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Orville Schell on China's Role in the World

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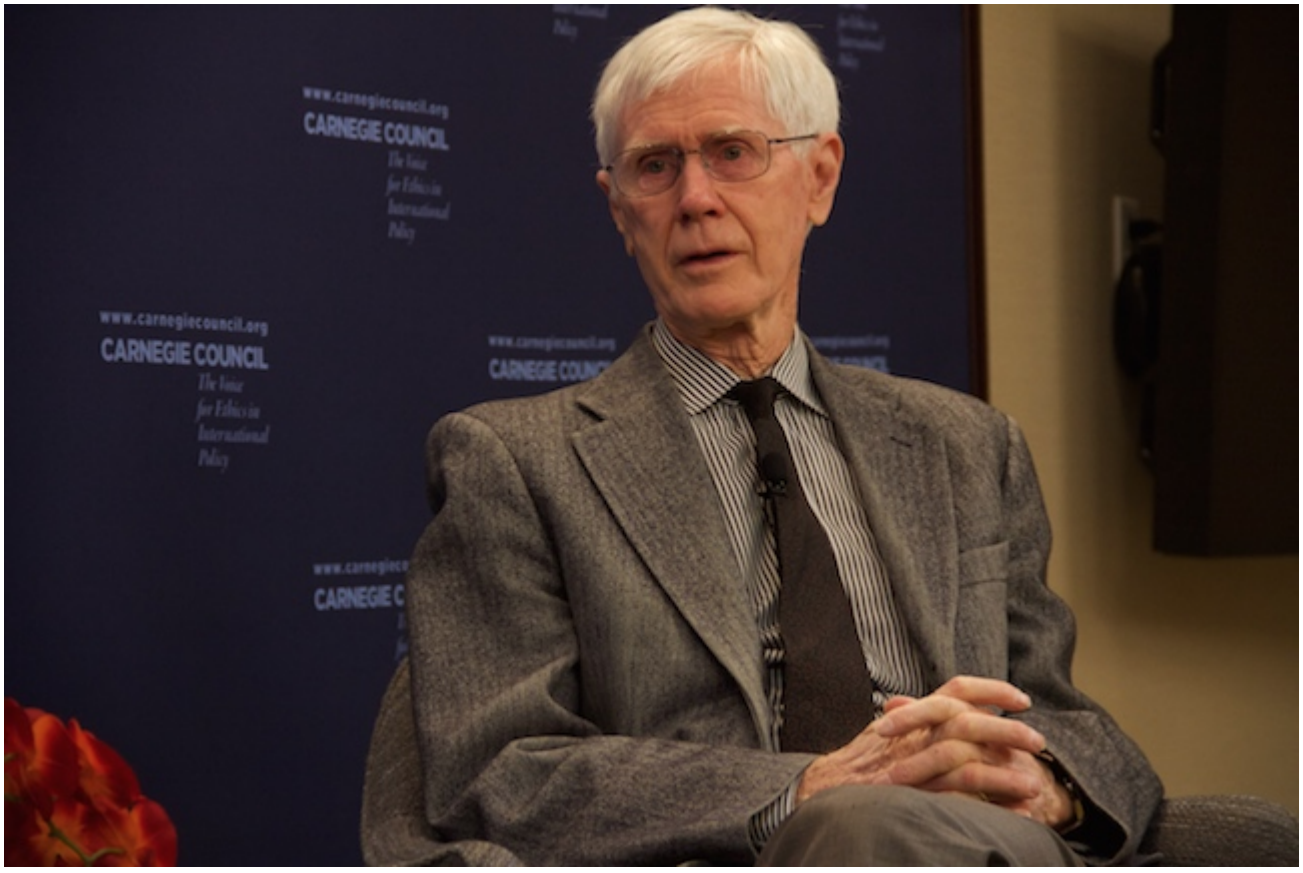


Orville Schell. CREDIT: Amanda Ghanooni.

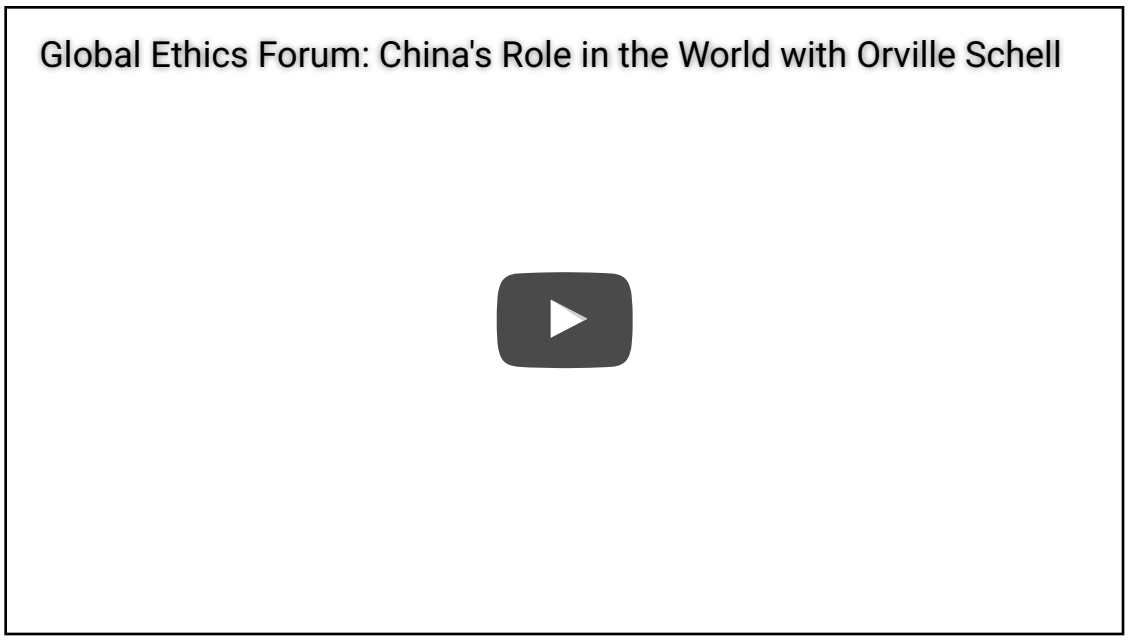
Orville Schell, Stephanie Sy

STEPHANIE SY: Welcome to Ethics Matter. I'm Stephanie Sy.

Our topic today is vast. We're talking about China with one of the world's preeminent experts on the topic, Orville Schell. Orville has written 15 books, 10 of them on China, and he is currently the Arthur Ross Director of the Center on U.S.-China Relations at the Asia Society.

Mr. Schell, it's such an honor to have you here at the Carnegie Council studios in New York.

It was hard to decide which topics I wanted to focus on for this interview because there are security issues at stake, there are human rights issues, there's climate change. But I want to try to focus the conversation really on our focus at Ethics Matter, so viewing some of these topics through an ethical lens.



I actually want to start with trade and globalization and the threats that President Trump has made to levy tariffs on foreign imports, including Chinese goods. It made me think about the fact that as we focus on the American worker post-election, I thought about the hundreds of millions of Chinese workers who have actually benefited from global trade and globalization and how we view poverty in international relations. Are we being selfish to only focus on our losses due to globalization?

ORVILLE SCHELL: Well, every nation has its own perception of its national interest, and the job of any government is to define that interest and protect it. The dilemma we live in today in the globalized world is that in ways that are often hard for us to discern, our national interest is shared with the interests of other countries because we have global economies, we have global problems, we have all sorts of things that we can only solve together. So this is a constant high-wire act of trying to figure out what is our interest, what is their interest, what is our common interest.

I think lately China has become increasingly obdurate about defining its interest, and it has, I think, a less evolved view in terms of being able to imagine its global interest. It understands the necessity of globalization, but the idea that "all men are brothers," to put it in Chinese terminology, I think is sometimes quite elusive to this country that has grown up over the last century with its Leninist doctrine that it is being exploited by the imperialist great powers outside.

STEPHANIE SY: It still feels that historical grievance. But "all men are brothers" is also not something that this country seems to be following.

ORVILLE SCHELL: This country is something of a contradiction. On the one hand we can be enormously self-serving. But on the other hand there is a kind of a fundamental ideology that has grown up over the last few decades that we are more or less in this together globally, the win/win notion of the global proposition. Now I think President Trump changes that in ways that could be quite stark, and we'll see what they are as we move forward.

But I think China has always had a sense of insularity, of being somehow not only cut off—and they had a big spate of that during Mao Zedong's time—but also of being preeminent. This raises the whole other kind of very vexing question: As China becomes more prosperous and powerful, how is it going to demonstrate that urge towards preeminence, at least in Asia, and possibly the world, as it moves forward?

STEPHANIE SY: President Xi Jinping gave a much ballyhooed speech at the Davos conference this year where he really heralded globalization. He said: "We should advance democracy in international relations and reject dominance by just one or several countries. All countries should ensure that development outcomes are shared by all."

What did you make of that speech? Did you take any sign from it that China is going to play a larger role on the global stage in ways that it hasn't before?

ORVILLE SCHELL: Well, nature abhors a vacuum. I think the election of Donald Trump poses the question of will the United States retreat from the global proposition and leave such a vacuum? I think it was into that potential vacuum that Xi Jinping stepped at Davos with his speech on globalization.

But I think his view of globalization is very different from the world of globalization that is understood—and, to be certain, sometimes hypocritically—by liberal democracies. But nonetheless there are certain shared propositions and there are things, such as the rule of law. It isn't a purely transactional world, although capitalism can be cutthroat.

There is also a kind of a—again, not always lived up to—moral proposition amongst liberal democracies that is not shared by a one-party Leninist state. This, I think, puts China something at odds with this earlier notion that was constructed in Europe and North America of globalization.

STEPHANIE SY: I've had a couple of conversations in this same studio with academics who believe some of those liberal ideas you talk about are actually under threat now in this country under the Trump administration, which has openly called the press the enemy, which has questioned some of the foundational democratic institutions in this country.

First of all, do you agree that some of those liberal ideas are under threat in this country, and what does that mean for an autocratic regime like China?

ORVILLE SCHELL: I do think that the whole notion of the virtues of liberal democratic open society is under threat, both within our own country by the election of Donald Trump, but also by the rise around the world now of these "illiberal" democracies. Very striking. The Philippines has recently come under the cloud of Duterte, and with China; Russia; Erdoğan in Turkey; Viktor Orbán in Hungary; the Czech Republic, even Poland; and now you have things like Marine Le Pen in France, a potential rising leader.

This is very alarming, because in two quarters these values under threat both from within—and the United States was considered the main protector of these values—and also abroad by the ascendency, and to some degree the success, of these illiberal democracies or illiberal autocracies.

STEPHANIE SY: How do you think Chinese leaders look upon that trend around the world?

ORVILLE SCHELL: I think they look at this trend with some surprise. Remember, in 1989 they had the demonstrations and bloodshed in Beijing, and then the Berlin Wall fell and the Soviet Union collapsed. That was—remember The End of History?—liberal democracy had won. Well, it turned out it was a little premature to announce that funeral because ultimately it turned out that illiberal democracy still had some fire power.

China then went on this burst of development and has proven to be something of a success on that front. So we now have a real competition going on, I think, that isn't simply military, it isn't simply economic; it is also a kind of clash of different kinds of political systems and values.

STEPHANIE SY: Is there a chance that what some would describe as a moral leadership vacuum—I mean the leader of the free world again endorsing torture or attacking the press as the enemy—is there any sense that the Chinese might rise to fill the moral vacuum? Or are they not interested in that; are they more interested in continuing economic growth and just the well-being of their citizens?

ORVILLE SCHELL: I think China has been somewhat prudent about its sort of expansive notion of assuming the various vacuums that have been created around the world, by the threat to the European Union, the disorder here in the United States.

On the other hand, I do think they have a deep and abiding yearning to write themselves rather more grandly on the global scheme of things. I think that's very much Xi Jinping's playbook, this idea in Chinese of fùxīng, a revival or a rejuvenation of China. This has been a long time coming, since the collapse of the Qing dynasty in 1911 and 1912. I think it is very gratifying for Xi and many Chinese, and thus a source of nationalist sentiment, to see China becoming wealthy and

powerful and being able to contend with what once they viewed as the great powers that were pushing them around, the great imperial powers—Japan, the United States, Great Britain and other Europeans.

STEPHANIE SY: When you think about the power of Chinese infrastructure projects overseas or its Silk Road projects and its economic leverage in different countries, is that how it sees its rise? Or does it end up playing a larger role on the global stage and in international relations in ways beyond that?

ORVILLE SCHELL: I think that China's rise and its rather expansive economic policies that were described as its "going out" policy—they have been quite successful and quite startling, a huge amount of money and involvement out around the world in various forms. But I think it is a very different kind of expansiveness than that of, let's say, the United States, which was always very evangelical in certain ways. It wasn't purely transactional. It was evangelical, first, because it was spreading Christianity and "civilization." And then, of course, because it was spreading the notions of the free world, and then liberal democracy, we believed that history was ineluctably moving in the direction of more openness, more freedom, and more democratic systems of governance around the world.

China heaved to on the scene, started slowly moving around the world, and it didn't bring with it that kind of same assumption, that sort of imperative, that things were moving in this more democratic direction. It was an authoritarian country, had no particular moral presumptions—it would trade with anybody, Robert Mugabe or Thomas Jefferson.

STEPHANIE SY: And it still does. Which leads me to the withdrawal of the United States from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). I remember during the Obama administration when there were arguments for TPP it wasn't just about trade. It was about this evangelism that you talked about. It was expanding worker protections throughout Southeast Asia, environmental regulations and standards would be brought to be comparable to U.S. standards.

Does the U.S. withdrawal from the TPP again leave another void in which you have China filling that without the sort of moral presumptions that the United States was once known for?

ORVILLE SCHELL: I think we're not quite sure what is going to happen. But clearly, when the United States vacated the TPP, it left a giant piece of the fabric, a kind of an alternative structure, missing. The whole strategy of things like the World Trade Organization was that we build a rules-based system, and China enters and China agrees to play by those rules. That was the theory behind TPP. You'd have environmental rules, you'd have "play fair," you'd have a level play field, this, that, and the other. With that gone missing, now we run the prospect of China setting up its trade structures in Asia and playing by their rules.

STEPHANIE SY: What ethics and morals, concern for the environment, and concern for worker

rights are in their playbook?

ORVILLE SCHELL: I think increasingly, actually over the last decade, Chinese leadership has come to understand the environmental threat, partially because it is threatening its own people and its own people are unhappy. You begin to get a lot of unrest around these environmental threats, which are unparalleled in global history. So that it begins to understand.

I think the value to the proposition for China—I mean one of the problems of the Chinese Revolution in the 20th century is that China kept trying to reinvent itself after the dynastic collapse. It had a republican period, it had a communist period, then it had a Deng Xiaopingist period. In the process the whole question of ethics, culture, and values got really savaged, and it kept getting changed and canceled and reformatted. But you can't really do that in a society and have the society keep its value through a moral compass.

So China now is in a curious position where, despite its amazing success economically, it is something like a compass without a true north when it comes to values. What values should Chinese believe in—Confucian, Maoist, Adam Smith?

STEPHANIE SY: Did capitalism become an overriding value?

ORVILLE SCHELL: I don't think capitalism is a moral value.

STEPHANIE SY: I don't think it is either.

ORVILLE SCHELL: It's a very transactional, dog-eat-dog world.

STEPHANIE SY: But has that become a religion in some ways in China?

ORVILLE SCHELL: I think it has filled the vacuum of values and culture.

You have to remember that China underwent a Cultural Revolution. We thought at the end of it, in 1978-1979, "Well, that's over, that's good, let's move on." But I think we didn't properly appreciate the consequences of having a society attacking its own culture and values, what the impact would be going forward. Actually I think what it was, was a profound, but also quite subtle, defoliation of the inner core operating system of Chinese society, to know how to regulate itself, insofar as any society regulates itself, according to a system of values, of ethics, of principles.

STEPHANIE SY: Can capitalism be seen as a value if it means—I was just reminded that even though China is the second-largest economy in the world on a per capita basis, its GDP is still one-sixth that of the United States. So you still have a majority of the population that by our standards would be considered very poor. Can the government continue to talk about morality in the sense of lifting those people out of poverty? Is that a compass; is that a north?

ORVILLE SCHELL: I think for the Chinese Communist Party, such as it is in its latter-day form, this idea of creating what Deng Xiaoping called "a reasonably well-off society" is a moral imperative, and it is not one to be naysayed. It's really important. China was a very poor country. But it does not complete the full menu, I think, of a society that has both its valuative compass and its moral compass intact. It's a fragment of a larger view of what it means to be human, how you view yourself connected to your society, to the world, to your family, to your friends, to whomever.

STEPHANIE SY: Is there an ethical framework that guides President Xi, his leadership and his policy? I guess the reason I ask that is he's very anti-corruption. So do you feel like there is a moral framework that guides him?

ORVILLE SCHELL: I'm sure President Xi could articulate what—I'm not sure he'd quite put it in those terms, "moral." I think he views his charge is to keep China together, keep it stable, and keep improving people's lives.

But, you know, human beings don't live by bread alone, and there are these other very subtle things that throughout human civilization have meant a great deal to human beings, whether it's art, religion, philosophy—one could go on. I think those are the things that are a little harder to put your finger on in China. You have to remember this is a country that identified its old culture, traditional culture, all those thousands of years, with weakness. Starting back in the '10s and '20s in the last century, it thought: "That's why China is weak. We have to get rid of it. We have to modernize."

Then from the West they borrowed democracy, republicanism, capitalism, and then they borrowed communism and Leninism. So they've tried all these things on. But in the process I think there has been quite a bit of self-—as Mao said, "you can't have construction without destruction," and they have destroyed a lot.

STEPHANIE SY: What do you think is the next phase of the revolution?

ORVILLE SCHELL: I think the Marx part of the revolution is long gone. The Leninist part, which isn't really a revolution; it's a way you structure a one-party system—authority, hierarchy, orthodoxy, ideology, propaganda, the way you make a state powerful—that's what the revolution is now about.

STEPHANIE SY: As I was reading your bio I read that your father, also named Orville Schell, was a human rights attorney, which I didn't know. I wonder how much that plays into your own view of China and its development. When I started studying, years back in college, and I was reading your works, human rights would frequently come up as an issue. The belief was that when they joined the WTO and the more there were economic reforms, the more we would see political reforms and reforms that would give people a bigger voice in government. How have you see that evolution in recent years?

ORVILLE SCHELL: Yes, my father was a lawyer here in New York and ended up being a co-founder of Human Rights Watch. He was a man of deep principles for whom something like justice was a matter of importance.

I think in many ways for me and my brother and sister—my brother Jonathan was also a writer—it did rub off. I think in China, as you suggested, there was a period of decades when it was possible to imagine that slowly it was evolving, not only to be more prosperous and wealthy, but it was also evolving slowly towards becoming a more republican, more democratic, more open society. That was this idea of history having a sort of an ineluctable force.

I think Xi Jinping in a certain way is an end of that—call it a fantasy, call it a delusion, call it a dream.

STEPHANIE SY: An end of that?

ORVILLE SCHELL: An end of that, because I don't think that is in any way a description that describes his end goal. Now, even Jiang Zemin and even Deng Xiaoping were good Leninists, but I think they also imagined that, "Well, China would slowly change. Don't push us too fast and we will become more open, more democratic, and more convergent with the liberal democratic world outside."

But I don't think that's what Xi views as his mandate. I think he has a very different view, which is what has started to maybe be called "the China model." It's authoritarian capitalism. He doesn't view his country as slowly converging with the West. In fact, I think he may view the West as declining, and the whole set of principles that to me are quite important, to live in an open, free, and democratic society. I'm sorry, that's how I would like to live.

STEPHANIE SY: Right. And for decades there has been pretty bipartisan consensus in Washington that that was desirable, that human rights and civil rights for Chinese citizens was desirable. Again, with the current administration do you see that that will not be an issue that comes up in relations between them?

ORVILLE SCHELL: It's very hard to know what's going to come to the fore in the Trump administration. Trump has obviously expressed a lot of incipiently anti-Chinese sentiments or dubiously supportive sentiments about China. But it's not clear what his position, if there is one, is on the question of democracy or rights or justice, things like that. We'll have to see. He plays out of both sides of almost every contradiction, so you can't pin him down very easily.

STEPHANIE SY: I want to change gears here. You recently co-chaired a really high-level task force that came up with a series of recommendations for the Trump administration on U.S.-China policy. I understand that this research went on for a year and a half, and at the very top of that list were concerns about North Korea's continuing development of missiles and of nukes.

Why do you think, first of all, has U.S. policy failed so far in containing North Korea's ambitions in these areas?

ORVILLE SCHELL: I think the North Korean leadership—Kim Jong-un the latest incarnation of the family—has concluded, after seeing what happened to Saddam Hussein, etc., that without nuclear weapons he's cooked. That's his last flight out, so he's not going to let them go easily.

Now, can you squeeze him, can you strangle him, and get him to finally yield, the way the Iranians did? Possibly. But the only conceivable way to do that is if you have the Chinese onboard wholeheartedly.

STEPHANIE SY: Are they?

ORVILLE SCHELL: No, they're not.

STEPHANIE SY: Why not?

ORVILLE SCHELL: They are not onboard because they view what's across the Yalu River as a significant national interest and they would rather have a strange, autocratic, and unpredictable client state than an allied partner to the United States across the river. It's completely possible to logically describe why they wouldn't want to ally with the United States.

But I think more and more they are getting impatient with North Korea. So I think there actually is a possibility—and Donald Trump may ultimately be able to make a deal—that the United States and China could get together for one last push to put the screws on North Korea and cut off most of North Korea's trade with China—trading companies, banks, airlines, communications. If China really squeezed the North, I think it's possible that they could bring them to heel—not certain, though. So that's the last, best hope. Now, it's somewhat remote I have to say, but it's certainly worth a try.

If it doesn't work, then it seems to me the United States and South Korea and Japan have no choice but to start the most drastic kind of secondary sanctions against China itself—in other words, against all the companies and banks that trade with North Korea.

STEPHANIE SY: Another tactic has been the United States deciding to build that advanced missile system in South Korea, where of course we should remind everyone that there are also U.S. troops stationed there. This advanced missile system is called Terminal High-Altitude Area Defense (THAAD). I understand this is actually creating a sense of more instability in relationships there because China really doesn't want it there. Can you explain what the Chinese position is on this missile system and why it feels so threatened by it?

ORVILLE SCHELL: China has long felt that the U.S. system of alliances—with Australia, the Philippines, Japan, and Korea, and then it looked like Vietnam might become some kind of a

partner—was a form of latter-day containment. So they view this missile system as sort of an upgrade of that containment of their ambitions to be hegemonic in Asia and to be the kind of a keystone of the Asian march. And the radars of this THAAD missile system they view as unnecessarily intrusive into North China, to view what's going on in there as well as in North Korea. So they are unalterably opposed to it, and they are now taking a very, very kind of extreme position of penalizing South Korea. The Lotte Company, on whose golf course the missile system will be placed—they can make it very miserable for them to do business.

So this is to say that China is demonstrating it is willing to be punitive to people who don't do its bidding.

STEPHANIE SY: I want to talk about the South China Sea and Chinese assertions there. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson has compared China's buildup on artificial islands there as "akin to Russia's taking of Crimea." If the Trump administration ends up following that line of thinking, how does it change the status quo in the South China Sea?

ORVILLE SCHELL: What's going on in the South China Sea is also very alarming. In essence, what China has done is they have ascribed the entire area which hangs down all the way, hundreds and hundreds of miles, to Indonesia, Malaysia, and Brunei, as theirs.

STEPHANIE SY: They have made a historical claim.

ORVILLE SCHELL: A historical claim which by any international legal standard is quite ludicrous.

STEPHANIE SY: And just to be clear, the U.S. position here is not one or the other on the territorial claims, right?

ORVILLE SCHELL: Right.

STEPHANIE SY: Their interest is in securing international waters. Is that the right way to—

ORVILLE SCHELL: Freedom of navigation, basically, because there is a tremendous amount of shipping that goes through there. For instance, neither Japan nor Korea have energy, oil, gas, so everything has to come through there. So it's a very critical waterway. That is the United States' primary conception of its charge.

The Chinese are saying, "We won't interfere with international travel, with global trade. We just want to own it." They're building these islands, military bases on these coral atolls. The question is: What should the United States do about it, if anything?

STEPHANIE SY: What is your recommendation?

ORVILLE SCHELL: I think there is a limited amount we can do because our force is sort of

projected all the way across the Western Pacific, whereas China's increasingly powerful maritime, naval, and air force are right there.

But I do think that our alliance structure is critically important here. But then, the Philippines just waltzed off with Beijing, Duterte and Xi.

So it's a very complicated situation that raises the most profound and vexing questions about how the United States should deport itself out there**.** And here we have the Trump administration, which doesn't seem to have any particular stars to steer by. It makes it very, very, I think, unsettling.

STEPHANIE SY: Do you think it makes these complex issues more volatile to have the secretary of state saying this is akin to the land seizure in Crimea?

ORVILLE SCHELL: I do think the one virtue of Tillerson's statement, and many Trump statements, is that it puts China on notice that in the United States there's a new sheriff in town and the United States does not shine kindly on China's actions.

Now, the question is: What are they going to do about it and can they negotiate their way out of it with China? Now, if Trump is the big dealmaker, one might hope that he'd be able to make a big deal. Possibly he can. That is an actual hope that we should not dismiss.

STEPHANIE SY: It's interesting that you say that there's—you know, we talk a lot about Trump's transactional approach to international relations here at the Carnegie Council. So you actually see some virtue in that approach?

ORVILLE SCHELL: I think in many ways Donald Trump is like Mao Zedong. I mean he is a kind of a roguish character who wants to turn everything upside-down. In a certain way I think the U.S.-China relationship could stand a little of that. On the other hand, one has to be extremely careful about just throwing the whole thing out and ending up with conflict.

But to put China on notice that the terms of the game should be readjusted is not foolish because the playing field is not level. China has really pushed things, I think, to the edge of endurance for many countries, not just the United States. It has really become a bully. I think it's the classic case where a country that has been bullied finds it very tempting when it gets powerful to put the shoe on the other foot.

But that's very, very dangerous, particularly when you have someone as thin-skinned as Donald Trump in power, who knows a little bit about bullying himself. You get two bullies going at it and you could have quite a dust-up.

STEPHANIE SY: Let's expand that to say three bullies, with Putin. That brings me to the other parallel, I think, between Tillerson's comparison to China's actions in the South China Sea and

Russia's actions in Ukraine, in that when Putin invaded, shall we say, Crimea, with his "little green men," there was a lot of talk about international norms and standards and the threat to the post-World War II world order.

Do you see President Xi potentially challenging those same international norms with Chinese action in the South China Sea?

ORVILLE SCHELL: I think China's actions in the South China Sea do have a certain parallel to Russia in Donbass and Crimea, in Ukraine, that there is just a sense of "might makes right, and we think it's ours and we're going to take it." It is not that the United States has always followed the proscriptions of international law in as friendly a way as some might hope, but it has not eschewed those principles of self-determination.

So this is one of the things that really now begins to divide the world, sort of the "axis of thugocracy" on one side and on the other side, a kind of a threadbare democratic, rules-based, international-law-based system. Again, the United States has not been always an exemplar. I mean we haven't signed the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

But this is the new sort of ideological fault line in the world today: liberal democracies, or just liberal autocracies, versus the sometimes seemingly weakened liberal democracies.

STEPHANIE SY: I want to talk about one of what some have called, if you can call it that, the virtues or the benefits of having an autocracy vis-à-vis climate change in China.

It was another thing that President Xi brought out in his speech at Davos, which was the importance of the major players—in other words, the United States—remaining party to the climate agreement that was struck in Paris last year. As you know, it was a big breakthrough that the United States and China were able to agree on emissions caps.

What would happen if the Trump administration followed through on its threat to pull out of the Paris Climate Agreement? Would China be able to continue to make the case, and would it want to, for the reasons that you named and the fact that environmental pollution is actually an internal political issue for the Chinese as well? Would they be able to live up to those agreements?

ORVILLE SCHELL: Well, the lord works in mysterious ways. It wasn't but 10 years ago when China was viewing climate change as a plot foisted on it by the West to slow down its development by insisting that it share an equal burden in controlling greenhouse gas emissions, carbon emissions. It came around because it did ultimately see its self-interest, not only in cleaning up conventional pollution, but also climate change is an enormous threat to China. And then, the United States, which had been leading this charge, suddenly reversed course, and you have Donald Trump, who's a climate denier, who may pull out of all of these agreements and sort of

neuter the United States' leadership role in this. Very alarming, very dangerous, because I think if you view, as I do, this is the challenge of all challenges of the next decade, to have the United States gone missing is dangerous.

However, I think the United States does have a kind of a curious advantage, just as when people get heart attacks they get compensatory circulation. I think Washington may fall out of the climate change battle. But I think we see the cities and states, corporations, and civil society kind of moving in to play an even more forceful role. So I think in a curious way the United States may still be able to meet certain commitments, even without Washington at the helm. But one would much prefer to see it otherwise.

STEPHANIE SY: When it comes to China there is actually self-interest and pragmatism involved.

ORVILLE SCHELL: Yes.

STEPHANIE SY: This is not a sort of hippie "Save the Earth" thing for China. They have real environmental degradation that they're dealing with, real protests that are happening around that, and as a result it seems like China has actually de facto become the leader on renewable energy and the technologies that may actually make the big difference when it comes to averting climate change.

ORVILLE SCHELL: Yes, I think China's leadership in this is greatly increased and should be extolled. It may be that they come to play a more pronounced role as the role of the United States as a nation-state recedes.

The problem is if you look all around the compass rose, U.S. leadership, even in its compromised state, was critical to the world functioning, and it did lead in a lot of ways, both in terms of systems and values, but also in terms of institutions and organizations. If it is now taken out of the game, it is going to have a profound effect on the way the whole world interacts and whether we can deal with global problems.

STEPHANIE SY: I want to conclude the conversation by going back to again human rights and the issue of norms when it comes to human rights. Do you think that the election of Trump has impacted human rights norms in a way that will affect human rights in China?

ORVILLE SCHELL: I do think Trump's election does call into question many things. One of them is America's commitment to openness and more democratic forms of governance.

But on the other hand, I think there are many other things that are challenging that as the ascendant political forum in the world today. One of them is certainly the success of China in its autocratic capitalist model, which I think is quite convincing to many countries that are unstable, that are politically fragmented, that really do need to, first of all, have an economic revolution before they could even consider political reform.

It's hard to know how all this is going to work out. But I think this is also one thing that brings Russia and China together, this sense that they are being beset upon, they are being disrespected, dis-esteemed by the liberal democratic West that sees them as sort of tin-pot dictators.

Finally, you could see this as a transition. That's the way we used to look at China and Russia: they were in transition, but they were heading toward something which was more open and in our view more welcome. I think that's no longer true.

STEPHANIE SY: That's scary.

ORVILLE SCHELL: Well, it certainly makes you correct your view of which way the wind is blowing.

STEPHANIE SY: Orville Schell, thank you so much for all your insights and for joining us on Ethics Matter.

ORVILLE SCHELL: A pleasure.
