



# Tiananmen and Its Aftermath, June 1989 – November 1991

Rosemary Foot



# Tiananmen square incident

- Demand for political and economic reforms
- **15 April 1989**: death of Hu → tens of thousands of students gathered in Tiananmen Square
- **3 - 4 June 1989**: tanks and heavily armed troops opened fire on demonstrators
- **International sanctions against China... but limited**





# The author's main argument: the limits of the international sanctions

## ❖ What are these sanctions?



- **Provisions in U.S. domestic law** that mandate or authorize the president to take action against China
- **Bilateral suspension** of all arms and war materials sales



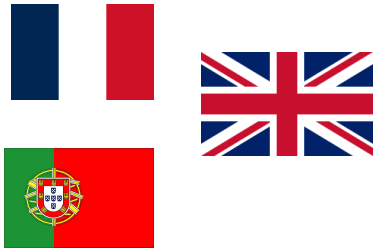
- Call for the **recall** of the US ambassador and the revoking of China's **MFN** trading status



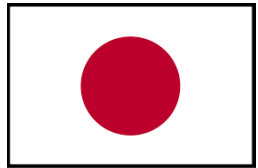
- **Ban** on high-level ministerial **visits** and on sales of military equipment
- Suspension of government-guaranteed **loans**

# The author's main argument: the limits of the international sanctions

## ❖ What are these sanctions?



- Political asylum
- **Exempted** from the ban on high-level ministerial visits



- Terminated the negotiations with China on the **Third Yen Loan package** worth 810 billion yen



- **“mildly worded” resolution** was voted

*‘The Sub-Commission . . . Concerned about the events which took place recently in China and about their consequences in the field of human rights, 1. Requests the Secretary-General to transmit to the Commission on Human Rights information provided by the Government of China and by other reliable sources; 2. Makes an appeal for clemency, in particular in favor of persons deprived of their liberty as a result of the above-mentioned events.’*

The author's main argument:  
the limits of the international  
sanctions

❖ **Relaxation in the international  
sanctions**

• **Bush administration:**

*'Some people think the best way to make changes for human rights in China is isolation: don't talk to them, try to punish them by excommunication. I don't feel that way.'* (Bush, January 1990 Press conference)

- Most-favored-nation (MFN) clause
- Discussions between US and Chinese officials on China's admission to the GATT



# The author's main argument: the limits of the international sanctions

## ❖ Relaxation in the international sanctions

### • Japan:

- Not only economic reasons: relations with China, dual belonging, maintain stability
- Emergency aid, firms in Beijing in full operation, freeze on current aid project lifted

### • European Commission:

- France + Italie + FRG → new loans and authorized their export credit guarantee body to cover the China risk
- Spain: send its Foreign Minister to Beijing





# The author's main argument: the limits of the international sanctions

## ❖ Relaxation in the international sanctions

### • The impact of the Gulf War

- China → great power as UN Security Council member
- Cooperation
- China's Foreign Minister received in Washington, Bank extended 'non-basic-needs' loan to Beijing, Germany unlocked their aid packages and France signed a credit agreement worth FF1,31 billion



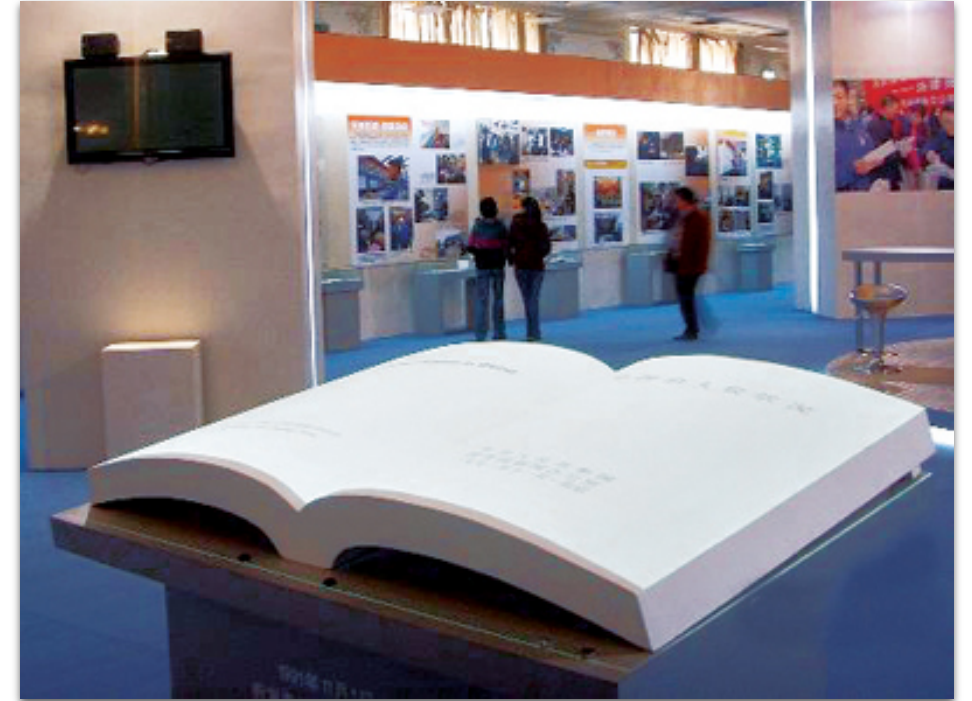
# Limited international sanctions: what consequences?

- Desire to maintain the credibility of a human rights regime
- How best to stabilize the key relationship that had been damaged as a result of Tiananmen



Lift of the martial law, release of three batches of prisoners, willingness to abide by the UN Charter in its respect

- October 1991: publication of a **White Paper** “China’s Human Rights Situation” → promoted the idea of a ‘dialogue’ on human rights between equal, sovereign, states







## CONCLUSION

- Concessions in response to criticism of its human rights violations
- Western states and Japan imposed economic and political sanctions
- Complexities of sustaining the human rights aspect in foreign policy



# A critical look at the author's argument

- Argument supported by evidence: a lot of figures, quotes from official speeches and from UN resolutions, surveys, testimonies, extracts from newspaper articles, book of peers...
- Logical and chronological argumentation, sometimes some inaccuracies
- Mostly discusses the limits of international sanctions in the introduction and focuses more on the difficulty of sustaining the human rights aspect in foreign policy in the conclusion
- Agree with the author's argument → objective and representative facts





An aerial photograph showing two military tanks, likely M1 Abrams, positioned on a multi-lane asphalt road. A person in a white shirt and dark pants stands in the foreground, facing the tanks. The tanks are painted in a camouflage pattern. The road has white lane markings. A vertical pole is visible on the left side of the frame.

THANK YOUR FOR YOUR ATTENTION!