

TRANSCRIPT

"CHINA AND TIANANMEN 25 YEARS ON: DOES AUTHORITARIANISM PAY?"

A Conversation With Rowena Xiaoqing He, Xiaorong Li, and Orville Schell

Moderator: Aryeh Neier

* * *TRANScriber's note: some speakers' accents difficult at times.* * *

ANNOUNCER:

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ARYEH NEIER:

I'm Aryeh Neier. I'm-- president emeritus of the-- the Open Society Foundations. And-- I'm-- here as the-- the moderator-- of this panel. And as moderator-- I-- (CLEAR THROAT) have said to the panel that-- I would-- pose-- a couple of questions-- to them and see how-- the discussion-- goes, rather than asking them to-- to start-- with set speeches. And after a period-- of discussion-- we will-- open it up to-- to questions-- by-- the other-- people who are-- here today.

We have-- three persons-- on the panel who are-- each-- very knowledgeable about China and about-- the-- the prospects for-- democracy and the-- the protection of-- of human rights-- in China. S-- starting on-- my far right-- we have-- Rowena Xiaoqing He, a lecturer on Chinese history at Harvard and-- her most recent book is-- *Tiananmen Exiles: Voices Of The Struggle for Democracy-- in Children*.

And-- next to her is-- Xiaorong Li-- who have I have known since she was the-- first executive director of-- on human rights-- in China. The organization was actually-- established a few months prior-- to-- to Tiananmen Square, and I recall taking part in the-- the founding meeting of the-- the organization-- in 19-- 88. Xiaorong has been-- associated with the Institute for Philosophy and Public Policy at the University of

Maryland and-- she has played-- a-- crucial role-- in-- assisting, from the-- the outside-- human rights-- defenders-- in China.

And then-- sitting next to me is-- Orville Schell, who directs the-- the Center on U.S.-China Relations at the-- the Asia Society. Orville is the-- the former dean of Berkeley's Graduate School of-- of Journalism and he is, as I think-- probably-- everyone here knows, a prolific-- author of-- of books and articles-- on China.

To start-- I-- I want-- wanted to say-- a few words about-- what happened or what was happening-- in 1989-- when the-- the events of Tiananmen Square-- took place. It was-- a moment in which-- it seemed-- that on a worldwide basis-- great headway-- was being made in-- the-- the struggle for-- freedom and democracy.

There had been-- shifts-- in-- a number of-- Latin American and Asian countries-- not long-- before that. In the early part of the-- the 1980s-- most Latin America countries were-- military dictatorships. By the end of the-- the decade-- other than in Cuba, the-- the military dictatorships had all fallen-- or were furling-- falling. The last of them, the-- Chilean dictatorship of General Pinochet-- was in the process of falling in 1989. The general had lost-- a plebiscite in 1988 and had to give up power-- in 1990.

In Asia-- or in some countries of Asia there had also been-- transformations. In-- in South Korea-- in the Philippines and in-- Taiwan in the-- the late 1980s there was significant-- movements in the-- the direction of-- human rights and-- and democracy. And-- change was-- on the horizon-- at that point in South Africa. A few months after Tiananmen Square-- Nelson Mandela was-- released from-- prison and-- the-- the end to the-- the apartheid system-- was signaled by-- Mandela's-- release.

The-- the one-- major event-- that went in the-- the opposite direction was what happened-- on the night of June 3-4th-- 1989-- in China. I-- I should say that even that date of June 4th-- things went in another direction and-- in one other country, an important country in terms of its global influence. The same day as the-- the crackdown in China-- there was an election-- in Poland-- and-- the-- the solidarity movement-- won-- every seat in the-- the Sejm-- that is the-- the Polish parliament-- that was contested. And 99 out of 100 seats-- in the-- the Polish-- Senate, the independent can-- candidate won the-- the 100th seat.

So I think that is-- indicative of the-- the extraordinary contrasts-- between-- what happened in China at that moment-- and-- what was happening in-- in other parts of the-- the world. In-- in-- that period-- about 1989-- I think that-- one of the factors-- that contributed to the-- the advance of democracy and-- and human rights-- worldwide-- is that the United States in particular had been-- immensely successful in getting across-- one idea.

And that was the idea that there was-- a relationship, a direct relationship-- between political freedom and economic success. And so I-- I think a lot of those-- who were-- engaged in efforts to-- to promote-- political-- freedom also thought-- that as-- a consequence-- of those efforts-- they would-- economically-- improve their-- their own lives.

Now, here we are-- 25 years later and things don't look the-- the same way. I would

say that-- if anything-- there have been more reverses-- recently-- with respect to-- to political freedom-- than great successes-- except for-- Tunisia-- things have been turning out badly-- in the-- the various countries-- that were the-- the focus of-- struggles-- in connection with the-- the Arab Spring.

We have seen the-- the consolidation of-- of Putinism-- in-- Russia. We have seen the-- the rise and the relative success-- of populist movements, which very often have-- a racist-- quality in-- in Europe and populist movements-- in-- Latin America. And we have-- events confirm-- confined to a single country-- like the-- the recent military coup-- that has taken place in-- in the Thai-- Thailand.

And so it's not-- an atmosphere-- in which-- there is-- great headway-- for-- democracy-- and political freedom. And we're also-- at a point where that-- relationship between political freedom and e-- economic success-- doesn't look as strong-- as it seemed in-- in 1989.

I'm-- of course China is the main reason for that, because China-- has had-- spectacular-- economic success-- without-- significant enhancement-- in-- political freedom. And of course many Western countries in the last several years-- which-- have enjoyed-- a relatively large amount of-- of political freedom-- have had-- significant economic difficulties-- in-- in recent years. So one can no longer-- appeal to people-- on the basis that-- political freedom-- equates-- or-- achieves-- economic success.

So-- the-- the-- the question with which I-- I'd like to-- to start-- to the-- the members of our panel, and I'm asking this-- to each of them, and maybe we'll go from-- Rowena, from you-- in this direction. And-- and trying to-- to respond-- to this.

How do you see the-- the current situation? Do you see-- any possibilities-- of-- moving towards-- greater political freedom and-- and-- democracy in China? It-- I-- is-- is this a lost cause? Was what happened at Tiananmen Square a death knell-- for democracy and-- and political freedom? Or-- is there still some prospect that we can-- we can move in the direction of democracy and political freedom?

* * *TRANScriber's Note: significant distortion on SPEAKERS' MIC.* * *

ROWENA XIAOQING HE:

I think that's a great question. It's a very important question too. It is true that on the surface, Tiananmen seems to be totally irrelevant. And (UNINTEL) often doing anything. Do (UNINTEL) in China. But if you look at-- the Chairman (UNINTEL) system, you're not allowed to openly (UNINTEL PHRASE) him. And the exiles. As they're not allowed to return from-- even for their parents'-- funerals. And as scholars have said, you can't (UNINTEL PHRASE) the heavy (UNINTEL) than from getting visa to enter China.

So in many sense, Tiananmen did not add, in 1989, its ongoing. The-- the attention of the recent, you know, internationals-- who organized-- a single (UNINTEL) on Tiananmen when, you know, they were-- they were detained-- from the whole month. And so it just showed us again and again-- Tiananmen did not end in 1989. 1989 it was just a beginning of an-- of an end.

Well, the regime has been very successful in suppress and-- and liberating (?) the-- the memory of-- '89, but this (UNINTEL PHRASE)-- and-- has followed with all kinds of distortions. Psychological, political-- and cultural, historical in the society.

So I think it's impossible to understand today's China without understanding the spring of 1989. And-- and Tiananmen really-- and people-- you know, it's (UNINTEL) relations which are politics and power in (UNINTEL) memory, financial freedom and human rights in the Chinese context.

Yes-- as you mentioned earlier-- there is a policy that-- to their country and make money in whatever way you want. But forget about-- unapproved politics and religions. Has led to a-- economic boom and-- and-- and-- you know, increasing average-- you know-- (UNINTEL) meanings and there's in China (UNINTEL) rising (UNINTEL PHRASE).

But it-- it-- it happened. And not without paying a heavy price. You know, for the (UNINTEL). It's-- I mean the Chinese society, nationalism of the younger generation, the lack of trust in a society, consistent-- environmental problems, massive corruption.

So all this problems, as students tried to fix the 1989 has not been-- fixed, but it's getting much-- much worse. So the-- the so called-- China Rising is-- at the cause of - human-- human lives and-- and human-- (UNINTEL PHRASE). So at the moment the government-- is people that-- human rights, human dignity, human dissonancy can be sacrificed for economic-- development and stability.

They basically are sending the message that any kind of principles can be-- compromised for the sake of a rising China and economic development. And I think the this the root for all sorts of political problems in China today. So it-- it-- economically (CLUNKING) (UNINTEL PHRASE) did not come without a cost.

And again, (UNINTEL) to the-- the-- the question about whether another Tiananmen would happen again-- like this, any political-- (UNINTEL) or political change, I think-- yes and no. No in the way that, you know, Tiananmen-- in 1989 people still didn't (UNINTEL PHRASE) take to the street looking for a regime change. They were not (UNINTEL) also the government. So it's not a real sense of revolution. Let's put it this way.

So it's more out of a passion, out of even (UNINTEL) the regime, in the government that they would not-- suppress the movement. But I think it-- now that Tiananmen happened again and now that-- (UNINTEL) social movement happened again, it would be out of grievances. Out of frustration. Out of hatred.

It would not be out of idealism. It would not be out of love and trust and passion as

it was in 1989. Although there are all this repression happening, I think Xao Yung (PH) can only follow up with more information. Many of their-- (UNINTEL PHRASE) they have been active-- both those high profile, it's not (UNINTEL PHRASE) is now increasing on the low profile people. Quietly working for NGOs inside and outside China.

They have been-- trying to push-- for change as well. But-- but I-- I-- I now have (UNINTEL) stake about-- civilized society development because of the lack of some of their ver-- very basic prerequisites, things which we are-- as-- as information-- free- - press. So all these things are still, you know, not present in Chinese society, and in Eastern society (UNINTEL) to try to continue to be difficult and challenging.

My final note is-- Tiananmen may remind us of oppression, but it also symbolized people's power and-- human spirit. As-- desire for freedom is (UNINTEL) between, you know, human and-- and their longing for basic wi-- rights is universal. And I'm sure history will witness (?) that Tiananmen Square is a power of the (UNINTEL) again and again. Thank you.

ARYEH NEIER:

Xiaorong?

XIAORONG LI:

So Aryeh, you prove-- once again (CHUCKLE) you're the-- master of-- stirring up a brainstorm. (LAUGHTER) you know, for-- over the-- since Tiananmen-- in the past quarter century-- a great-- prevailing (CHUCKLE) scientists in this country-- politicians-- lawmakers have been debating now this issue we-- whether democracy and political freedom-- would be the fruit of-- market economic-- development.

As you remarked that China has done spectacularly-- economic developments, but we don't see-- an improved political environment-- for freedom. We don't even know see a great prospect for political legal reform at this point.

You know, the-- I noticed in the room there are quite a few people recently coming here from mainland China. Either to get away from political persecution or-- the environment there is-- so unbearable they need a moment of-- of freedom to come out. So-- I mean they can-- maybe during the question (LAUGH) and answer se-- time they can speak-- about the-- the current situation in China.

But-- but-- you know, you-- you're all familiar with, from reading newspapers and *New York Times*-- what the situation is now. I think, you know, we don't need to remind you of the cases and-- and, you know, just basically it-- the situation is grim. It's-- unexpectedly-- harsh-- political repression under the new Xi Jinping regime.

People have had some expectations that he would liberalize somehow when he came to power. But-- on the contrary, ever since he got into office it has been one after

another political crackdown with unprecedented-- many amount-- many more numbers of-- criminal detentions--

ARYEH NEIER:

I'm sorry--

XIAORONG LI:

--disappearances, torture--

ARYEH NEIER:

--but-- let me interrupt you on that. When you say there's been-- one crackdown after another, I mean-- that can also mean, though, that-- he senses a need-- to engage in (CLUNKING) those-- political crackdowns. (UNINTEL) that there are-- possibilities of dissent which need to be-- suppressed.

And that he is engaged in-- in crackdowns because-- he doesn't feel secure-- or the government doesn't feel secure without engaging-- in those crackdowns. So you can see that on the one hand-- as, you know, a very negative development, but you can also-- see it as indicating that-- he has some reason-- to be concerned about-- political dissent.

XIAORONG LI:

Well, it-- you're reading my mind. That's what I'm going to (LAUGH) say. In fact-- giving all this going developments, I-- I'm optimistic. I-- I think that the economic development has not so far delivered political freedom and democracy, but-- we are very hopeful.

The-- precise reason for that is because as Xi Jinping is feeling now the insecurity, why? Because civil society is all, you know, awake in China. And they're very active. So 25 years ago compared to-- to today, there so many activists who are willing to be out there. To be outspoken.

And right now, even today, there is-- a hunger strike going now-- outside-- present (?) in (FOREIGN PHRASE) province by more than 20 lawyers who are protesting-- the blocking by police of their right to visit their-- clients. You would not imagine this being happening in China.

And-- the news is minute by minute on Weibo, on Twitter. So-- in a way, Chinese citizens already have a break-- a broke open space for themselves to express themselves. There's a lot more space for information freedom-- for-- speech. And government can continue to crack down, can continue to be repressive and even

more repressive in some ways, but this is precisely a reflection of their insecurity, because they felt threatened.

They're-- they're threatened not only because there are so many problems in China they have to deal with, as-- (UNINTEL)-- mentioned. It's not just corruption. And that-- precisely because of the economic development-- and because of the-- the lack of-- elected representatives of the people. And people have no outlet to complain about problems. About injustice.

Today's China is-- is very much like-- a volcano that's waiting to explode. There are so many problems that do not find the official permitted outlet, so they are burning-- right-- right underneath the surface, just waiting for some crack. It's-- it's going to flare. And-- it's a matter of time.

So we-- we should all be very optimistic, and I think to a very large extent, thanks to the Chinese citizens themselves, I think as-- as a whole the optimism should come from our belief in human nature. Every human being is for freedom. Is for human dignity. When those then start being suppressed, are being violated, they would turn into a freedom fighter.

Through my work I have come into contact with so many ordinary people that were either not even-- being a toddler 25 years ago or they had nothing to do with the politics, and today they're in the forefront. I mean-- I-- I just have to give you one-- example of-- one individual.

Her name is Tao Zuni (PH), who is-- she died-- in detention. She wasn't a Tiananmen student leader or protester. And her problems started with some housing problem with her working unit. She felt there was injustice in assigning housing. So she start writing letters. She start to complain.

And then every step she come up with-- suppression. "You can't express your view. You cannot disclose corruption. You cannot sue your officials and your working unit. You cannot get the journalist to report on you." And she went to court. They don't accept her case. So then she discovered a whole-- you know, a host of-- illegal injustice issues and how the whole system, the legal system, is-- corrupt. Is-- intervent (?) and manipulated by the party single handedly.

And then she became this-- human rights (?) defender. What was she doing last year in June? She was organizing a protest in front of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Why? Because the Foreign (CLUNKING) Affairs ministry is representing Chinese government at the U.N. to undergo universal periodic review.

She figured-- "There's no channel for me in China to-- bring up injustice. I'm gonna go to the U.N. This is my opportunity." So she organized this thing and then we invited her to Geneva to attend some preparation sessions for the review and she was detained at the airport, put in detention and she got very sick and she died in detention.

So this is a woman, right? She should give us hope. Of course it's a very sad case. But she give me a lot of hope. And-- I came into contact with so many people like

her. Some of them are here. And-- and I hope you can meet them. I spied some of them (LAUGH) (UNINTEL).

They should give you hope. They were not political dissidents. And they were not, like, (UNINTEL PHRASE) and not (UNINTEL PHRASE), but-- but they were those ordinary people. It's them in the thousands, even I would say millions. They are just-- you know, they are out there. Very outspoken. They're getting involved in general human rights issues, legal injustice issues, political reform.

So-- I-- I-- I can't get-- you know, I think it's a dissertation topic, (LAUGHTER) whether economic success should-- be like-- causing a chain-- causal-- effect, chain to deliver democracy. That's a theoretical issue. I think it-- it's a very complicated issue in the-- theoretical sense.

There are many other things that should happen in between. One of them is a civil society activism. Is how the people themselves realize the systems is corrupt to the core and need to be overthrown. And-- that I think is happening in China. It-- the delivery is not direct. Economic success democracy. No. There are many things that need to happen in between. But I see some of this as are happening in between. So democracy is on the horizon for China in short.

ARYEH NEIER:

All right. Orville?

ORVILLE SCHELL:

Well, it's nice to have-- if-- if I-- can you hear me all right I don't use this? It just sounds like I'm on another planet I think (LAUGHTER) if I-- you know? It's nice that you end on a note of optimism, Xiaorong. I myself am a little bit undecided-- in that question.

I do think 1989 was an extraordinary moment-- in many ways-- but I think it was an inflection point, as Aryeh suggests-- that really-- it was the beginning of the end of the end of history, in effect, because it-- at that time-- there were so many things happening which made it look as if Francis Fukuyama -- remember him? (LAUGH)

MALE VOICE:

He's still (UNINTEL).

ORVILLE SCHELL:

You know, it-- the game was over. We had won. (LAUGH) The forces of history ineluctably were leaning towards openness. And there's a great tradition of this in

Western political philosophical tradition. You know, from Hagel to Marx to-- on and on and on that history has emotion.

And here it was, being acted out before us in the grandest way all across the world as the Soviet empire was crashing and burning, one piece at a time. It's interestingly, Aryeh, I called up a friend who you know, a Polish woman, to see if she wanted to come today. And I-- she said, "What it's-- what's it about?" And I said, "June 4th." And she said, "Oh, it's about Poland." (LAUGHTER)

(OVERTALK)

MALE VOICE:

Well said.

ORVILLE SCHELL:

But-- no, it wasn't. But-- (LAUGHTER) in any event, in those days-- I-- and I remember vividly spending weeks in Tiananmen Square when this was unfolding, it seemed just the-- sort of the natural, inescapable forces of history were at work. It seemed-- that there was no way that this genie would ever be put back in the party bottle.

Everybody thought that. There wasn't a single person of the million-odd-- many millions who came into the square, I think who thought, "Well, you know, this-- this too will pass and we'll return to the (UNINTEL) regime." Nobody. And yet it happened.

And I think when that happened that did throw off a whole sort of-- bunch of assumptions that we of the West had made. And you all have s-- have said a little bit about this. That, you know, you just-- remember the grand old wonderful days when just let the New York Stock Exchange and market capitalism in and then rest would follow. And it-- it didn't.

And we were in-- a nominalist position where all of our sort of philosophical assumptions hit a brick wall, where not only didn't it happen, but China turns out to be the poster child for economic development, startling, arresting success in many, many ways, the problems notwithstanding. With no political openness at all.

What happened? Where were all our developmental theories that turned out, at least for this interim, to seem to have-- it all wrong? Now, okay, this may be an interim (UNINTEL) going forward. Maybe the forces of freedom and democracy are irrepressible and history will start up again somehow and China will get on track. And, you know, we'll have phase two, three, four. But whatever phase we're in now, no. Not at all.

And not only has China succeeded in-- finding a totally different path of development, counter to all of the models which we esteemed, we took for granted,

but now it also is becoming something of a model for other people to what I think Russia, very envious.

And we are on the precipice, I think, of having a different kind of a Cold War. Not communism versus capitalism, but the aggrieved nations of the world. The nations of the world who were deprived of their empires and have a kind of a sense of-- phantom loss and want to restore their-- their sort of imprint in the world of their own old sort of imperial territorial footprint. We may see China and Russia finding some common ground there, even though they don't like each other very much in many, many other ways.

So there are a lot of strange things happening where I think common assumptions about how the world moves, how development works, what works, have really come a cropper (?) and China-- has been at the very center of all of this sort of-- these requirements that we reorganize our brains-- as to what works, what logically follows what and what in fact is the motion of history, of course, which was sort of born of the enlightenment where it just seemed inevitable that things grew towards more openness. I mean Hagel sort of said it in his very complicated way. And we've never quite been able to-- to escape that set of presumptions.

So for me, China is a very confusing and a very anomalous case. I know it's a tense place. I live it every day. I-- I-- I don't know how long they can continue this balancing act. I totally distrust my ability to judge it because at no time over the last 20 years did I think the place would cohere and manage to keep rolling forward as it has. I thought it was fundamentally unstable. Didn't make sense to me. It was counterintuitive. And yet here we are.

Final thought. I do think that-- in a very strange, again, counterintuitive, somewhat cryptic way, that not only was 1989 the end of political reform in China, when you look back on it you can say, "Well, you know, they were-- had a lot of incredibly powerful reformist sentiment." Zhao Ziyang not the least of it. Party secretary, former premier, who was then put under house arrest.

But the-- that shock, that fright scared the communist party right back into its most retrograde mode of operations where it couldn't contemplate political reform, as it had, very actively, in the 1980s. Very actively. And it had one other interesting effect. If it couldn't reform politically, what could it do besides becoming North Korea?

Well, it could reform economically. And it-- I think the shock of 1989 made Deng Xiaoping sort of-- really go up on his mountain and come to the conclusion that without some extraordinarily dynamic, new, bold economic reform program, perhaps a program they never would have succeeded in implementing before 1989, the party and he were goners.

And I think it was that recognition the something very bold, quite extreme-- and he said it. You know, he came right out a few days after the-- the massacre and he said, "You know, reform is not dead." He also said, "This is a storm that's-- was bound to happen."

And he was very much a Leninist. The party remains a very Leninist structure. That means it-- it gets along by controlling. And I think that's-- going to be-- the modus operandi going forward. Control. And if it doesn't work, the party now has another great source of fund of credit on its side. That is every other springtime around the world, as Aryeh pointed out, with exception possibly of Tunisia, has crashed and burned in manned chaos. Exactly what the party warns against. And so who wants to risk going there? We now have a laboratory full of experiments of springtimes everywhere that of late, at least, had-- not succeeded. Poland again would be-- quite an exception.

So there are lots of reasons why I don't think we're going to have a tremendous-- change. And-- now, whether the system just gets too brittle and gets shaken apart by all of its contradictions, that's another question I can't answer. I thought it wouldn't cohere 10 years ago. But it did. And are we off to a new model? (COUGH) I don't know. So far-- it's been a model that-- certainly has problems, but I think you would have to say has had its successes. Quite arresting successes.

So where does that leave us? Where does that leave the notion that democracy is the end game of history? Democracy is something so fundamental and freedom is so deeply rooted in every individual's yearning that in the end it will out. Will it? I-- (LAUGHTER) I remand my remaining time to Li Xiaorong for an uplifting message from--

(OVERTALK)

ORVILLE SCHELL:

--from the other side. (LAUGHTER)

ARYEH NEIER:

Before you respond for that-- I-- I think-- all three of you-- have-- focused on internal dynamics as-- the-- the driving-- factor in determining with-- whether there will be any change. If one thinks back to-- to 1989-- we used to-- to think in those-- in that period that-- external-- influences have-- a big role in determining-- such matters.

And Xiaorong-- by-- your efforts to-- to publicize-- what happens to-- to rights defenders in China-- in effect you are still suggesting that-- knowing about this outside and generating some kind of response-- outside-- is an important factor. And I-- I wonder if I could get you, not in any order, whoever wants to respond to this-- to indicate whether you think-- what is done externally-- is-- significant with respect to-- to these matters in China.

FEMALE VOICE:

I think it's very significant. I think the international--

ARYEH NEIER:

I think you may want to use the-- microphone.

XIAORONG LI:

Oh, our (UNINTEL) to be, whoever they are, should do their best-- to put pressure on the Chinese government. And just-- a point that's not the site point, and I could-- the great-- China scholar, as great as always, Perry Link (PH)-- would like to say there's no one China.

So when we say what China is going to do, it-- we're talking about the Chinese government. And even within the government that we're talking about, the reformers, the-- the-- you know-- hard liners. There-- you know, it's very layered. And then we have-- we're talkin' about civil society and the Chinese intellectuals and the Chinese lawyers, 'cause those are mainly-- many players, (UNINTEL) in China it's hard to say.

I-- I agree what la-- Orville had to say is very much in this thinking of the-- you know, the Chinese government wanted to be the model. And-- and a lot of other governments in Africa, in Latin America, in Asia, have wanted to emulate the model. So it is-- in that sense it is a model now. But where does that leave us? Where does that leave the rest of China, other than what the government is thinking, is doing?

I just want to-- get a little bit-- complicity into the-- into here, 'cause-- international pressure is very important. I-- I think somebody is-- got to review the reverse of the pol-- U.S. policy in 1992 to-- restore China's most favorite nations, (UNINTEL) standards. I think that the major thinking at the time was economic development is a good thing and-- hopefully democracy will come in time.

And also the other argument is we don't want to hurt the Chinese people, 'cause the economic sanction will hurt them. Of course, you know, the government is-- very capable of transfer the suffering to the people. But then you look at the world as a whole, in many countries economic sanctions have brought in political changes. So how do we think about that? I mean I'm not gonna answer that question.

I-- I think in a way the economic devel-- velopment that did not just-- you know, it-- it's not just a great thing. Right? It's-- it's a complicated thing. Because it created-- because of this kind of a government, this kind of political system, it has created such an unjust society today.

And so in a way, is that-- isn't that a disaster? You know, and should we ask ourselves that question? And also the idea that that government has-- potential (UNINTEL)

has lifted (UNINTEL) out of poverty. I mean this is another myth. In fact a few years-- a decade before Deng Xiaoping actually said, "Let's go--" there had been so many efforts at the bottom of the society pushing for economic-- reform. And that many places had experimented in the market economic model.

And-- so it-- in a way, the-- the hard working Chinese, the Chinese who were so resourceful, so-- are willing to work-- under such harsh conditions-- no union rights no freedom of expression, and no freedom of association and-- and the corrupt officials sitting on top of you, they brought about the economic miracle in China.

So it-- again, this is another mess we can go into in details, but what I'm trying to say is that it-- we should reevaluate what we did in 1992 or back then, we lifted (?) the sanctions against the China, because of the Tiananmen massacre.

I'm not saying, you know, economic development is a bad thing. I'm saying it's a complicated thing. In a way, as Orville, I think I heard you saying, the-- the wealth, the tremendous amount of wealth created first benefitted the-- authorization state. Look at their military budget. Look at their internal security budget for internal suppression. You know, all this also benefitted from economic development.

And-- and today, you know, anyone here just came from China can tell us how every minute when they're in China they were being s-- under surveillance. There's cameras everywhere. There are police stationed outside their houses. You know, activists, they all have a police cars escorting them everywhere they go.

So all this takes money. Where does that money come from? So-- in a way-- I-- I just want to suggest in-- in some ways the international lack of-- action in some ways have raised the kind of police state we have today in China. But then of course there's still many other things that we could still do.

I don't want to get into too many details, take too much time, but I just want to say right now there's a bill that has been proposed in Senate-- by Senator McCain and Senator Cardiff, so it's bipartisan. It's called the Global-- Act for Human Rights Accountability.

It's modeled on the-- Magnitsky Act that was passed in Congress in-- late-- 2012. This-- anti-corruption activist in-- not an activist. A businessman died in prison in Russia. So Congress passed-- this bill. It's a law now. To ban Russian abusers of human rights-- on visas to visit this country and to freeze their bank accounts that the U.S. government-- can get hands on.

So now there's a movement-- there's a move, not a ment-- (LAUGHTER) in Congress to try to get this global bill passed to ban all human rights abusers from all countries, including China. On those two-- you know, (UNINTEL PHRASE) and the-- the financial section. So if we-- you-- you all have the opportunity to-- to support that bill. (LAUGHTER) That would be a great thing. It's-- a very good-- international action to do--

ARYEH NEIER:

Right. Orville or Rowena, any-- do you wanna comment on this question of whether external-- pressure can be a significant factor?

ROWENA XIAOQING HE:

Yeah, of course. I (UNINTEL PHRASE)-- my comments. I think I'm-- short-term-- pessimistic but long-term optimistic-- about this situation. I-- I think if you look at any historic relief (?) (UNINTEL), especially after Arab Spring, you will see that before it happened people would tell you it's impossible, but-- but the next day when it happened, everyone is telling you that it's inevitable. (LAUGHTER) And-- and I think-- it-- if you look at history that's what happened. That's-- why I see (CLUNKING) a long-term-- optimistic but-- short-term pessimistic.

Beginning-- sorry. (UNINTEL PHRASE) lead to-- a greater (UNINTEL) too about economic development. If you look at-- between '89 and '92, before Deng Xiaoping said (UNINTEL) or do Shengen (PH)-- economic (FEEDBACK) was in a mess. So that the kind of justifications-- that the regime has been making about-- if it had not been for this (UNINTEL) coming out there would not be the economic development afterwards, which is not true, because between '89 and '92 was totally a mess. That's why he went all the way to the (UNINTEL PHRASE) Shengen to-- to give this speech. Let's forget about the (UNINTEL) and focus on (UNINTEL) again.

So that's another point. And-- and the third thing, international pressure definitely take-- is-- very important. I think I myself was-- is the beneficiary of this kind of international pressure. And-- and (UNINTEL) and-- and-- and attached in a (UNINTEL) because I-- I remember (UNINTEL) right after '89 I was still struggling in (UNINTEL) as a young girl, wondering if there were-- you know, what happened to us. And-- and-- and if they care about-- what's going on.

And the only-- encouragement or-- or-- or-- or light I saw was when I heard the news that-- when the international community, the international society was doing something and saying something. I think those are the kind of-- s-- lights that kept me going and-- and-- and-- and-- and survived-- 1989-- all those years.

So I do think that-- it's very important. I still remember when Liu Xiaobo was (UNINTEL) the Nobel Peace Prize-- I was really jumping and-- and celebrating with all my friends. It's not that much about the prize, but it's an international recognition that you had guns, you had tanks, you had (UNINTEL) machines. We had nothing, but now we got some international support and recognition for this man that you have put in prison. So it's that kind of-- support.

And I think in the past 25 years we saw that-- the mainstream has gone somewhere else. Immediately after the crackdown the international community have all this support for the-- for the cause. For the movement. For-- the organization in China.

But-- but in the past 25 years you saw-- we've become some very lonely-- groups.

Small number of group. And-- and I-- for this reason I really appreciate that you're still here, caring about this instead of just being fascinating. But it's China model. They have money and they're successful.

I think in a sense the world has become victims of the Tiananmen massacre. Why do I say that? Because I think now what they (UNINTEL) so often, we just consider a great country, a powerful country, as one that's only about GDP. And-- and there were-- their people, as it's bounding (?) through this-- power-- because of its wealth only, and-- and-- and this power has been enforcing for everyone of this forced (UNINTEL). There was not just only Chinese society, but on the international community.

I think if we do all these things, we also compromise our values and downgrading our institutions when we-- when we forget who we are and stick to our values and principles. So-- so I think in this sense we-- we are also victims of-- Tiananmen.

And I do not think this is just about China. It's also about the world. By the end of the day this international-- you know, group, village, we are all on the same plane. A power of a non-democratic-- regime-- that manipulating nationalism-- it's really dangerous to the world. Not just to China.

I feel like, you know, on the same page, if you're being hijacked by some guys, whether you're in a business class, first class or you're-- have a window seat, actually you are going to end the same way. So that's (LAUGHTER) another reason that you really need to-- care about what's going on in China.

Not-- not-- not-- it's not just about China. It's really about us. Of course, it also reflects who we are as human beings. As we're citizens. You (UNINTEL) just watch this happen before their eyes and say that they have their own way.

And-- and-- and we can forget about those big-- words like democracy, freedom, whatsoever. You don't have to have a PhD to understand whether the (UNINTEL) mothers need to be given justice if their kids were killed for 25 years. This is just very basic human instinct.

And I think the worst thing that the regime has been doing in the past 25 years is not that much about the suppression of a peace treaty, but more about the testing of the values. I think the Chinese society now has been so-- very much receptive to all that kind of-- rationale, that-- for the sake of this higher goals that we can sacrifice anything.

We can sacrifice some of the very basic things that our society used to believe to be important and hold onto. And that's the worst part of it. And-- and-- and that's-- that's where cynicism-- is rooted in the Chinese society, because Chinese internationals learn-- ever since the (UNINTEL) crackdown that-- "I cannot afford to love this country, this nation, this people. Only I could afford to love this money."

That's the-- that's-- the-- the message they send to the internationals. And-- and that's where cynicism and the silence of (UNINTEL) and not just in (UNINTEL) '90s. But of course, as Xiaorong mentioned, that-- many of the rights activists have--

decided to-- to (UNINTEL).

But-- but basically-- a war-- it's-- in, you know, a war of memory against (UNINTEL). It's been a war between the power and the powers in the past 25 years. And international community as a (UNINTEL PHRASE) important.

ARYEH NEIER:

Orville? You wanna comment or-- ?

ORVILLE SCHELL:

Well, maybe just one very (UNINTEL) thought. I-- I do think-- in my experience there are few countries of consequence more sensitive to how the world views them than China. And I think here you-- because of the unique sort of historical experience, the United States has played-- a rather dominating role. So it is of great importance whether the United States-- respects China. And this is something that the government really, deeply wants.

On the other hand, I would have to say in thinking about pressure that now that China is much stronger it is not much inclined to resist pressure. So that pressure, while it is certainly heard and it certainly has an effect, very often it will induce the opposite reaction from that which is desired, simply because China does not-- the party does not want to seem to be yielding to pressure. So it's a paradox.

ARYEH NEIER:

Rowena mentioned-- Liu Xiaobo and-- one very small indication of the-- the way China cares about-- the international reaction I thought was that the-- 11 year prison sentence on Liu Xiaobo-- was imposed on Christmas day-- so as to-- minimize the-- the international reaction-- to-- to that-- prison sentence.

China-- I think-- doesn't fear-- economic pressure from-- anyplace else. Nobody's really-- in a position to-- to put economic pressure on China. And I think China has been the-- the first country-- that has turned things around. That is it uses its economic pressure-- to prevent others from speaking out-- about China.

If-- if a government wants to sponsor a resolution in the U.N. critical of-- China on human rights grounds-- then China-- indicates that it will-- employ economic reprisals-- against the-- the government that joins-- some effort to-- to criticize China.

ARYEH NEIER:

Or a journalist or a scholar--

ORVILLE SCHELL:

Or-- journ-- as-- or--

ARYEH NEIER:

--or a businessman.

ORVILLE SCHELL:

Yes. But even so-- they don't want the-- the criticism-- that comes-- from something like the-- the very harsh-- prison sentence against-- Liu Xiaobo. You know, I-- I-- I teach a course on-- human rights and one of the things I-- I have said to my students, and I wonder if-- you agree with this or you think I'm completely-- off base.

I-- I've said-- but I thought about if-- tomorrow one lifted all restrictions on-- the formation of human rights groups-- in China, and there were no-- reprisals-- there would-- easily be the largest human rights organization in the world that would-- emerge in-- in China. But-- the-- but it is really the-- the government's-- capacity to intimidate-- that prevents anything like that from taking place, rather than a lack of interest-- in-- in human rights. And I wonder how you-- you agree with that or disagree with that?

XIAORONG LI:

I agree.

ORVILLE SCHELL:

Okay.

XIAORONG LI:

So-- (LAUGHTER) if-- if they left any restrictions-- human rights organizations, then there will suddenly be thousands of such organizations. They are already operating-- that's-- that's the people I work with. Right? So they-- they don't call themselves human rights organizations. They don't get legally registered. They even work underground. But they're there. And-- and so now suddenly if the restriction is lifted-- somebody here actually can answer that question better. So there will (LAUGHTER) be, I can say, immediately thousands of such organization.

ROWENA XIAOQING HE:

I-- I-- I agree with Xiaorong, that if the (UNINTEL) kind of fear that-- that that (UNINTEL), there would be-- lots of-- you know-- people of China to take to the same (UNINTEL). So I think (UNINTEL) okay in this-- (UNINTEL)-- democratization and nationalism is inseparable from the collective memory of the nation's most (UNINTEL PHRASE).

And that's why Tiananmen has been such an (UNINTEL) field in the past 25 years. And-- and going back to-- rights activists, I think the regime has learned two things in the post-Tiananmen period. One thing is that they-- they're trying to frame these people who have been trying to work with-- overseas-- NGOs and-- and-- and that they are anti-China forces. So everything, whatever people try to (UNINTEL)-- and they would say that they're-- they are working with anti-China forces.

So the military crackdown was an effort to-- to-- countering-- anti-China conspir-- Chin-- the conspiracy to weaken and divide China. And afterwards anyone who tried to push for democratization in China, they become part of the anti-China forces.

And this is closely rela-- related to the-- nationalism phenomenon in the post-Tiananmen period-- of the younger generation. I think the regime learned that they're more sophisticated in-- in dealing with (UNINTEL) memory. So on one hand they wanted to makes you're those-- who have experienced Tiananmen, they wanted to make sure that-- they remembered it. They know that if you do this again, this would be the consequences.

And for the younger generation, they make sure that they do not know anything about it. If they-- if they do know much about it, then-- it would be the official version-- of the events. And at the same time, starting from 1992-- they-- they implemented this (UNINTEL) education campaign-- that-- that I had studied-- in (UNINTEL) textbooks. I-- and then I started (UNINTEL).

So all the textbooks, in particular, history and-- and (UNINTEL) education textbooks, has been significantly revised to underscore the patriarchic theme. And-- and-- and also China's (UNINTEL PHRASE) and (UNINTEL) in the (UNINTEL) with the-- the West. That's why-- the younger generation grew up with all this kind of-- belief. For example-- China is over-- significant-- specific (UNINTEL PHRASE) culture context. That's why you cannot have Western democracy. And-- and the West always used human rights issues to-- to criticize China and to weaken China.

So those kind of-- arguments has been-- also been prominent in the Chinese society. And-- and where we talk about human rights or we talk about beliefs in-- in the directions that China is happening towards-- that also has a lot to do with how-- the (UNINTEL) scenario of Tiananmen has been presented and interpreted in the Chinese society.

And, again, as mentioned at the very beginning, (UNINTEL) European (UNINTEL) pertaining to democratization and nationalism is just inseparable from their-- the-- the nation's most immediate past. The (UNINTEL) measure in the most immediate

past. When they said (UNINTEL)-- are manipulated or-- or choose (UNINTEL) memory. So-- I think-- I think that is also connected to-- people's idea of the organization in China.

ARYEH NEIER:

Okay. All right. Let me now open this up to-- to questions. Lenny?

LENNY:

They, Aryeh. Aryeh asked about external influences. And I'm curious to what extent one of those external influences might be some of the failures of the liberal democratic model. It strikes me that the sort of debate around-- Western human rights versus-- so called-- non-Western approaches to human rights, it's not a significant debate anymore.

It's actually a much more empirical question. When one looks at the polarization, say, of-- of the American political system today, despite the jettisoning on (UNINTEL) yesterday. It's still very polarized. When one looks at what came out of the European parliament two weekends ago, in (UNINTEL) the far right parties, I think it's not difficult for the Chinese government to point to these examples and simply say, "This is what you want or would you prefer to have far more effective means, ends approaches to getting politics done?" And it's a very strong and convincing argument. No?

ROWENA XIAOQING HE:

You know, once-- Deng Xiaoping, before he died-- I can't remember his exact wording, but he wondered out loud-- why Americans wanted to have three governments, namely the judiciary, legislative and administrative branches, within one government, all checking and obstructing each other, because he said, "How could you ever get anything done?"

And-- he was prescient in his-- sort of-- critique of the inability of a democracy to function in an efficient way. And Chinese do indeed now look at the United States, just as they look at the various springtimes, and it's another-- you know, example in the wrong column-- for democracy. So right now I would say that quite apart from their own success-- it isn't as if democracy is exactly the shining city on the hill-- that it was once was-- as an example.

XIAORONG LI:

Well, I think that there are two fundamentally different questions. Right? One, is

how to improve democracy itself. Democracy or non-democracy is not a matter of efficiency. It's about something about participation. About respecting every individual's opinions. How our society should be governed.

So that issue is not-- resolved in China. And the-- the American democracy system is not the most efficient one. And it's different from the British one, the French one. You know, all those differences are on a different plane. Right? So where we accept the fundamental principle that every citizen's opinions should count, but we need to work out how to do that. That's a different methodological issue.

But-- for China is usin' this argument to-- to counter any kind of development, democratization is a different matter. It doesn't work. It's-- logically it's night-- not-- because it's inefficient it doesn't mean you can deprive every individual's right to political govern-- polit-- democratic governance. Right?

So anybody-- you know, all the democrats in China are very familiar with this argument. When they're very-- it's brought up by the government to just say, "Well, (LAUGH) it's-- it-- you can't use this as excuse to deny us the right to political participation."

ARYEH NEIER:

Yes?

ROWENA XIAOQING HE:

This (UNINTEL) can be citizens from every (?) democracy but they cannot be democracy without citizenship and participation. I think if they're going to keep punishing people who will participate, will actively participate, then that is not going to work.

And-- and again, regarding-- (UNINTEL) China policy-- and-- and-- and the influence, I think-- we've witnessed a period of time when-- when-- when the-- the government-- the U.S. government, together with the world, seem to think that, okay, doing this and this is more important, money making is important. I fully understand that kind of political pressure. And-- and there-- there-- you know, the pressure from very immediate-- international interest and everything.

But-- but there seems to be any kind of-- variations tried. You don't need to be an IR person to recognize that should be a two way relationship. Even if there is-- the Chinese government doesn't want-- any criticism, want to hear any criticism, it doesn't mean that we should just mute our criticism.

I think it's very important that we all-- express and-- and let the government know-- what we stands for, what our values are, because that's what the United States is about. And-- and-- and it cannot be, "Okay, you-- you-- we are getting-- you are making more money and-- and-- and we should just stop-- criticizing you."

And-- and I think of course that I saw some adjustment in-- in this kind of (UNINTEL)-- recently and-- and I think-- we should really stick to the-- the values that (UNINTEL) already eloquently. Put their (UNINTEL)-- it-- it's more about-- making sure that everyone's right is protected. It's not just about-- efficient-- efficiency.

Then-- and-- and, again, as I mentioned earlier, if you just look at the (COUGH) numbers, you just look at the GDP, even (UNINTEL) for that, it's at a cost of-- of all these other human costs, environmental costs and (UNINTEL). You know, it's not as efficient as we thought that it is.

As the Chinese say-- (FOREIGN PHRASE). They say you pushed up the plant, it looks-- it is growing higher, but actually you are actually-- it-- it's lose its root. It's not going to grow anymore. You know, it just looks high. You have a plant. You put it out. And then it looks taller-- for the time being, but actually it lost the root. It's not going to grow anymore. So it's not sustainable. It seems to me. Like, what's going on is not sustainable.

Of course-- people also-- like-- like China also say, "Look, at Taiwan. They-- they even fight-- you know, politicians fight with each other. So democracy doesn't solve any problem." And I disagree. And I think in fact Taiwan can provide China a very good-- model. Taiwan has something very similar to Tiananmen, as many of you know. That the Areba (PH) incident. I mean (UNINTEL) incident. The KMT, the nationalist party, they cracked down-- the-- the protesters. And-- and-- and that they imprison all those participants. And-- and Chen Shui-bian was one of the-- those that was imprisoned.

But in the 1980s when Chiang Ching-kuo-- felt that they have all these, you know, pressure from below, they really need to have a better reform. Otherwise, even the KMT, that the party could not survive. So they decided, "Okay, let's open up. Let's have free press. Let's have free speech. Let's allow opposition parties. Let's release political prisoners."

And that's the first step when Taiwan is starting to have this very first step of democratization. And-- and, yes, KMT lost its power to-- to-- to DDP-- at one point. Lost to Chen Shui-bian. But look at who's in power now? He's-- the-- the KMT are there-- right? It's (UNINTEL PHRASE).

So losing-- opening up-- learning to lose in order to win again. So this kind of rationale has been an alternative presented to the CCP regime-- I mean to the communist party-- regime for a long time. And-- and if they are willing to take this-- as a deal, I-- I'm not imagining they're going to be good guys. I just think that this would be a good rationale for them to consider, because that actually would probably be the best for the party for-- and for the Chinese society, if they open up and have political reform. Because what is happening now is not sustainable. So just for the sake of their party's survival it's actually better for them to-- to-- to have-- the real-- reform and to open up.

ARYEH NEIER:

Wiktor Osiatynski?

WIKTOR OSIATYNSKI:

My question is basically related on the part-- partly to China. I-- I have a big problem with-- long assumed or long accepted-- connection between economic development and the open society and democracy. I don't know of any country that developed under democracy and open society. (COUGH) Never in history.

Only when some countries in Western Europe and the United States were already developed and there were conditions after world war and unions, et cetera, they could make this combination. But not in the 18th, 19th century, development of Europe. Not the-- under communist. Not in any other case of development. Development always was under duress, under regime, under control with the lack of freedom and with big-- I want use-- I will use, you know, not popular word, exploitation.

So I think that China here is-- and others like the-- another example, because the reforms-- and I'm old enough to remember that the reforms under communist and communist economy that were going from the '58, '59 with (UNINTEL) in Russia, had to-- actually to develop communist economy by splitting big conglomerates and by taking away the party central economic power on the top and put it down and introduce some competition. And that was politically difficult because the-- those who had power were resisting that. And they didn't want.

But once the communist economic was overthrown, either in Poland in 1989 or in China after-- after 1989, then it is completely different scene, because capitalism actually at that stage doesn't necessarily need political reform and political freedom.

In Poland it was difficult for Batzerovich (PH) because we were already under freedom, because our-- our transition was at the same time to market and freedom. That's why we needed shock therapy. And that's really the cushion and that was-- support was short lived. But in China actually it opened the way to that. So that means that the changes that were-- therefore economics were not-- nothing against the historical type (?) or general against the type.

But that brings me to Aryeh's second question about the international influence. And I think that when any country historically developed enough that the distribution could be changed, including the distribution of influence through political reforms, then it could have happened only in the conditions of internal pressure.

And now, if you have-- what you are saying, you are eluding to the possibilities for internal pressure in China, that economic-- the external forces are extremely important to keep moral-- of those who can rebel or who can resist or who can ask for reforms from inside. That is the main top-- including the sanctions. Probably sanctions in my country under 1980s economically were actually one thing the

population, but politically were very important because that was the support for the opposition that they didn't give up and they pressed for reforms.

And I think that a lot what Open Society is doing for (UNINTEL) societies is precisely doing that. Supporting the small islands of dissatisfaction and-- and potential-- potential changes. Please.

ARYEH NEIER:

You're-- you wanna comment? There wasn't really a question, so-- (LAUGHTER)

XIAORONG LI:

Well, I-- I want to say-- consistently-- every Chinese former pu-- political prisoners I have met, I asked the question, "Did it help international pressure?" They all said, "Yes, it helped." And they gave me all kinds of examples how it helped. And then for all the activists in China who are now facing-- all sorts of harassment from the government, whenever something happens, they always ask for international pressure.

So-- in a way-- of course the government won't like it and-- and the-- precisely how do we know that? They have done all the stuff to, you know, the-- their spokesperson for their state council, for the foreign minister, would-- come out with a statement that whenever the U.S., the E.U., the U.N. does anything. Right? (COUGH) And then they will-- have-- long articles in the official newspaper to counter the argument.

And they will expose the-- (COUGH) your own institution for supporting (LAUGH) activists in China or the National Endowment For Democracy, because they don't (CLUNKING) like it. Because it-- it hurts them. That's why we should do it.

(LAUGHTER) So the-- see my-- they care about it. They are-- it's all about face. They will fight back. But the fact is, all the pressures made some difference at some level.

I-- I-- I can go into a lot of details if you're-- interested. I'm thinking as-- my retirement project to write about (LAUGHTER) (UNINTEL PHRASE). Even at the U.N., you think the U.N. is the most useless organization, (LAUGHTER) but-- when the U.N. does something--

(MALE VOICE: UNINTEL)

XIAORONG LI:

--something happens. Happens in China a lot only because Chinese government will come up with-- with a statement and-- being very angry. But they actually been changing their law. There are many examples.

MALE VOICE:

Yeah, that's true.

XIAORONG LI:

You know, the criminal procedural law, the criminal code has been changed. Articles concerning torture. You know, we don't know this, right? But-- but this is happening. Why? Because there's a committee against the torture in the past how many years China ratified the treaty in 1988.

Has persistently pressured China to change its law. Very specific articles. For example, reeducation (UNINTEL) labor. China said that it's abolishing it. Right? Because every time the U.N. committee against the torture raised that issue as how it violated the torture convention. So since are changing not as visible, but international pressures like this sorts-- you know, do help. So I-- you know, I'm-- I'm very-- positive of this.

ORVILLE SCHELL:

It seems to me there are two things we're talking about here, though. One is what is justice in relation to people who dissent and-- and-- and would like to speak openly and have free expression.

(FEMALE VOICE: UNINTEL)

ORVILLE SCHELL:

The other is the question of development. You know, what's-- what's national-- what promotes national development? How do you make an economy stronger? And these things do-- do not necessarily-- draw from the same well.

ARYEH NEIER:

Tom? And then over there.

TOM:

Just a question of-- about-- I think-- all of the panelists at different moments in time, and using different words, talked about the struggle of-- memory against forgetting. And I'm reminded that-- Louisa Lim, the NPR journalist, who recently wrote a book on Tiananmen, did an experiment where she took the famous picture of the so called Tank Man, the one individual standing in front of three tanks-- on the road to

Tiananmen Square and the immediate-- aftermath of the crackdown, she took that photograph to students at Beijing University and asked them simply, "What is this?" And the vast majority of them were-- unable, and perhaps some percentage of them were unwilling-- to answer.

So my question for-- for all of you is what sense do you have of-- what level, especially among young people, that the battle has been-- won by the party? That-- many people have no idea what happened in-- May and June of-- April, May and June of 1989. What number of people have-- maybe even experienced it and have chosen to forget about it and no longer really think about it? What level of remembrance have you-- have you seen-- especially outside of activist circles? You know, what is your sense of the current historical resonance inside China of-- of 1989?

ROWENA XIAOQING HE:

It's my question. (LAUGHTER) Thank you. I've been written about this-- yes. So-- I think that the Tank Man picture-- actually there's a documentary called *Tank Man*. Right? So that was-- produced about 10 years ago and they invited (UNINTEL)-- Beijing University students, asking them if they have any idea about what that was-- on.

And I think they all said no at that time. But-- but some of them were kind of whispering to each other as well. So we do not know. So-- so that actually tells you a lot, because we actually did not know who was behind the scene when they were shooting the documentary.

And-- and I think that's the post-Tiananmen-- scenario. So you-- maybe you know about something, but you have to tell yourself that, "I do not know," or, "I do not care." That's almost like a survival-- attempt-- technique for-- for-- for people.

And-- and for the younger generation they-- they probably-- it is true that they either be-- not know anything about it or they feel that-- "This has nothing to do with me. Even if it happened, so what?" So is this kind of so what question that tells you a lot about-- how successful the-- the an-- the-- the-- the impact-- combining both historical (UNINTEL) and nationalistic-- sentiments in a society has been.

So I myself have been teaching the Tiananmen course-- for four years now, right? So teaching to-- students, both in the United States and-- and-- and-- and from China. And-- and I think maybe one scene is also very telling, right? When we had-- a conference this year on April 26th. I invited two Tank Man to my conference. One Tank Man was the photographer who shot that tank man picture.

The other Tank Man was the real Tank Man-- Feng Jung (PH). He was the guy who were ran over by a tank on the morning of June 4th, losing his two legs. That he-- his two legs were crashed (SIC). And they were both at the site-- at the conference.

And one of my (COUGH) Chinese students, the only Chinese student who was willing to participate at the conference-- you know, obviously not want to be part of it

because of the fear that they would gotten punished. And the only student who were willing to do it, she did not want to come up to the stage when she asked a question.

So it was this eyewitness of a major historical event in China. And the Chinese student in the audience were-- did not dare to come up to ask questions. And we were all speaking in our second language, all through translation, in a foreign land, talking about major historical event in China. And inside the country the younger generation did not even get an opportunity to learn about it.

So-- so that-- that was really a telling moment that tells you everything about what Tiananmen is-- is about. It-- it's-- it-- and-- and people are punished, right? People are still punished. And so many Chinese students told me-- "I cannot come to your confidence because I don't want to be (UNINTEL)." Right? To be invited for tea. (LAUGH) "And-- and I did not want to be punished."

So-- and-- and I wrote a lot in my book to write about-- how I struggled with self censorship when I was working on this-- topic of-- of-- political taboo. And-- and by (UNINTEL) and talking in exile, you'll find yourself in exile too. So-- and-- and behind that-- self censorship, the way that it-- offering (UNINTEL) and in-- intimidation works is because behind that invisible line you try not to cross, it was the things that you really care about. If we are family. If you're-- is your love for-- for your family members. Right?

So that's why we always didn't want to cross that invisible line. And-- and I think it-- it also happened to both the younger generation and to their parents, who did not want to tell them anything about '89 because it's just parents' nature that they want to protect their kids. That they do not want them to have anything to do with politics.

So it's a long narrative (COUGH) (UNINTEL PHRASE) questioned about-- how '89 has affected all these mentalities and thinking. And I think-- when the whole society have to-- to pretend that when something like this big happen and then you have to tell yourself, "It did not happen. It's not important," it-- it already cross all kind of trauma that we don't-- we-- we-- we experience such a (UNINTEL) event in our youth.

We were not even allowed to-- to shed a tear or light a candle for the (UNINTEL). And we were not even allowed to express anger and fear. And-- and I think the Chinese society has been carrying this kind of-- this open and (UNINTEL) for 25 years.

And-- and if we-- it doesn't-- it-- it (UNINTEL), which we consider Asian, we now choose there will be on reconciliation. And China would not be able to move on if they do not-- con-- you know, if-- if they-- if they refuse to face this. So it has to face its past in order to to have a future.

MALE VOICE:

Thank you (UNINTEL).

ARYEH NEIER:

Yes?

MR. LIU:

So-- I'm a Beijing-based-- NGO worker. Our organization is (UNINTEL) to public interest law on the (UNINTEL). So I just want to raise a question about the rule of law in China. So-- I-- yeah, I have a feeling of the rule of law-- current rule of law in China.

The-- we have a hopeless (?) new leadership-- rule of law-- issue. And-- but we have a hopeful civil society-- rule of law-- subject. I'd like to-- provide an example-- really to the way that-- the 25th anniversary of June 4th. It's happening Zhengzhou.

Many activists organized-- an event for-- June 4th anniversary in February-- in-- yeah, February. And-- so after that, several of them-- were detained and-- very a famous public interest lawyer visiting Zhengzhou-- named Chang Boyang, representative some of them. And so he went to the detention halls-- yeah. Detention center for a meeting, but it was refused-- again again.

And-- that he himself was te-- was detained, yeah, for the same reason. There's a same-- crime-- disturbing the public order. Yeah. And is now the only case happening-- before June 4th. And now there are-- the same situation happening in Bejing. Pu Zhiqiang' lawyer was detained, yeah, after he repa-- represented-- Pu Zhiqiang.

So after these two case happened, many lawyers declare that they are willing to represent for a lawyer Chang Boyang. And is-- so-- his lawyer went to Zhengzhou for a meeting and was refused. After that, 30 lawyers went to Zhengzhou organizing a (UNINTEL), yeah, on (STATIC) (UNINTEL) on this case. And-- 20 of them went to the-- detention center, went to the-- PSB-- and-- protest for the-- (CLUNKING) refuse-- the refuse-- the refusal.

And that they-- forced-- the PSB to-- come out. Yeah, to come out to meet and negotiate with them. So it's very influential on-- civis-- social media in China. And so I-- I'm just-- here-- yeah, working for this case. I'm also for this this case. And I have-- bought some-- brought some-- (UNINTEL) list-- outside, and if you are interested-- this case you can-- have a look.

And so I think through this case-- I found there is a new trend in (UNINTEL), yeah, lawyers were detained for their client case. Criminaca-- criminally detained. It's very rear (?) in the past because in the past-- government-- of course they dislikes huma--

human rights lawyers representing, (COUGH) but they (UNINTEL)-- punish them with-- the mistreative punishment like disbarred and they were-- inspection. But this time, two lawyers were criminally detained. Yeah, for their clients' case. So it's a very bad trend.

I think if this China cannot be stopped, the rule of law will be, yeah, even worse than before. But fortunately the civil society, the lawyers' community, is very active. These-- (CLUNKING) they have taken very strong action against the new trend. So-- I have-- I have the thing, yeah, I just-- mentioned. And my question (DING) is-- what do you think about the future of the rule of law in China. Yeah? And-- (LAUGHTER) I like to be-- (UNINTEL PHRASE) on commence.

XIAORONG LI:

I think what-- Mr. Liu-- just said. You know, it-- it-- it's-- both gave us this hope and it's very depressing. These are the two major pieces of news, everybody who's connected to the Chinese human rights community waking up this morning are reading.

One is these protests-- to outside the Zhengzhou detention center where-- 20-- plus lawyers are staging because they have been systematically prevented from meeting their clients, including Mr. Chang Boyang, the lawyer who went to defend-- detainees-- who gathered-- to commemorate June 4th in February. And-- and then also-- a lawyer detained because-- she was involved in defending the case of-- Pu Zhiqiang, who was himself a lawyer and-- and that-- being detained with a dozen other people right now. The others were released and he remains detained and facing-- formal charges.

So-- (CLUNKING) it's depressing to read about the news, but the-- at the same time where did we read about them? On Chinese social media. How many news we're getting? A lot. And a lot of people are posting, reposting or talking about this. And said how horrible it is. What a violation of Chinese-- law. And what-- (CLUNKING) a kind of-- desecration of the leaders' own vow to reform the legal system?

So it was this discussions-- coming with those cases-- that-- I think it-- you know, he himself basically answered the question, you know, about (CHUCKLE) the rule of law in China. It-- it's basically the reform is-- is going, you know, a few steps forward and a few steps back. And-- it's-- because (UNINTEL) knows, you cannot be serious about rule of law reform. If they really-- let law to rule the country then they have to fold. The communist party has to go out of business. (LAUGHTER) So-- so practically--

ARYEH NEIER:

Is that a wish expression or--? (LAUGHTER)

XIAORONG LI:

So-- so it's those-- brave lawyers who-- been educated the-- in law schools and taught about (COUGH) rule of law. And then they go into society. They say, "Rule by the party." You know, the-- how did those (LAUGH) (UNINTEL) you. How do you put them together?

So they-- they're fighting. They're fighting case by case. You know, saying, "We want rule of law." And that-- that's the hope. But then at the same time if that party rule down not fold, (LAUGH) close down for business, there's no real rule fo law. There's no future for rule of law, 'cause it-- 'cause it's-- party rule. One party rule of China.

ARYEH NEIER:

Can I say, we-- we've run out of time-- and we're going to have to end this. I-- I would ask any of our panelists if they want to have-- a sort of final word-- before we close? Orville, how do you--

ORVILLE SCHELL:

Well, I just-- I think that a Leninist system is basically and fundamentally opposed to any meaningful rule of law. It's hardly surprising that we've arrived at this impasse.

ARYEH NEIER:

Rowena?

ROWENA XIAOQING HE:

I think Milan Kundera has said this very eloquently. "The struggle of people against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting." It-- it's-- there's nothing we can (UNINTEL). At least wish we would remember, we shall remember and support those (UNINTEL) remember. And-- and-- and that's the-- that's how-- the power of the powerless. That's our power. Thank you.

ARYEH NEIER:

Xiaorong?

XIAORONG LI:

I think the-- communist party knows very well it has no leg-- moral-- legitimacy. And

it's-- it's ruling by fear. As we have seen today, you know, all these examples and-- and all the points we have made, is about-- the government is very, very insecure.

And it's a striking fear to suppress memory of the Tiananmen, suppress information, suppress public participation in-- in democ-- democratic-- reform. And the old (UNINTEL). So-- all this I think should give us confidence of what, you know, all-- you and you have been doing all these years.

And-- and even though we haven't seen the final result, but it's coming. And the-- and-- incremental results are there. And-- we just have to have confidence, have faith, and keep up with our-- our efforts and with all of your-- whatever you can do (LAUGH) to support democratization, human rights, not only in China. All over the world. Thank you.

ARYEH NEIER:

And I-- I-- I wanna-- make my own-- sort of-- last comment, which is that-- as dire as the-- the situation is today, I-- I count myself on the optimistic side-- for this reason. That there are so many persons-- in China-- who are struggling in one way or another-- to-- to open up the-- the cess pit (?).

And-- they are up against-- a very powerful state, a very powerful-- party and a state and a party that have had-- great successes. But the fact that the-- the state and the party have not wiped out-- that resistance-- to-- to state repression-- gives me-- the-- the possibility of remaining an optimist about the-- the situation in China. Anyway, thank you very much. (APPLAUSE)

(OFF-MIC CONVERSATION)

* * *END OF TRANSCRIPT* * *