Roh's delegation. I went all the way back to Beijing from the UN to welcome the ROK's delegation. In May 1993, I paid an official visit to the ROK and held talks with its new foreign minister, Han Sung Joo. I also met with the new president, Kim Young Sam.

It has been over a decade since our two countries established diplomatic relations, and in that time bilateral relations have developed beyond our expectations. As close neighbors, the leaders of China and the ROK have made frequent visits to each other and effectively promoted understanding, exchanges, and cooperation between the two countries in all fields. By 2002, the trade volume between us had exceeded US $40 billion. China had become the third largest trading partner of the ROK, which was the fifth largest trading partner of China. In addition, the ROK's investment in China exceeded US $10 billion, and it has continued to increase. Both sides have been strengthening their cooperation in international organizations such as the UN, and in international affairs. China and the ROK have the same objective in safeguarding the peace and stability of the Korean peninsula and in making it a region without nuclear weapons.

In late February 2003, I paid an official visit to Seoul again, to attend the inaugural ceremony of the new president of the ROK. I met the outgoing president, Kim Dae Jung; and the incoming president, Roh Moo Hyun.

From the establishment of diplomatic relations to this day, although the government of the ROK has changed several times, relations between China and the ROK have been developing smoothly, thanks to the solid foundation we laid at the very beginning.

6 WITHSTANDING INTERNATIONAL PRESSURE

During the ten years that I served as China's foreign minister, the most difficult time for Chinese diplomacy was the late 1980s and the early 1990s. All of a sudden, the international situation changed. The governments of Western countries announced one after another that they would impose sanctions against China. Various political powers, for different motives, set off an anti-China campaign. In a little more than one month—from June 5 to July 15, 1989—the United States, Japan, the European Community, and the G7 Economic Summit announced one after another that they would stop all bilateral high-level visits, stop exporting arms for military or commercial purposes, and defer new loans to China provided by international financial organs. For a while, the pressure of isolation was extremely great. China fought back courageously and wisely, and it did not take long before we triumphed over the sanctions and survived the crisis.

History has proved that the Great Wall of China is impregnable.
The Gathering Political Storm

In the warm spring of late April and early May 1989, when flowers were in full bloom everywhere in Beijing, it seemed that the air was filled with restlessness. Many people felt a bit uneasy, as if something unexpected was about to happen.

China’s diplomatic work proceeded as usual. In late May, after seeing off Mikhail Gorbachev, the president of the Soviet Union, I set out on a planned official visit to Latin America. Ecuador was my first destination. Then I would make a stopover in Mexico before I continued on to Cuba, and finally the United States.

Since there was no direct flight from China to Latin America, I boarded a CAAC flight in Beijing on May 31, and flew to Ecuador via the United States on June 2. When I was passing through the United States, the Americans were gracious to me. The security guards knew me very well, as I attended the UN General Assembly there every year. I was under their protection around the clock from the time I entered U.S. territory till I left it. When they bade farewell to me, they said they hoped to see me again in a few days’ time. Unexpectedly, however, I had to cancel my visit to the United States.

On the afternoon of June 3 (the morning of June 4, Beijing time)—the second day after my arrival in Quito, the capital of Ecuador—footage of the “Tiananmen Square incident” from CNN and the BBC was broadcast repeatedly on local television. At that time we were not able to get news from inside China. The usually friendly overseas Chinese in Ecuador were all grave-faced when they asked us what had happened in China. The atmosphere turned tense and grim.

It was extremely difficult to get in touch with people in China at that time. After many efforts, we finally contacted the vice foreign minister, Zhou Nan, who briefed us on what had happened in China. Only a day later did we receive a related report from Beijing.

On June 4, at the harbor city of Guayaquil, I held first a provisional press conference and then a symposium for overseas Chinese, at which I answered many questions. I stressed that China’s policies of reform and opening-up had not changed, and would not change in the future. The local press, as well as some big international news agencies, reported the press conference. They said that China’s foreign minister did not evade questions but gave specific answers, and made clear the position of the Chinese government.

As the situation was becoming more and more serious, I decided to proceed with my visit to Cuba but I canceled my scheduled trip to the United States.

From Ecuador to Cuba, we chose to fly via Mexico. When we arrived at the international airport at Mexico City on the evening of June 6, to make the transfer, I could sense an unusual atmosphere. The foreign ministry of Mexico issued an announcement saying that the Mexican government had canceled the Chinese foreign minister’s visit to the country. The airport lounge was full of reporters who had gotten news of my arrival. For reasons of safety, the Mexican government had made arrangements for us to board a car as soon as we had disembarked from the plane, leaving Gao Shumao, a member of our delegation, responsible for going through the formalities and claiming the luggage. The reporters took him to be the Chinese foreign minister. They rushed up to him and bombarded him with questions. Remaining calm and smiling all the time, Gao did not say a word. Inadvertently, he became the man in the spotlight that night.

Around ten o’clock that evening, some Chinese students who were studying in Mexico came to the Chinese embassy and asked to see me. From the way they banged on the door of the embassy, they seemed to be agitated. I asked the embassy people to let them come into the lobby, where I would meet them. They became quiet after they entered the embassy. I asked what schools they originally came from in China, and what their majors were. I told them honestly what had happened in China. One student said that he hoped I could represent the people. I said that, as foreign minister, I should of course represent my country and people. Then I told them to obtain more news about what had really happened, and advised them not to be credulous. Finally, they all calmed down and left the embassy quietly.

On June 7, we arrived in Havana. As the first Chinese foreign
minister to visit Cuba since Fidel Castro's revolution of 1960, my primary task was to improve relations between China and Cuba, and strengthen mutual understanding.

For years China and Cuba had taken different attitudes toward the Soviet Union. Cuba was closer to the Soviet Union than to China. It was wary of China, having formed many misunderstandings about our country. When the Cuban foreign minister had visited China at the beginning of 1989, he expressed a wish to improve bilateral relations. My trip was a return visit.

The Cuban leader, Fidel Castro, valued my visit. On the following evening, he gave a welcoming banquet in my honor in the Palace of the Revolution. We talked for a long time after the banquet. When the other guests had left, he invited me to his office upstairs, and we continued talking till midnight.

Energetic, enthusiastic, voluble, and inquisitive, Castro displayed a strong interest in everything about China. I briefed him on Gorbachev's recent visit to China and on the normalization of relations between China and the Soviet Union. Castro was pleased, saying that the socialist countries and Third World countries were all in favor of China's normalizing relations with the Soviet Union, which he said was an event of historic significance. He said that the Cuban government fully supported the Chinese government over the Tiananmen Square incident, and would provide a venue or other conditions for me to make any announcement. Castro said China needed solidarity; it should not fall into a state of anarchy, as Western countries hoped it would—that would be a global tragedy.

Castro said that he believed I had made the right decision when I canceled my visit to the United States, as I would have been confronted with numerous provocative questions by the reporters there. I agreed, adding that on such an occasion, no matter what you said, and even if you remained silent, some reporters would distort the facts. When you tried to correct the mistakes, nobody would pay any attention to you. Castro smiled. Obviously, he was one of the people who were constantly vilified by the Western media.

I was impressed by Castro's strong interest in everything having to do with China. He asked me one question after another. He asked about the difference between the southern and northern parts of China, how Hong Kong would be managed after it was returned to the motherland, what route one had to take to travel from China to Cuba, what type of plane one would take, and so on. He listened to me attentively. When our conversation ended at midnight, he did not show any sign of fatigue. Later, when some curious people asked the interpreter what we had talked about, he replied in a humorous way, "Ten thousand whys."*

THE UNITED STATES SENDS A SPECIAL ENVOY TO CHINA

JUST AT THE TIME WHEN THE CALL FOR SANCTIONS AGAINST CHINA BY WESTERN COUNTRIES,ヘEDED BY THE UNITED STATES, WAS AT ITS MOST VEHEMENT, THE UNITED STATES SECRETLY SENT AN ENVOY TO CHINA.

As a matter of fact, imposing sanctions against China did not accord with the United States' global strategy or its long-term interest. In the triangle of China, United States, and the Soviet Union, China and the United States had cooperated effectively to restrain the Soviet Union's expansion. To isolate China would not serve the interest of the United States, and this was clear to the U.S. government.

During that period, President George Bush had several times sent messages to China, saying that he valued Sino-American relations highly. He explained that the sanctions against China were imposed because of pressure from Congress and the general public. He expressed the wish that the Chinese leadership would understand this.

On June 21, 1989, President Bush wrote a secret letter to Deng Xiaoping asking to send a special envoy to China to have a frank talk with Deng. Deng replied to Bush the next day. He pointed out that our relations, which had been cultivated by both sides over many years, were facing a severe challenge. To prevent them from declining

*Ten Thousand Whys is a very popular Chinese children's book (note by translator).
further, Deng agreed to let Bush send a special envoy in top secrecy, with whom, he said, he was willing to hold frank and sincere talks. Bush decided to send the national security adviser, Brent Scowcroft, accompanied only by a deputy secretary of state, Lawrence Eagleburger; and a secretary.

The U.S. government had spent much time pondering the selection of the special envoy. Officials revealed in private that they had considered sending the former president Richard Nixon or the former secretary of state Henry Kissinger, but because both were so famous it would be difficult to keep the visit a secret. Scowcroft held an important post in the Bush administration, and so sending him to China indicated that the U.S. government valued Sino-American relations, but at the same time would not attract much attention.

In his book *The Politics of Diplomacy*, the former U.S. secretary of state James Baker said that President Bush originally wanted to send only Scowcroft to China, but Baker objected. He told Bush that if the United States sent only an official from the National Security Committee with no one from the State Department accompanying him, it would be difficult for the U.S. diplomatic mechanism to work. In fact, Baker himself wanted to be the special envoy, as he says in his book, but this proved difficult, so his deputy, Eagleburger, accompanied Scowcroft.

After Scowcroft arrived in China, he was not to have any contact with the U.S. embassy, which would not be informed of his activities in Beijing. James R. Lilley, U.S. ambassador to China, had already left Beijing on orders from the U.S. government. In the United States, only President Bush and Secretary of State James Baker knew of the secret visit.

The United States also deliberately chose July 1 as the day of the visit. Since it was near the Fourth of July, Scowcroft’s leaving Washington on that day would not attract much attention. The plane was a C-141 military transport disguised as a commercial carrier. It would refuel in midair, and it carried special communications equipment so that Scowcroft would not have to use the equipment in the U.S. embassy in Beijing. In fact, the United States took more stringent measures to keep Scowcroft’s visit to China secret than it had done when Kissinger flew from Pakistan to China on his secret diplomatic mission in the early 1970s. At least the U.S. ambassador to Pakistan had been informed of Kissinger’s secret trip to China. The present case was a demonstration of how complicated and sensitive Sino-American relations were at the end of the 1980s.

Interestingly, in his book *A World Transformed*, co-written with President Bush, Scowcroft says that when the C-141 was entering China, none of the few people in China who knew of the secret visit had thought of informing the military. So the air defense troops telephoned President Yang Shangkun to report an unidentified airplane entering Chinese territory near Shanghai and asked if they should shoot it down. Scowcroft says that he was lucky, because the call was put through to the office of President Yang, who told the military that it was a plane with a most important mission.

However, I am dubious about the perilous experience described by Scowcroft. As far as I know, the Chinese and American sides had fully exchanged views about the route of Scowcroft’s plane and the time when it would enter Chinese territory, and the Chinese government had made careful arrangements. The Americans had asked if their plane could avoid the route over Shanghai in order to save time. But we thought that would be more complicated as far as formalities were concerned and it would not save much time, so we did not accept the request. We did agree that the American plane would carry no national identification. Still, the plane entered Chinese territory along a route and at a time designated by China.

In any case, Scowcroft arrived in Beijing on the afternoon of July 1, at the Capital Airport. No national flags were displayed at the venues for meetings, talks, or banquets, or on the car Scowcroft used or at the hotel where he was staying. No news reports were released about his arrival or when he left Beijing. All photographs were taken with the prior consent of Scowcroft, and they were sealed as historical materials.

Scowcroft had a tight schedule in China. He was to stay only for twenty hours. Deng Xiaoping would meet him first, and then Li Peng
and I would have talks with him. This was a very important visit because it would decide in which direction Sino-American relations would move.

Deng himself set the keynote for his meeting with Scowcroft. Before the meeting, on the morning of July 2, Deng said to Li Peng and me, “We will talk only about principles today. We shall not talk about specifics. We don’t care about the sanctions. We are not scared by them.”

I told Deng that the G7 Economic Summit would soon be convened, and might then impose new sanctions on China.

Deng said in a firm tone, “Not even seventy nations can daunt us, let alone seven!” He said that we wanted to improve Sino-American relations, but we were not afraid of the Americans. Fear would not help us. The Chinese people should have backbone and aspirations. Have we ever feared anybody? After liberation, we fought a war with the United States, which had an overwhelming advantage over us, with air supremacy. But we were not afraid of them. China, as a nation, feared no evil spirits nor any blusters. Deng stressed that all diplomats should keep this in mind.

Deng then went into the Fujian Room in the Great Hall of the People, where he said to Scowcroft, “I know you have long been concerned about the development of Sino-American relations. You were involved in the historic visit to China of President Nixon and Dr. Kissinger in 1972. We have many friends like you in the United States.” Then Deng pointed out that current Sino-American relations were in a delicate, or one could even say perilous, state. Actions on the part of the United States that would lead our relations to a dangerous situation, or even to a final rupture, were continuing, he said. There was no sign of cessation. On the contrary, the pace was stepping up. Three days earlier, the U.S. House of Representatives had passed a measure imposing further sanctions on China. Still, he said, there were cool-headed high-level leaders on both sides. In the United States there was President Bush; in China there was himself as well as other Chinese leaders. But the issue could not be solved by a few friends only. What President Bush said would serve the interests of the United States. What Deng and other Chinese leaders said, and the decisions they made, would serve the interests of the Chinese nation and the Chinese people, he stressed.

Deng blamed the United States for the current situation. China had not offended the United States. It was the United States that had directly infringed on the interests and prestige of China in many regions. There was a Chinese saying, “It is up to the person who tied the knot to untie it.” He said that we hoped the Americans would do something concrete to win back the trust of the Chinese people and stop adding fuel to the fire.

Deng also objected to the United States’ interference in the Chinese legal system. He told Scowcroft clearly that China would allow no outside interference in its internal affairs. China would not make concessions no matter what the consequences. The Chinese leaders would not take rash actions or make thoughtless remarks in regard to Sino-American relations then or in the future. But China would remain steadfast when it came to safeguarding its independence, sovereignty, and national dignity.

Scowcroft said that President Bush was a real friend of Deng and the Chinese people. He had had direct and close contacts with China and the Chinese. This experience of his made him unique among the presidents of the United States.

Hearing this, Deng remarked that Bush had explored the streets of Beijing on a bicycle. Everyone laughed and the atmosphere became more relaxed.

Scowcroft said, “Yes, it is precisely because of the above reason that President Bush recently wrote a letter in person to you and sent me to China to convey his message.”

He defended the United States’ decision to impose sanctions on China. He said he had not come to China to negotiate specific plans for solving the difficulties in current Sino-American relations. Rather, he was in China to explain to us the difficulties faced by President Bush, and Bush’s determination to safeguard, restore, and improve Sino-American relations. Because of domestic circumstances in each country, our relationship was now facing its greatest disturbance
since Nixon’s first visit to China. President Bush was uneasy about this, so he had chosen Scowcroft for this secret trip to make contact with the Chinese leaders and safeguard Sino-American relations.

Scowcroft said that Congress had asked the Bush administration to adopt harsher measures. President Bush had opposed the bill and would oppose it in the future. But if Congress passed the bill unanimously, Bush would be in a very difficult position if he tried to veto it. The president did not always have enough power to influence in which direction a situation would turn.

Deng told Scowcroft sternly that he hoped American politicians and ordinary Americans understood one fact. The Communist Party of China had led the Chinese people in fighting wars for twenty-two years (it would be twenty-five years if the Korean War was included). In these wars more than 20 million people had died, before the Party achieved a final victory and established the People’s Republic. China was an independent country. It implemented a foreign policy of independence and peace. China would not tolerate interference in its internal affairs, nor would it dance to any other country’s tune. China would be able to withstand all difficulties no matter what they were. No political power in China could replace the leadership of the Communist Party. This was not empty talk, he stressed: our experience over the past few decades was proof of it. When dealing with China, all countries must abide by the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, among which were equality and mutual benefit, mutual respect, and noninterference in each other’s internal affairs. We hoped that Sino-American relations would develop on the basis of the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, and that existing problems could be solved properly. Otherwise, China would not be to blame if bilateral relations worsened.

Finally, Deng said, “We agree with some of your comments. But we have different opinions about most of what you said. Anyway, whether this unpleasant situation will be brought to an end depends on what the Americans will say and do in the future.”

Deng then excused himself, and asked Li Peng to continue the talks with Scowcroft. Before Deng left, Scowcroft said to him, “Chairman Deng, you seem to be in good health.” Deng said, whimsically, “I am an old man now. Eight-five years old. The Voice of America first said I was critically ill, and then it said I was dead. Don’t trust rumors.” He thus not only replied to Scowcroft’s polite remark but also criticized the untruthful reports of the U.S. media. Moreover, he hinted to the American government that it was unwise to impose sanctions on China because the decision had been based not on facts but on rumors.

In his talks with Li Peng and me, Scowcroft admitted that actions of the Chinese government were China’s internal affair, but he stressed that some Chinese affairs had an impact on the United States and could develop into political problems there. That was what mattered in the current situation.

Li said that all government leaders, no matter what country, must base their policies on facts. They should not base their principles, policies, or actions on inaccurate information or rumors. There was a saying in China that emotion should not take the place of policies. For a period of time, the policy makers in the United States, including Congress and government leaders, had not had a clear or accurate understanding of what had recently happened in China. Their sentiments had been whipped up by inaccurate information and rumors.

After Scowcroft returned to the United States, he reported to President Bush on his visit to China, particularly his meeting with Deng. On July 28, Bush wrote a secret letter to Deng. In the letter, Bush first thanked Deng for meeting Scowcroft, and then told him that the United States and Japan had deleted some strong wording offensive to China from the final communiqué released by the G7 Economic Summit. Bush also defended the United States’ policy regarding China and attempted to shift the responsibility for the tension in Sino-American relations onto China.

In his letter, Bush said: “Brent Scowcroft told me of your reference to the Chinese proverb: ‘It is up to the person who tied the knot to untie it.’ Herein lies our major dilemma. You feel we ‘tied the knot’ by our actions. But we believe it is what happened next that
‘tied the knot.’ I have great respect for China’s long-standing position about nonintervention in its internal affairs. Because of that, I also understand that I risk straining our friendship when I make suggestions as to what might be done now. But the U.S.-China relationship, which we have both worked so hard to strengthen, demands the candor with which only a friend can speak. In spite of a U.S. Congress that continues to try to compel me to cut off economic ties with China, I will do my best to keep the boat from rocking too much.”

President Bush continued: “Please understand that this letter has been personally written, and is coming to you from one who wants to see us go forward together. Please do not be angry with me if I have crossed the invisible threshold lying between constructive suggestion and ‘internal interference.’ When we last met, you told me you had turned more and more day-to-day matters over to others; but I turn to you now out of respect, a feeling of closeness and, yes, friendship. You have seen it all—you have been up and down. Now I ask you to look with me into the future. This future is one of dramatic change. The United States and China each have much to contribute to this exciting future. We can both do more for world peace and for the welfare of our own people if we can get our relationship back on track.”

On August 11, Deng wrote a reply to Bush. He first expressed his appreciation for Bush’s efforts in maintaining and developing Sino-American relations. Then he gave an explanation of the meaning of “tied the knot.”

Deng said, “It’s true that I talked about ‘tying the knot and untie the knot.’ What I meant was that the United States has become deeply embroiled in China’s internal affairs. It has taken the lead in imposing sanctions on China, and has greatly infringed on China’s interests and dignity. The difficulties thus created in Sino-American relations were caused solely by the Americans, who should take actions to solve the difficulties. The sanctions imposed on China by the United States are still in place, and interference in China’s internal affairs still occurs. I hope this situation can be changed as soon as possible. I believe President Bush can do something in this respect.”

The argument about the meaning of “tying and untying the knot” was not an ordinary argument about the meaning of words. It was the crux of bilateral relations.

From China’s standpoint, it was U.S. interference in China’s internal affairs that had tied a knot in Sino-American relations. Only if the Americans took the initiative could Sino-American relations move forward again. But the Americans did not acknowledge their responsibility. Rather, they put the blame on China. Both sides argued fiercely over this crucial point for the process of lifting the sanctions imposed on China by the United States.

To Tie or Untie the Knot

Scowcroft’s visit to China was the first contact between Chinese and American leaders after the United States announced sanctions against China. His visit did something to keep bilateral relations from worsening. But because the United States did not lift its sanctions, the knot in our relations remained tied.

Meanwhile, though, relations between the United States and the Soviet Union improved somewhat. Leaders of the two countries were to meet at Malta in early December. Concerned that China might become closer to the Soviet Union again, the United States sent another special envoy to China.

On November 6, Bush wrote a letter to Deng, telling him that the forthcoming U.S.-Soviet summit would not impair China’s interests. He said that the geopolitical reason that had led to President Nixon’s first visit to China still applied, and China and the United States had similar interests in many important areas. Bush also said that after he met with the Soviet leader Gorbachev at the summit, he wanted to send a special envoy to China to inform Deng of their talks and discuss ways to normalize Sino-American relations.

At the time when Deng received Bush’s letter, he too was pondering how to resolve the key issue of the impasse. It so happened that Henry Kissinger was visiting China at this time. Kissinger was a longtime friend of the Chinese people and had made great contributions to
the development of Sino-American relations. Deng asked Kissinger to convey a "package solution" of the impasse to Bush.

Deng’s proposals were as follows: (1) China would permit Fang Lizhi and his wife to leave the U.S. embassy in Beijing to go to the United States or a third country, (2) The United States, in ways that suited itself, should make an explicit announcement that it would lift the sanctions on China, (3) Both sides should make efforts to conclude deals on one or two major economic cooperation projects, (4) The United States should extend an invitation to Jiang Zemin to pay an official visit the following year.

The purpose of the proposal was to crack the hard nut that was troubling relations between China and the United States and bring the Sino-American relations back to the normal track.

Upon returning to the United States, Kissinger reported to Bush on his China visit. On November 15, Deng replied to Bush’s letter of November 6, saying, “I always consider you a friend of China. It is my hope that during your term as president Sino-American relations will improve rather than go backward. I hope to change the ever-worsening situation between China and the United States by the time I retire. Since reading your letter, I have had some ideas about how the two sides can work together to restore and improve our bilateral relationship. I have entrusted Dr. Kissinger to pass on my proposals to you. I hope and believe that I will get a positive response from you. Both I myself and China would welcome a special envoy from you.”

The American side responded quickly. On December 1, Bush wrote to Deng, telling him that within a week after the Malta summit between the United States and Soviet leaders Bush would send Brent Scowcroft as his special envoy on an official visit to China to brief the Chinese leaders on the Malta talks. He also asked the Chinese side to further elaborate on the package solution proposed by Deng. Bush said he hoped and believed we could find a way to bring Sino-American relations back to normal.

In his letter, Bush also said he was making efforts to “untie the knot.” He asked China to be cooperative and make the same efforts.

On December 9, Scowcroft visited Beijing again. Accompanying him again were the deputy secretary of state, Lawrence Eagleburger, and others. Unlike his previous visit to China, this two-day visit was an open one. Deng Xiaoping, Jiang Zemin, and Li Peng met with him individually. I also held rounds of talks with him. The first round was scheduled, but the second one was added at his request.

After briefing us about the Malta summit talks, Scowcroft changed the topic to the package solution proposed by China.

I told Scowcroft about our intention when Deng proposed the package solution. First, to serve the best interests of China and the United States, we should end the current dispute as soon as possible, and turn to the future; second, any solutions reached between China and the United States should be effected simultaneously or almost simultaneously; third, if new disputes arose between the two countries later, both sides should exercise great restraint, and keep in close contact to solve the problems.

I said the package solution was a demonstration of China’s good faith. It also took into consideration the United States’ reaction and Bush’s ideas, as mentioned in his previous letter. China also considered follow-up actions: (1) Both sides should make efforts to conclude deals on some major economic cooperation projects, (2) The United States should invite Jiang Zemin for an official visit in the following year. By that time, Sino-American relations should be in relatively good condition.

I stressed that the United States and China should refrain from doing things that would harm the other side. China has never done anything harmful to the United States, I said, and we hoped that the United States would never do anything harmful to China. The United States and China should treat each other properly, and support each other. Only such a situation would contribute to regional and world peace and stability.

I said that I hoped the Americans would give our suggestions serious consideration before giving us their response. If they needed more time, they could give us the reply later. If the United States wanted to have more discussions about the issue with China, I was willing to go to the United States in late January the following year (sometime around China’s Spring Festival).

Scowcroft said that China’s suggestions were very important, and
he would take them back to the United States for further study. Then he told us his initial reaction to our proposals. He attributed the U.S. government’s position on China to the complex political situation in his country, and said that he hoped China would understand. Bush, he said, was not a man who would act on these matters without any restraint. The sanctions on China announced in June were intended to satisfy the demands of the American people. Under the current circumstances, if Bush tried to lift the sanctions, Congress would very probably pass, by an overwhelming majority, a bill that the president could not veto. As for Fang Lizhi, said Scowcroft, he thought that detailed negotiations were needed. He preferred to hold the negotiations in Beijing, but they could also be held in the United States if sensitive topics were to be touched on.

I told him that since the issue was quite complicated, I hoped the United States could study it carefully and work out a plan. A solution to the problem required efforts from both sides, I stressed.

Scowcroft’s official visit to China actually nullified America’s ban on high-level visits. During our talks, both sides agreed to end the dispute as soon as possible, and to move toward the future. Some progress was made in Sino-American relations.

Several days later, the U.S. deputy secretary of state, Lawrence Eagleburger, put forward a counterview. He said the United States would, in principle, accept China’s package proposal, but he wanted to make the following statements. First, in order to satisfy the common interests of all parties concerned, the U.S. ambassador to China, James R. Lilley, would talk with a Chinese representative about the issue of Fang Lizhi. Second, other aspects of Sino-American relations would be discussed in Washington between the Chinese ambassador there and American representatives. Third, the United States agreed in principle to make serious efforts to reach agreements on cooperative projects, and would welcome China’s suggestions for these projects. Fourth, the United States agreed in principle to invite Jiang Zemin to visit the United States sometime in the following year, so as to complete the process of bringing bilateral relations back on track. Fifth, the United States was willing to make a proposal about an action plan to be adopted by both sides to resume normal relations.

While Scowcroft’s visit to China helped improve bilateral relations, it caused trouble for him at home. At the welcoming banquet held in his honor, we proposed toasts to each other. This scene was captured by the media, and when the pictures were printed in newspapers and were shown on televised news programs, they caused a great stir in the U.S. mass media. In his book *A World Transformed*, Scowcroft said that picture of him and his Chinese host toasting each other caused him great embarrassment in the United States. When I visited the United States in 2002, Scowcroft mentioned the incident, complaining to me in a joking tone, “You really made me suffer.”

It was routine diplomatic protocol for the Chinese host to give a welcoming banquet to Scowcroft, a special envoy of the U.S. on an official visit to China. His was a diplomatic mission aimed at safeguarding the interests of the United States. The reason some media and individuals in the United States made a fuss about the visit was that they wanted to exert pressure on the Bush administration, which stood for maintaining relations with China.

Twists and Turns

After Scowcroft returned to the United States, there were signs of improvement in Sino-American relations, but just at this moment dramatic changes took place in eastern Europe.

The Romanian government was rocked by domestic unrest. The ruling Romanian Communist Party was overthrown overnight, and its leader, Nicolae Ceausescu, was executed on December 25.

The political changes in eastern Europe brought about changes in the international situation. The United States began to assess the general situation of the world, and was no longer so eager to improve relations with China. Thus Sino-American relations backpedaled to where they had been before China’s package solution was proposed. The package solution was put aside.

In *A World Transformed*, Scowcroft gives his explanation of how
the United States saw the situation. He believed that the downfall of Ceausescu caused China to backpedal in regard to Sino-American relations. The truth was just the opposite: China did not backpedal; it was the United States that backpedaled, because it did not know whether China could withstand the storm following the changes in eastern Europe.

In April 1990, China suggested sending a special envoy to the United States to inform it of Li Peng’s recent visit to the Soviet Union, and to exchange views on existing problems in bilateral relations. The United States rejected the suggestion, saying that the domestic atmosphere was not suitable for such a visit. Soon afterward, the United States suggested that officials from both sides meet in a third country. China believed that exchanging the latest information was something between China and the United States, and that this should not be done in a third country, so it rejected the United States’ suggestion. Because of the United States’ negative attitude, no special envoy was sent to the United States.

On May 14, Deng Xiaoping asked Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, who was in China on an official visit, to convey a message to President Bush. In the message, Deng cautioned Bush not to get too excited over what had happened in eastern Europe, and not to treat China in the same manner as it treated the eastern European countries. Otherwise, new disputes or even conflicts would arise, and these would serve the interests of neither country.

The historic changes in eastern Europe, plus the political turmoil in the Soviet Union, dramatically altered the strategic foundation for Sino-American cooperation. Believing that they no longer needed China’s cooperation, some people in the United States began to talk about how to “restrain China.”

With this background, the United States turned a deaf ear to Deng Xiaoping’s advice, and Sino-American relations again reached an impasse.

In the summer of 1990, Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait set off the Gulf crisis. This had a direct effect on the interests of the United States. The Gulf region had oil reserves accounting for two-thirds of the total in the world, and so it was a lifeline for the economies of the United States and other western countries. The United States knew that if it did not stop Iraq’s military expansion immediately, its own interests and the interests of the other Western countries would suffer seriously.

When the United States began to deal with the Gulf crisis, it realized that it needed China’s cooperation more than at any time before. The United States needed China’s support if it wanted to get authorization from the UN Security Council to use force to expel the Iraqi troops from Kuwait. As two of the five permanent members of the Security Council, China and the United States shouldered important tasks in solving major international problems and easing regional conflicts. Consultation between the two countries was required to deal with unexpected incidents around the world. The existing deadlock would not serve the interests of either side, nor would it be conducive to world peace and stability.

The United States had to reassess its relations with China, and it began to try to improve bilateral relations. From then on, Sino-American relations took a turn for the better.

On the afternoon of August 31, the American embassy in China passed a letter from President Bush to Deng Xiaoping. In the letter, Bush said that the United States would not lower the level of Sino-American relations, which he considered to be of strategic importance. The United States appreciated China’s position regarding the occupation of Kuwait by Iraq.

I was to pay an official visit to Iraq in November that year. When James Baker, the U.S. secretary of state, heard about this, he said he would be on a tour of the Middle East at the same time and hoped to meet me in Cairo to exchange views about the invasion.

On the afternoon of November 6, I met Baker in a waiting room at Cairo International Airport. Baker said he hoped that China would not obstruct the passage of any resolution by the UN Security Council authorizing the use of all necessary means, including military action, against Iraq. In exchange for China’s support, he promised that the United States would find an appropriate time to lift the sanctions.
against China, and would not oppose a World Bank plan to provide loans worth US$110 million to be used for projects under China's Spark Program.

I told him that the United States was already lagging behind in economic cooperation. Improvements had been made between China and Japan and between China and the European Community in economic cooperation, China did not link the Gulf crisis to Sino-American relations. No matter in which direction these relations eventually went, China, as always, would stick to the position that all conflicts should be resolved through peaceful means.

As the situation in the Gulf region got more and more tense, the United States was determined to use military force against Iraq. Whether it could get authorization for this from the UN Security Council became a pressing task for its diplomacy. How China would vote in the Security Council would be vital as to whether or not the United States could legitimately send troops to the Gulf region.

Baker handled foreign affairs as if he were doing business. At the negotiating table, he liked to say, "Let's make a deal." This time was no exception. From the meeting at Cairo International Airport to another one in New York at midnight on November 28 to the voting in the Security Council on November 29, he always used meetings with President Bush as his bargaining counters in "making deals."

I have described the development of this matter in detail in chapter 3, "Flying to Baghdad," so I shall not repeat it here.

Baker's Visit to China

On October 10, 1991, Bush told Zhu Qizhen, the Chinese ambassador to the United States, that he had decided to send Baker on a visit to China—and without attaching any conditions. Bush said this was his own decision.

Bush told Zhu that it was extremely important for both sides to restore Sino-American relations to normal, for this would best serve the interests of both countries. He said that he hoped Baker's visit to China would be a turning point in bilateral relations. Bush stressed that, given the political climate in the United States, both sides must ensure that Baker's visit was a success. A general election was to be held in the United States the following year, and the political climate there would have an impact on Sino-American relations. Therefore, both sides must take action quickly; otherwise, he would be powerless to maintain bilateral relations.

On November 15, 1991, Baker arrived in Beijing for an official visit. This was the first visit to China by the secretary of state since the United States had severed all contacts and halted visits with Chinese leaders in 1989.

Although the tension between China and the United States had eased slightly, making contact was still a sensitive topic, and the situation in the United States had become even more delicate.

Probably having learned some lessons from Scowcroft's visit, Baker told the Chinese side several times that he had come to discuss and solve problems. He said that he hoped the press would publish photos of his meetings with Chinese leaders rather than photos showing them clinking glasses at banquets.

I held several rounds of talks with Baker. He said that the visit itself indicated that the ban on top-level contacts between China and the United States had been lifted. This was politically unpopular in the United States, and many Americans found it very difficult to understand. The U.S. Congress was anxious to take over the decision-making power concerning policy toward China. If it succeeded, that would be a disaster for Sino-American relations. If Baker's visit to China was unfruitful, it would be more difficult to maintain the bilateral relationship, he explained. So his visit itself was tantamount to "having filled up the Chinese basket." Now he hoped he had a full basket when he returned to the United States.

I asked him what he wanted to put into his basket. His answer was straightforward. He said that he actually had three empty baskets: (1) arms proliferation prevention; (2) promoting economic cooperation; (3) promoting human rights.

During their meeting, Premier Li Peng told Baker that China did not object to holding discussions about the three topics, and that it
hoped to put something into each one. China, however, had its own empty baskets, and it hoped the United States would support its bid to restore its status as a founding country of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade.

The two countries now began arduous negotiations regarding how to fill up each other’s “baskets.”

During the evening banquet on November 15, Baker requested a private meeting with me. At our meeting, he said repeatedly that the most important thing was what we were going to tell the press about this visit to show that we had made achievements. I said that if China did not get anything out of the negotiations, there would also be strong repercussions in China. When Scowcroft visited China two years previously, both sides had come to some agreement, and China had taken some actions. But the United States did not honor some of its commitments. The changing situation in eastern Europe had probably caused the United States to adopt a “wait and see” attitude. So, if both sides had reached agreement on some issues, they must carry out the agreement. If they could not reach an agreement, they should tell the public why.

Baker said that if China asked Bush to do more than what China was able to do in return, it would increase dissatisfaction in the United States. It was crucial to show that his visit had led to achievements, so that the people at home would recognize the importance of his visit.

At noon on November 17, the last round of talks between Baker and me was held. The negotiations, which went on until five-thirty P.M., were extremely difficult, and the departure of the American delegation had to be delayed seven times. There were heated arguments, but all the people on both sides, including both foreign ministers, worked continuously, with no one leaving the site of the talks.

Finally, the negotiations achieved some progress. The American side promised to support China’s bid to join GATT, and the difficulty surrounding the time for Taiwan’s entry into GATT would be solved in the same way as Taiwan’s admittance to APEC. The United States agreed to cancel the three punitive measures, including banning the export of satellites to China, announced on June 16 of that year. It also promised to nullify Special Article 301 imposed on China. The United States would give serious consideration to establishing three joint committees on trade, economy, and science and technology. And it agreed to resume the ministerial conference at an appropriate time the following year.

China promised to adhere to the MTCR Guidelines and Annex, on condition that the United States lifted the ban on the export of satellites to China. It also promised to do more to protect intellectual property rights, on condition that the United States nullify Special Article 301 imposed on China.

China insisted on the principle that its internal affairs should not be interfered with by other countries when the issue of human rights was discussed. Still, it briefed the United States on matters the latter was concerned about. The United States produced a long list of detained Chinese “dissidents,” which was full of mistakes. Some names were written only in Roman letters, without Chinese characters, so it was hard to identify who was meant. There was a Wu Jianmin on the list. I told Baker that the director of the Information Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was called Wu Jianmin, and he was right here in the room. And Wu Jianmin said, “Yes, I am here.” Baker joked, “Oh, you’ve been released.” Everyone burst out laughing.

Baker was satisfied with his visit, and Bush also considered Baker’s visit fruitful and of positive significance for Sino-American relations. Media around the world also responded positively. The visit was generally considered a success for China’s diplomacy. It marked the beginning of the lifting of sanctions that had been imposed on China by the United States and other Western countries for two years and more.

**DIVIDE AND DEMORALIZE THE ANTI-CINA FORCES**

Japan was a reluctant member of the Western bloc of countries that imposed sanctions against China. It endorsed the resolution of the G7 Economic Summit imposing sanctions simply because it
wanted to take the same position as the other six countries.

On August 1, 1989, I met the Japanese foreign minister, Mit-suzuka Hiroshi, in Paris, where I was attending the international conference on Cambodia. He told me that Japan had explained China's position at the G7 Economic Summit held fifteen days earlier. It had advised the Western world not to escalate sanctions against China. As stability resumed in China, in 1990 Japan ratified the granting of the third batch of loans to China that had been put on hold after the Tiananmen incident.

Of course, Japan did this for its own interests, and China regarded Japan as a weak link in the united front of Western countries that had imposed sanctions against China—and therefore the best target for attacking such sanctions. In addition, China had other strategic considerations when it chose Japan as the first country to be persuaded to lift the sanctions. Through high-level contacts between the two countries, China invited the Japanese emperor to pay his first visit to China, and bring the bilateral relationship to a new stage. In the 2,000-year history of exchanges between Japan and China, no Japanese emperor had ever visited China. If the Japanese emperor paid a visit to China, that would not only break Western countries' ban on high-level visits with China but it would also be of profound significance for Sino-Japanese relations. It would also prompt more ordinary Japanese to support the policy of friendship toward China.

To realize such a visit entailed a great deal of careful work. First, we needed to increase contacts between the foreign ministers of the two countries.

The Japanese foreign minister, Nakayama Taro, paid an official visit to China from April 5 to 7, 1991. During our talks, I told him that although there had been difficulties and setbacks, bilateral relations had improved since the latter part of the previous year, thanks to efforts made by both sides. That year, the minister of finance, Hashimoto Ryutaro, and the construction minister, Nakao Eiichi, had already visited China, and Nakayama was on his first visit to China. I expressed appreciation to Japan for its efforts, and for being the first country in the Western bloc to resume and improve relations with China. Nakayama said that he hoped I could pay an official visit to Japan before the Japanese prime minister, Kaifu Toshiki, visited China. We could decide on the schedule of Kaifu's visit during my visit to Japan.

Since the following year was the twentieth anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Japan, Nakayama suggested that both countries undertake various activities, including visits by their leaders. I said I totally agreed with his suggestion. I also said that if the Japanese emperor could pay an official visit to China the following year, it would be the most important event in Sino-Japanese relations. The Chinese people would give the emperor a warm welcome, taking the friendly relationship between our two countries to a new stage. Nakayama said that the Japanese government would study China's suggestion.

About two months later, from June 25 to 28, I paid a return visit to Japan, meeting Nakayama again. We continued our discussions about the programs to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations.

I said that twenty years was but a short moment in the history of bilateral relations. The anniversary provided us with an opportunity to review the past and open up the future, and to discuss conscientiously how to promote Sino-Japanese relations in the third decade following normalization. I suggested that we hold one more round of high-level visits the following year, and then told Nakayama again that China would welcome a visit by the Japanese emperor.

Nakayama agreed with what I said. Then we decided on the date of Kaifu Toshiki's visit to China in August. As to the Japanese emperor's visit, Nakayama said that his government was still pondering the matter.

On August 10, 1991, Prime Minister Kaifu Toshiki arrived in Beijing, becoming the first head of government from a Western-bloc country to pay an official visit to China since the West had imposed sanctions against China. His visit indicated that Japan had lifted the sanctions and that bilateral relations had been resumed.

Since Japan was the only country that had suffered atomic bomb-
the situation in one country could be different from that in another country, stressing that human rights should be embodied in the laws of each country and protected by its laws. This meeting marked the end of the ban on high-level contacts between Europe and China.

It is worth mentioning that when China’s diplomacy was undergoing its most difficult time, many Western countries still maintained friendly relations with China. One of them was Spain, which said it could understand what had happened in China. After the Tiananmen incident of 1989, Spain had kept implementing a loan agreement signed with China, and other economic cooperation projects. It also made efforts to restore political contacts with China.

On October 1, 1990, the Spanish foreign minister, Francisco F. Ordonez, made an appointment to meet with me in New York. During our meeting, he said that Spain had all along supported maintaining friendly relations with China. Spain was pleased at the good atmosphere in which the talks between the Chinese foreign minister and the three EC foreign ministers had been held. He told me that those EC countries which had favored tough measures against China had somewhat changed their attitude. The foreign ministers of the EC would hold a meeting the following week, at which they would make the decision to resume relations with China as soon as possible.

During that meeting, we reached an agreement that our two countries would exchange official visits soon. In November 1990, Ordonez paid an official visit to China, becoming the first foreign minister from the West to do so after the EC lifted its sanctions against China. Three months later, I paid an official visit to Spain.

Ordonez, who had been diagnosed with cancer, bought some royal jelly in China, and found that it gave him strength. When I heard about this, I particularly asked someone to take more royal jelly to him, in the hope that this Chinese medicine would build up his resistance and help him return to health eventually.

Given the fact that more and more countries were violating the ban on contacts with China, the EC foreign ministers finally announced after the Luxembourg conference on October 23, 1990, that except for contacts at the level of head of government, military exchanges and cooperation, and the arms trade, the EC would lift all the restrictive measures against China that had been adopted since June 1989. Moreover, it would normalize relations with China immediately.

Spain and Italy played a positive role in prompting the EC to make the announcement. This was a step taken by the EC in its attempt to improve relations with China, and another major victory for China in its fight against the sanctions imposed by the West.

A Friend in Need Is a Friend Indeed

In those difficult years when Western countries were imposing sanctions against China, we felt grateful to the developing countries, who took our side and gave us much-needed support.

Though they could not make up for the economic losses caused by the sanctions, the developing countries had given us much support politically. At the UN General Assembly, in particular, leaders and foreign ministers from Asia, Africa, and Latin America were as friendly to China as ever. Frequent contacts with them became a principal part of my activities outside conferences.

The UN General Assembly sessions were normally held every September in New York. The daily agenda was usually tight. Still, I would find time to meet leaders or foreign ministers from Asia, Africa, and Latin America. I normally met with thirty to forty such leaders every year when I was in New York to attend the General Assembly. I made it a point to meet the foreign ministers of ASEAN, the Gulf countries, and the Rio Group every year.

Foreign ministers from African countries often praised China for its foreign policy. They expressed their hope of strengthening solidarity with China, and of making concerted efforts for economic development and world peace. Thanking them, I would say that the most important thing was to develop the economy and increase a country's strength. Only then could a country have its say in international affairs, and play a greater and more critical role in safeguarding world peace.

The Gulf countries showed great concern about what China thought of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990. When I met the foreign ministers of the Gulf countries, I told them that China had always
opposed the invasion, and had asked Iraq to withdraw its troops from Kuwait. At that time the situation in the Gulf was tense. It was a hot topic at and outside the UN. My statement helped give the Gulf countries a good understanding of China’s position. Everyone was serious at the start of the meetings, but the atmosphere lightened up after the talks had been under way for a while.

The foreign ministers of the Latin American countries showed great interest in China’s economic growth, and in its policies regarding reform and opening-up. I gave them brief accounts.

Relations between China and the ASEAN countries had improved greatly by this time. After Indonesia resumed diplomatic relations with China, Singapore and Brunei established diplomatic relations with China. The communiqués for establishing diplomatic relations were signed by me and the foreign ministers of the two countries in New York during the UN General Assembly session.

A relationship between countries, just like a friendship between people, needs to be tested in adversity. The relations between China and the developing countries had withstood the trials and tribulations. The support of these old friends greatly eased the difficulties faced by China, and gave it more strength to break the sanctions imposed on it.

**The Sky Did Not Clear Up after the Rain**

As a large country, China has an important strategic status on the international stage. It is a huge market, with great potential. In this time of global economic integration, countries have to become ever more interdependent if they want to develop. With this background, China needs the rest of the world, and the rest of the world also needs China.

The sanctions imposed on China by the Western countries went against the tide of history and against the principles guiding international relations. While they harmed China, the Western countries suffered as well. So it was only two years before they were lifted.

But the diplomatic struggles continued. Sino-American relations, for instance, did not remain stable for long. One incident after another cropped up to trouble the relationship.

Some people probably still remember the “Yinhe incident.” On the basis of its intelligence, the United States insisted that the Chinese cargo vessel Yinhe was heading for a certain country with materials to be used for making chemical weapons. After careful investigation, China found that the accusation was not based on facts, and informed the United States of the result of its investigation. Chinese leaders also issued a statement making clear the government’s position on the matter. Believing their intelligence was reliable, the United States persisted with its own investigation. When the Yinhe docked, the United States had all the containers moved ashore, and U.S. specialists searched them thoroughly. To their disappointment, they did not find the materials which they claimed were being carried. The event became a farce.

In 1997, Jiang Zemin paid an official visit to the United States, and in 1998 President Bill Clinton visited China. Sino-American relations were advancing smoothly, but then in May 1999 the Chinese embassy in Yugoslavia was hit by five U.S. missiles. The attack killed three Chinese journalists and injured more than twenty others. The news infuriated the Chinese people and shocked the world. The American airplanes involved took off from the U.S. mainland, followed the route, and struck a target worked out by a control center. All five missiles hit the intended target. How could anyone say that the attack was a “mistake”?

In 2001, shortly after the Republicans won the presidential election, I was sent on a visit to Washington, where I met President George W. Bush, Vice President Dick Cheney, Secretary of State Colin Powell, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, and National Security Adviser Condolezza Rice. We talked about bilateral relations and international issues. The talks were satisfactory, and both sides expressed the hope that Sino-American relations would advance smoothly. Unexpectedly, only a week later, an aircraft collision happened over the South China Sea. It might have seemed to be an accidental occurrence. But U.S. spy planes frequently had been flying close to Chinese territory in the South China Sea area. Given these circumstances, the midair collision seemed anything but accidental.