Interview med freds- og fremtidsforsker Jan Øberg: Om Ukraine-Rusland-USA-NATO krisen, Danmarks forhandlinger om amerikanske soldater i Danmark, og Xinjiang spørgsmålet, den 21. februar 2022

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Afskrift: 1. del om Ukraine-Rusland-U.S.-NATO krisen:

Michelle Rasmussen: Hello. Today is February 21st, 2022. I am Michele Rasmussen, the vice president of the Schiller Institute in Denmark. And I'm very happy that peace researcher Jan Oberg agreed to this interview. Jan Oberg was born in Denmark and lives in Sweden. He has a PhD in sociology and has

been a visiting professor in peace and conflict studies in Japan, Spain, Austria, Switzerland, part time over the years. Jan Oberg has written thousands of pages of published articles and several books. He is the co-founder and director of the Independent TFF, the Transnational Foundation for Peace and Future Research in Lund, Sweden since 1985, and has been nominated over several years for the Nobel Peace Prize.

Our interview today will have three parts. The danger of war between Russia and Ukraine, which could lead to war between the United States and NATO and Russia, and how to stop it.

Secondly, your criticism of Denmark starting negotiations with the United States on a bilateral security agreement, which could mean permanent stationing of U.S. soldiers and armaments on Danish soil.

And thirdly, your criticism of a major report which alleged that China is committing genocide in Xinjiang province.

A Russian invasion of Ukraine, which some in the West said would start last Wednesday has not occurred. But as we speak, tensions are still very high. You wrote an article, Jan Oberg, on January 19th, called Ukraine The West has paved the road to war with lies, specifying three lies concerning the Ukraine crisis. Let's take them one by one.

You defined lie number one: "The Western leaders never promised Mikhail Gorbachev and his foreign minister, Eduard Shevardnadze, not to expand NATO eastwards. They also did not state that they would take serious Soviet or Russian security interests around its borders, and, therefore, each of the former Warsaw Pact countries has a right to join NATO, if they decide to freely." Can you please explain more to our viewers about this lie?

Jan Oberg: Yes, and thank you very much for your very kind and long and detailed introduction of me. I would just say about that point that I'm amazed that this is now a kind of repeated

truth in Western media, that Gorbachev was not given such promises. And it rests with a few words taken out of a longer article written years ago by a former U.S. ambassador to Ukraine, who says that Gorbachev did not say so. That article was published by Brookings Institution. Now the truth is, and there's a difference between truth and non truths, and we have to make that more and more clear when we deal with the West at the moment. The truth is, if you go to the National Security Archives in the U.S., if I remember correctly, the George Washington University that is well documented, their own formulation is that there are cascades of documentation. However, this was not written down in a treaty, or signed by the Western leaders, who one after the other came to Gorbachev's dacha outside Moscow or visited him in Kremlin, and therefore some people would say it's not valid. Now that is not true in politics. If we can't rely on what was said and what was written down by people personally in their notebooks, etc.

George Bush, Margaret Thatcher, Helmut Kohl, James Baker, you can almost mention any important Western leader were unanimous in saying to Gorbachev, we understand that the Warsaw Pact has gone, the Soviet Union has gone, and therefore, we are not going to take advantage of your weakness. James Baker's formulation, according to all these sources, is we're not going to expand nature one inch. And that was said in 89, 90. That is 30 years ago. And Gorbachev, because of those assurances also accepted, which he's been blamed very much for since then, the reunification of Germany. Some sources say that was a kind of deal made that if Germany should be united, which it was very quickly after, it should be a neutral country. But the interpretation in the West was it could remain a member of NATO, but would then include what was at that time the German Democratic Republic, GDR [East Germany] into one Germany. You can go to Gorbachev's Foundation home page and you will find several interviews, videos, whatever, in which he says these things, and you can go to the Danish

leading expert in this, Jens Jørgen Nielsen, who has also written that he personally interviewed Gorbachev, in which Gorbachev, with sadness in his eyes, said that he was cheated, or that these promises were broken, whatever the formulation is.

And I fail to understand why this being one of the most important reasons behind the present crisis, namely Russia's putting down its foot, saying "You can't continue this expansion up to the border, with your troops and your long-range missiles, up to the border of Russia. And we will not accept Ukraine [as a member of NATO]. You have gotten ten former Warsaw Pact countries which are now members of NATO, NATO has 30 members. We are here with a military budget, which is eight percent of NATO's, and you keep up with this expansion. We are not accepting that expansion to include Ukraine.

Now, this is so fundamental that, of course, it has to be denied by those who are hardliners, or hawks, or cannot live without enemies, or want a new Cold War, which we already have, in my view, and have had for some years. But that's a long story. The way the West, and the U.S. in particular – but NATO's secretary general's behavior is outrageous to me, because it's built on omission of one of the most important historical facts of modern Europe.

Michelle Rasmussen: Yes. In your article, you actually quote from the head of NATO, the general secretary of NATO, back in 1990, one year before the dissolution of the Soviet Union, Manfred Wörner, where you say that in these documents released by the U.S. National Security Archive, that you just referred to, "Manfred Wörner gave a well-regarded speech in Brussels in May 1990, in which he argued 'The principal task of the next decade will be to build a new European security structure to include the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact nations. The Soviet Union will have an important role to play in the construction of such a system.' And the next year, in the

middle of 1991, according to a memorandum from the Russian delegation who met with Wörner. He responded to the Russians by saying that he personally and the NATO council, were both against expansion "13 out of 16 NATO members share this point of view," and "Wörner said that he would speak against Poland's and Romania's membership in NATO to those countries leaders, as he had already done with leaders of Hungary and Czechoslovakia. And he emphasized that we should not allow the isolation of USSR from the European community," and this was even while the U.S.S.R. was still alive. So it must have been even more the case after the U.S.S.R. collapsed, and Russia emerged.

Jan Oberg: Well, if I may put in a little point here, you see, with that quotation of a former NATO secretary general, compare that with the present secretary general of NATO. Wörner was a man of intellect. The leaders around him at the time in Europe were too. I mean, those were the days when you had people like Willy Brandt in Germany and östpolitik [East policy], and you had Olof Palme in Sweden with common security thinking. We cannot in the West be sure, feel safe and secure in the West, if it's against Russia. Which does not mean at all to give into everything Russia does, but just says we cannot be safe if the others don't feel safe from us. And that was an intellectualism. That was an empathy, not a necessarily a sympathy, but it was an empathy for those over there, that we have to take into account, when we act. Today that intellectualism is gone completely.

And it is very interesting, as you point out, that 13 out of 16 NATO countries, at that time, were at that level, but in came in 1990 Bill Clinton. And he basically said, well, he didn't state it. He acted as though he had stated it, I don't care about those promises, and then he started expanding NATO. And the first office of NATO was set up in Kiev in 1994. That was the year when he did that. And that was a year when I sat in Tbilisi, Georgia, and interviewed the U.S. representative

there, who, through a two-hour long conversation, basically talked about Georgia as “our country.”

So, you know, it’s sad to say it’s human to make mistakes, but to be so anti-intellectual, so anti-empathetic, so imbued with your own thinking and worldview, you’re not able to take the other side into account, is much more dangerous than it was at that time, because the leaders we have in the western world today are not up to it. They were earlier, but these are not.

Michelle Rasmussen: Lie number two that you pointed out, “The Ukraine conflict started by Putin’s out-of-the-blue aggression on Ukraine and then annexation of Crimea.” What’s the rest of the story here?

Jan Oberg: Well, it’s not the rest, it’s the beginning of the story. You see, people who write about these things, and it’s particularly those who are Western media and Western politicians and foreign ministers, et cetera, they say that it all started with this out-of-the-blue invasion in the Donbass, and then the taking, annexing or aggression on, or whatever the word is, Crimea. Well, they all forget, very conveniently, and very deliberately – I mean, this is not a longer time ago than people who write about it today would know – that there was a clearly western assisted, if not orchestrated, coup d’état in Kiev in 2014. After, I won’t go into that long story, after some negotiations about an economic agreement between Ukraine and the EU, in which the president then jumped off, allegedly under pressure from Putin, or whatever, but there were a series of violent events in Kiev.

And it’s well known from one of those who were there, and participated, namely the assistant secretary of State for European Affairs, Mrs. Nuland, and she’s given a speech in the U.S. where, if I remember correctly, she says that the US has pumped $5 billion into Ukraine over the years, to support democracy and human rights, et cetera, and training courses for young NGOs, et cetera. And it’s obvious that that

operation, that ousting of the president, he had to flee to Russia, and the taking over, partly by neo-Nazis and fascists who were present and who probably did the beginning of the shooting and the killing of people, that all this had to do with the promise that was given to Ukraine years before that it would be integrated into the Euro-Atlantic framework. And then it was kind of stopping and saying, we don't want that anyhow. We will negotiate something else, and we will look into what Putin has to offer, etc.

But that that, in Putin's mind, in Russia's mind, meant that NATO would be the future of Ukraine. And Russia had, still has, a huge military base in Crimea, which it had a lease on for, at the time, I think it was 30 plus years, meaning should Ukraine, which was clearly signalled by the western NATO member's leadership, enter and become a full member of Ukraine, then he would look at a Russian base, either being lost or you would have a Russian military naval base in a NATO country.

Now I'm not saying that that was a smart move. I'm not saying it was a legal move, but it's very difficult for the western world to blame Russia for annexing Crimea. If you look at the opinion polls and the votes for that, if you will, voting ourselves back to Russia – you know, the whole thing was Russia until 1954, when Khrushchev gave it to Ukraine, and he was from Ukraine himself. And so this happened three weeks before. And I'm amazed that it should not again be intellectually possible for people who witnessed this – The other thing we talked about with 30 years ago. There might be some young fools who would not read history books.

But what I'm talking about was something that happened in 2014, and there's no excuse for not mentioning that there's a connection between that coup d'état, and the influence of the West in Ukraine in a very substantial way, and what happened in Donbas and Crimea.

So I’m just saying, if I put it on a more general level, if we look at today’s ability to understand, describe, analyze issues as conflicts, we are heading for zero understanding. There is nobody in the press, and nobody in politics who are able, intellectually, to see these things as conflicts, that is, as a problem standing between two or more parties that has to be analyzed. And conflict resolution is about finding solutions that the parties we have defined as parties, and there certainly are many more than two in this very complex conflict, can live with in the future. What we are down to in banalization is that there is no conflict. There’s only one party, Russia, that does everything bad and evil and terrible, while we are sitting in the receiving end, being the good guys who’ve done nothing wrong in history. Who could never rethink what we did or say, we’re sorry, or change our policies, because we are right. There’s only one problem. That’s them. We’re down now to the level in which these things, also the last three months, the accusations about Russia invading Ukraine, has nothing to do with conflict analysis. It is purely focusing on one party, and one party, by definition, is not a conflict.

We are not party to a relationship anymore, and that makes a huge difference, again, from the leaders and the way of thinking and the intellectual approach that existed 20-30 years ago. And one reason for all of this is, of course, that the West is on his way down. Secondly, and they feel threatened by anything that happens around the world. And secondly, when you have been number one in a system for a long time, you become lazy. You don’t study. You don’t have as good education as you should have. You bring up people to high levels who have not read books, because we can get away with everything. We are so strong militarily. And when that happens, you know, it’s a slippery slope and you are actually on board the Titanic.

This is not a defense of everything Russia does. What I’m

trying to say is there is a partner over there, by the way they call us partners in the West. We call them anything else but partners. We don't even see them. We don't listen to their interests. We didn't listen to Putin when he spoke at the Munich conference in 2007 and said, 'You have cheated us.' And of course, when Gorbachev, 90 years old, says, you have cheated us, he's not even quoted in the Western world, because there's no space anymore for other views than our own. You know, this autism that is now classical in the Western security policy elite is damn dangerous.

Michelle Rasmussen: I want to just ask you shortly about the third lie, and then we'll get into what you see as the solution. The third lie you, you pointed out, was that "NATO always has an open door to new members. It never tries to invite or drag them in does not seek expansion. It just happens because Eastern European countries since 1989 to 1990 have wanted to join without any pressure from NATO's side, and this also applies to Ukraine." And in this section, you also document that Putin actually asked for Russia to join NATO. Can you shortly, please explain your most important point about this third lie?

Jan Oberg: Yeah, well, it's already there since you quoted my text, but the fascinating thing is that you have not had a referendum in any of these new member states. The fascinating thing is, in 2014, when this whole NATO membership came to its first conflictual situation in the case of Ukraine, there was not a majority, according to any opinion poll in Ukraine. There was not a majority. And I would say it's not a matter of 51%. If a country is going to join NATO, it should be at least 75 or 80% of the people saying yes to that. Third, and it's not something I've invented, it is NATO's former secretary general Robertson, who has told the story. I think it was first released in the Guardian, but it's also in a long podcast from a place I don't remember, which the Guardian quotes. He says that he was asked by Putin whether, or at what

time, or whatever the formulation was, NATO would accept Russia as a member.

This probably goes back to what you had already quoted Wörner, the NATO secretary general for having said, namely that a new security structure in Europe would, by necessity, have some kind of involvement, in a direct sense, of Russia, because Russia is also Europe.

And that was what Gorbachev had as an idea that the new [common] European home, something like a security structure where we could deal with our conflicts or differences or misunderstandings, and we could still be friends in the larger Europe.

And that was why I argued at the time thirty years ago that with the demise of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact, the only reasonable thing was to close down NATO. And instead, as I said with Clinton and onwards, the whole interpretation was we have won. The Western system, the neoliberal democratic NATO system has won. We have nothing to learn from that. There's nothing to change now. We just expand even more.

And the first thing NATO did, as you know, was a completely illegal. Also, according to its own charter, the invasion, involvement and bombing in Yugoslavia, Yugoslavia was not a member. Had never been a member of NATO, and NATO's only mission is paragraph five, which says that we are one for all and all for one. We are going to support some member, if the member is attacked. Now, it had nothing to do in Yugoslavia. That happened in 1991 and onwards, all the nineties. And you remember the bombings and 72 two days of bombings in Kosovo and Serbia. And it's nothing to do – and there was no UN mandate for it. But it was a triumphalist interpretation. We can now get away with everything, anything we want. We can do it because there's no Russia to take into account. Russia could not do anything about it. China could not do anything about it at the time.

And so, you get into hubris and an inability to see your own limitations, and that is what we are coming up to now. We are seeing the boomerang coming back to NATO, the western world for these things. And then, of course, some idiots will sit somewhere and say, Jan Oberg is pro-Russia. No, I'm trying to stick to what I happen to remember happened at the time. I'm old enough to remember what was said to Gorbachev in those days when the Wall came down and all these things changed fundamentally.

I was not optimistic that NATO would adapt to that situation, but there was hope at that time. There's no hope today for this, because if you could change, you would have changed long ago. So the prediction I make is the United States empire, NATO, will fall apart at some point. The question is how, how dangerous, and how violent that process will be, because it's not able to conduct reforms or change itself fundamentally into something else, such as a common security organization for Europe.

Michelle Rasmussen: Well, I actually wanted to ask you now about the solutions, because you've been a peace researcher for many decades. What what would it take to peacefully resolve the immediate crisis? And secondly, how can we create the basis for peaceful world in the future? You mentioned the idea that you had 30 years ago for dismembering NATO and the founder and international chairman of the Schiller Institute, Helga Zepp-LaRouche, has now called for establishing a new security architecture, which would take the interests of all countries, including Russia, into account. So how could we solve the immediate crisis? If there were the political will, what would have to change among the parties? And secondly, what needs to be done in terms of long term peaceful cooperation?

Jan Oberg: Well, first of all, the question you are raising is a little bit like the seventh doctor who is trying to operate on a patient who is bleeding to death and then saying, "What

should we do now?” What I have suggested over 30 years is something that should have been done to avoid the situation today, and nobody listened, as is clear, because you don’t listen to researchers anymore who say something else that state-financed researchers do. So it’s not an easy question you are raising, of course. I would say, of course, in the immediate situation, the Minsk agreements, which have not been upheld, particularly by Ukraine in establishing some kind of autonomy for the Donbass area. Now that is something we could work with, autonomous solutions. We could work with confederations, we could work with cantonization, if you will. Lots of what happened, and happens, in the eastern republics of Ukraine. It reminds me of a country I know very well, and partly educated in and worked in during the dissolution, namely Yugoslavia. So much so that it resembles Granica. Ukraine and Granica in Croatia, both mean border areas. Granica means border, and there’s so much that could have been a transfered of knowledge and wisdom and lessons learned, had we had a United Nations mission in that part. A peacekeeping mission, a monitoring mission. UN police and U.N. civil affairs in the Donbas region.

If I remember correctly, Putin is the only one who suggested that at some point. I don’t think he presented it as a big proposal to the world, but in an interview he said that was something he could think of. I wrote in 2014, why on earth has nobody even suggested that the United Nations, the world’s most competent organization in handling conflicts, and, if you will, put a lid on the military affairs, for instance, by disarming the parties on all sides, which they did in eastern and western Slovonia, in Croatia. Why has that not been suggested? Because the western world has driven the United Nations out to the periphery of international politics..

I’ve said Minsk. I’ve said the UN. I’ve said some kind of internal reforms in Ukraine. I have said, and I would insist on it, NATO must stop its expansion. NATO cannot take the

risk, on behalf of Europe, and the world, to say we insist on continuing with giving weapons to, and finally making Ukraine a NATO member. You can ask Kissinger, you can ask Brzezinski, you can take the most, if you will, right wing hawkish politicians in the West. They've all said neutrality like Finland or Switzerland, or something like that, is the only viable option.

And is that to be pro-Russian? No, that needs to be pro-Western. Because I am just looking like so many others, fortunately, have done at the Cuban Missile Crisis. What would the United States – how would it have reacted, if Russia had a huge military alliance and tried to get Canada or Mexico to become members with long-range weapons standing a few kilometers from the U.S. border?

Do you think the US would have said, "Oh, they were all freely deciding to, so we think it's OK." Look at what they did during the Cuban Missile Crisis. They could not accept weapon stations in Cuba.

So, one of the things you have to ask yourself about is there one rule and one set of interests for the Western world that does not apply to other actors? If you want to avoid Russia invading Ukraine, which all this nonsense is about repeatedly now for two or three months. Look into a new status where the East and the West and Ukraine, all of it, can sit down and discuss security guarantees for Ukraine.

President Zelensky has said it quite nicely, I must say. If you don't want us to become members of NATO, and he says that to the West, because he feels that it has taken a long time for the West to act, and he last said that at the Munich Security Conference, I think yesterday or two days ago, by the way, interestingly a man whose country is going to be invaded any moment, leaves the country and goes to a conference to speak which he could have done on Zoom.

I mean, the whole thing doesn't make sense, like it didn't make sense, was it on the 18th or 17th when all the West said that they're going to invade Ukraine, and the Russian defense minister was sitting in Damascus and Putin was receiving Bolsonaro. I mean, don't they have intelligence anymore in NATO and Washington?

So long story short, sit down and give Ukraine the guarantees and non-aggression pact with both sides or all sides, clearly limited non-nuclear defensive defense measures along the borders, or whatever, integration in whatever eastern and Western economic organizations.

And I would be happy to see them as part of the Belt and Road Initiative with economic opportunities. There is so much Ukraine could do if it could get out of the role of being a victim, and squeezed between the two sides all the time. And that can only be done if you elevate the issue to a higher level, in which Ukraine's different peoples and different parts and parties are allowed to speak up about what future they want to have in their very specific situation that Ukraine is in. It is not any country in in Europe. It's a poor country. It's a country that has a specific history. It's a country which is very complex, complex ethnically, language wise, historically, etc.

And that's why I started out saying confederation. I said something like a Switzerland model, something like Cantonization, or whatever, but for Christ's sake, give that country and its people a security, a good feeling that nobody's going to encroach upon you..

And that is to me, the the schwerpunkt [main emphasis], the absolutely essential, that is to give the Ukraine people a feeling of security and safety and stability and peace so that they can develop. I find it very interesting that President Zelensky, in this very long interview to the international press a couple of weeks ago, say I'm paraphrasing it. But he

says “I’m tired of all these people who say that we are going to be invaded because it destroys our economy. People are leaving. No business is coming in, right?”

Who are we to do this damage to Ukraine and then want it to become a member of NATO? You know, the whole thing is recklessly irresponsible, in my view, particularly with a view of Ukraine and its peoples and their needs.

So I would put that in focus, and then put in a huge UN peacekeeping mission and continue and expand the excellent OSCE mission. Put the international communit, good hearted, neutral people down there and diffuse those who have only one eyesight, only one view of all this. They are the dangerous people.

Michelle Rasmussen: And what about the more long-term idea of a new security architecture in general?

Jan Oberg: Oh, I would build a kind of, I wouldn’t say copy of, but I would I would build something inspired by the United Nations Security Council. All Europe, representatives for all countries, including NGOs, and not just government representatives. I would have an early warning mechanism where the moment there is something like a conflict coming up, we would have reporters and we would have investigations we would look into, not conflict prevention.

My goodness, people don’t read books. There’s nothing about conflict prevention. We should prevent violence. We should prevent violent conflict, but preventing conflicts is nonsense, life is getting richer. There’s not a family, there’s not a school, there’s not a workplace, there’s not a political party, there’s not a parliament in which there are no conflicts. Conflict is what life is made of. Conflict is terribly important because it makes us change and reflect. I’m all for conflicts, and I’m one hundred and ten percent against violence. But people will say “Conflict prevention is

something we should work, on and educate people in." Nonsense from people who never read books, as I said.

So I would look for something like common security. The good old Palme Commission from the eighties, which built on defensive defense. The idea that we all have a right, according to Article 51, in the UN Charter. Everybody has a right to self-defense.

But we do not have a right to missiles that can go 4,000 km or 8,000 kilometres and kill millions of people far away. Get rid of nuclear weapons and all these things. It has nothing to do with defensiveness and common security, and I say that wherever I go and whoever I speak to. Get rid of nuclear weapons and offensive long range weapons.

The only legitimate weapons there are in this world are defensive ones, and they are defined by two things. Short distance, ability to go only over a short distance, such as helicopters instead of fighter airplanes or missiles.

And second, limited destructive capacity because they're going to be used on your own territory in case somebody encroaches or invades you. But nobody wants to have nuclear weapons or totally super destructive weapons on their own territory because they don't want them to be used to there. So just ask yourself, what would you like in Country X, Y and Z to be defended with? And that's a definition of a defensive weapons. If we all had only defensive military structures, there would be very few wars, but they would also not be a military-industrial-media-academic complex that earns the money on this.

The whole thing here that the big elephant in the room we are talking about is, well, there are two of them, is NATO expansion, which we should never have done this way. And secondly, it's the interest of the military-industrial-media-academic complex, as I call it, that earns a hell of a lot of

money on people's suffering, and millions of people who, at this moment while we speak, are living in fear and despair because of what they see in the media is going to happen. None of what we see at this moment was necessary. It's all made up by elites who have an interest in these kinds of things happening or the threat of the Cold War. And even if we avoid a big war now, and I hope, I don't pray to anything, but I hope very much that we do, thanks to some people's wisdom, and it's going to be very cold in Europe in the future after this.

Look at the demonization that the West has done again against Russia, and to a certain extent, of Ukraine. This is not psychologically something that will be repaired in two weeks.

Michelle Rasmussen: Yeah, and also, as you mentioned at the beginning, it has also something to do with the unwillingness in part of certain of the Western elites to accept that we do not have an Anglo-American unipolar world, but that there are other countries that need to be listened to and respected.

Jan Oberg: Yeah, and you might add, what the West gets out of this is that Russia and China will get closer and closer. You are already seeing the common declaration. We will have friendship eternally. And that's between two countries who up to the sixties at some point were very strong enemies. And the same will go with Iran, and there would be other countries like Serbia which are turning away from the West. We're going to sit and be isolating ourselves because, one, we cannot bully the world anymore, as we could before in the West. And secondly, nobody wants to be bullied anymore. We have to live in a world in which there are different systems. This Christian missionary idea that everybody must become like us. We opened up to China because then we hope they would become liberal democracies with many parties, and the parliament is awfully naïve. And time is over for that kind of thinking.

Michelle Rasmussen: I want to go into the other two subjects. Firstly, the question of the negotiations between Denmark and

the United States in the context of the political, military and media statements of recent years alleging that Russia has aggressive intentions against Europe and the U.S. the Danish Social Democratic government announced on February 10th that a year ago, the U.S. requested negotiations on a Defense Cooperation Agreement, and that Denmark was now ready to start these negotiations. The government announced that it could mean permanent stationing of U.S. troops and armaments on Danish soil. And if so, this would be against the decades-long policy of the Danish government not to allow foreign troops or armaments permanently stationed in Denmark. And you wrote an article two days later criticizing these negotiations. Why are you against this?

Jan Oberg: I'm against it because it's a break of 70 years of sensible policies. We do not accept foreign weapons and we do not accept foreign troops, and we do not accept nuclear weapons stationed on Danish soil. I sat, for ten years, all throughout the 1980s, in the Danish Governments Commission for Security and Disarmament as an expert. Nobody in the 80s would have mentioned anything like this. I guess the whole thing is something that had begun to go mad around 20 years ago, when Denmark engaged and became a bomber nation for the first time in Yugoslavia. And then Afghanistan and Iraq, and it means that you cannot say no. This is an offer you can't refuse. You can't refuse it, among other things, it's my interpretation, because you remember the story where President Trump suggested that he or the U.S. could buy Greenland, and the prime minister Mette Frederiksen said, 'Well, that is not something to be discussed. The question is absurd,' after which he got very angry. He got personally very angry, and he said, 'It's not a matter of speaking to me. You're speaking to the United States of America.' And I think this offer to begin negotiations must have come relatively shortly after that, as 'This offer is not something you should call absurd once again.' I've no evidence for that. But if these negotiations started more than a year ago, we are back in the Trump

administration.

And secondly, what kind of democracy is that? We do not know what that letter in which the Americans asked to have negotiations about this, when it was written and what the content of it was. But what we hear is that a little more than a year ago, we began some negotiations about this whole thing, that is behind the back of the parliament, and behind the back of the people, and then is presented more or less as a fait accompli. There will be an agreement. The question is only nitty-gritty, what will be in it.

In terms of substance, there is no doubt that any place where there would be American facilities based in sites, so whenever you'd call it, weapon stored will be the first targets in a war, seen as such in a war, under the best circumstances, seen by Russia. Russia's first targets will be to eliminate the Americans everywhere they can in Europe, because those are the strongest and most dangerous forces.

Secondly, it is not true that there is a no to nuclear weapons in other senses than Denmark will keep up the principle that we will not have them stationed permanently. But with such an agreement where the Air Force, Navy and soldiers, military, shall more frequently work with, come in to visit, etc., there's no doubt that there will be more nuclear weapons coming into, for instance, on American vessels than before, because the cooperation would be closer and closer.

Jan Oberg: And there the only thing the Danish government will do is, since they know that the "neither confirm nor deny policy" of the U.S., they would not even ask the question. If they are asked by journalists, they would say, "Well, we take for granted that the Americans honor or understand and respect that we will not have nuclear weapons on Danish territory, sea territory, or whatever. Now the Americans are violating that in Japan even. So, this is this is nonsense. There would be more nuclear weapons. I'm not saying they would go off or

anything like that. I'm just saying there would be more undermining of Danish principles.

And then the whole thing, of course, has to do with the fact that Denmark is placing itself – and that was something the present government under Mette Frederiksen's leadership did before this was made public – is to put 110 percent of your eggs in the U.S. basket. This is the most foolish thing you can do, given the world change. The best thing a small country can do is to uphold international law and the UN. Denmark doesn't. It speaks like the U.S. for an international rules-based order, which is the opposite of, or very far away from the international law.

And secondly, in a world where you are going to want multipolarity, a stronger Asia, stronger Africa, another Russia from the one we have known the last 30 years, etc., and a United States that is, on all indicators except the military, declining and will fall as the world leader. This is, in my view, be careful with my words, the most foolish thing you can do at the moment, if you are a leader of Denmark, or if you leading the Danish security politics. You should be open – I wrote an article about that in a small Danish book some six or seven years ago, and said "Walk on two legs." Remain friendly with the United States and NATO, and all that, but develop your other leg, so you can walk on two legs in the next 20, 30, 40 years. But there's nobody that thinks so long term in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and there's nobody who thinks independently anymore in research institutes or ministries. It's basically adapting to everything we think, or are told by Washington we should do. And that's not foreign policy to me. There's nothing to do with it.

Jan Oberg: A good foreign policy is one where you have a good capacity to analyze the world, do scenarios, discuss which way to go, pros and contras, and different types of futures, and then make this decision in your parliament based on a public

discussion. That was what we did early, 60s, 70s and 80s. And then also when you become a bomber nation, when you become a militaristic one, when active foreign policy means nothing but militarily active, then, of course, you are getting closer and closer and closer down into the into the darkness of the hole, where suddenly you fall so deeply you cannot see the daylight, where the hole is. I think it's very sad. I find it tragic. I find it very dangerous. I find that Denmark will be a much less free country in the future by doing these kinds of things. And, don't look at the basis of this agreement as an isolated thing. It comes with all the things we've done, all the wars Denmark has participated in. Sorry, I said we, I don't feel Danish anymore, so I should say Denmark or the Danes. And finally, I have a problem with democratically elected leaders who seem to be more loyal to a foreign government, than with their own people's needs.

China and Xinjiang

Michelle Rasmussen: The last question is that, you just mentioned the lack of independence of analysis, and there's not only an enemy image being painted against Russia, but also against China, with allegations of central government genocide against the Muslim Uyghur minority in Xinjiang province as a major point of contention. And on March 8th, 2021, the Newlines Institute for Strategy and Policy in Washington published a report The Uyghur Genocide, an examination of China's breaches of the 1948 Genocide Convention in cooperation with the Raoul Wallenberg Center for Human Rights in Montreal, and the next month, April 27, last year, you and two others issued a report which criticized this report. What is the basis of your criticism and what do you think should be done to lessen tension with China?

And also as a wrap-up question in the end, if you wanted to say anything else about what has to be done to make a change from looking at Russia and China as the autocratic enemies of the West, and to, instead, shift to a world in which there is

cooperation between the major powers, which would give us the possibility of concentrating on such great task as economic development of the poorer parts of the world?

Jan Oberg: Well, of course, that's something we could speak another hour about, but what we did in our in our tiny think tank here, which, by the way, is totally independent and people-financed and all volunteer. That's why we can say and do what we think should be said and done and not politically in anybody's hands or pockets, is that those reports, including the Newlines Institute's report, does not hold water, would not pass as a paper for a master's degree in social science or political science. We say that if you look into not only that report, but several other reports and researchers who were contributing to this genocide discussion, if you look into their work, they are very often related to the military-industrial-media-academic complex. And they are paid for, have formerly had positions somewhere else in that system, or are known for having hawkish views on China, Russia and everybody else outside the western sphere.

So when we began to look into this, we also began to see a trend. And that's why we published shortly after a 150 page report about the new Cold War on China, and Xinjiang is part of a much larger orchestrated – and I'm not a conspiracy theorist. It's all documented, in contrast to media and other research reports. It's documented. You can see where we get our knowledge from, and on which basis we draw conclusions.

Whereas now, significantly, for Western scholarship and media, they don't deal with, are not interested in sources. I'll come back to that. It's part of a much larger, only tell negative stories about China. Don't be interested in China's new social model. Don't be interested in how they, in 30 to 40 years did what nobody else in humankind has ever done. Uplifting hundreds of millions of people out of poverty and creating a society that I can see the difference from, because I visited China in 1983, and I know what it looked like back then when

they had just opened up, so to speak.

And what we are saying is not that we know what happened and happens in Xinjiang, because we've not been there and we are not a human rights organization. We are conflict resolution and peace proposal making policy think tank. But what we do say is, if you cannot come up with better arguments and more decent documentation, then probably you are not honest. If there's nothing more you can show us to prove that there's a genocide going on at Xinjiang, you should perhaps do your homework before you make these assertions and accusations.

That's what we are saying, and we are also saying that it is peculiar that the last thing Mike Pompeo, Trump's secretary of state, did in his office, I think on the 19th of January last year, was to say I hereby declare that Xinjiang is a genocide, and the State Department has still not published as much as one A4 page with the documentation.

So, I feel sad on a completely different level, and that is, Western scholarship is disappearing in this field. And those who may really have different views, analyses and question what we hear or uphold a plurality of viewpoints and interpretations of the world, we're not listened to. I mean, I'm listening to elsewhere, but I'm not listened to in Western media, although I have forty five years of experience in these things and I've traveled quite a lot and worked in quite a lot of conflict and war zones. I can live with that, but I think it's a pity for the Western world that we are now so far down the drain, that good scholarship is not what politics built on anymore. If it, I think it was at a point in time.

So what is also striking to me is, very quickly, the uniformity of the press. They have all written the day that the Newsline report that you referred to, was published, it was all over the place, including front pages of the leading Western newspapers, including the Danish Broadcasting's website, etc., all saying the same thing, quoting the same

bits of parts from it.

The uniformity of this is just mind boggling. How come that nobody said, “Hey, what is this Newlines Institute, by the way, that nobody had heard about before? Who are these people behind it? Who are the authors?” Anybody can sit on their chair and do quite a lot of research, which was impossible to do 20 years ago. If you are curious, if you are asked to be curious, if you are permitted to be curious, and do research in the media, in the editorial office where you are sitting, then you would find out lots of this here is B.S. Sorry to say so, intellectually, it’s B.S.

And so I made a little pastime, I wrote a very diplomatic letter to people at CNN, BBC, Reuters, etc. Danish and Norwegian, and Swedish media, those who write this opinion journalism about Xinjiang, and a couple of other things, and I sent the all our report, which is online, so it’s just a link, and I said kindly read this one, and I look forward to hearing from you. I’ve done this in about 50 or 60 cases, individually dug up their email addresses, et cetera. There is not one who has responded with anything. The strategy when you lie, or when you deceive, or when you have a political man, is don’t go into any dialogue with somebody who knows more or it’s critical of what you do.

That’s very sad. Our TFF Pressinfo goes to 20 people in BBC. They know everything we write about Ukraine, about China, about Xinjiang, et cetera. Not one has ever called.

These are the kinds of things that make me scared as an intellectual. One thing is what happens out in the world. That’s bad enough. But when I begin to find out how this is going on, how it is manipulated internally in editorial offices, close to foreign ministries, etc. or defense ministries is then I say, we are approaching the Pravda moment. The Pravda moment is not the present Pravda [newspaper], but the Pravda that went down with the Soviet

Union. When I visited Russia, the Soviet Union at a time for conferences, et cetera, and I found out that very few people believed anything they saw in the media. Now, to me, it's a question of whether the Western media, so-called free media want to save themselves or they want to become totally irrelevant, because at some point, as someone once said, you cannot lie all the time to all of the people, you may get away with lying to some, to some people, for some of the time.

Michelle Rasmussen: President Lincoln

Jan Oberg: Yeah. So the long story short is this is not good. This deceives people. And of course, some people, at some point, people will be very upset about that. They have been lied to. And also don't make this reference anymore to free and state media. Viewers may like to hear that may not like it, but should know it, the US has just passed a law – They have three laws against China – How to intervene in all kinds of Chinese things, such as, for instance, trying to influence who will become the successor to Dalai Lama, and things like that. They are not finished at all about how to influence Taiwan, and all that, things they have nothing to do with, and which they decided between Nixon and Zhou Enlai that America accepted the One-China policy and would not mix themselves into Taiwanese issues. But that is another broken promise. These media are state media in the U.S. If you take Radio Free Europe and Radio Free Asia, they are those, particularly the latter, who have disseminated most of these Xinjiang genocide stories, which then bounce back to BBC, etc. These are state media. As an agency for that in in Washington, it's financed by millions of dollars, of course, and it has the mandate to make American foreign policy more understood, and promote U.S. foreign policy goals and views. Anybody can go to a website and see this. Again, I'm back to this, everybody can do what I've done. And that law that has just been passed says the U.S. sets aside 15 hundred million dollars, that's one point five billion dollars in the next five years, to support

education, training courses, whatever, for media people to write negative stories about China, particularly the Belt and Road Initiative. Now I look forward to Politiken [Danish newspaper] or Dagens Nyheter [Swedish newspaper] or whatever newspapers in the allied countries who would say, “This comes from a state U.S. media” when it does.

And so, my my view is there is a reason for calling it the military-industrial-media-academic complex, because it’s one cluster of elites who are now running the deception, but also the wars that are built on deception. And that is very sad where, instead, we should cooperate. I would not even say we should morally cooperate. I would say we have no choice on this Earth but to cooperate, because if we have a new Cold War between China and the West, we cannot solve humanity’s problems, whether it’s the climate issue, environmental issues, it’s poverty, it’s justice, income differences or cleavages, or modern technological problems or whatever. You take all these things, they are, by definition, global. And if we have one former empire, soon former empire, that does nothing but disseminate negative energy, criticize, demonize, running cold wars, basically isolating itself and going down.

We lack America to do good things. I’ve never been anti-American, I want to say that very clearly. I’ve never, ever been anti-American. I’m anti empire and militarism. And we need the United States, with its creativity, with its possibilities, with what it already has given the world, to also contribute constructively to a better world, together with the Russians, together with Europe, together with Africa, together with everybody else, and China, and stop this idea that we can only work with those who are like us, because if that’s what you want to do, you will have fewer and fewer to work with.

The world is going towards diversity. And we have other cultures coming up who have other ways of doing things, and we may like it or not. But the beauty of conflict resolution and

peace is to do it with those who are different from you. It is not to make peace with those who already love, or are already completely identical with. This whole thing is, unfortunately, a conflict and peace illiteracy that has now completely overtaken the western world. Whereas I see people thinking about peace. I hear people mentioning the word peace. I do not hear Western politicians or media anymore mention the word peace. And when that word is not, and the discussion and the discourse has disappeared about peace, we are very far out.

Combine that with lack of intellectualism and an analytical capacity, and you will end up in militarism and war. You cannot forget these things, and then avoid a war. So in my view, there are other reasons than Russia, if you will, that we're in a dangerous situation, and that the danger has to do with the West operating, itself, at the moment. Nobody in the world is threatening the United States or the West. If it goes down, it's all of its own making. And I think that's an important thing to say in these days when we always blame somebody else for our problems. That is not the truth.

Michelle Rasmussen: Thank you so much, Jan.