China, the UN, and Human Protection, with Rosemary Foot
October 7, 2020

Ezra Vogel: Okay, I want to welcome all of you to our weekly session and we're very fortunate to have with us Rosemary Foot. But first I'm gonna ask Nick to remind new people, how we're gonna do the questions, Nick.

Nick Drake: Thank you Ezra. So those of you who have been here before, you know how to do this, those of you who are new welcome. At the bottom of your screen you can see the options for Zoom and one of those is a Q&A tab. You just click into that you can submit questions. You should be able to do so anonymously if you wish this meeting is being recorded and will be up on YouTube after the event. So please use that option if you want. If you aren't submitting questions anonymously, please identify yourself and your affiliation so we know who's asking the question. Thank you very much.

Ezra Vogel: We're very pleased to have with us today Rosemary Foot who's coming to us straight from Oxford. Her home right near Oxford. And she's been many years at St. Anthony's, which is the International School Oaktree. Rosemary has trained a lot of the PhD Anatomy in England, but in China and around the world. Who working on International Relations for many decades. She first went to China in 1974. She spent time at Red Dawn, she spent time at Fudan. She is spent time at Columbia and Harvard and other universities in the United States. She's been an international figure. And I think she's trained something like 30 PhDs, Rosemary you said something like that?

Rosemary Foot: That's right yeah. And at least 50% women so that's.

Ezra Vogel: You done very well. And so she's really been one of the great leaders in the field of China International Relations. And she has a new book out. And so we're very fortunate to have her talk about her new book today. She's just hitting a road now. She's just talking to Chatham House in England already about her new book. And so she'll tell us about her new book on the United Nations issues. So without further a do, Rosemary it's yours.

Rosemary Foot: Thank you very much Vogel Ezra. Thanks for a really generous introduction and for inviting me to be with you today.

Ezra Vogel: We're delighted to have you.

Rosemary Foot: Yeah, I wish I could be there in person. That's really in college of course. And thanks to the Fairbank Center. And I should also mention Bob Ross, actually, who was very kind in suggesting that we try and set something up when I was with him, in what seems like very Halcyon days. Now in Oslo, we were both at a conference in Oslo. Seems like a completely different world when I think back to that time. But anyway, I'm here now on Zoom. And I thought I'd probably begin by trying to give some kind of broad context for the book. Why did I do this particular book? Why did I focus on these questions involving the UN? And it's partly because for some time. I've been interested in the implications of China's Resurgence for Global
and Regional Order. I find it one of the most defining questions in International Relations Scholarship.

**Rosemary Foot:** And of course, its importance to the policy world as well. And then that interest has been further deepened because the Chinese themselves have talked a lot about their intention to play a larger role in Global Governance. That they have a good story to tell it's time for them to start telling this story. And they have special responsibilities as they would put it to fulfill. Xi Jinping in particular, has made a number of Statements where he talks about China leading the reform of Global Governance. In Cheshire, there was a Statement along the lines that China should actively participate in the formulation of international rules become participant, promoters, leaders in the process of Global Governance changes. So this is a big change I think. We're in an era of greater Chinese ambition, an era where it's creating new International Organizations. We're all familiar with the AIB of course. And is offering alternative bowstring sometimes more familiar, Global Ordering principles. And in when I think about it, I see China's sort of networking in what I call loose influence groups.

**Rosemary Foot:** So for example, with the like-minded group at the Human Rights Council or with the G77, plus China in the UN General Assembly. Or of course by the Belt and Road Initiative. And I decided that I wanted to explore questions like this through a study of China in the UN. Because I see the United Nations as a useful platform in many ways for China to articulate its beliefs, World Order related believes. It's a important platform for exercising power. And it's also China, a place where China sort of uses the opportunities to boost its international image. So this idea of being a responsible great power. You probably noticed that China regularly references the fact that it was the first country to put its signature on the UN Charter. Of course, it doesn't mention that it happened to be the Nationalist government of China that did that. But nevertheless, that's in several Statements, official Statements, it's the first country to sign the UN Charter.

**Rosemary Foot:** And the idea is that it therefore played a major role in the creation of Post-War Order. And it's also singled out the United Nations as the most authoritative representative multilateral organization that we have. And it's stressing that since '45, it's made a major contribution to the workings of the UN. And even more so in the Post-Cold War era. And I'll come on to that in a minute. So despite the fact that the PRC doesn't get to be a member of the UN till 1971, there is now a discourse about this positive relationship between China and the United Nations. And certainly, the UN has been a major multilateral institution since 1945. It's an institution that tries to reflect a world of shared norms. It expresses these in the via the UN Charter, but also in various other UN documents. And it's a key component, if you like, of the liberal dimensions of Global Order.

**Rosemary Foot:** I mean, we see that in its practices, its commitment to open debate, its inclusiveness or States. Virtually all States in the International System are members, transparency via the documentation of meetings, the involvement of non-State actors in its deliberations. All of these factors reinforce the UN's association with liberal dimensions of Global Order. And in normative terms, these liberal elements actually have been reinforced in the Post-Cold War era. As the UN has turned to a focus on Human Protection, hence, the title of my book. So from the 1990s in particular, you see the UN operating on the basis of a broadening
of the concept of security. And arguing that internal breakdowns over State security as well as large scale. Violence directed at individuals pose potential challenges to international peace and security. And one of the most important statements along those lines was that given by Kofi Annan, in 1999. Very famous statement, where he says along the lines of in our contemporary reading of the UN Charter.

Rosemary Foot: We are more than ever conscious, that his aim is to protect individual human beings not to protect those who abuse them. And that was very sort of evocative of this kind of Post-Cold War framing for the role that the United Nations might play. So over the period from the late 1990s, through the 2000s, you see, the UN trying to incorporate as core norms in its deliberations, the idea of the protection of civilians in armed conflict, that governments have a responsibility to protect their peoples from mass atrocity crimes. Governments need to recognize the differentiated and negative consequences of conflict for women and children in particular. They need to take actions to stop the widespread use of conflict related sexual violence with a new Human Rights Council to replace the Human Rights Commission in 2006. That Human Rights Council requires all States to count account for the lapses and triumphs, of course in its Human Rights protected through what's called the Universal Periodic Review Process. And where they have lapsed, they are required to seek remedies.

Rosemary Foot: And since China determined to increase its influence in the resources that it devotes to the UN, then the steady this, the study of this relationship between China and the UN, I think helps us to navigate questions of particular interest to IR scholars, as well as to policymakers, as I said earlier. So questions like, is China reshaping International Organizations from within? If at all, should we regard China as a revisionist, reformist, status quo power the sorts of categories that Avery Goldstein used in his very recent International Security article? Or is it seen as an adopter, an adapter, or a reformer? Sorts of questions Shaun Breslin in the UK has been asking. Does Beijing represent a challenge to liberal dimensions of Global Order? And if so, what kind of challenge what degree of challenge?

Rosemary Foot: To quote Jessica Chen Weiss who I think has also spoken at the Fairbanks Center. Recently, she had a very very helpful foreign affairs article where she asked the question is China making it a world that safer autocracy? Or if you play off the title of John Ikenberry's new book, that title is really saying, does it is it are the changes that we're witnessing in Global Order, making it a world that's actually less safe for democratic countries? So that was the sort of broad context for my study. But if I turn more don't explicitly to the research puzzle at the heart of this. Why did I come into this?

Rosemary Foot: I came into it because of matters of timing, China becomes more deeply involved in the work of the UN at the time when the UN is moving beyond Westphalian principles. Into this era where it's focused on human protection, those issue areas I talked about earlier. So the decision to focus on human protection is because it's an idea that invites normative contestation of a particularly fundamental kind for a government like China that's privileged the security of the State, above that of the security of the individual. So human protection appeals to sort of Universalist cosmopolitan principles implies imposing limited limits on sovereignty. And yet China became more deeply active within the United Nations, at this time, when the UN is turning its focus to human protection. And it's also a time of course, when China has increased
capacity to project its beliefs in the values of State based pluralism and acceptance of diversity and difference. So my next research question was along the lines of how is China actually working within international institutions like the UN? That have taken a direction, that seems, appears to challenge its core beliefs?

Rosemary Foot: So the book explores a series of how questions, how is it working? Through the various issue areas that I outlined at the start protection of civilians are two up work in the Human Rights Council. Women, peace and security agenda and so on. As a number of you will know, I'm influenced by a constructivist an English school approaches to IR theorizing. And they've influenced the framing of the project that I'm talking about today. So I'm sympathetic to approaches that explore the social construction of reality. Yes, of course, I am interested in changes in material power. But I'm also interested in the how that changes the social interpretation of a particular State and a particular State's behavior. So I'm interested in the social context in which decisions are made and taken.

Rosemary Foot: My subtitle of the book, Beliefs, Power, Image. So what I'm doing in by drawing out those three elements is I'm saying that there's an interrelationship among these three elements that needs to be explored. So I'm talking about a kind of mutually constitutive relationship between China's power that is its material and social influence. And I mean by that power, yes, certainly that can be used as leverage, but power or has the ability to set agendas to gain non-coerced followership. And to perhaps to shift the meaning of dominant global norms towards an interpretation that is closer to those that the State believes validates its own position. And I look at international image, particularly images responsible, great power, because it's important to China both domestically and internationally. And it shapes its perspectives and the positions it takes in a number of these issue areas I'm looking at.

Rosemary Foot: I think about domestic ideological beliefs. And note that if you look over a long long historical period, a set of beliefs derived from several different phases of China's political progression, and coalesce around the idea if I put it in a fairly benign form. That a governing authorities success requires strong centralizing institutions, social harmony, or otherwise known as social stability. And recognition of the larger social value of economic development. So in uncovering that interrelationship, I hope will help us to explain the dynamic nature of Beijing's policy responses and helps us understand how China's responded in the UN as the bodies attempted to move towards a post-Westphalian Global Order. So I'm hoping that the empirical work undertaken in the book shows that China's growing power has been used in service of the firmer articulation of its ideological beliefs together with an effort to reconstitute what it actually means to be a responsible, great power in the global system. So by China, by operating as an engaged actor in the UN, by engaging in public debate, in an environment that is actually quite sympathetic to the idea is that it's been putting forward. It can potentially reconstitute what is understood by responsible international behavior.

Rosemary Foot: Turning to the broad findings of the research. What I argue in the book is that China is offering an alternative set of understandings. Alternative to dominant UN understandings, at least among the Secretariat and some member States and civil society about how best to give effect to human protection. And I'm gonna try and represent this in pictorial
form. So the idea is to share the screen here. And I hope that is the case, that I'm showing PowerPoints here. Somebody tell me if I'm--

**Ezra Vogel:** It's working it's working.

**Rosemary Foot:** Okay, great. So this is the sort of the basic UN's Three-Pillar Structure. You can't have development Secretary General say, without peace and security, you can't have security without development. And you can have neither of those two things without attention to Human Rights. That's the sort of the core formulation of the UN Three-Pillar Structure. And it's, of course, it's built into the UN Charter. But China's come to articulate something rather different. And I think I have decided to call it a Triadic Model. It's not a term that they use. But it is a model that looks something like this. Where you link, as I said, earlier, development, social stability, strong State. That aids in conflict prevention, conflict resolution, and it leads the protection of people. That model I think, has come out more clearly, especially since the presidency of Xi Jingping.

**Rosemary Foot:** It's not that these ideas weren't mentioned in earlier periods, but they have become form made more formal in various presentations. And it's a model that, again, you can see in official documents, official Statements. If you look at Xi Jingping's Statement at the 75th anniversary of the UN just the other day, they these elements are represented in that Statement. What it does of course, is it's a model that downgrades the significance of Human Rights contrary to the place given your rights in the UN Three-Pillar Structure. And it also downgrades a role for civil society in this term of social stability and I'll come on to that in a bit later on. If I put this in a slightly different form, again, just drawing out a couple of concepts here that have sovereignty and security. Again, the table is designed just to show point up some of the differences between dominant UN understandings. And Chinese understandings of particular elements of these two concepts of sovereignty and security.

**Rosemary Foot:** But I want to flag straight away that the heading United Nations in this table is in some senses covering up a great deal of complexity. So that the table is suggesting a Beijing that's attempting to undermine support, or at least is challenging the Three-Pillar Structure that the UN Secretariat and the Charter continues to advance. But Beijing's support for its own model among developing countries represented in the UN has become quite large. Now, yes, this is in part because of economic leverage or use of economic laws yes. But also as a result of China's demonstrable economic success in sustaining high growth rates until very recently. Bringing some 800 million Chinese out of poverty as the economic organs of the United Nations themselves constantly reference. And this immediately raises questions for me then, about the extent to which China actually has to act. Because there's something of an alignment in Chinese views and the views of other States within the United Nations. So China doesn't always have to act there is, as I suggested, in my earlier part of the presentation, there is a degree of non coerce followership where China is concerned.

**Rosemary Foot:** And that then raises questions about what kind of normative order the United Nations actually represents the extent to which this Post-Cold War, post-Westphalian framing, that are referred to as actually taken root. And so that, again, in turn raises questions about the level of Beijing's challenge to this component of Global Order. Let me give you some flavor of
what these generalized concepts mean in terms of actual policy positions. So I do some of this in the fourth slide here. But I'll say a bit more than is in the slide itself. So across this various dimensions of human protection, we see Beijing promoting and linking each leg of the Triadic Model that I tried to introduce to you. So the State is predominant rather than the individual. And it promotes this through narrowing the or trying to narrow the concept of what represents a genuine threat to international peace and security. And therefore restraining attempting to restrain what should be on the UN Security Council agenda.

**Rosemary Foot:** So we would prefer to move the focus away from evidence of mass atrocity crimes as threats to international peace and security. Or what could be considered civil wars as threats to international peace and security. Some diluting to some degree the emphasis on protecting civilians towards firmer support for the government in power. It makes plain I think that the UN Security Council should be considered basically as an enabler or supporter of the government in power. So you will find many Statements repeated that the Security Council should provide constructive assistance but must respect the sovereignty of the country concerned. And when there's evidence of some kind of some form of atrocity crime having been committed inside a State then domestic judicial institutions are to be the ones that address this question and seek redress. China links the the status and the developmental legs of the models, again in various different ways. So if we turn to as the UN constantly does focus on capacity building for fragile States. This becomes a development issue for China one that should involve ECOSOC, UNDP rather than the Security Council.

**Rosemary Foot:** So, again, China States that the Security Council should reduce its concern with security sector reform inside States. Reduce its attention to the building of inclusive and representative political institutions focus much more on the economic aspects on the development side. If you think about our TwoP responsibility to protect that has a Three-Pillar formulation associated with it. Pillar one says it's the State's responsibility to protect its population from mass atrocity crimes. Pillar two says that, in its attention to international assistance, that the international role is to build State capacities to help the State in question in its atrocity prevention role. And in Beijing argues in addition, that it's the State in question that needs to determine what kind of assistance it need and when it needs it. And the pillar three element of our TwoP, which is about an international community response in the event the State is manifestly failing to protect its population gets relatively little attention in China. When China thinks about the causes of conflict and therefore conflict prevention, conflict resolution, then those things are bound up in its view with poverty and underdevelopment.

**Rosemary Foot:** When it turns to when Beijing turns to the women peace and security agenda, again, it becomes a China a women's rights and development issue. So women's rights, it's States have the prerogative of the government in power or at most something of international concern for the Commission on the Status of Women. Women's empowerment which is a key feature of the Women, Peace and Security agenda, should be promoted through the development arm of the UN. China says even though the concept of empowerment in this WPS agenda is actually much much larger than that. If we look at China's diplomacy in the Human Rights Council, then we see China promoting more vigorously to alternative norms and challenging more directly the focus on the universality and indivisibility of Human Rights. So Xi Jinping, in a speech in Geneva in January 2017, at the Palais des Nations, a firm sovereign equality as the most important norm,
governing State to State relations. And that in itself as the main protector of Human Rights. And China from June 27 teams started introducing its own resolutions at the Human Rights Council. We hadn't done that before. And they were about the contribution of development to the enjoyment of all Human Rights. And about mutually beneficial cooperation in the area of Human Rights. On the emphasis, that is, when it's placed this emphasis on development, it's obviously again, repeating that we need to raise the profile of economic, social and cultural rights. And it's arguing for development as a foundational right from which other rights might eventually flow. And is also arguing to some degree that cultural diversity raises fundamental questions about universal principles.

Rosemary Foot: Just quickly turning to the social stability lake of China's trading model. And this is particularly the case after the Arab Spring. Official statements emphasize the duty of governments to maintain Public Security public order, the need to curb the use of social media. It's tried very hard to restrict NGO role in the UN and elsewhere. Urguing that UN, NGOs actually need to be guided in the work that they undertake by and on behalf of the government in power. And it's cast doubt on the impartiality of NGOs, especially those working in the Human Rights field. It's argued that the international community and that's a term that it's began to use more frequently in its discourse in the EU, and particularly in Security Council debates. Possibly because it links it can be linked with the idea of the shared community of humankind. Anyway, it uses that term, but it argues that the international community cannot agree on who should be defined as a Human Rights defender. And that there's no international consensus on who should have that designation. And therefore their representation should be more strictly controlled. And then the Human Rights Council in particular, it talks about these groups, the NGO groups as essentially confrontational and that their information lacks credibility.

Rosemary Foot: Let me raise the question of how successful China's been in promoting this agenda. The, to talk first about some of the UN related reasons for China's success, and I think it has had a relative success. And it's partly because of the greater attention that the Secretariat and other specialized agencies of the UN, have actually given to the relationship between underdevelopment conflict and human protection. So they've been a number of important studies, not least one in 2003, produced by the World Bank. Which was about the causes of civil wars, and the if you like the repetitive nature of civil wars within one particular society. That particular project and the book that resulted from it puts great emphasis on the role of underdevelopment in causing conflict and promoting recurrence of conflict. And I think that influenced the Secretariat approach. There's also been the recognized difficulties of enacting this complex human protection agenda that I've outlined very briefly. So how do you protect thousands of civilians caught up in armed conflict? How do you protect women and children in particular times of conflict? There's also been a great deal of criticism of so called Christmas Tree mandates that are far too complex, include far too many tasks, with too few resources. So the UN regularly is seeking ways of doing things better.

Rosemary Foot: Looking for alternatives, looking for ways of reforming the agenda that is put forward. This provides a space for Chinese ideas to be articulated. And of course, China's aged as a result of the decline in Western influence at the United Nations. Not least in the fact of the diminished Western presence in UN Peace Operations. So the that's been something that's happened over the last several years. And there doesn't seem to be any prospect of that changing
in the future. Then, of course, is the role of the United States always ambivalent relationship with the United Nations. But particularly so with the Trump presidency, and the obvious denial of the benefits of multilateralism as far as the Trump administration is concerned. With that's been added to because of cutbacks to the UN the US cutbacks to the UN budget. It's seriously behind with paying its UN dues. And as it's pulled out of the Human Rights Council out of UNESCO, WHO. And all of this is against the backdrop of increased contribution or resources on the part of China. So in 2015, Xi Jinping announces the setting up of a 10 year $1 billion China UN peace and development funds to be that used to fund particular projects of interest in the Secretariat. Then it would join the UN Peacekeeping Readiness System would establish a standby force of 8000 troops would it has done and offer a grant to the African Union to help it in its peacekeeping role. Is become again as it constantly reminds us the second largest contributor to the UN budget and offers more peacekeeping troops than all other P5 members combined.

**Rosemary Foot:** It's also the case that the Belt and Road Initiative has made some headway within the United Nations in part because the Secretary General and the Secretariat is extraordinarily concerned about the ability of the UN to reach the Sustainable Development Goals that have an ambitious target of completion by 2020. So calling on Belt and Road, economic luxurious has been an important element that helped to align China and the United Nations in a closer way than was true of the past. And I think a final point, not on that slide, actually. But Beijing's recognize an often positive relationship with African governments. And that of course, is the continent where most of the UN's Peace Operations actually take place. That positive relationship is seen as beneficial to the legitimate enactment of key parts of the UN's Peace Operations policy. So if China does offer its support for a Peace Operation, then that UN Security Council role is additionally validated.

**Rosemary Foot:** If my final slide is thinking about China. More direct China related reasons for its enhanced influence. Yes of course, it's using its economic centrality to many States in the in the global system to forge alignments and to build voting Coalition's. It's using discourse of various forms to promote the successes of its own model. So staging exhibitions, inviting party leaders from other States to learn about its political economic model. There's a famous Statement of the man from the Czech Republic who visited China. And he said, I'm not here to learn about democracy and Human Rights. I'm here to learn about democracy and sorry development and social stability. So obviously, that kind of linkage between China in certain States has allowed for, again, the diffusion of ideas about the Political Economic model that I term, the Triadic Model. And it's working with other Post-Colonial States, which are similarly concerned about the interventionist aspects of post-Westphalian UN. So Beijing finds itself able to get voting Coalition's together and bodies like the Human Rights Council, for example. Because Post-Colonial States feel similarly concerned about a more intrusive UN Human Protection agenda. Let me see if I can stop the sharing. And I hope I'm back on main screen then. Is that right Ezra I'm back on?

**Ezra Vogel:** Yes.

**Rosemary Foot:** Okay, great. So I'm not trying to suggest in all of this that there isn't normative resilience, that there isn't some pushback on the part of the United Nations to these sorts of ideas
that China has been articulating. If you look at something if you go back to this example of the relationship between development and the outbreak of conflict. UN reports do stress the necessity for sustainable development in raising levels of human protection. But they also those reports, also called what you might think of as a key role for Global Governance. So there was a very interesting 2018 study that linked by the Department of Political Affairs in the UN, it was called Pathways for Peace. And the message of that 2018 report was yes, growth and poverty alleviation are crucial, but alone, they will not suffice. So you need inclusive solutions, you need institutional reform, you need redistributive policies. If you look at goal 16, of the UN's 2030, Sustainable Development agenda, for example, that emphasizes very strongly that Sustainable Development requires justice. And that means accountable political institutions, and Human Rights issues run throughout the Sustainable Development Goals. So there is a certain amount of pushback.

Rosemary Foot: I think there's been a certain amount of pushback on certain things like the Syrian crisis, where China has used vetoes alongside Russia are a number of different occasions. It is the case though that China hasn't been able to persuade other members of the Security Council among the elected 10 of the Security Council, often to give support to those Chinese and Russian vetoes. So again, there's some sort of boundary that prevents Chinese positions, actually, influencing in all circumstances in all settings. On RTP, for example, China voted with a very small group in favor of keeping it when discussed at the General Assembly on an annual basis. Keeping that discussion at the informal level as it was called. But it has been adopted by the General Assembly as a formal discussion item. As I say China was in a very small group of States that tried to work against that particular framing. And it hasn't been able to protect some of the States with whom we associate China's having a relatively close relationship or close interest. So, Myanmar, for example, the Human Rights Council established an investigative mechanism. We saw the Gambia take the issue of the Rohingya violations of International Humanitarian Law involving Rohingya. Taking that under the Genocide Convention to the International Court of Justice.

Rosemary Foot: If you look at North Korea as well, that's been subject to a series of damning reports from the Human Rights Council mandated Commission of Inquiry into its Human Rights abuses. So the conclusion then that I draw from this study is, it's not a straightforward one. So what I'm trying to give you a picture of is a very complex environment in which China is articulating these beliefs and the Triadic Model, as I describe it. China is aided its aided because the UN itself represents more than one kind of order within the Secretariat, among membership, among its Charter and in the everyday behavior of the United Nations. This is a very complex ordering mechanism. And therefore it makes it extraordinarily difficult to describe China as either revisionist or status quo. Because the setting of the United Nations contains a range of conflicting normative elements. And we were very familiar with that include the UN Charters might have set to seven which pledges, non-intervention in matters essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any State.

Rosemary Foot: But also the charges powerful Statement calling for universal respect for Human Rights and fundamental freedoms. Or you look at something like paragraph 139 of the World Summit outcome document, referencing RTP international actors are obligated to help protect populations from mass atrocity crimes where a State is manifestly failing in its duty of
protection. So it's a complex ordering normative environment. And as I've said, it, China is aided by that complexity. But there is a degree of pushback, there is a post-Westphalian identity, dating, especially from the Post-Cold War era. And that's promoted energetically in the Secretariat and by some UN member States. And as we know, civil society groups still remain vibrant in many of the societies in which China operates. And if you look at some of the research on the effectiveness or otherwise of UN Peace Operations, they tend to underline how important it is. To strengthen local knowledge and to search out a range of opinion within countries inside countries that are hosting Peace Operations, in order to be able to reduce and manage conflict. As it's probably clear, the most direct of Beijing's challenges as that comes from what I've been saying is in the area of Human Rights. This insistence that the right to subsistence, right to development a primary basic Human Rights. And the statements that talk about the so called universality of Human Rights. The attempt really to turn the Human Rights Council into a technical capacity building body rather than one that holds States to account for Human Rights lapses. And so in this area, you see China being particularly vigorous in trying to cut budgets for Human Rights. Is engaging in what variables and Journal of European described as public reasoning as an engaged actor rather than an outlier. But it is a particularly challenging form of public reasoning.

**Rosemary Foot:** But it has partial success because even in this area because some elements some specific currencies within the United Nations are concerned about the issue areas of human lives and RTP. And the more intrusive aspects of the human protection agenda. I've been going about half an hour, if I just make a final point, if that's all right Ezra or just about the-- What I see is the kind of United Nations that China would prefer to see. Difficult, though, that might be to be authoritative or predictive. But I think where China to acquire the increased authority within the UN that it's been seeking. And we know already that it heads for the UN's Chinese nationals head for the UN specialized agencies for over 15. It's also seeking higher level positions within the Secretariat it's got some of them. But it seeking more if that were to occur, if it becomes a more powerful actor within the Secretariat. I think we're likely to see a return to a UN that's more reminiscent of the '70s or the 1980s. And so it would be a UN that would appear even more than is the case today, as a kind of InterState governance body. It individual States would be the ones deciding on priorities. The international community is essentially an enabler or a supporter of the government in power. And so that represents for me a fairly minimalist a pluralist State-based conception of International Order, where the international community is essentially reduced to a resource rather than a partner. And I think that overplays the notion that choices determined at the central governmental level will resolve issues associated with State fragility or benefit States wider society.

**Rosemary Foot:** And I think it sidesteps the problem that for international actors to agree to commit resources will require that they are afforded a larger role in determining how those resources are used a larger role than Beijing's formulation implies. So I think overall, what I'm suggesting is that Beijing's vision as articulated at the UN, is something which has familiar elements, is has conservative elements. It means that the categories revisionist reformers status quo all could be said to be in play in different parts of the UN System. And I think what I also want to say is that that is in part because the post-Westphalian framing of the 1990s has not carried enough of the UN member States with it. And that may be is one of the debates that will take center stage in the next five to 10 years of the UN's existence. So I'll leave it there Ezra.
Thank you very much for allowing me to try and lay some of this out. And I am happy to try and respond to comments and questions as they arise.

**Ezra Vogel:** Well, I would like to start with the question couple of questions.

**Rosemary Foot:** Mm.

**Ezra Vogel:** One, I mean, the overall picture of China playing a very active role contributing financial, contributing to peacekeeping, playing wanting to have a bigger role in UN. At the same time, the Human Rights this year, which many others emphasizes the kind of pushback that places limits. I mean, that's sort of one of the main takeaways.

**Rosemary Foot:** Yeah.

**Ezra Vogel:** But the overall picture of how the UN has gotten a lot of Chinese attention and support, some people say the China has played a much bigger role than in the UN than in some other international institutions. I wonder if you could give a little comparison between how you see China's role in the UN and some other institutions. Some people say that some other international institutions WTO, and so forth. China has not taken such an active constructive role.

**Rosemary Foot:** Mm.

**Ezra Vogel:** How do you see its role in UN compared to its role in other international institutions?

**Rosemary Foot:** I mean, I let me start by saying I do think it has singled out the UN to some degree for some of the reasons that I've suggested. I think it can construct via the UN kind of both a sense of itself as a key element in Post-War Order. That's what this emphasis on the first signatory of the UN Charter is about, but it's, it had a role in Post-War Order. And that had, it was right to it was right to play that role in post war order. And I think it's also an environment in which it can, if you like, lay out a sort of a moral position of the place that it forms within that body. So yes, it provides, more troops and the other four members of the P5 combined. Yes, it has given these resources to the United Nations. It's a place where, as I said, it's a very valuable platform for saying these kinds of things. What we could also say about those things, though, is that actually, the numbers of troops that it provides is still very, very small. It doesn't compare with countries like India, or Bangladesh, or Ethiopia, and so on. It provide many more troops than those that the Chinese provide.

**Rosemary Foot:** So if that kind of questioning that relative questioning doesn't tend to take place within the UN Framework. Because it's managed to sort of articulate a special role for itself within the UN system. In other International Organizations, and be one where I would single out a more active Chinese role is in some way, like the G20, for example. Which is regarded as an important international institution and as a place where various agreements have been reached, not notably, with respect to the global financial crisis that provided a very important venue in which to articulate particular policies. In order to deal with the onset of that
particular crisis. China is also active within regional organizations. And we know that it's played
a large role in trying to formulate the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, RCEP.
Obviously plays a crucial role within the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and so on. So it
would like to play it would likely something like the ASEAN Regional, the forum. Also to have
more of a defining role within that that's more difficult because of the membership of that
particular grouping.

Rosemary Foot: So I think there are a number of organizations where it has played a more
active role. But there is this kind of special place for it within the United Nations. There's a status
equality within the United Nations. It is one of the P5 it has equal status with the other four
members, the veto gives it that. And there is this sense of sort of legal, sovereign equality of
nations. Bodies, like the IMF, World Bank it doesn't, although its voting rights have increased
over the last few years. It's not on the basis, it's a hierarchical basis, as you know it doesn't. It's
not equally weighted across the members of those organizations. So in those organizations,
where it has the the opportunity and the capacity to act, it is acting in the UN, I think fulfills that
role for it.

Ezra Vogel: One of the issues as far as worked on Japan is concerned about.

Rosemary Foot: Mm.

Ezra Vogel: The aging preventing Japan from becoming one of the P5, P6, P7.

Rosemary Foot: Yes.

Ezra Vogel: Principle powers and India and possibly Brazil or so forth. You think that issue is
still alive? Does it still influence, say, Japanese resistance to China? Or do you think that that
issue of who shall be in the large P5 issue members?

Rosemary Foot: Mm.

Ezra Vogel: Is that dead now or that's alive?

Rosemary Foot: Let I think it's alive in two ways really. I think the first way and in many ways
that I've got a more significant way is that the UN Security Council or suffers from a legitimacy
deficit. I mean, there's no doubt that it's not just China has risen. But there are other there's been
a diffusion of power in the International System. And an expectation that the United Nations
Security Council would reflect that diffusion of power. And so I think that this failure to reform
UN Security Council is a serious loss for the United Nations and for those that care about this as
a multilateral organization. The other part of my response, there is also say that, and in some
senses, that speaks against Chinese objectives. I mean, the Chinese, obviously, for the reasons
that I outlined at the start. I mean, they see the United Nations as an important platform for them
to articulate their beliefs. And because of the status the equal status that it gives them is an
important venue. And yet, they are one of the countries obviously, that is not articulating a clear
vision of what reform of the Security Council should look like. And so there is a bit of a paradox
as I feel in Chinese foreign policy positions, as there are a number of Chinese foreign policy
positions. But that's that to do with this legitimacy of the Security Council, I think that's a major element. I think also, yes, they're the there's clearly a very strong sentiment still in China that Japan should not be on the Security Council. I mean, it's both the domestic sentiment and official sentiment.

Rosemary Foot: And I mean, it to some degree, the issue has disappeared off the international agenda to a degree because there are so many other things that are going on at present. But again, I don't think Japan will actually give up its pressure to be considered for UN Security Council membership role. Similarly with India, I mean, it's hot and cold on the issue. But again, there is a resentment that it hasn't been considered as deserving of the mantle of Security Council membership. And it's not China alone, of course, that is his reason for the failure of Security Council reform. But nevertheless, both of these States see China as lukewarm on the idea of sort of diffusing the status, the Security Council membership, and use the veto. I mean, this is the crucial thing, and China would not want to be part of the Security Council where the veto was diluted or even taken away. I mean that would worry it considerably, it would worry the other P5 members, too. But it would worry China since we're talking about China, certainly worry China.

Ezra Vogel: You make the point about China having history as an early signature. And so that has that old connection with the UN. But another part of the history is that during the Korean War.

Rosemary Foot: Yeah.

Ezra Vogel: The United States and UN forces fought against China.

Rosemary Foot: Yes.

Ezra Vogel: In the last few days, I've seen Chinese reviving the story.

Rosemary Foot: Yeah.

Ezra Vogel: Now their forces resistance, the UN forces and overcame issues facing UN. Sounds as if they wanna prepare the people don't be afraid of that big bad united States need with the United Nations.

Rosemary Foot: Mm.

Ezra Vogel: But then how does China deal with that history? Does that when they think about the United Nations, they just forget that period or are?

Rosemary Foot: Well, I mean--

Ezra Vogel: In to the mind you some of the things--

Rosemary Foot: Yeah, that tend to gloss over that yes. And maybe in terms of that, as I say this recent reference to the Secretary, for a signatory on the UN Charter is on. The absence of the
PRC from the UN, the fact that the UN labeled China an aggressor in Korea, that becomes a story about the United States. Or perhaps even the Western powers, not a story about the United Nation. So you think about China's Statement in 1965, of course, a particularly radical period in Chinese foreign policy. But they talk about as a dirty, the UN as a dirty international stock exchange in the grip of a few big powers. Mayor referred to the United Nations is a cesspit. I mean, so the actual, if you go back to the actual period in the earlier period, then the view of the United Nations was incredibly negative. Obviously, with the Public China in the UN seat and so on. But in contemporary framing of the United Nations, then it becomes the Korean War story would become not a UN story but a US story.

Ezra Vogel: Here is a question from Tony Singh, who is at the Harvard College Phillips Brooks House Center.

Rosemary Foot: Mm.

Ezra Vogel: How realistic is it to rely on UN North Eastern equity under the current global power balance? The implication clearly is, there's a lot of power out there. And the United Nations itself as an institution may not have that much power to say prevent nations from fighting against each other. And in comparison to the League of Nations, where the League of Nations cannot really control Imperial Japan in Germany. Does the United Nations of new too soon have any capacity to prevent conflict between major powers in the world?

Rosemary Foot: Yeah, I major powers of the world is extraordinarily difficult for the United Nations to act of course. As the UN Secretary General will constantly remind us, the UN is made up of member States and certain of those member States have more power than others. And certain of those member States that are powerful, new and secure Security Council. And therefore, certain issues will not be dealt with through the UN Security Council. So of course, it's always been about selective security rather than collective security as far as the United Nations is concerned. But that doesn't mean to say that it can't play a positive role in world politics. I mean, I think it was important that something like the Paris agreement on climate change was facilitated through a UN Framework.

Rosemary Foot: That something like the agreement with the Iran on the nuclear issue was again authorized by the UN Security Council legitimated by the UN Security Council. I think it kind of gives it the particulars status and standing that otherwise those sorts of agreements otherwise wouldn't have it makes it more difficult. We know that the United Nations can adopt certain sanctions that actually can help to constrain certain forms of behavior. And the United Nations often acts as a kind of an aspirational body. It played a major role in the past in the decolonization process. Again, providing a platform for States to articulate the important norm of self determination. And to remind member States that the UN Charter says this about fundamental freedoms, about Human Rights and that we should be moving to a decolonize world. So it can play roles, but I'm not gonna pretend that major wars between major States are necessarily going to go through the UN system. And we've seen the difficulties that the UN had in dealing with the dreadful Syria crisis, or Yemen and so on. So, there are certain topics that are never gonna get onto the UN Security Council agenda. But it doesn't mean to say that within that sort of selective framing that suggested that important things can't be done, can't be said.
Ezra Vogel: As you're talking to Americans, now's the time when we are preoccupied with our own election.

Rosemary Foot: Oh.

Ezra Vogel: And some of us believe Biden should be elected, that the United States might begin to play a bigger role resume its relationship to international institutions.

Rosemary Foot: Mm.

Ezra Vogel: Maybe it's better too hopeful or optimistic. What do you think are some realistic scenarios if the United States under Biden should begin to play a show a willingness to take a bigger role in the United Nations and so in other international institutions?

Rosemary Foot: Yeah.

Ezra Vogel: Do you think that it can happen quickly? Or I just wonder, how do you see that process working out?

Rosemary Foot: Mm, I mean, I think, yeah, I think certain things could happen fairly quickly. I mean, I'm sure so much more I mean, obviously, I'm following this election very very closely as large parts of the world are. And obviously Biden is going to be hugely absorbed by the domestic agenda, obviously COVID is one thing. But the economic fallout from all that's associated with it is gonna absorb unemployment. Those kinds of questions are gonna absorb him as they're absorbing our government. But there are certain things I imagine that a Biden administration would do fairly quickly. I think you obviously would seek to rebuild Alliance relationships which are very seriously frayed. I think it would join the Human Rights Council. And I think it would have a different relationship with WHO. I think it might even work more collectively, on the COVID issue so that you would have some form of sort of leadership, collective leadership working with various countries around the world. I think the whole tone of it would shift from being unilateralist America first-type framing that we have at the moment. And disdain really for alliances and international organization to a realization that although International Organizations can't do everything, they are an important force multiplier for the United States.

Rosemary Foot: I mean, I, and in terms of what else it should do, and in terms of my project, I also think that the Biden administration needs to think about, down the line not in the first year. Down the line, we need to think about what it is about what China offers the developing world that is so attractive to them, and to a number of them. And what is it that they dislike about this elements of Chinese lessons with parts in the developing world. And what a US administration and other countries allied with it might might do about not to compete across the board in sort of development issues with the Chinese. But to think about, why these countries have been crying out for things like infrastructure projects, and to be noticed, to be taken seriously and so on. And to think about what could be offered and how that how that should be done. But that's down the line. As I say, I'll probably be domestic first, but then some swift moves to emphasize that
actually, there's a recognition that multilateral cooperation in given the collective change challenges that faces. I mean, by the administration, obviously, has talked about climate change and rejoining the Paris Agreement, as I understand it. I think that's right, isn't it? So those sorts of things can be done fairly swiftly and send a very important political signal.

**Ezra Vogel:** As our students are very concerned about the problem of how you gonna search now with China.

**Rosemary Foot:** Mm.

**Ezra Vogel:** And I wonder, what's your advising students now want to continue to do work over the next several years on International Relations with China?

**Rosemary Foot:** Mm.

**Ezra Vogel:** What kind of topics? Or what kind of modalities? How do you tell your students what kind of advice to give your students what they might do?

**Rosemary Foot:** Mm.

**Ezra Vogel:** To carry out research International Relations with China?

**Rosemary Foot:** Yeah, well, I mean, my approach to my students has always been for us students to sit there and tell me what it is that's brought you to have an interest in the parts of the world that I'm interested in. And whether that's the US China relationship, or the International Relations of East Asia or security issues and so on World Order questions, Regional Order question. So my argument would always start from the perspective that I wanna know about what is it that excites you? And can we frame a question as a result of that? I mean, obviously, I'm interested in these questions of what difference it makes to World Order to Regional Order that we now have a major player acting more ambitiously, more, obviously on the international stage. And what does that mean in terms of some of these questions about the future shape of World and Regional Order? I'm also interested in questions about the what I see as the kind of mismatch between a number of Chinese Statements particularly as it involves its own region. And its more generalized Statements about shared community of humankind and so on.

**Rosemary Foot:** But, so there's a there is very often as a huge tension I think, between the idea of China wanting to, if you like, be a kind of benign Headjam on within its own region. And yet statements that almost weaponize ideas of sovereignty, with its neighbors, run willingness, if you like to compromise on those issues that divide it from its neighbors. And that tension between these two things. Why is there sort of not a recognition that many of the things that China would like to see as a positive outcome in terms of regional relations are stymied, actually, by the way in which it approaches some of the questions that divide it from its neighbors. So the emphasis becomes more a kind of a dominance question rather than a kind of a consensual cooperative dimension. And then it's thinking about those sorts of questions that would really would really interest me in the future. One of the other things that I want to do be great if one of my former students would work with me on it, that'd be a fantastic. I mean, one of the other things that I'm
interested in because I'm interested in this notion of the complicated nature of so called Global Order or so called rules based order. Normative orders, is I'm very interested in the Human Rights question, for example. China tackles it differently within the Security Council from the Human Rights Council, from another body that it's set up called the South-South Forum, on human Global Forum on on Human Rights. Now it actually acts rather differently in those three venues.

**Ezra Vogel:** How different?

**Rosemary Foot:** Well, in the South-South Forum, I mean, it's much more in a direct leadership role and has articulated a so called Beijing Declaration on Human Rights. That very boldly States its actual positions on Human Rights, and argues that, there is this ground as well of support in favor of it. Within the Human Rights Council, it adopts a variety of methods. Sometimes it leads sometimes it lets others lead. Sometimes it steps back and is more passive on particular issues. Within something like the Security Council is much more of a sort of a negotiated outcome where it actually has to, so to acquiesce, reluctantly. So very trivial thing like the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, is often called upon to give a Statement before the UN Security Council on some Human Rights related issue. Or the general thrust of her perception of Human Rights in today's world, and so on. The Chinese will try to prevent that happening and Russians too. But they've tried to prevent that happening. And but often will acquiesce to that because, it's not because of the nature of the venue. The design of the particular institution. The fact of precedence which is so important within the Security Council setting. So it's these kinds of design questions, precedence questions, as well as membership questions that I'm quite interested in looking at. Because they again, they complicate the notion about the extent to which China is a challenge or not. And it makes it more difficult for us to make, very hard and fast Statements about China's role in the world.

**Ezra Vogel:** I wonder if two other co-organizers William Overholt or Bill shall have any comments or questions, Bill.

**William Overholt:** I did want to ask about continuity and change. The perspective you've provided on transpositions is so incisive. I find it marvelous, so useful, thank you. I wonder if there are elements of continuity and change well, let me give examples of what I mean. Economic development as a foundational right, has been a core element of Chinese policy forever. If you look at Hong Kong policy on the higher end. Some Western commentators say oh, now they're doing what they always wanted to do. No.

**Rosemary Foot:** Mm.

**William Overholt:** Until Ping and Johnson had an image that took the principles of one country two systems, and all those promises very very seriously. And Xi Jinping has just thrown that away, and then something different. Now, most of the alliance of Chinese policy in UN you're talking about seem to be pretty continuous. They're more emphatic Statements as China's power has grown. But are there elements that are distinctive or balances that are distinctive to the Xi Jinping period? And the might indicate areas that could undergo further change in the future?
Rosemary Foot: Hmm, yeah, is a very good point, Bill. I mean, there are, of course, elements, strong elements of continuity. And you can find references to development social stability all that. We know that China has status and so on. So I mean, what is it that's different? Why do I focus on it now? And I think there are a couple of reasons. But they don't destroy your continuity point at all, actually. But they add a sort of a layer to it. An important layer, I think. And the fact is of it being articulated much more as a package. And articulating the idea of development as a kind of a foundational right. Yes can be found in that first white paper on Human Rights way back in 1991 and so on. That but it wouldn't within some body, like the Human Rights Council. Or sorry the Human Rights Commission and so on. It wouldn't have actually introduced a resolution. It wouldn't have used the phrase, so called Universal Rights.

Rosemary Foot: I mean, again, if you look back to the 1980s, I mean, China's celebrated, with great fanfare, the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. It's signed up to the Vienna agreement that linked the two covenants together very strongly. So the idea that they were indivisible, and so on. So, it's articulating a view on Human Rights along the lines of, we come from different cultures, we're part of different civilizations, each one is equally meritorious, therefore, you have no right to comment on my behavior. So it's that sort of more fulsome articulation of the argument. It's the linking of the development, social stability, strong State more firmly, I think in its Statements. And you can see that actually in Chinese scholarly work in particular, and some of the think tank writing. So you've probably come across this idea of developmental piece that has been articulated by a number of Chinese scholars.

Rosemary Foot: But, this notion that essentially the UN has put too much emphasis on political change, security sector reform and so on. It needs to focus much more on the kind of the development side and from that you will get a peaceful outcome and so on. So there's much more of a kind of a confidence about articulating this kind of three pronged idea. And there's an actual willingness to put yourself out in front and to say, this is my stance on this. And I'm looking for your support for it.

William Overholt: Thank you.

Ezra Vogel: Hsiao do you have a question or comment Bill? We can't hear you, Bill.

William Hsiao: Yes.

Ezra Vogel: Now we can hear you.

William Hsiao: I wonder though. The Three-Pillars fought by United Nations could not be refined some? Because from my perspective, China comes from a different perspective of first of veto people.

Rosemary Foot: Mm.

William Hsiao: Three years ago. That's the first priority is not Human Rights. But is part of the Human Rights be free from hunger.
William Hsiao: But that's a priority issue. So could you, China and the UN, come to some kind of a compromise to say, countries that have different stages of development?

Rosemary Foot: Mm.

William Hsiao: And actually, we there are different trade-offs and train as economists, we always believe there are trade-offs.

Rosemary Foot: Mm.

William Hsiao: So therefore, the Three-Pillars Development Human Rights and social, I mean, they have different trade-offs at different stages.

Rosemary Foot: Mm.

William Hsiao: And apply that to be more flexible, rather make a unitary declaration.

Rosemary Foot: Mm.

William Hsiao: Is that possible?

Rosemary Foot: Yeah. Is it possible? Yes, it's possible. And perhaps that's what I'm suggesting could happen, which is become more influential within the Secretariat. But again, the Charter itself has the three pillars of Human Rights, Security and Development as the institutional structure of ECOSOC, the Security Council, the Human Rights Council, that's well established institutional structure. So it's a big ask to get a real shift away from those things. And of course, there are many States that would argue that actually, okay, feeding the people is absolutely crucial. But how do you know who needs to be fed? How do you know that some groups aren't being favored over others? How do you know that the development that's chosen by the State, at the central level is right for a particular area. The only way you're gonna know about things like that is with a free press, an independent civil society. A populace that is confident of being able to speak up about the things that really concern it. And so I find it very difficult to get away from that particular element and to imagine that at one particular development stage, you ignore all of that. Amartya Sen, of course, famously said that famines never occur in countries with a free press. Now you may have, not be entirely right there. But that was the cut that's the kind of framing that I'm persuaded by. And therefore, no, I don't see it as different stages or possibility for that kind of trade-off. I don't see it as a trade-off you know what I mean.

Ezra Vogel: I'm afraid our time is already packed, and we're running out. I think it shows that we're very interested in what you write and had to say. And so we thank you for presenting today. And I think we look forward to reading your book so inventory.

Rosemary Foot: Thank you very much Ezra thank you. Thanks so much for joining me.
Ezra Vogel: Thank you so much. Bye bye.

Rosemary Foot: Bye bye.