

Tens of thousands join Hong Kong Tiananmen rally

By Kelvin Chan
The Associated Press

HONG KONG — Tens of thousands of people in Hong Kong joined a candlelight vigil in a downtown park to commemorate the 25th anniversary of China's bloody military suppression of protests on Beijing's Tiananmen Square.

Participants held candles to remember the victims at the vigil, which turned Victoria Park's six soccer fields into an ocean of flickering light.

More than 180,000 people joined the gathering, according to organizers, while police put the crowd size at about 99,500. It was likely one of the largest turnouts for the annual event in recent years.

Democracy activists laid a wreath at a makeshift memorial as they read out the names of those who were killed in the military suppression on June 3 and 4, 1989, in the heart of Beijing. The



crackdown killed hundreds, possibly thousands, of unarmed protesters and onlookers.

Many participants at the rally wore white headbands on which were written

"June 4 25 years" and followed chants urging China's Communist Party to overturn its verdict on the protest movement. Beijing has said the protests aimed to topple the ruling party and

CRACKDOWN COMMEMORATION. Tens of thousands of people attend a candlelight vigil at Victoria Park in Hong Kong on June 4, 2014 to mark the 25th anniversary of the June 4 Chinese military crackdown on the pro-democracy movement in Beijing. (AP Photo/Cyrus Wong)

plunge China into chaos.

The protests remain a taboo topic in mainland China, and Beijing has never given a full accounting of what happened during the crackdown or its human toll. But in Hong Kong, which retains western-style civil liberties unseen on the mainland, the memory of the Tiananmen protests reinforces the widening differences with China 17 years after the territory ceased to be a British colony.

"When the whole of China is being silenced, I think the people of Hong Kong, now, with the freedom that we have, have the responsibility to light up the candle for them," said Lee Cheuk-yan, a pro-democracy legislator and one of the organizers.

Warning on bulldozing hills for Chinese cities

By Louise Watt
The Associated Press

BEIJING — China's campaign to shave off mountaintops and fill in valleys to make way for cities may come at too high a price in the pollution, erosion, and flooding unleashed by the unprecedented redistribution of earth, Chinese researchers have warned.

Dozens of peaks up to 150 meters (490 feet) tall have been flattened to fill up valleys and create tens of square kilometers of land over the past decade. But there has been little assessment of the costs and environmental impact of these projects, researchers at Chang'an University said in a commentary published in the journal *Nature*.

"Land creation by cutting off hilltops and moving massive quantities of dirt is like performing major surgery on earth's crust," the group said.

In addition to causing air and water pollution, erosion, landslides, and flooding, the projects have destroyed farmlands and habitat for wild animals and plants, the group said.

While mountaintop removal has been done before in mining in the United States, it has never



BULLDOZING BACKLASH. Earth-moving vehicles work at a site in Baidaoing area in Lanzhou in northwest China's Gansu province in these December 10, 2012 file photos. Chinese researchers have warned that China's campaign to shave off mountaintops and fill in valleys to make way for cities may come at too high a price in the pollution, erosion, and flooding unleashed by the unprecedented redistribution of earth. (AP Photos)

been carried out on the scale underway in China or used to construct urban areas, the researchers said.

One of the authors, Li Peiyue, assistant professor of hydrogeology and environmental science, said in an interview that the development of cities must come at a price. "But we believe the government should be cautious in promoting the projects before proper experiments have shown that they are technological, geological, and environmentally feasible," he said.

China's government is in a multi-year drive to move more

rural residents to urban areas to develop into a more modern economy.

The first city to expand by bulldozing its mountaintops was Shiyan in central Hubei province in 2007. The transformation caused landslides and flooding, altered watercourses, and increased the sediment content in local water sources, the commentary said.

In neighboring Shaanxi province, Yan'an city aims to double its area by creating 30.5 square miles of flat ground in a project started in 2012 — in the largest such project attempted on loess, a



kind of wind-blown silt. The project has destroyed farmlands while filling valleys with a kind of earth that may lack firmness and be vulnerable to "geological disasters such as landslides," Li said.

The authors questioned the cost benefits of landfills, noting that the Yan'an project will cost 100 billion yuan (\$16 billion) over 10 years, but that it will take at least that long for the filled-in valleys to become stable enough for building.

Jennifer Turner, director of the China Environment Forum at the Washington, D.C.-based

Wilson Center think tank, said the mountain-moving projects could leave China with more deserts and water shortages, as well as other unforeseen costs.

"There are these uncoordinated massive engineering projects," Turner said. "And I wonder as well ... if anyone's done any analysis, not only on the water footprint, but the energy footprint of actually constructing cities in this way, because cities need cement, they need steel."

Associated Press researcher Yu Bing contributed to this report.

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Notice of Proposed DBE Goal: ODOT proposes an overall DBE goal of 8% for Federal Transit Administration (FTA)-funded projects for FFY 2015 - 2017. The agency expects the overall goal to be met through neutral measures. This calculation is made in accordance with 49 CFR Part 26. The final FFY 2015 - 2017 DBE goal will be submitted to FTA for review on August 1, 2014. The proposed goal and its rationale are available for inspection during normal business hours at the ODOT Office of Civil Rights for 45 days, beginning June 15 to August 1, 2014. ODOT will accept comments on the goal until August 1, 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/.

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