

# **Li Xing, PhD: Kinesiske forslag til en ny sikkerheds- og udviklingsarkitektur: Xi Jinpings forslag fra april om en ny international sikkerhedsarkitektur, Bælte- og Vej-Initiativet og det Globale Udviklingsinitiativ**

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Li Xings tale begynder 1 time 43 min. inde i videoen.

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Ordstyrer Michelle Rasmussen: Next, we have Li Xing who is the director of the Research Center on Development and International Relations at Aalborg University in Denmark. He has a PhD in that subject. He is a professor in the Department of Politics and Society and the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, as well as being an author. The word is yours.

Li Xing: First of all, I want to thank you, Michelle, and thank the Schiller Institute in Denmark for inviting me to be part of this seminar. I really learned a lot from the previous speaker's analyses, especially from Helga, Jens Jørgen Nielsen and Jan Øberg. They are much bigger experts on the Ukraine case than I. I will try to provide a perspective from the Chinese point of view. I remember that Jens started by talking about his becoming old and the historical evolution of his experience.

The same with me. When I came to Denmark, I was 25 years old, and now I can see my hair growing grey. At that time, it was in the eighties, China was in the process of economic reform, the very early stage. China was very poor, measured by any dimension, but today, China is much more advanced, much more developed, and has achieved great success in all dimensions. Somehow things have changed.

Speaker2: At that time, 40 years ago, nobody regarded China as a threat. But, today, you can see waves of Western media demonizing China, defaming China. So, I'm am thinking, what's wrong with that? There must be something changing, because China's power was making the West very afraid, or for other reasons. But Helga has contributed a large amount of analysis.

The topic of today is about the international security order. It's very important to me, because I'm a professor of international relations. I really think this topic is extremely important and actual.

First of all, I want to speak about China's position on the

Ukrainian war. Major Western media describe China's position as awkward. Perhaps it appears to be very awkward, indeed. According to my interpretation, the Chinese position on Ukraine war can be interpreted as a coin consisting of two sides. On the one side, it is about sovereignty, about territorial integrity. Of course, the war affects Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

But on the other side of the coin, it is exactly what Helga and Jens Jørgen talked about. What are the factors that triggered Russia's behavior? Did Russia's action represent the American style of pre-emptive self-defense? Because during the anti-terrorism wars, American used preemptive strikes, preemptive self-defense as an argument, as a kind of defense for its war policy. So, we have to understand why China's position is described as being awkward.

And we should not forget that just before the war, China and Russia had a joint statement where both sides actually declared, very clearly, that they are going to support each other, in respect to each other's national security concerns. For Russia, it is the Ukrainian crisis, and for China, it is the Taiwan issue. Both sides also agreed that NATO's enlargement is regarded as encircling Russia, which is a security concern for Russia. And both countries opposed a U.S.-led military camp or security camp in the Asian Pacific, as well. You can say that the Chinese position consists of two aspects, but is more sympathetic to the Russian side. This is my interpretation.

I also think that Helga's explanation about the flaw of the current security structure, which she calls geopolitics, which means that a bloc of nations tries to define, or has defined, their interests against another bloc of nations – It means that when you form blocs, you feel secure, but you make the opponent, on the other side, feel insecure. This is the dilemma.

And actually, I think that Helga's point of view is quite echoed by Chinese President Xi Jinping's understanding of the flaw of the national security order today, and what Xi Jinping, in a recent conference, called a block-based security structure. He also called it group politics, block confrontation, small cycles. You can see that both Helga's and Xi Jinping's understanding of the flaw of the security architecture today is quite similar.

If I want to offer a deep analysis, what is, exactly, wrong with the current security structure? That is, if you look at the left side, you have NATO, and you can see NATO enlargement throughout this historical period since the 1990s. Now we are talking about Finland and Sweden, and now Denmark will vote on whether to join a European army, a kind of independent security body, but more or less, it's also within the same structure of NATO. It is group politics, block politics.

On the right side, you can see that we have other types of block-based security structures: The Five Eyes [intelligence alliance of Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States.] Within the Five Eyes is AUKUS with three countries: the UK, Australia, the United States, which forms an even smaller group. Perhaps they think that Canada and New Zealand are not strong enough to resist China. Maybe they are not trusted. These three countries form an even smaller circle.

Then there is the Quad: India, the U.S., Japan, Australia. There is the Indo-Pacific Security Dialogue. Biden was in South Korea a couple days ago, and people begin to talk about whether South Korea should be part of the Quad.

These are multilateral, but then there are also bilateral blocs. There is Japan-U.S., or South Korea-U.S. There is also Australia-U.S. All these are surrounding China, trying to contain China in one way or another.

The key problem of this type of security structure is what we call the security dilemma spiral, which means that countries can begin to be destructive against each other. If country A acts on something, then country B will strengthen its capacity to counteract country A. Then country A is confirmed by country B's action. Then country A needs to further invest in military means. This is a kind of dilemma spiral, which is very destructive. The previous speakers have already explained that.

I'm a professor of international relations, and many people in this audience understand the idea of an international order. When we talk about the international order, we start with the Treaty of Westphalia, and Helga also mentioned the Treaty of Westphalia from 1648. The Westphalian Conference, or the "Westphalian order" was regarded as the first international order, a rule-based order based on two major principles: state sovereignty and territorial integrity.

These two major principles were also written into the United Nations Charter. After the Second World War, when the United States, or allied countries, established the United Nations, together with the Bretton Woods system, the United Nation's charter includes these two basic principles.

Unfortunately, after the Cold War, with the U.S. leading the West, they felt extremely excited. They became totally embedded in this triumphalism mentality, and this kind of mentality was theorized, or conceptualized, by Francis Fukuyama, the American political scientist, as "the end of history." Now the West should decide. There are no alternatives. The American-style liberal democracy, and liberal capitalism is the only way. And so, the US and the West don't care about the Westphalian order. It is not important. We see what is happening. We have the Yugoslavia bombing, or the Iraq war, color revolutions: the Orange Revolution, Tulip Revolution, Rose Revolution, all these revolutions. Where are the basic principles of the

international order: sovereignty and territorial integrity? No. These are typical intervention-based revolutions.

Now I'm feeling extremely puzzled. Now, regarding the Ukraine war, every European country, every Western country talks about sovereignty, sovereignty, territorial integrity. I'm thinking, how about those revolutions, and interventionism? I remember that during all these color revolutions, one of the arguments was that if state leaders are not capable, if they do not comply with Western standards of democracy and human rights, they should be removed. That's the same logic that maybe in Putin's mind, that if I feel that the Ukraine is creating a security dilemma for me, I'm going to remove it. Is this a double standard?

Now we are moving into the future world order. What will be the world order? I think there will be a multi-order work. This is one of the projects I'm involved in, and we have gotten funding to theorize about the future world order, which will be a multi-order, not one world order with different poles, but a multi-order, i.e, groups of countries aligned with one big power along cultural, identity, and historic lines. Is that the world that we are going to see? I don't know.

I need to emphasize what the solution is from China's perspective. President Xi Jinping made a speech at the Boao Forum for Asia on April 28-27, where he emphasized a few key points as part of his Global Security Initiative. He pointed out the importance of common, comprehensive, cooperative, sustainable security because broad-based security is not sustainable. He also pointed out that block-based NATO is a product of the Cold War. We should abandon the Cold War mentality. We should oppose unilateralism, and oppose group politics, and work towards peaceful settlement of crises.

And we should reject the double standard. I just pointed out double standards. And also, we should oppose unilateral

sanctions. The demonization of Russia is one issue, and the sanctions against Russia is another issue, because there are no U.N.-authorized sanctions. It is the EU's or the West's own sanctions. And the Chinese and Xi Jinping also made the point that non-interference in internal affairs is one of the principles. I remember Jan Øberg talked about the five principles of peaceful coexistence, and this is one of the principles.

China proposed that we must build a balanced, effective, sustainable security architecture.

Jan and Helga just talked about development, and that we must work together on this. The Chinese concept, if I understand it correctly, is that there must be a strong nexus between security and development. The security concept, in essence, is to rise above one-sided security, and seek common security through mutually beneficial cooperation. It is a concept established on the basis of common interests, and is conducive to social progress.

The Chinese perception is that there is no development without security, and there is no security without development either. It is both ways. China sees economic exchange interaction as an important avenue. Broadly speaking, security and development are intertwined. They cannot be separated.

If you look at China's international relations, the majority, and the key characteristics of China's external relations are economics and trade. Very little based on security issues. For example, China's One Belt, One Road, [the Belt and Road Initiative] which Helga also mentioned. If you look at the One Belt, One Road vis-à-vis the U.S.-based Indo-Pacific strategy, it is totally different. China's One Belt, One Road is focused on transportation, infrastructure, trade, investment, energy, etc. Whereas the Indo-Pacific strategy comprising four countries: India, the U.S. Japan and Australia, is about security, military and defense. Biden has a summit today with ASEAN leaders, and it is obvious that the ASEAN leaders refuse

to choose sides, because China is their largest economic partner. Australia has a new government. Let's wait and see whether Australia is going to change the policy positions.

The Belt and Road focuses on connectivity. I remember that Jens Jørgen, Jan or Helga talked about connectivity. It is extremely important. And now, China is building high speed trains in Southeast Asia, and perhaps it will spread further later on. Now in Asia, we have the largest trading bloc called (ASIF?). If you look at the the statistics, you can see that it is the biggest economic bloc, which means a free trade zone. These are China's ambitions. These are China's vision and goals. Economic development, economic change, trade.

Today, the result is very clear. China is the largest economic partner of 128 countries out of 190, ironically, including our allies, including the U.S.'s close allies that are against China.. If you look at ASEAN, China is their largest economic partner. If you look at Africa, Latin America, even the European Union today, China is the European Union's largest trading partner. Even the Quad, a kind of security alliance against China. Every country within the Quad has China as its largest economic partner. This is the dilemma today. So, if you want to talk about economic decoupling? I don't think it's so easy.

The conclusion, now, is that economic development and security are intertwined and they are also embedded. The existing international architecture, security architecture, puts too much emphasis on the military dimension. Unless the world prioritizes relieving global poverty and development, long term security can remain elusive.

The war in Ukraine generates arms spending in Europe, and undermines development aid to the world's poorest countries. Now European countries are beginning to increase their arms spending, and also increase spending on refugees in Europe, which implies that they will even be cutting in aid to the

poorest countries. Look at the United States military budget – 813 billion this year under the Biden administration. The United States's international aid is only 4% of its military spending.

I don't think the world will be peaceful without economic development. The conclusion is that economic development, by far, is the best form of conflict prevention and conflict resolution. I think that China is fighting to get the world to move towards that position.

I know that China is not perfect. There are a lot of problems, a lot of mistakes, a lot of weaknesses, which we can discuss. But the major direction China is fighting for, I think is optimal, is conducive to world peace.

Thank you for listening.