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Rosemary Foot. ***China, The UN, and Human Protection: Beliefs, Power, Image.*** Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020. ISBN: 9780198843733.

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Contents

Introduction by Sarah B. Snyder, American University

Rosemary Foot, a distinguished scholar of China and of human rights, has written an important new book on China's approach to human protection at and within the United Nations (UN). This succinctly argued account builds upon her decades of scholarship on these topics; the result is what one reviewer terms "essential reading for policy and scholarly audiences alike."

Foot's seminal work, *Rights Beyond Borders*, focused on transnational actors' efforts, beginning in the mid-1970s and going forward, to press China to observe the human rights of its citizens.[1] In *China, The UN, and Human Protection*, rather than examine the influence of nongovernmental actors, she explores the effect of an international organization. Similarly, the emphasis here is not on China's domestic human rights practices but instead falls on its foreign policy and external influence.

In this new work, Foot examines how China's rise has caused a shift to a more forceful foreign policy. China's assertiveness, Foot argues, is not necessarily offensive but is rather aimed at reducing the risks the country faces. She is interested in why China shifted to embrace the United Nations, including through greater material and personnel contributions, and the book thus explores the ways that new relationship changed China and the organization.

Foot demonstrates that whereas the UN has traditionally been focused on "development, peace and security, and human rights," China has its own concerns, which she terms a "triadic model" of "economic development, the strong state, and social stability." (3) The triadic model privileges the collective or the state over the individual. Given these different conceptions of security, Foot focuses on China's efforts to shift the UN's approach to human protection, based on the state's view of the relationship between a stable state and economic development or conversely between the lack of development and instability.

Each chapter teases out the Chinese decision-making process regarding its rhetoric and votes at the UN. In one case study Foot's analysis reveals China's diplomatic relationship to the concept of "responsibility to protect." For China, Foot argues that state consent for UN action is key, which explains its support for the protection of civilians in armed conflict but not for humanitarian interventions that might violate state sovereignty from its perspective. In terms of human protection, China's focus is therefore on prevention rather than intervention. In many respects Foot's evidence shows how Chinese officials are working within the UN to reveal an alternative to the UN-based order.

The reviewers, Alex Bellamy, Steve Chan, Courtney Fung, and Kelly-Kate Pease, praise *China, The UN, and Human Protection* for its significance, timeliness, methodology, and style.

Bellamy characterizes the book as a "sober reckoning with the naively optimistic liberal universalism prevalent after the end of the Cold War." In his view, Foot's research "puts flesh on the bones of the realist argument that liberal hubris and delusion after the Cold War sowed the seeds of liberal order's destruction." In Fung's view, Foot's work offers a "sorely needed corrective" to existing narratives about China's dominance within the UN that "goes beyond existing studies." For Pease, *China, The UN, and Human Protection* contributes to a range of literatures, including that on China's emerging place in global governance.

[1] Rosemary Foot, *Rights Beyond Borders: The Global Community and the Struggle over Human Rights in China* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

For Fung, and for Bellamy, Foot's book was published with "impeccable timing." Fung praises Foot's "extensive fieldwork," in China, Switzerland, and the United States. Pease sees the book as well structured, clearly written, and transparent in its methodology. In her view it is an "exceptional interpretive analysis."

The reviewers' criticisms are gentle but many. Put another way, many of the authors frame their points in terms of how the book could have been "even stronger," as Chan writes. The exception is Pease's review which, despite its general enthusiasm for the book, raises a number of questions about Foot's interpretation and methodology.

In Chan's view, Foot's account needed greater historical context to explain sufficiently the evolution of China's approach to human protection and the UN. Chan's review details some of the missing historical background, as he sees it. Fung, however, notes that Foot "casts back into history throughout the book." In addition to adopting a broader chronological lens, Chan also advocates for Foot to take a comparative approach or widen her analysis geographically to include Western countries. Like Chan, Pease raises the possibility that the book is too "China-centric," particularly in Foot's discussion of the UN, which Pease argues does not sufficiently disaggregate the organization's members and institutional bodies. Yet Pease acknowledges that it is "refreshing to see UN through the lens of China." Similarly, she argues that Foot's narrative is not suitably attuned to diplomatic norms, which leads it to overemphasize Chinese influence. Finally, Pease raises questions about Foot's source base, which strikes her in some instances as "rather thin." She hoped for more use of UN records, which might have better addressed shifting norms within the organization.

In her response, Foot acknowledges the influence of the reviewers' publications on her work and expresses appreciation for the care the reviewers took to understand and encapsulate her arguments. She engages with the reviewers' criticisms, acknowledging the value of addressing "the diplomatic craft" but dismissing the assessment that her account treats the UN as a single entity. Similarly, she asserts the value of "China-centered analysis." Her response gestures at a new context for the book – China's stance on Russia's invasion of Ukraine – and confirms the reviewers' assessment of the myriad ways in which her analysis is relevant for the future of the United Nations, China, and global governance.

Participants:

Professor (Emeritus) **Rosemary Foot** is a Senior Research Fellow in the Department of Politics and International Relations at the University of Oxford, a Research Associate of the University's China Centre, and an Emeritus Fellow of St Antony's College, Oxford. In 1996, she was elected a Fellow of the British Academy. Her research interests cover security relations in the Asia-Pacific, human rights, China-US relations, and the implications of China's resurgence for global and regional order.

Sarah B. Snyder teaches at American University's School of International Service and is the author of two award-winning books, *From Selma to Moscow: How Human Rights Activists Transformed U.S. Foreign Policy* (Columbia University Press, 2018) and *Human Rights Activism and the End of the Cold War: A Transnational History of the Helsinki Network* (Cambridge University Press, 2011). She is the founding editor, along with Jay Sexton, of Columbia University Press' Global America book series.

Alex J. Bellamy is Professor of Peace and Conflict Studies and Director of the Asia Pacific Centre for the Responsibility to Protect at the University of Queensland, Australia. His forthcoming book is *Syria Betrayed: War, Atrocities, and the Failure of International Diplomacy* (New York: Columbia, 2022).

Steve Chan is College Professor of Distinction at the University of Colorado, Boulder. His publications include twenty books and about one hundred and eighty articles and chapters. His most recent books are *Contesting Revisionism: China, the United States, and the Transformation of International Order* (Oxford University Press, 2021; coauthored with Huiyun Feng, Kai He, and Weixin Hu); *Thucydides's Trap? Historical Interpretation, Logic of Inquiry, and the Future of Sino-*

American Relations (University of Michigan Press, 2020); *Trust and Mistrust in Sino-American Relations* (Cambria, 2017); *China's Troubled Waters? Maritime Disputes in Theoretical Perspective* (Cambridge University Press, 2016); *Enduring Rivalries in the Asia-Pacific* (Cambridge University Press, 2013); and *Looking for Balance: China, the United States, and Power Balancing in East Asia* (Stanford University Press, 2012). His articles have appeared in journals such as *American Political Science Review*, *International Studies Quarterly*, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, *Journal of Peace Research*, *Security Studies*, and *World Politics*.

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Kelly-Kate Pease is Professor of International Relations and the Director of International Relations online at Webster University, St. Louis. She is author of *Human Rights and Humanitarian Diplomacy* (Manchester University Press, 2016) and *International Organizations: Perspectives on Global Governance* (Routledge, 2018). She is co-author of *The United Nations and Changing World Politics* (Routledge, 2020).

Review by Alex J. Bellamy, The University of Queensland

The times are a-changing at the United Nations (UN). Whether or not the global organization is experiencing first-hand the transition of a liberal or 'rules-based' international order into something quite new, certainly less liberal but maybe not less rule-bound, there is little doubting that the politics of global governance at the UN are changing in profound ways. The rise of China is a key – though not the only – reason why and a growing number of scholars and analysts are turning to the question of how China's relationship with the UN is evolving and what that will mean for the organization's present and its future.

Rosemary Foot was among the first Western scholars to write systematically about the evolving relationship between the People's Republic and the UN and this book is both timely and prescient.[2] It is timely because it explains their complex relationship especially well, locating the particularities of Chinese positions on peacekeeping, the Responsibility to Protect (R2P), women, peace and security, the crisis in Syria, and the UN's human rights institutions in historical and political context. It is prescient because Foot's compelling explanation of where those positions have come from tell us much about where they – and the UN itself – might be heading.

In many respects, this important book provides a sober reckoning with the naively optimistic liberal universalism prevalent after the end of the Cold War. It is certainly that. Foot painstakingly shows that the Chinese government is not just hesitant about the UN's human protection agenda – a hesitancy limited not just to controversial items like the Responsibility to Protect and the International Criminal Court but to the agenda's full panoply, including women, peace and security – but actively hostile to it. The differences between China and the UN are deep, not superficial. China simply does not accept a lot of what the UN seems to accept about human rights and human protection and nor does it see a legitimate role for the organization in the protection people when their own governments refuses or fails to do so.

In this, then, Foot puts flesh on the bones of the realist argument that liberal hubris and delusion after the Cold War sowed the seeds of liberal order's own destruction. That story goes something like this. After the end of the Cold War, Western (principally US) governments pursued liberal hegemony, "an ambitious strategy in which a state aims to turn as many countries as possible into liberal democracies".[3] Deluded by the false promise of liberalism, the US and its allies tried to fashion the world in their own image by liberalizing world trade to promote growth and with it a convergence of economics and values that would spark pro-democratic transitions forging a new world of peaceful, prosperous, liberal democracies. The West helped the invisible hand of the market in its relentless pursuit of liberal world peace by forcefully promoting democracy and human rights, and by strengthening multilateral institutions and transnational civil society. Predictably, the story goes, this plan soon ran into difficulties, for the age-old reason that whilst liberalism portends to universalism it is in fact culturally and politically specific. As such, the evident spread of democracy after the Cold War was the result of US military hegemony not of the universal appeal of Western political ideals.[4] Since US power could not reach into China, the tanks of Tiananmen Square thus put a quick end to China's democratic stirrings. Meanwhile, China took advance of the access global liberalization gave it to world markets and prospered remarkably, in the process hatching a seemingly successful alternative to liberal democracy: authoritarian capitalism. Thus, liberal globalization spawned a rival to liberal democratic

[2] See, for instance, Rosemary Foot *Rights Beyond Borders: The Global Community and the Struggle over Human Rights in China* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001) and Rosemary Foot, 'China's Foreign Policy in the Post-1989 Era', in Robert Benewick and Paul Wingrove (eds.), *China in the 1990s* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1995), 234-244.

[3] John J. Mearsheimer, *The Great Delusion: Liberal Dreams and International Realities* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2018), 1.

[4] Philip Cunliffe, *The New Twenty Years' Crisis: A Critique of International Relations 1999-2019* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2020).

ideology, ending the end of history.[5] Liberalism's mask of universality did not put its values beyond political or moral contestation and so when the global hegemon embarked on a grand strategy of reforming the world in its own image, including by using force, this inevitably provoked a backlash in the form of authoritarian revanchism spearheaded by China and Russia.[6] The realist thesis artfully explains why liberal order gave way to post-liberal chaos and how norms of human protection and practices of humanitarian intervention were implicated in that. But it is an incomplete picture that flattens history and irons-out the non-Western agency of others.[7]

Centring China in the story, as Foot does so well, makes for an altogether more complex – and more compelling – account that makes better sense of the anomalies the realist story finds difficult to account for.[8] That is because centring China forces us to focus on two-way relationships, not just China's relationship with the UN – and through that liberal order -- but the UN's relationship with China and how these entanglements give legitimacy to China's place in international society, a legitimacy that rising China still craves and that serves to restrain it. Other recent work has already shed important light on these relationships. Courtney Fung, for example, explains why China's reaction to liberal interventionism was not the kneejerk rejectionism the realist story would predict. She shows instead how a combination of interests, self-identity, and the quest for legitimacy and prestige pushed China towards contributing to UN peacekeeping even as UN peacekeepers became more forceful and occasionally tolerating outright intervention.[9] Foot adds to this thinking by showing not just about how China influences the UN but also about how the UN influences China.

The argument unfolds something like this. China and the West have different values and these different values translate into different views about the proper role of the UN. Instead of the UN's current human-centred approach organized around the three pillars of human rights, development, and peace and security, China articulates what Foot calls a "triadic model" of strong states, social stability, and development (228). Over the past few decades, China's relative position has changed within the UN. Its increasing material power has translated into a more confident and assertive foreign policy. This is evidenced where material power has afforded China more political and diplomatic clout at the UN. Now the organization's second largest financial contributor, China can exert greater influence over key appointments, policies, and decisions than ever before. It can offer its own vision of the UN as a viable alternative to the currently prevailing three pillars.

What is more, since its first faltering proactive engagements in the early 1990s, Chinese diplomacy at the UN has become more adept. The Chinese found a ready-constituency of backers in the UN General Assembly, where around half of the Member States are not democratic, not committed to human rights, or both, and who thus find the Chinese vision of a more sovereignty-based UN as a mutual help club for governments more appealing than the human rights-focused UN peddled by the West, other democracies, and successive UN secretaries-general. The appeal is amplified by the fact that China's own economic success offers an appealing model to emulate and its promise of a less-intrusive UN provides an appealing

[5] Recall that for Fukuyama, the 'end of history' referred to the absence of a viable political alternative to liberal democracy. Francis Fukuyama, *End of History and the Last Man* revised edition (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2006).

[6] See, for example, Patrick Porter, *The False Promise of Liberal Order: Nostalgia, Delusion and the Rise of Trump* (Cambridge: Polity, 2020).

[7] A more comprehensive story is told by Alexander Cooley and Dan Nexon, *Exit from Hegemony: The Unraveling of the American Global Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020).

[8] Such as those raised by Robert Jervis, "Liberalism, the Blob, and American Foreign Policy: Evidence and Methodology," *Security Studies,* 29:3 (2020): 434-456.

[9] Courtney Fung, *China and Intervention at the UN Security Council* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020).

alternative vision to rights-based liberalism. That combination means that Chinese arguments find a more receptive audience than they once did.

The rise of China will likely therefore be associated with a concerted effort to reorient the UN away from human rights and human protection towards a narrower vision focused on mutual support and managing relations *between* states, not within them. This is not an unintended side-effect of China's rise, Foot explains, but a conscious focus for its UN policy, which we can see being played out in its positioning on everything from atrocities in Syria to arms restrictions in South Sudan and much else besides. She argues that "Beijing is attempting to shape the United Nations from within and to weaken support" (3) for the UN's three pillars as currently understood. In the field of peacekeeping, for example, where Western states distracted by the War on Terror and limited interest in sub-Saharan Africa's protracted civil wars, largely abandoned pretensions of leadership, China has inserted itself into an influential position from which to advocate for a switch in priorities from human protection to developmental peace.[10] The UN will likely continue to be in the peacekeeping business, but both the peace being kept and the manner in which is it kept will have more Chinese and fewer liberal characteristics.[11]

Foot shows, however, that things are not quite the one-way street that they might first appear. For one thing, China's rise is at least to some extent aided by the decline of Western influence and not all of that has to do with the relative decline of Western economic power. More importantly, however, the UN and its Member States remain an important source of international legitimacy for China, and a counter to Western legitimation. Beijing cannot therefore easily disregard the opinions of UN officials or the UN General Assembly. It bridles at criticism of its human rights, and its 'wolf warrior diplomacy' – the aggressive style of public diplomacy developed by Chinese foreign ministry officials during Xi Jinping's premiership – has done it much more harm than good by persuading many of its neighbours, for instance, to regard it as a source of threat.[12] It exhibits discomfort and tries to hedge when confronted by tensions between its preferred policies and majority opinion.

For instance, though the Chinese-way was consistently privileged over human protection in the UN's handling of the civil war in Syria, Beijing occasionally broke ranks with Russia to abstain where Moscow vetoed, aware that most Middle Eastern governments and the UN's membership favoured more robust action to protect civilians from the terror unleashed by Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's government. Evidently aware of these pressures, rather than demanding a sharp break from the past, China attempts to engage and nudge UN policy and practice. It participates in peace operations, even those with robust protection mandates, but tries to soften and temper both the mandate and the practice. Similarly, after decades of simply ignoring the UN's human rights architecture, Foot shows, China has begun to engage with it with a clear eye to reforming it and downsizing its ambitions. Whilst China no doubt hopes to hollow out human rights from the inside, it remains to be seen whether it will succeed or whether others might succeed occasionally in exerting influence over Beijing. It is likely to be a bit of both.

Herein lies the rub and the genius of Foot's argument. For as it attempts to exert influence over the UN, China becomes more engaged in the UN, so will have to assume more responsibility for the UN's pursuit of international peace and security. More and more, the UN's successes and failures will become China's successes and failures, and China's own international legitimacy will become tethered to that of the UN. Its experience in South Sudan is a clear example of that and was a sharp lesson in African realities for Beijing. In July 2016, Chinese peacekeepers withdrew from a civilian protection zone when they came under attack and refused requests for assistance as civilians and humanitarian workers were subjected to murder,

[10] Katharina P. Coleman and Brian Job, "How Africa and China May Shape UN Peacekeeping Beyond the Liberal International Order," *International Affairs* 97:5 (2021): 1451-1468.

[11] Lise Morje Howard, "The Future of UN Peacekeeping and the Rise of China," in Chester Crocker, Fen Osler Hampson, and Pamela Aall, eds., *Diplomacy and the Future of World Order* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2021), 211-212.

[12] See Peter Martin, *China's Civilian Army: The Making of Wolf Warrior Diplomacy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021).

rape, and torture.[13] This failure of UN peacekeeping raised serious questions about the capabilities, attitudes, and even honor of Chinese soldiers, embarrassing questions the People's Liberation Army was not used to being asked. Over time, the appeal of China's vision of world politics will be tested by results as perceptions of China are tied to the performance of the UN. And if, as seems likely, a more sovereignty-bound organization proves no more able that the current organization to solve difficult transnational problems, such as war in the Middle East, conflict in the Sahel and Horn of Africa, the effects of climate change, and mass displacement, the Chinese government will have difficult choices to make.

As Foot explains, "[a] weakened United Nations will not help with the provision of a stable international order" (p273) and that will make it more difficult for China to achieve its stated goals. More than that, however, if the weakened UN is associated with *Chinese* values and principles in the minds of member states, not only will China's hoped-for positive international image be tarnished then so too will be its international legitimacy. That could "generate forms of resistance that Beijing will find difficult to finesse" (273).

Each chapter offers a self-contained case study illuminating in its own right. But the value of this important book comes when Foot draws it all together to explain China's complex relationship with the UN and show how it is looking to reform the global organization whilst simultaneously being constrained by it. Evidence is mounting from Myanmar to Syria that a more bounded UN may be a significantly less effective UN. A growing mountain of empirical evidence suggests that China's approach to peace and security is unlikely to achieve its desired goals (268). Ultimately, global China may need a global, not sovereignty-bound, world organization to underscore the complex transnational order in which it plays a dominant role. Whilst Beijing knows what it doesn't want – a UN focused on human protection – it is much less clear about how it will achieve what it does want or whether its prescriptions are the right ones to achieve its stated goals. That tension, between China's vision of a future UN and the organization's fitness for purpose, will likely shape global governance in the decades to come.

[13] Center for Civilians in Conflict, "Under Fire: The July 2016 Violence in Juba and UN Responses," 2016. Available here: https://civiliansinconflict.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/civic-juba-violence-report-october-2016.pdf

Review by Steve Chan, University of Colorado, Boulder

At a time when China's rise is routinely framed as a challenge to the Western-dominated liberal order and a precursor to a possible armed conflict with the United States, Rosemary Foot offers us a sophisticated analysis of China's views and conduct on the international stage. Focusing on the topic of human protection, she provides a rich and nuanced account of both the continuities and changes in Beijing's policies in this area and its evolving relationship with the United Nations and its peacekeeping and humanitarian missions.

China's views and conduct on human protection, as Foot ably shows, cannot be described in binary categories of the PRC being either a revisionist power, which seeks to upend and overhaul the existing norms, principles and institutions, or a defender of the status quo. Such simplistic dichotomies tend to distort a more complicated reality. Moreover, China's views and conduct in this area have shown both continuity and change over time. They have been influenced by its experience in participating in the United Nations and its many agencies as well as having influenced these organizations' programs and operations. There is a dynamic of reciprocal adjustment whereby Beijing seeks to adapt to the changing international environment and at the same time to shape it. It has tried to introduce its own positions and perspectives on what should be the priorities and emphases of UN missions while at the same time working with other member states and the UN Secretariat to develop feasible compromises and alternatives to the United Nations' traditional emphasis on peace and security, development, and human rights as a trinity of mutually reinforcing desiderata.

Beijing contests this orthodoxy and presents an alternative triad to promote human protection. It argues that economic development holds the key to human rights, a concept that incorporates not only freedom from fear (such as fear of being victimized by violence and atrocities committed during civil war) but also freedom from want (such as fulfilling the basic needs of food, housing, medical care). Moreover, as Foot points out, Beijing sees social stability and a strong, capable government to be necessary conditions to achieve economic development. It is skeptical of Western tendencies to emphasize the role of civil society and the marketplace to promote economic development, and to favor military intervention to prevent or stop massive violations of rights. It also stresses social stability rather than democracy as a prerequisite for economic development. Moreover, it endorses the principles of state sovereignty and non-interference in other countries' domestic affairs. In its view, international intervention should occur only with the consent of the state involved, and it should play the role of assisting the incumbent government, which has the primary responsibility of protecting its citizens' rights. Humanitarian intervention should not be used as a pretext to challenge or replace the existing government. Foot summarizes and captures well these important features characterizing Beijing's policy position on human protection.

As she also suggests, China's role in the UN's activities for human protection is affected by its existing beliefs, increasing power, and concerns for its image. Beijing's emphasis on the principles of state sovereignty and non-interference in other countries' domestic affairs naturally inclines it to argue that the UN should only intervene with the consent of the host government and in cooperation with this government. There is, as Foot points out, discursive continuity and consistency in Beijing's position in this regard in recent decades. Yet, one would be remiss to overlook that this position reflects a basic transformation of China's earlier beliefs during the 1950s and 1960s when it championed the solidarity of the international proletariat, class warfare, and armed insurgency to overthrow bourgeois governments. During these earlier years of the People's Republic, Beijing also rejected the legitimacy of the UN (it had fought against forces under the UN auspice in Korea and was denied membership in this organization) and opposed the UN's armed interventions. That Beijing has now provided the largest number of personnel to UN peacekeeping missions and that it has even relaxed its insistence that UN intervention can only occur with the host government's consent point to a sea change in its policy orientation. Thus, one can see both continuity and change in Beijing's beliefs.

Of course, with its economic growth Beijing has also become a more active and influential participant in UN processes. It is now the second largest contributor to the UN's budget. China's exercise of its increased power, however, has to some extent been restrained by its concern for its image abroad and at home. Presumably, its role as the largest contributor to UN peacekeeping forces can be construed as a status symbol of having become a great power and even a 'responsible stakeholder.' This said, this desire for a positive image can be limited by other considerations. For example, Foot shows that Beijing's

vetoes on UN intervention in Syria's civil war (often in conjunction with Moscow's vetoes) suggest that it is sometimes willing to take a 'hit' in international criticism when it adopts an unpopular position. In this case, concern for its image takes a backseat to strongly held views about China's basic principles and suspicions about Western countries' motives in this conflict. China's opposition to the UN intervention in Syria is interesting because the PRC does not have a large material interest or stake in the outcome of this country's conflict. Here and elsewhere, identity and history rather than interest may be more relevant. As a country that has suffered foreign military intervention, China is more sensitive and averse to such undertakings.

How does this discussion pertain to Foot's analysis? China's views and beliefs reflect its process of learning. Its policies and actions regarding human protection, the focus of Foot's book, must be understood in the context of previous episodes involving the UN and its interventions. Beijing updates its views and beliefs according to its understanding of its experiences. In other words, China's views and beliefs are not *sui generis* or formed in a vacuum. It would therefore be helpful for Foot to provide some additional historical background that is pertinent to China's recent attitudes toward and actions on issues of human protection.

Unfortunately, Beijing has felt that it has been deceived and misled by the West, especially the US, in previous instances of UN interventions to protect human rights. In its view, the real hidden purpose of these interventions has turned out to be different and these interventions have been undertaken to advance the agenda of the US and the West to overthrow objectionable regimes abroad. Beijing sees hypocrisy and double standards in the West's advocacy when it looked the other way when massive violations against human rights occurred in places like Rwanda, Somalia, and Haiti where the victims happened to be people with dark skin.

The US quickly and unilaterally abandoned its mission in Somalia after a gun battle with Somali militia commanded by one of its warlords,[14] and it literally turned back Haitian refugees seeking asylum in the US, forcing their rickety boats on the high seas to return to Haiti before they could reach US shores.[15] 'Responsibility to protect' does not appear to apply to these refugees or to the Rohingya people fleeing Myanmar. The US was also slow to act when civil war and ethnic cleansing occurred initially in former Yugoslavia.[16] Western countries were quick to condemn Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait, insisting that Iraq must be forced to give up its annexation of this conquered land. But they, or at least their official quarters, did not act with equal vigor in opposing Israel's occupation and takeover of Arab land and did not extend the same amount of sympathy to Palestinians and their demand for statehood now for over seventy years. Foot's book would be even stronger if it had taken a comparative approach, juxtaposing China's views and actions on human protection with those of Western countries, especially the US. The historical background of Western and US action and inaction would help to inform further the evolution of Beijing's views, some would say its skepticism, on issues of human protection.

There was a time when China and Russia gave greater support to UN intervention. Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990 posed the first major challenge to the 'new world order' after the Cold War. The UN acted decisively and practically unanimously, passing numerous resolutions in quick succession in a matter of days to reverse Iraq's annexation of Kuwait.[17] The member

[14] Ken Menkhaus and Louis Ortmayer, "Key Decisions in the Somalia Intervention." 1995. Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, School of Foreign Policy. Georgetown University.

[15] Louis Ortmayer and Joanna Flinn, "Hamstrung over Haiti: Returning the Refugees." 1997. Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, School of Foreign Policy, Georgetown University.

[16] James E. Bjork and Allan E. Goodman, "Yugoslavia, 1991-92: Could Diplomacy Have Prevented a Tragedy?" 1993. Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, Pew Case Studies Center, Georgetown University.

[17] Dorinda G. Dallmeyer, "The Kuwait Crisis: Sanctions, Negotiations, and the Decision to Go to War." 1991. Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, Pew Case Studies Center, Georgetown University.

states joined these resolutions in the hope that a forceful, united front would peacefully extract Iraq from of Kuwait. Having obtained Resolution 678 (with China abstaining) authorizing the use of 'all necessary means,' the US declared that diplomacy had failed and proceeded to attack Iraqi forces in 1991. UN resolutions intended to avoid war were in the opinion of many (including those in Beijing and Moscow) hijacked by Washington to legitimate its agenda of decimating Iraq's armed forces and consolidating its own military and political position in the Middle East.[18]

In late 1992, the Bush administration launched Operation Restore Hope. The US led the UN-sanctioned United Task Force, pursuant to Resolution 794, to provide a protected environment for humanitarian operations in southern Somalia. After armed clashes with the forces controlled by warlord Mohamed Farrah Aidid (which were popularized in the US movie, *Blackhawk Down*), the Clinton administration decided unilaterally to withdraw US troops. Their departure abandoned the UN personnel and the troops of other countries which contributed to the United Task Force in this supposed collective mission.

After President Jean-Bertrand Aristide was overthrown by a military coup, the US imposed an embargo on Haiti that made this country's dire economic conditions even worse. Washington declined to intervene in the country, which is located in its backyard, even when Haitian people's living conditions deteriorated seriously. When this deterioration caused an exodus of refugees fleeing to the US for asylum in 1991-1992, they were intercepted at sea and forcibly repatriated. Both the Bush and Clinton administrations declined to accept the refugees in the US.

There was then the tragedy of mass killings that occurred in Rwanda in 1994. The Clinton administration refused to intervene and had even opposed reinforcing UN personnel already in that country. Its evacuation of US nationals was followed by the withdrawal of French, Belgian, and Italian soldiers, leaving an under-staffed UN presence behind. Their departure had the effect of further emboldening those committing mass atrocities. Yet the State Department deliberately avoided using the "g-word" because any reference to genocide would trigger international obligations that the US did not want to assume in this case.[19] This tragedy and the role of Western countries in it were depicted in the movie *Hotel Rwanda.*

In 2011, China abstained on Resolution 1973 which imposed a no-fly zone to limit casualties in Libya's civil war. This resolution was then used by the US and its Western allies as a blank check to attack and topple the Qaddafi regime. Beijing felt that it had been fooled again by this gambit of bait and switch, using humanitarian protection as a pretext or ploy to undertake regime change.[20]

These episodes of Western and US action or inaction led Beijing to question these countries' sincerity and their true commitment to human protection. Its opposition to various resolutions subsequently put forth in connection with Syria's civil war reflects its learning and adjustment to these prior experiences. When the US and its allies bombed Serbia in 1999 and when they invaded Afghanistan and Iraq in 2001 and 2003 respectively, they did not bother to seek UN approval, anticipating that this approval would be blocked by Chinese and Russian vetoes.[21] They resorted instead to unilateral action

[18] Dallmeyer, "The Kuwait Crisis."

[19] Samantha Power, "Bystanders to Genocide." *The Atlantic Monthly*, September 2001. https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2001/09/bystanders-to-genocide/304571/.

[20] See, for example, John A. Heffern, "The 2011 NATO Intervention in Libya." 2015. Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, Pew Case Studies Center, Georgetown University; and Matthew Green, "To What Extent Was the NATO Intervention in Libya a Humanitarian Intervention?" E-International Relations, February 6, 2019, https://www.e-ir.info/2019/02/06/to-what-extent-was-the-nato-intervention-in-libya-a-humanitarian-intervention/

[21] Curtis H. Martin, "Going to the United Nations: George W. Bush and Iraq." 2005. Pew Cases Studies Center, Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, Georgetown University.

or a 'coalition of the willing,' using the North Atlantic Treaty Organization as a cover to legitimate their action such as in Serbia, Libya, Iraq, and Afghanistan. This selective approach and 'forum shopping' obviously compromised the UN's role in human protection (one may also recall that many of these same countries had previously opposed international sanctions against South Africa and Rhodesia's racist regimes, denying that these regimes were violating basic human rights such as their apartheid system).

Parenthetically, during the episode involving the NATO attack against Serbia, US air force bombed China's embassy in Belgrade, causing several fatalities. Washington claimed that it was an honest mistake due to an outdated map. Most people in China did not believe in this claim. Even Western media have questioned this claim and have reported that it was a deliberate attack.[22] Fast forward to more recent developments, Washington has condemned Beijing's treatment of its Uighur citizens as 'genocide.'[23] Beijing of course objects to this characterization, and sees it as another sign of hypocrisy in view of Washington's incarceration of its citizens of Japanese ancestry in internment camps during World War II, the forced relocation of native Americans from their ancestral land to so-called reservations, and the forced assimilation of indigenous children in American, Canadian, and Australian schools not so long ago.

In short, Beijing sees the West to have 'weaponized' the issue of human rights, applying it selectively to disguise their true foreign policy motives. As a most recent example, the Biden administration has condemned Moscow for violating Ukraine's sovereignty and for recognizing the independence of two breakaway republics, Donetsk and Luhansk, as a violation of international law. We do not need an expert to tell us that leaders in Beijing would ask why Washington sees it fit to support Taiwan's de facto independence and secession from China. The right of self-determination appears to be important for the people of Taiwan but not for those living, for example, in Crimea, Kashmir or Palestine.

This historical context explains the tense exchange between high-ranking US and Chinese officials at their meeting in Alaska in March 2021. US Secretary of State Antony Blinken publicly berated the Chinese delegation, stating that Beijing's actions "threaten the rules-based order that maintains global stability," and arguing that this is "why they're not merely [China's] internal matters."[24] China's top diplomat Yang Jiechi retorted, asking which and whose rules Blinken had in mind and stating that China would only follow "the United Nations-centered international system and the international order underpinned by international law, not what is advocated by a small number of countries of the so-called 'rules-based' international order."[25] He stated bluntly that the US "does not have the qualification to say that it wants to speak to China

[22] See, for example, https://www.theguardian.com/theobserver/1999/nov/28/focus.news1; and https://www.theguardian.com/world/1999/oct/17/balkans.

[23] Bill Bostock, "Secretary of State Antony Blinken Says He Stands by Mike Pompeo's Designation that China Committed Genocide against the Uighurs." Yahoo!News, January 28, 2021, no page numbers. https://news.yahoo.com/secretary-state-antony-blinken-says-110049095.html; *The Economist*, "'Genocide' Is the Wrong Word for the Horrors of Xinjiang: To Confront Evil, the First Step Is to Describe It Accurately." February 13, 2021, no page numbers. https://www.economist.com/leaders/2021/02/13/genocide-is-the-wrong-word-for-the-horrors-of-xinjiang; and Amitai Etzioni, "Will the Biden Administration Embrace Trump's Extreme Anti-China Rhetoric? The New Administration Will Have to Sidestep yet Another Trump Landmine." *The Diplomat*, February 1, 2021, no page numbers. https://thediplomat.com/2021/02/will-the-biden-administration-embrace-trumps-extreme-anti-china-rhetoric/.

[24] Quoted in Rising Powers Initiative, "RPI Policy Alert: Rising Powers React to Contentious U.S.-China Relations: A Roundup." George Washington University, March 2021, no page numbers. https://www.risingpowersinitiative.org/publication/rising-powers-react-to-contentious-u-s-china-relations-a-roundup/.

[25] Rising Power Initiative, "RPI Policy Alert." no page numbers.

from a position of strength."[26] On another occasion, Xi Jinping, China's president, also stated pointedly, remarking that "China welcomes helpful suggestions, but won't accept sanctimonious preaching."[27]

So how does all of this relate to the issue of human protection, the subject of Foot's book? The legitimacy of any international norm, rule, or institution requires widespread consent, most importantly the support of major states. A principle such as human protection should be based on shared value and common understanding, and it should reflect the perception that it is not being applied selectively and used to disguise ulterior motives. Trust is a precious but fragile thing. It is difficult to develop and easy to lose. Once lost, it will take much effort and a long time to restore.

Foot's book has documented that Beijing has come a long way from its days of opposing the UN to the point that it is now one of this organization's most active member states and one of its largest contributors to its peacekeeping missions. This role may yet again change. Already we have seen the US changing its attitudes from one of the strongest advocates of the UN to one of its most vocal critics, having withdrawn from some of its institutions such as UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) and international treaties and other bodies such as the Paris Climate accord (President Joe Biden rejoined this agreement after President Donald Trump pulled the US out), the Iranian nuclear deal, the Trans Pacific Partnership, the Global Compact on Migration and many others, including, most ironically, the UN Human Rights Council. In order to have a rule-based international order, a country cannot insist that others must play by its rules and then quit the game when these rules turn out to be inconvenient.

[26] Rising Power Initiative, "Rising Powers React to Contentious U.S.-China Relations." no page numbers.

[27] Xinhua, "China Welcomes Helpful Suggestions, but Won't Accept Sanctimonious Preaching: Xi." July1, 2021, no page numbers. http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/special/2021-07/01/c_1310037332.htm.

Review by Courtney J. Fung, Macquarie University

Rosemary Foot's latest book, *China, the UN, and Human Protection: Beliefs, Power, Image*, arrives during heated public commentary over China's alleged growing influence in the United Nations system. Recent US administrations have called out various UN organs for "favoring China" and lacking "independence from the Chinese Communist Party,"[28] noting that the United States will "resist China's efforts to overfill key UN positions with Chinese citizens."[29] The US Congress introduced a bill requiring intelligence services to report "the purpose, scope and means of expanded Chinese influence in international organizations,"[30] suggesting concerns over how China seeks to shape the United Nations from within. Such policy developments reflect a popular narrative that equates China's funding contributions and tally of senior executive assignments as indicative of China's ascendancy at the United Nations.[31] After all, China is now the second largest contributor to the regular and peacekeeping budgets; holds four executive leadership posts across the UN system, deploys the most peacekeepers out of the permanent members of the UN Security Council, and garners accolades from senior UN officials for its conscientious commitments to multilateralism. The impeccable timing of Foot's analysis only underscores what a sorely needed corrective she offers to an emerging conventional wisdom of China's almost unfettered ascendancy of the UN system. Her nuanced account of China's behavior in the United Nations vis-à-vis human protection is a significant contribution to policy and academic debates on China's multilateral rise.

China, the UN, and Human Protection builds upon Foot's earlier works,[32] offering an investigation to the research question of "[h]ow are we to make sense of the PRC's embrace of the UN, and what does its engagement mean in larger timers?"(1). Foot focuses her broad research question on "one of the most contentious area of UN activity" – human protection, which aspires towards a 'people-centered' conception of security and thus "tips the balance away from the UN's Westphalian state-based profile, towards the provision of greater protection for the security of individuals and their individual liberties." (1). Using the theme of the emerging human protection complex to organize the book, Foot's work emphasizes a United Nations that is shifting towards a liberal, human-centered organization, with individual protection secured through a reinforcing combination of development, human rights, peace and security. The book goes beyond existing studies that identify China's preference for state sovereignty and territoriality as guiding principles for UN activity, and discomfort over the implication of such liberal agendas, with their normative emphasis on accountability, inclusivity and transparency in

[28] Abigail Williams, "U.S. Opts Out of WHO-linked Global COVID-19 Vaccine Effort," *NBC News*, 4 September 2020, https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/white-house/u-s-opts-out-who-linked-global-covid-19-vaccine-n1239218.

[29] Bryant Harris, "Senate Questions Biden's UN Ambassador Nominee over Speech at Chinese-funded Institute," *The National News,* 27 January 2021.

[30] Ripon Advance News Service, "Young's Bipartisan Bill Seeks Intelligence Report on Chinese Influence," *The Ripon Advance*, 25 September 2019, https://riponadvance.com/stories/youngs-bipartisan-bill-seeks-intelligence-report-on-chinese-influence/.

[31] Kristine Lee and Alexander Sullivan, "People's Republic of the United Nations: China's Emerging Revisionism in International Organisations," *Center for a New American Security*, 14 May 2019, https://www.cnas.org/publications/reports/peoples-republic-of-the-united-nations; Maaike Okano-Heijmans, Frans-Paul van der Putten and Louise van Schaik, "A United Nations with Chinese Characteristics?," *Clingendael Report*, 18 December 2018, https://www.clingendael.org/publication/united-nations-chinese-characteristics; Anne Applebaum, 'How China Outsmarted the Trump Administration," The *Atlantic,* November 2020. For a contrasting view, see Jeffrey Feltman, "China's Expanding Influence at the United Nations – and How the United States should React', *Brookings Institution,* 14 September 2020, 4; https://www.brookings.edu/wpcontent/uploads/2020/09/FP_20200914_china_united_nations_feltman.pdf.

[32] Rosemary Foot, *Rights Beyond Borders: The Global Community and the Struggle over Human Rights in China* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Foot and Andrew Walter, *China, the United States, and Global Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

how the UN engages with the world.[33] Foot summarizes how China has enacted state sovereignty and territoriality as policy guidance to counter moves towards a liberal-leaning UN structure, with what she coins as "Beijing's triadic model," emphasizing economic development, social stability and a strong state infrastructure as the means to secure international peace and security, and ultimately, human protection. Foot underscores that "this Chinese model downplays the significance of human rights." (3). China's efforts and ability to engage are driven by three key factors: Beijing's conservative ideological positions (beliefs); growing material capabilities (power), and specifically its concern for a positive international image (which Foot shortens to simply image). The United Nations is an excellent platform to shape international politics along China's preferences, while securing praise for China as President Xi Jinping aspires for China to "[l]ead the reform of the global governance system…" (7). China's growth in power – primarily in this case, economic power – means that China has more material resources to offer the United Nations to make such aspirations possible.

Foot argues that two pairs of factors in the post-Cold War era further China's triadic model as a credible alternative. The first pair focuses on the global context of declining Western influence in the UN system, which has been accentuated by US abdication of multilateral leadership and derision of the United Nations under the Trump administration, contrasting with China's commitment to the UN system. China is indeed willing to contribute material resources to the organization at a time when the United Nations is in search of funds for major initiatives. For example, in support of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, China alone is funding $1bn over a decade for the China-UN Peace and Development Fund and is contributing the UN-People's Republic of China (PRC) Global Geospatial Knowledge and Innovation Centre, using big data to globally map human activity, infrastructure, and topography.[34] Foot is clear, however, that she is not just probing the headline-grabbing material contributions of funding and personnel, but also China's "positive relations with the G77" (3), which are crucial to legitimizing UN protection programs.

The second pair of factors are specific to the ambitious, yet mixed success in operationalizing the human protection agenda. The UN's focus on the connections between underdevelopment and conflict as relevant for human protection presents fertile ground for China to apply its correctives focusing on economic recovery and its more narrow goals of social stability, for example. Moreover, the United Nations' admittedly uneven achievements regarding its human protection agenda reflect its own difficulties of operationalizing such a complicated and expansive family of programs, giving further opportunity for China's triadic approach as a potential corrective. Although it is attention-grabbing to see UN initiatives linked to references of a 'shared future' or a 'community of humankind,' which is shorthand for Xi Jinping's vision for global governance, Foot's work reminds us that China worked to exert its will on the UN system long before its economic rise and geopolitical clout of today. For example, as Foot notes, the overlap of the PRC's ideas with those of the UN has fostered China's current position, as China can point to UN reports that emphasize economic empowerment as vital to human security, and then selectively discard the UN prominence of civil and political rights.[35]

The book does not explain particular event outcomes but dissects broad trends with six eclectic chapters on aspects of human protection that offer detailed studies of rhetorical responses to emerging norms, alongside chapters that unpack the PRC's approaches per specific functional issues or crises. A chapter on peace operations mirrors the latest official Chinese

[33] Joel Wuthnow, *Chinese Diplomacy and the UN Security Council: Beyond the Veto* (Oxford: Routledge, 2013); Courtney J. Fung, *China and Intervention at the UN Security Council: Reconciling Status* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019).

[34] See "Statement by H.E. Xi Jinping President of the People's Republic of China At the General Debate of the 75th Session of The United Nations General Assembly," PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 22 September 2020, https://www.mfa.gov.cn/ce/cohk//eng/Topics/gjfz/t1817098.htm.

[35] See Boutros-Boutros Ghali, *An Agenda for Peace: Preventive Diplomacy, Peacemaking and Peace-keeping* (New York: UN Department of Public Information, 1992), https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/145749; Boutros-Boutros Ghali, "An Agenda for Development: Report of the Secretary-General," A/48/935, 6 May 1994, https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/188719; Kofi Annan, "The Causes of Conflict and the Promotion of Durable Peace and Sustainable Development in Africa: Report of the Secretary-General," *Voices from Africa*, 8 December 1998, https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/267132. Foot discusses these overlaps on page233.

statements, with a focus on the last thirty years of China's peacekeeping activities. Peacekeeping's most recent track record is of particular interest to Foot since these operations are now routinely "more complex, dangerous, and intrusive" (15) compared to their traditional antecedents, yet China is now a key peacekeeping player in terms of funding and deploying troops. A later chapter examines China's evolving relationship to the UN Human Rights Bodies, including the UN Commission on Human Rights and the UN Human Rights Council against three junctures – in response to the Tiananmen crisis of June 1989; the dispatch of the Commission to the birth of the Council in 2005-6, and the Council's response to the 'Arab Spring' from 2011 onwards. Foot finds that China's resistance to the human rights bodies dropped as China became more confident in its ability to shape procedural workings and promote its own interpretations of human rights, emphasizing economic and social rights over political and civil rights.

Foot devotes two chapters to emerging norms: one on the protection of civilians and the women, peace and security agenda given the emergence of the United Nations' core obligations of human security; and another on the responsibility to protect (R2P), which redefines the right of state sovereignty as contingent on protecting populations. In both cases, China has worked to modify norm content and prevent norm (mis)application, adapting the norms away from interventionism by emphasizing a long-term, economic development approach that is respectful of state sovereignty, for example. Foot pivots to examining the Syrian civil war. This long-term crisis is chosen as it is not only a focal point for R2P and the protection of civilians agenda in one of the most grave post-Cold War failures of human protection, but also a surprising case where China has used its veto to block much action, which she describes as "extremely unusual behavior for Beijing" (164). These vetoes have required Beijing to grapple with blows to its much-valued image as a cooperative custodian of international peace and security, highlighting the tradeoffs that China faces in securing its beliefs within the UN system. A final functional chapter examines how PRC elites conceive of development as supporting human protection to unpack how China relates its unique domestic experiences towards sophisticated theoretical and grounded policy recommendations, exported via its triadic model into the UN system.

Foot's analysis rests upon extensive fieldwork, with research trips to Geneva and New York and sabbaticals in China to interview diplomats, UN personnel, and academics in the PRC. The last group is arguably an even more valuable source, as opportunities for research access to PRC officials is increasingly limited. While such scholars "are constrained by official discourse, they can also be reflective of the range of debates that taking place at official levels." (229). Drawing from these elite interviews and extensive primary and secondary sources, a consistent theme in Foot's book is the entrepreneurial, opportunistic approach that PRC elites take to shaping norm content, formal procedure, and informal processes that are subject to the UN agenda. By implication, China's worldview promotion and efforts to modify UN structures is uneven, and is contingent on social environment, bureaucratic resources, and issue area. Even with China's triadic model, there is still only a nascent PRC academic literature on human protection (239)[36] and a lack of clarity in "the intervening steps linking development and security" (250). Foot emphasizes that these silences are indicative of China's "pragmatic flexibility" (250), cautioning against hyperbole over a singular PRC intentionality in China's apparent efforts to influence global politics.[37]

Foot's research joins the revival of research on the sub-area of Chinese foreign relations vis-á-vis multilateral institutions, with works that problematize simplistic assessments of China's multilateral rise.[38] The book joins an ongoing academic

[36] Foot cites Shaun Breslin, "Debating Human Security in China: Towards Discursive Power?" *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 45:2 (2015): 243-265.

[37] Courtney J. Fung, Enze Han, Kai Quek, and Austin Strange, "The Evolution of Chinese International Influence: Intentionality, Intermediaries, and Institutions," *Journal of Contemporary China* (2022).

[38] Scott L. Kastner, Margaret M. Pearson and Chad Rector, *China's Strategic Multilateralism: Investing in Global Governance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018); Alastair Iain Johnston, *Social States: China in International Institutions, 1980-2000* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008); Ann Kent, *Beyond Compliance: China, International Organizations, and Global Security* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007); Joel Wuthnow, *Chinese Diplomacy and the UN Security Council: Beyond the Veto* (Oxford: Routledge, 2013); Marc Lanteigne, *China and International Institutions: Alternate Paths to Global Power* (Oxford: Routledge, 2005).

conversation on whether and how China applies its aspirations to lead the reform of international institutions from within and Foot's ambitious, macro-lensed work is an excellent complement to a growing body of academic studies on China's response to specific UN regimes and platforms.[39] While Foot casts back into history throughout the book, her evidence-based, clear-eyed assessment of China's trajectory as a UN player speak to the here and now. *China, the UN, and Human Protection* is an astute assessment of China's struggle to secure its international image within a UN system that is moving towards more liberal, humane, and progressive values. Foot's latest book will surely be essential reading for policy and scholarly audiences alike and is a major contribution to our understanding of China's evolving role in multilateral politics.

[39] Fung, *China and Intervention at the UN Security Council: Reconciling Status* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), Rana Siu Inboden, *China and the International Human Rights Regime* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021).

Review by Kelly-Kate Pease, Webster University

In *China, the UN, and Human Protection: Beliefs, Power, and Image*, Rosemary Foot seeks to understand China's involvement in the politics of human protection at the United Nations. Foot essentially argues that the interdependent interaction of China's ideological beliefs, its growing material power, and its desire to craft a global image as a responsible great power is reshaping existing human rights and human protection norms. This review reconstructs Foot's complicated argument and explains how Foot marshals evidence to support it by summarizing two representative chapters. The review then critically analyzes the argument and evidence in the context of the methodological traditions (i.e., the Constructivist and English School) chosen by Foot.

At the outset, Foot is clear that her research is embedded in interpretivist epistemology and that her analysis is informed by the English School's focus on how the social reality of international relations is constructed through the interplay of material power and social norms (25). Foot's work complements previous research on the interplay of capability, actor self-image and the role of beliefs and values in constituting and causing the actor's behavior.[40] Foot also contributes to the growing body of research devoted to China's role in global governance.[41] The first chapter is devoted to justifying the timeframe and scope of her study. Foot explains her focus on China and the UN in the post-Cold War era and highlights the difference between the UN's framework for human protection (based on international peace and security, development, and human rights) and China's preference for strong state, coupled with development and social stability as the preferred strategy for human protection (28).

Then, in separate chapters on peacekeeping, the protection of civilians in armed conflict, the women, peace and security agenda, the responsibility to protect, Syria, UN human rights bodies, and development, Foot details how and why China engaged the UN from within. Foot structures each chapter in more or less similar fashion. She first explains the UN structure and norms as they relate to each aspect of the UN's human protection agenda. Then, using government documents, prepared statements by government officials, and the analyses of Chinese scholars[42], Foot describes China's views and preferences in exceptional detail. This description bolsters the book's central thesis that China's values, beliefs, and image are combining with its growing material power to shift the UN's normative framework. The shift has also been aided by UN failures, the inherent difficulties in policy implementation, and the overreach and subsequent retrenchment of Western states. For example, in Chapter 2 on UN Peacekeeping Operations, Foot details the evolution of peacekeeping beginning with traditional peacekeeping based on principles first articulated by Secretary General Dag Hammarskjold: state consent, impartiality, and the non-use of military force except in cases of self-defense.

Traditional peacekeeping operations then pivoted to more robust peacebuilding and enforcement missions which were far more intrusive on state sovereignty, with the UN pushing policy prescriptions on host governments (64 to 68). China's

[40] For previous research on capability see Robert Dahl, "The Concept of Power," *Behavioral Science* 2(3), 1957: 201-15; Michael Barnett and Raymond Duval, eds., *Power in Global Governance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); and Steven Lukes, *Power: A Radical View* (Basingstoke: Palgrave/MacMillan, 2005). For prior research on actor self-image, see Amitav Acharya, "The R2P and Norm Diffusions: Towards a Framework of Norm Circulation." *Global Responsibility to Protect* 5:4 (2013): 466-79, Jennifer Dixon, "Rhetorical Adaptation and Resistance to International Norms, *Perspectives on Politics* 15:1 (2017): 83-99; and Michael Freeden, *Ideologies and Political Theory: A Conceptual Approach* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).

[41] See for example Janka Oertel, *China and the United Nations* (London: Nomos/Bloomsbury, 2015); Ian Clark, "International Society and China: The Power of Norms and the Norms of Power.," *The Chinese Journal of International Politics* 7:3 (2014):15-40, and Shogo Suzuki, "Seeking Legitimate Great Power Status in the Post-Cold War International Society: China's and Japan's Participation in UNPKO," *International Relations,* 22:1 (2008): 45-63.

[42] Interestingly, Foot uses Chinese scholarship as primary source material because Chinese professors are rarely out of step with official government policy.

desire to be viewed as a responsible great power, coupled with increased security demands, explain why China's became more involved in these complex operations. Foot then describes subsequent UN peacekeeping reforms to show how China has systemically advanced a return to the Hammarskjold principles of traditional peacekeeping with its emphasis on state consent and assisting states in promoting social stability and development. China did this by materially supporting initiatives and building UN capacity through the China-UN Peace and Development Fund and the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and by constraining initiatives that advanced internationally recognized human rights and encouraged post-conflict states to develop a strong civil society.

Similarly, in Chapter 4, Foot explores China's interaction with the emergence of the responsibility to protect (R2P) norm—a norm that redefines state sovereignty as the responsibility to protect populations of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity. If states are unable or unwilling to do so, then that responsibility falls to the international community. This norm grew out of the failure of the international community to act to prevent genocide in Rwanda in 1994. Foot first distinguishes between the protection of civilians (POC) and the R2P norms. The POC norm applies during armed conflict and/or peacekeeping which arguably requires state consent obtained either through accession to international treaties or an international agreement to host a peacekeeping force. The R2P norm, on the other hand, qualifies state sovereignty when the government fails to prevent these four specific mass atrocities (132-133). R2P, therefore, contains a potentially coercive element that allows for the UN to act without state consent. Foot then examines two phases of R2P, first by detailing how the R2P norm originated at the UN with a focus on the differing perspectives of Sudanese diplomat Francis Deng and UN Secretary General Kofi Annan. Deng placed the emphasis of the emerging norm on the state's responsibility for protecting populations, while Annan sought to make sovereignty conditional, less sacrosanct. Foot acknowledges that few states at the UN supported Annan's view; however, several UN working continued to advance Annan perspective in the lead up to the 2005 World Summit. Foot explains that while R2P was formalized in the 2005 World Summit outcome document, it was qualified by requiring any R2P use of force to be authorized by the Security Council on a case-by-case basis when a state demonstrates manifest failure to protect its population (138). Foot's analysis of the first phase of the R2P norm shows that China responded to the Secretary General's implementation report by undermining the institutionalization of the norm at the UN.

Foot's discussion of the second phase of R2P is dominated by an analysis of China's response to the 2011 Libya crisis and its role in Security Council decision-making. China voted for council resolution 1970, which stated that Libya had a responsibility to protect its population and authorized for nonforcible measures against Gaddafi regime, and abstained from council resolution 1973 when the council authorized of use military force "to protect civilians" and enforce a no-fly zone (but did not reference R2P directly). Foot explains that China's actions were driven in large part by the Gulf region's preferences during the crisis and the defection of the Libyan UN delegation to the side of the rebels (147-48). However, as the Libyan intervention deteriorated, China hardened its position against R2P, citing a litany of complaints ranging from NATO's abuse of its mandate, to the level of civilian casualties, to the brutal murder of Libyan President Muammar Gaddafi. The UN's failure in Libya reinforced China's position that human protection is best advanced through promoting a strong state and social stability, shifting the R2P discourse toward prevention and away from more forcible means of protecting civilians.

All the chapters in this book support Foot's central contention that China, while working within the UN, is shifting the human protection agenda away from the consolidated UN approach (peace and security, development, and human rights) to China's preferred framework of a strong state, development, and social stability. This process is driven by China's image, ideological beliefs, and its growing material capabilities. Foot is to be commended for her narrative clarity and her transparency about her research choices and process. The level of detail and description is impressive and provides the necessary context to understand the analysis. This is an exceptional interpretive analysis. By focusing on the discourse and political interplay, Foot can avoid the unnecessarily narrow requisites of positivist causation, while ensuring that her work remains impressively empirical. The book can, however, be critiqued in a couple of ways.

First, Foot's analysis of the UN often suggests that the UN is an integrated unit with relatively stable normative preferences (for example, 42). The UN's human protection agenda apparently consolidated in the 1990s and understandably, Foot

needs to start somewhere. Yet, the intergovernmental bodies of the UN (where member-state politics take place) have always been sites of competing values relating to human rights and humanitarian values. While Foot acknowledges that other member states had similar positions and values to those of China before and after this consolidation, the China-centric analysis leads to the conclusion that China is shifting those UN norms. It is just as possible that UN norms are always shifting, and that China is just one of the many actors who seek to define and redefine norms and affect their implementation at the UN. Success in this normative competition could be more influenced by events and the outcomes of initiatives rather than the fact that China has been attempting to form a normative consensus around its values and ideology.

Moreover, Foot often shifts her analysis between UN intergovernmental bodies and the UN bureaucracy when speaking of "the UN." Obviously, the bureaucracy can rarely stray too far from state preferences, it certainly does not reflect the same preferences. The UN bureaucracy and some member-states may advance the norm that human rights are interdependent and indivisible, but those values are not evident at the Human Rights Council, nor are they widely upheld by member-states. Similarly, the story of the politics of R2P is just as much about the persistence and perseverance of UN bureaucrats and experts pushing powerful states like the United States, Russia, and China as it is China's role in shifting the UN's consolidated R2P discourse to primarily emphasizing a strategy of building state capacity.

Second, Foot's description of China's engagement the UN human protection agenda seems to ignore the norms of diplomacy. One norm is finding a path or course of action where there is common ground. So where one might see shifting norms and normative concessions in security council resolutions and other documents, another might see vague language deliberately crafted to allow for multiple interpretations thereby enabling the parties to "do something" while theoretically adhering to their positions and principles. Foot goes to great lengths to show the level of nuanced in the discourse between the protection of civilians in armed conflict and the responsibility to protect, but arguably that may be distinction without a difference in crisis diplomacy.

Third, in some situations the textual evidence is rather thin. Foot occasionally relies only one official government document or official. Interpretive research has the benefit of utilizing qualitative sources, but key incidences need more than one source to show how a state 'understands' or 'thinks' about something. For example, Foot references a single official statement to document China's thinking on the UN Secretary General's report on the implementation of R2P (141-42). As compelling as that statement is, additional evidence seems to be in order if one wishes to assert that this represents how China thought about R2P at the time. Using multiple sources and statements would make the already convincing argument more convincing. In a related vein, Foot's argument of normative shift at the UN would be persuasive if she provided more UN bureaucratic documents, manuals, reports, etc. that reflect China's human protection preferences. Her documentation of the UN's original consolidated 'worldview' is extensive but the evidence indicating a normative shift at the UN is not.

Fourth, Foot dispatches counterarguments by briefly acknowledging them, making them a part of the interplay, and then moving on to her analysis of China's response. Foot mentions UN missteps or difficulty in implementing norms, points out that many important states such as the US, Russia, Germany, and Brazil have similar position and views, and notes overreach by the US, UN, NATO, and others. All of these factors could explain the shift (return) to the more conservative UN values of state sovereignty and nonintervention rather than a shift to these norms and values because of mutually constitutive dynamic between China's image, beliefs, and power.

Interpretive works are often assessed by the degree of reflexivity exhibited by the researcher. Foot's book exhibits little such reflexivity. The analysis does much to advance China's image as a responsible great power and forces serious consideration of China's triadic model for human protection at the UN. If, and when, member-states and the UN bureaucracy come to share China's standards for acceptable state behavior more broadly, the UN and the world will be a very different place indeed. Still, at the end of the day, *China, the UN, and Human Protection: Beliefs, Power, and Image* does an outstanding job of explaining why China has increased its engagement with the UN and how it engages with UN on the thorny issues related to human protection given its worldview. Foot's analysis yields a secondary benefit because she creates a detailed blueprint of

human protection at the UN as she explores China's interaction with different dimensions and nuances of the agenda. It is refreshing to see UN through the lens of China.

Response by Rosemary Foot, University of Oxford

I am very grateful that Alex J. Bellamy, Steve Chan, Courtney J. Fung, and Kelly-Kate Pease, four scholars with their own demanding and valuable research agendas, have taken the time to read and critique my 2020 book. I am grateful too for their close reading of the text and the efforts made to reflect upon and to improve my main argument.

As the reviewers note, one of my prime objectives in the book was to expose a complicated reality within an international organization that has been tipping away from its Westphalian state-based profile toward an emphasis on human protection. In its focus on China, the book shows how the Beijing leadership has attempted to counter these moves within the United Nations (UN) across a range of policy areas related to human protection.[43] Beijing has put forward what I term a "triadic model" that seeks to replace the UN emphasis on the interlocking nature of development, human rights, and peace and security with an approach to human protection that connects economic development with domestic social stability, and a strong state infrastructure as a route better able to reach UN goals. Steve Chan helpfully provides detail of the various dimensions of that triadic model as well as suggesting what that model implies for the role of civil society, the market, and human rights in the pursuit of human protection – basically, a downgrading or constraint on the centrality of all three.

Courtney J. Fung and Kelly-Kate Pease provide welcome and powerful summaries of the book's major thesis, while subtly pointing to the inherent difficulties in determining change and influence within such a dynamic and multi-layered organization. Alex J. Bellamy helpfully underscores that this relationship of influence is not a "one-way street," not least because China needs a positive relationship with the UN and its various networks in order to reinforce its international legitimacy. Thus, China's positions are inevitably shaped by other UN constituencies.

Chan supports the argument that the use of binary categories that have been used by policy-makers and some scholars to describe China – such as "revisionist state" or "status quo power" – simply are inadequate reflections of the contemporary reality.[44] Or as Fung puts it more expansively, one theme in the book is the "entrepreneurial, opportunistic approach that [People's Republic of China] PRC elites take to shaping norm content, formal procedure, and informal processes," leading her correctly to conclude that "China's worldview promotion and efforts to modify UN structures is uneven, and is contingent on social environment, bureaucratic resources, and issue area" – a succinct expression of the book's extended argument.

Turning more directly to those parts of the reviews that are either valuable correctives or suggest ways to improve the argument, where Bellamy references my attention to the "two-way street" of the UN-China influence relationship, Pease is looking for more evidence that China's normative preferences with respect to human protection are actually being reflected in UN documents, reports, and presumably action. Pease raises the valid point that the UN's inter-governmental bodies "have always been sites of competing values relating to human rights and humanitarian values" and that it is possible that China is "just one of the many actors who seek to define and redefine norms and affect their implementation at the UN."[45] I agree, and there is support for this point in the chapters on the Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict, the Women, Peace and Security agenda, the Responsibility to Protect (R2P), and the UN's human rights bodies. Often China has not

[43] I learned a great deal about the concept of human protection through following the work of Alex J. Bellamy. See, for example, Alex J. Bellamy, "The Humanisation of Security? Towards an International Human Protection Regime," *European Journal of International Security* 1:1 (2016): 112-133.

[44] For an extensive critique of the concept of revisionism see Steve Chan, Huiyun Feng, Kai He, and Weixing Hu, *Contesting Revisionism: China, the United States, and the Transformation of International Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021).

[45] In this regard see Kelly-Kate Pease, *International Organizations: Perspectives on Global Governance*, (New York: Routledge, 2018).

needed to take the lead, realising that it can rely on others to play a more forward role – whether that is Russia, Cuba, Pakistan, or Egypt, among other states.

Indeed, my research persuaded me that it is unhelpful in any attempt to understand China's role in global governance to ignore institutional design, the players, and the range of ideas that exist in extant environments and which may enable or restrain the furtherance of Chinese objectives. At the same time, there is much benefit to be had from a China-centered analysis in that it allows for an exploration of the opportunities that may arise from, as Fung notes, its determination to play a larger role in global governance, its emergence as the second largest contributor to the regular and peacekeeping budgets, and its status as the largest provider of peacekeepers among the other permanent members of the UN Security Council combined. Beijing has also offered major funding in support of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals and more recently launched its Global Development Initiative through the UN, the implications of which are worth tracking in future research.

Pease sees the book as treating the UN too often as a unitary actor and thus neglecting the often painful differences between the actions and preferences of UN inter-governmental bodies and the desires of a UN bureaucracy and various UN Secretaries-General trying to perform more aspirational roles. The stance underpinning the book, however, is in fact that there is not one UN at all. In several of the chapters, and certainly in the conclusion – where I quote Inis Claude's reference to "two identities of the UN" (267; see also 270-271) – the aim is to underscore that this is a body made up of several different constituencies. We not only have the UN of the Secretariat, but also the UN of member states, underlining that the term 'member state' covers several different types and groupings. There is also a vital place reserved for civil society actors within the UN system. In the area of human protection (and elsewhere) they have helped to frame policies, draw attention to failures in protection, and offer early warning of the possible outbreak of fighting or gross violations of human rights. Undoubtedly, there is room to strengthen that argument, not least through reference to the work of others such as Thomas Weiss, co-author of "The 'Third' United Nations," a major article that points to the importance of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), academics, consultants, experts, and others, who can bring forth a shift in UN ideas or policies in areas where governments and the UN bureaucracies find it difficult to act.[46]

Pease also suggests the value of highlighting the "norms of diplomacy." This suggestion led me to recall one interview I had with a state diplomat where the diplomat in question reminded me that it was her job to go into a room with the intention of finding common ground in order to do her level best to advance policy and/or a relationship. This omission of a discussion of the nature of the diplomatic craft is a point well made. It may well have been crowded out because of my desire to make the argument that Bellamy in particular highlights in his review: that policy compromise sometimes derives from a fear that too many instances of UN failure will not only destroy the UN's legitimacy but that of the state playing a prominent role in the shaping of UN policy.

Pease criticizes the book for not showing sufficient "reflexivity," by which she means a requirement to spell out in more detail what it could imply for the UN and world order were the UN Secretariat and member states broadly come to share China's standards for acceptable state behavior. However, the conclusion notes (272-273) that were China to acquire the increased authority that it has been seeking, this could mean a return to a UN more reminiscent of the 1980s – a UN that is even more of an inter-state governance mechanism than is currently the case. More specifically, it implies involvement in "fewer, less complex, and less intrusive peace operations, less emphasis on human protection," and a Human Rights Council that neglects the rights of the individual and emphasises the right to development as well as collective rights above other areas of rights protection. The assumption is that a constrained UN will find it difficult to remain relevant in a world marked by atrocity crimes, explosions in refugee numbers, and climate change among other issues requiring global rather

[46] Thomas G. Weiss, Tatiana Carayannis, and Richard Jolly, "The 'Third' United Nations," *Global Governance*, 15 (2009): 123-142.

than national solutions. China's emphasis on 'national authorities' determining outcomes and establishing priorities is unlikely to provide the stable international order that it has long claimed that it craves.

Bellamy puts these broader consequences of a Chinese-inflected UN well. As he writes: "Over time, the appeal of China's vision of world politics will be tested by results as perceptions of China are tied to the performance of the UN. And if, as seems likely, a more sovereignty-bound organization proves no more able than the current organization to solve difficult transnational problems … the Chinese government will have difficult choices to make." Bellamy goes on to note that a weakened UN associated with Chinese values and principles could both tarnish China's positive international image and its international legitimacy, generating new forms of resistance from elsewhere in the international system.

Chan's main criticism of the book aligns with one of the points that Pease makes. Where Pease recommends consideration of a wider range of potential "influencers" capable of shifting the UN in one normative direction or another, Chan focuses directly and trenchantly on the negative role of the West in past interventions that were launched ostensibly in the name of human protection. Reproving the West and the United States in particular for its double standards, hypocrisy, and selectivity, Chan argues that greater attention to this historical background would have helped to explain "the evolution of Beijing's views, some would say its skepticism, on issues of human protection" as well, it might be added, as the positions of many other emerging powers and developing countries. However, this context for China's views is central to the chapters on R2P and on Syria. Moreover, the Chinese perception of past western behavior is relatively well-known not only because Beijing itself constantly refers to such examples, but also because a number of scholars, including Fung, have laid out clearly the basis of China's stance on what Beijing would call "so-called humanitarian intervention".[47]

Chan also raises the issue of American labelling of the oppression of Muslim Uighurs in Xinjiang as genocide, noting that "Beijing of course objects to this characterization, and sees it as another instance of hypocrisy." This charge of hypocrisy, rests, he recounts, on such US actions as incarceration of Japanese citizens in internment camps during World War II, the relocation of native Americans from their ancestral lands, and other such instances of human rights violations.

What the Chinese do not note, however, is that the US government has issued formal apologies for many if not all of these violations, as have the Australian and Canadian governments for their past abuses of indigenous children's rights. It is hard to imagine the Chinese government ever doing the same, though we can but hope that it might. Furthermore, unlike Beijing, such western governments come under the regular scrutiny of well-established domestic human rights organizations demanding various forms of redress and that their governments live up to the identities that they have embraced. The "whataboutism" that is characteristic of the Chinese government's approach to many of these issues is unhelpful and dangerous. It either encourages us to excuse reprehensible action whenever we see it, on the grounds of past instances of egregious human rights failings; or in some instances it can lead to a superficial, false equivalence.

Thus, unlike Beijing, I do find it necessary to condemn Moscow's violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and international law arising from the Putin government's recognition of the independence of the two breakaway republics of Donetsk and Luhansk, let alone its larger goal to destroy Ukrainian independence entirely.[48] And I do not see that as equating with US policy toward Taiwan, an equation that Chan reports as China's view. From the coverage of the virtual meeting between presidents Joe Biden and Xi Jinping in November 2021, we read that Biden repeated US opposition to "any unilateral

[47] See in particular Courtney J. Fung, *China and Intervention at the UN Security Council: Reconciling Status* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019).

[48] At the time of writing, China itself has not accorded recognition to these two republics. Neither has it recognized the 2014 Russian annexation of Crimea.

efforts to change the status quo or undermine peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait," a position that reflects the majority opinion on the island itself.[49]

I am privileged to have had the opportunity to reflect on these scholars' understandings of my argument, on some of the larger meanings that they have discovered in its exposition, and their suggestions for ways in which future work on China and global governance can be advanced and deepened.

[49] David J. Keegan and Kyle Churchman, "Taiwan Gains Ground Internationally, but Will China Retaliate?" *Comparative Connections* 23:3 (January 2022): 79-90.