Interview: Li Xing, phd: Den fælles erklæring fra Kina og Rusland af 4. februar: En erklæring om en ny æra og en ny verdensorden

22. februar 2022 – Schiller Instituttet i Danmark gennemførte et 45-minutters interview med Dr. Li Xing, professor i udvikling og internationale relationer ved Institut for Politik og Samfund, Det Humanistiske og Samfundsvidenskabelige Fakultet, Aalborg Universitet, Danmark.

Dr. Li beskriver indholdet af den fælles erklæring af 4. februar 2022 mellem Kina og Rusland og analyserer, hvad dette betyder for forbindelserne mellem Kina og Rusland, men også for resten af verden. De emner, der diskuteres, omfatter unipolaritet eller multipolaritet, et nyt forhold mellem nationer, demokrati, økonomisk udvikling, en amerikansk domineret "regelbaseret orden" eller en FN-baseret orden, behovet for en ny international sikkerhedsarkitektur, som efterlyst af Helga Zepp-LaRouche, og hvordan Kina vil reagere på de kraftige vestlige sanktioner mod Rusland, der er udløst af Ukraine-krisen.

Dr. Li havde også givet Schiller Instituttet et interview den 26. januar med titlen "Samarbejd med Kina": Det er ikke fjenden".

Afskrift på engelsk:

Interview: Li Xing, PhD
The China-Russia Feb. 4 Joint Statement:
A Declaration of a New Era and New World Order

Michelle Rasmussen: Presidents Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin held a summit meeting on the sidelines of the Beijing Olympics and issued a statement on Feb. 4 called Joint Statement of the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China on the International Relations Entering a New Era and the Global Sustainable Development. Schiller Institute founder and international President Helga Zepp-LaRouche said that this signals a new era in international relations. To discuss the content and implications of the development, I am pleased to interview Dr. Li Xing, Professor of Development and International Relations in the Department of Politics and Society, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences from Aalborg University in Denmark. Dr. Li also gave the Schiller Institute an interview on Jan. 26 of this year, entitled "Cooperate with China. It Is not the Enemy."
Before we go into details, can you please give us your assessment of the overall importance of the summit and statement, including what it means for relations between China and Russia, and China-Russian relations with the rest of the world. And at the end of the interview, we will also discuss what it means in the current, very tense situation between Russia and NATO.

Li Xing: Thank you Michelle for your invitation. It's my pleasure to be invited again by the Schiller Institute.
First of all let me emphasize that it is a landmark document. Why? Because the document emphasizes what I call a "new era," declaring a shift in the world order, a multipolar world order, in which the U.S. and the West are not the only rule-makers, and Russia and China take the lead, and lay out a set of principles and a shared worldview. This is my first general summary.
Second, unlike the U.S./NATO alliance, the China-Russia relationship is described by the joint document as a "close comprehensive strategic partnership." In Putin's early words, he said, "The China-Russia relationship is a relationship that probably cannot be compared with anything in the world." The

relationship is not “aimed against any other countries.” It is “superior to the political and military alliances of the Cold War era,” referring to the U.S.-NATO alliance. It also echoes Xi Jinping’s recent statement, that “the relationship even exceeds an alliance in its closeness and effectiveness.” So the document tries to demonstrate that the China-Russia relationship is a good example of interstate relationships.

Rasmussen: You have characterized the introduction as “a conceptual understanding and analysis of global changes and transformations taking place in the current era.” It especially refers to the transformation from a unipolar to a multipolar world. Can you please explain how the statement addresses this, and what it means?

Li: In the beginning of this statement, it puts forward both countries’ conceptual understanding of the world order, which is characterized as “multipolarity, economic globalization, the advent of information society, cultural diversity, transformation of the global governance architecture and world order; there is increasing interrelation and interdependence between the States; a trend has emerged towards redistribution of power in the world.” [emphasis added by Li] “Redistribution of power in the world.” This is what the part emphasizes.
Second, this part also clearly sets up a series of analyses, arguments and discourses to demonstrate both countries’ understanding, and to emphasize the fact that the world order has entered a new era. Again, “new era” are the key words for this document.
Lastly, in this beginning part of the joint statement, it shows both Russia and China’s grand worldview that pave the foundation for the two countries’ broad consensus on almost all issues of the world, which we will deal with one by one later on.

Rasmussen: Part 1 is about the question of democracy, and it starts by saying: “The sides” —that is, China and Russia—”share the understanding that democracy is a universal

human value, rather than a privilege of a limited number of States, and that its promotion and protection is a common responsibility of the entire world community."
But the charge is that China and Russia are not democratic, but rather autocratic. This is one of the leading accusations by those in the West who are trying to maintain a unipolar world, and they portray the world as a battle between the democrats and the autocrats. How does the document respond to this, and treat the idea of democracy?

Li: Actually, this document utilizes a large amount of space to discuss this point. First, the joint statement points out that "democracy"—including human rights—"is a universal human value, rather than a privilege of a limited number of States." So here it implies that the concept of democracy must not be defined by the West alone. The West cannot singlehandedly define which country is autocratic and which country is democratic.
Second, the joint document emphasizes that their standpoint is that there is no universal one-form document, or human rights standard. Different countries have different cultures, histories, different social-political systems in a multipolar world. We have to respect the way each country chooses their own social-political system, and also the tradition of other states.
Third, it signals a strong critique of the West, and in this part, there are a lot of criticisms toward the West. That is, that the West has a tendency to weaponize the issue of democracy and human rights, and very often uses it as a tool to interfere in other countries' internal affairs. It is completely wrong for the U.S. and the West to impose their own "democratic standards" on other countries, and to monopolize the right to assess the level of compliance with democratic criteria, and to draw a dividing line on the basis of ideology, including by establishing exclusive blocs and lines of convenience, and this is very bad, according to these two countries, that the West tends to use democracy and human

rights to interfere into other countries' internal affairs, and China really suffers a lot from this point.

Rasmussen: How would you say democracy works in China?

Li: I would argue that if we use Western standards to define democracy, then definitely, China is not a democracy. In a Western version of democracy, China does not have a multi-party system, China does not have elections. But the point is, how the West will respond to the fact that according to major Western sources, survey data sources, throughout many years, that the Chinese people's confidence in their government is the highest in the whole world. And the Chinese Communist Party and the Chinese state receive the highest approval from the Chinese population according to those data. And also China has reached very high, rapid economic development, under the so-called "non-democratic government." Now, how can the West explain these issues? Many democratic countries suffer from economic backwardness and underdevelopment.
So, as to the form of governance in China, I think it is the Chinese people, themselves, who should make the judgment.

Rasmussen: Let's move on to part 2, which is about coordinating economic development initiatives, including harmonizing the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative, and also the Russian Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), even more, and taking initiatives to create economic development, where they emphasize the role of scientific research in generating economic growth, something that Lyndon LaRouche and our movement have had as a priority concept. And also increasing healthcare and pandemic response in poor countries. What do you see as the significance of this call for increasing economic development cooperation?

Li: Yes. I also read this part of the document very carefully. This part shows a clear difference in approach between the West and the U.S. on the one side, and China-Russia on the other side. While the West is emphasizing, or holding the flag

of democracy and human rights, China-Russia actually emphasize that peace, development and cooperation lies at the core of the modern international system. So, according to the understanding of Russia and China, development is the key driver in ensuring the prosperity of other nations, even though democracy and human rights are important, but development must be the core. So it implies that good development will lead the country in the direction of democracy, but not defined solely by the West, the concept of democracy.

Second, that following this line of understanding, then China's Belt and Road Initiative and Russia's Eurasian Economic Union are good examples of interregional cooperation. So they actually use the Belt and Road, and also Russia's Eurasia Economic Union, as good examples. One interesting point I want to emphasize is that both countries emphasize scientific and technological development, and "open, equal, and fair conditions." I think here, there is a kind of implicit criticism toward the United States, which has been conducting sanctions against Chinese tech companies, for example, Huawei, or other high-tech companies.

Finally, I'll remark here that both countries show their commitment to the Paris Agreement and to combat COVID-19, and these two issues are the most vital issues for the international community today. So it is a core for every country to emphasize these two vital issues: climate change, Paris Agreement, on the one side, and COVID-19 on the other side.

Rasmussen: Yes, I can add that Helga Zepp-LaRouche has initiated a proposal which she calls Operation Ibn Sina, which deals with the terrible humanitarian catastrophe in Afghanistan, leading off with creating a modern health system in every country. And if we could get much more international cooperation for building a modern health system, having the economic development which gives the basis for the population to have the immunology to resist disease, this would be a very

important field for economic development, which means life and death at this moment.

Li: I fully agree with Helga's understanding and call.

Rasmussen: As to part 3, this is about the increasing, dangerous international security situation, with a sharp critique of Western attitudes and actions. And the statement reads: "No State can or should ensure its own security separately from the security of the rest of the world and at the expense of the security of other States." And here, China addresses Russia's concerns and criticizes NATO's expansion eastward after the Fall of the Berlin Wall. And Russia addresses China's concerns by reaffirming the One-China principle and concerns about building different regional alliances against China —the Quad and AUKUS. It also praises the recent P5 statement against nuclear war.
Can you say more about China's and Russia's concerns? And do you think this is a call for a new international security architecture?

Li: Yes. If you read the document carefully, and this part on international security architecture, or their understanding of international security, occupied quite a large space. So it is a very important part for China and Russia.
In this part, the statement is actually bluntly clear about their mutual support for each other's national security concerns. For Russia, it is connected with the Ukraine crisis, but the document does not mention Ukraine specifically, but it is connected. For China, it is the Taiwan issue, definitely. So they show their mutual support for each other.
On Russia's concern for its national security, both countries oppose "further enlargement of NATO," and "respect the sovereignty, security and interests of other countries." And it clearly pronounced, there will be no peace if states "seek to obtain, directly or indirectly, unilateral military advantages to the detriment of the security of others." The document claims that the NATO plan to enlarge its membership

to encircle Russia will mean security for the Western side, but it is a danger for Russia. It is a national security concern.
On the Taiwan issue, Russia reconfirms that Taiwan is part of China—the One-China policy—and it is against any form of Taiwan independence.
Third, the joint statement also openly criticized the formation of closed blocs, as what you mentioned about the Quad. The document does not mention the Quad, but it does mention AUKUS. The document shows that both countries oppose U.S.-led military camps, or security camps in the Asia-Pacific region, definitely implying the Quad and AUKUS, and it points out the negative impact of the United States Indo-Pacific strategy.
Finally, the two countries call for a new international security architecture, with "equitable, open and inclusive security system … that is not directed against third countries and that promotes peace, stability and prosperity." So this part is very important for China and Russia to challenge the traditional international security architecture, and call for a new international security architecture, which I will touch on a bit later.

Rasmussen: Many political spokesmen in the West have criticized Russia and China for not adhering to the "rules-based order" and here, in part 4, China and Russia write that they "strongly advocate the international system with the central coordinating role of the United Nations in international affairs, defend the world order based on international law, including the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, advance multipolarity and promote the democratization of international relations, together create an even more prospering, stable, and just world, jointly build international relations of a new type."
And it continues: "The Russian side notes the significance of [Xi Jinping's] concept of constructing a 'community of common destiny for mankind…'"

Can you say more about the significance of this section, about global governance and the difference between the question of the “rules-based order” and an order based on international law, as laid out by the United Nations Charter?

Li: Yes. This part is extremely interesting, because it touches upon the mental clashes between China-Russia on the one side, and the U.S. and West on the other side, about the “rules-based order.” China, in particular, has been criticized a lot, as you also mentioned, that China has been accused by the U.S. of not following the “rules-based order.” If you remember the dialogue between a Chinese delegation and a U.S. delegation in Alaska in December two years ago, then we still remember the clash, that the Chinese claim that the U.S. rules-based order does not represent the global rules-based order, rather the United Nations—China emphasizes that the United Nations should play the central coordination role in international affairs. But the United States does not really like the UN-based structure, which is based on one-country/one-vote. So if we trace UN voting, we could easily find that the United States very often suffers from many setbacks when it comes to UN voting on many issues. So that’s why China emphasizes the United Nations rules-based order, whereas United States prefers a U.S. rules-based order.

And this joint statement also calls for advancing multipolarity and promoting democratization of international relations. In my interpretation, democratization of international relations implies that the power structure embedded in the Bretton Woods system, which was created by the United States after the Second World War, does not really reflect the new era, as I pointed out earlier. China and Russia think reforms are needed to reflect the new era. This definitely, again, from my interpretation, refers to international financial institutions like the World Bank, and the IMF, where Chinese voting power is proportionally weaker than it should have been, according to its economic size.

And also the joint statement mentions the China foreign

policy, as you mentioned in your question, “community of common destiny for mankind,” which was raised by President Xi Jinping. And in this nexus China’s Belt and Road Initiative is a good example, seen from China’s point of view, a good example of community of common destiny for mankind, in which the Belt and Road intends to promote, through worldwide infrastructure investment, the formation of a new global economic order, through creating a community of shared interest, and the community of shared responsibilities.
Unfortunately, the West does not really like both a “community of common destiny for mankind,” and the Belt and Road Initiative, because they are interpreted as the Chinese agenda is to transform global governance and the rules-based order.
However, I really think that the West should rethink their opposition, and they must face the fact that the Belt and Road memorandum has been signed by 148 countries and by 32 international organizations. So, according to my judgment, the Belt and Road, and also a community for common destiny for mankind, have already become an indispensable part of global governance and global order.

Rasmussen: Yes, this is also to underscore what you said before, about how important economic development is for the wellbeing of the countries. And here you have China, which was the first country to eliminate poverty in their country, over the last 40 years, and is offering this as a model for other countries to get economic development. The slogan of the Schiller Institute is “Peace through Economic Development,”—

Li: Exactly.

Rasmussen: The way that you can get countries that have perceived each other as enemies to rise to a new level, to seek common interest, is through arranging economic development programs, not only for a single country, but for a whole region, which encourages them to work together. You spoke before about the Chinese criticism of the Bretton Woods institutions. What the Schiller Institute and Lyndon LaRouche

have been saying, is that the initial idea of the Bretton Woods institutions as proposed by Franklin Roosevelt was to try to get the economic development of the poorer countries. But it degenerated into, for example, where you had the World Bank and International Monetary Fund imposing austerity conditions on countries as a precondition for loans, where nothing was done to actually increase the productivity of the countries, in the way that the Belt and Road is actually —with the infrastructure development, creating the basis for the countries to becoming prosperous. And what we're saying is that the total change in the international financial institutions is absolutely necessary now, at a point where financial speculation is blowing out, hyperinflation, and we need to have a new economic architecture, you could say, based on the physical development of the countries.

Li: I fully agree with your remarks and comments.

Rasmussen: Then another important statement in part 4, is that Chinese-Russian relations have reached a new level, as you said at the beginning, "a new era."
"The sides [China and Russia] call for the establishment of a new kind of relationship between world powers on the basis of mutual respect, peaceful coexistence and mutually beneficial cooperation. They reaffirm that the new inter-State relations between Russia and China are superior to political and military alliances of the Cold War era. Friendship between the two States has no limits, there are no 'forbidden' areas of cooperation, strengthening of bilateral strategic cooperation is neither aimed against third countries nor affected by the changing international environment and circumstantial changes in third countries."
And yet, this is a plea to end the geopolitical blocs, where the two countries also call for strengthening multilateral fora, like the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the BRICS.
Li Xing, what will this much strengthened alliance mean for China and Russia, and also for the rest of the world? Should

the West be worried, or is this a plea for a new type of international relations? What are the implications for shaping the new world order? What is your conclusion from the joint statement?

Li: I think one of the purposes of the joint statement is to demonstrate the good example of the China-Russia relationship, characterized as mutual respect, peaceful coexistence, and mutually beneficial cooperation. It is not targetted at any other country. It is not like the U.S.-led coalitions which are Cold War minded, according to Russia and China's understanding.
And if we look at the BRICS, and if you look at the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, they are not purely juridical and geopolitical organizations or alliances. They are non-binding, open and non-binding.
After I read the document several times, I reached the conclusion that the unipolar world order is over. The West and the United States might have a hard time to accept it.
So the joint statement shows a strong unity between Russia and China. So my question is where is the West's unity after the Cold War, and when the unipolar world order is over? How strong is the trans-Atlantic relationship today? I don't know: I'm asking the questions to the West, the U.S. The West must rethink its Cold War strategy of reviving unity through creating enemies, and I think this is a completely wrong strategy, in a multipolar world order, where countries are much more interdependent. So it is necessary for the U.S. to rethink its own version of the rules-based order, in which the U.S. is the rule-maker and others are rule-followers. And this does not work in a new era any more. That is my conclusion after reading the joint statement.

Rasmussen: Now, as to the current situation, today is Feb. 22, and yesterday, Russia recognized the two breakaway republics in Ukraine as independent republics, which is now going to lead to very heavy sanctions by the West. Putin's point was

that these sanctions would have come anyway, but in any case, without going into the details of the Ukraine-Russia-U.S./NATO crisis, the fact is that Russia will be most probably faced with enormously hard sanctions.
In our last interview, you were asked, for example, if Russia were thrown out of the SWIFT system, how would China react? Now it's a question of the not only of the SWIFT system, but also of other major financial penalties. How do you see China reacting, in light of the joint statement, to the new sanctions against Russia, that will most probably come?

Li: Let me first of all put it in this way: That sanctions are never one-sided punishments. That both sides will suffer. It's like President Trump's trade war, that President Trump thought the trade war would hurt China. Yes, it hurt China, but it had a backlash, a backfire to the U.S. economy. And today, if you look at the U.S. economy, the inflation actually is, one way or another, connected with the trade war, as well. It was one of the outcomes.
Now, sanctions against Russia will also cause mutually suffering by both sides. Because if you look at the European dependence on Russia's oil and gas, it's about 30-35%; some countries more, some less. If Russia is thrown out of the SWIFT system, which means that Russia cannot have international trade, then Europe cannot pay Russia as well, then the oil or gas pipelines will be blocked, which is in the interest of the United States, but not in the interest of Europe. This is the first point.
Second, that China and Russia have already agreed that they are not going to use dollars for their bilateral trade. So that doesn't really matter seen from the Russian and Chinese perspective, and in light of the spirit of this joint statement. So definitely China will continue to do business with Russia, and if the U.S. is saying that any country that is doing business Russia will be sanctioned as well, then the U.S. is creating even a larger, a bigger enemy. And China is a different story. And Russia, because Russia's economy,

Russia’s economic-financial status is relatively limited, compared with China. China is the second largest economy in the world.
By the way, China is the largest trading nation in the world. And you can see that last year, the China and EU trade reached more than 850 billion! That’s a lot! And look at the China-U.S. trade as well. If you punish China, in what way? I cannot imagine it. Take China out of the SWIFT system as well? No, you can’t do that! Then the whole world is blocked! Then no trade, no economic development at all.
So these are grave consequences of sanctions. I cannot predict the future situations. Until now I haven’t read any concrete reaction from the Chinese government, but I guess, following the spirit of this document, which was signed three weeks ago, definitely, China is going to act. China will also act in accordance with the spirit of solidarity between both countries.

Rasmussen: Our analysts were saying that it may be the case that China would buy more oil and gas and other products from Russia. Actually, one thing is that today, February 21 , is the 50th anniversary of Nixon’s trip to China, [February 21 to 28, 1972] and the opening up of relations, andthe United States commitment to the One-China policy. And at that time, many people were saying that Kissinger’s strategy was to open up the relations to China, as a way of isolating Russia, of putting Russia aside. But the fact is that these sanctions and this type of policy over the recent period, has done more to bring Russia and China together, as signified by this document. What is your reaction to that? But also the prospects of how we get out of this?
Lyndon LaRouche, for many years, called for a “Four Power” agreement between the United States, Russia, China, and India. How can we break through, looking at the world as Russia and China on one side, andthe U.S. and Europe on the other side, how can we get a cooperation among the great powers for the necessity of dealing with these other very serious crises the

world is facing?

Li: Extremely interesting that you mentioned Nixon's trip, of playing the "China card," during the Cold War, in the beginning of the 1970s. You are completely right that the U.S. has historically enjoyed a very favorable position, in which the U.S. has been able to keep relatively stable relations with China, relatively stable relations with Soviet Union, at that time—but making the Soviet Union and China fight each other all the time. And especially after the Cold War, the U.S. still had this favorable position—relatively stable relations with both countries, but China and Russia still had difficult relations with each other.

But today, the situation is reversed. It's totally shocking that the U.S. is fighting both world powers simultaneously. If you remember that the former U.S. National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski, he wrote, before he died, he wrote clearly, that the worst situation for the United States, for the West is when Iran, Russia, and China become a bloc, become an alliance, with China as the economic driver, the economic power. I was very surprised that his words are becoming true today!

So, the only way we can come to the second part of your question, about how we can manage major power relations, is in line with the spirit of the Schiller Institute conference that took place last week and its call for establishing a new international security architecture. There is no other way. The Western dominance, the U.S. singlehanded dominance, the unipolar world is over. We need what Helga proposed, to establish a new international security architecture. We don't know exactly what the form of this architecture, but that needs discussion from both sides! Unless the international community forms a kind of great, new international security architecture, conflict will continue.

Rasmussen: And then, as we spoke, it goes hand in hand with the increasing economic cooperation and the determination of

the great powers to really do something for the economic development of the poor parts of the world.

Li: Yes, definitely. I agree with you. Thank you.

Rasmussen: Is there anything else you would like to add?

Li: No, I just want to add the last point, that I am very amazed by this joint statement, because I have come across many joint statements by two countries, or by multiple countries. But this one is the most comprehensive political document I have ever come across, because it covers every aspect of the world order, international relations, governance, security, values, norms, technology, climate change, health—you name it. So it is an extremely comprehensive document, which shows what Russia and China envision as a just world order.

So I would argue that this document implies a kind of new world order which Russia and China are going to, not only propose, but also push forward.

Unfortunately, this document has been demonized by many Western media—I have read many media talking about — to me it's a kind of Cold War syndrome, because those media describe the document as creating a "bipolar world," they say bipolar world, with the Russia and China/autocracies on the one side, and the U.S. and the West/democracies on the other side. So to me again, it's a dividing line, when they allege that this document divides the world into two camps again. So to me, this is a typical Cold War syndrome.

Again, I come back to my last point: That we need a new international security architecture, as the Schiller Institute also proposed during the conference last week. Otherwise, there will be no peace and development. Thank you.

Rasmussen: Thank you so much, Li Xing. This has been a very important discussion.

Li: Thank you very much.