016 DBE Goal.

When: Tues., March 11, 2014, 10am - 12pm
Where: ODOT Headquarters, 355 Capitol St. NE, Gail Achterman Rm. 103, Salem

When: Tues., March 18, 2014, 10am - 12pm
Where: ODOT Reg. 1 Headquarters, Rm. A&B, 123 SW Flanders St., Portland



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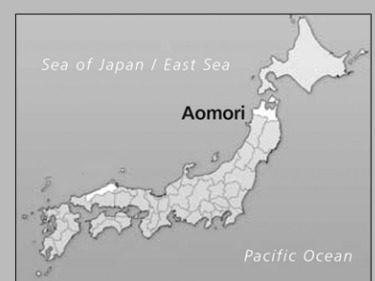
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