

# CGTN

## CGTN / The Big Picture President Xi Jinping Thought and Philosophy Robert Lawrence Kuhn October 16, 2017

RLK: To appreciate General Secretary Xi Jinping's thought, ways of thinking and overall philosophy - both as they affect individual Chinese and the national China collective, you have to look at what Xi has proposed, and those are four different categories. The first is a kind of an overall categorization called the 5-in-1 and it lists the categories: economic, political, cultural, social, and ecological. Second, and this is very important, is Xi's governance philosophy - called the 'Four Comprehensives': moderately prosperous society, strengthening reform, strengthening rule of law, and strengthening governing the party. Third is about economics, the five major development principles, which are innovation, coordination, green, open, and sharing. And the fourth is internationally based and President Xi has had a grand vision of a new kind of global governance in China, big power relationships, win-win cooperation, multilateralism, and others - a series of different directives.



**RLK: I can exemplify many by the Belt and Road Initiative. China has been proactive in its diplomacy, a dramatic shift. China has had a new kind of inflection point, not reacting to what other countries are doing, but beginning to set the agenda for the world. So now this category of overarching, governance, economics, and international – those are the categories that hold Xi’s systematic way of thinking. We don’t have a lot of time so I’d like to focus on the governance speech: the Four Comprehensions because you look at each one of them: moderately prosperous society, reform, rule of law, and governing the party. They’ve all been used in the past by previous generations – these are not individually unique. What is unique is systematically bringing them together and then looking at it from a comprehensive point of view. What does that mean.?**



**RLK: The moderately prosperous society was proposed in 2002 and recently it called for doubling the GDP per capita of 2010 by 2020. That’s very important. But when you add the word ‘comprehensive’ it takes on a different character because you can have an average GDP per capita that’s terrific, but you can still have at the same time a lot of poor people. So can you call yourself a ‘moderately prosperous society’ if you still have people in extreme poverty? President Xi said ‘No’! China cannot claim to be a moderately prosperous society with any people still living in extreme poverty, so he has launched China’s “Targeted poverty Alleviation” Campaign.  
HOST: Nobody can be left behind.**



**RLK: Getting everyone out of extreme poverty is a national mission. So Xi has made a really magnificent and new commitment to achieving the elimination of all extreme poverty through precision poverty alleviation. I've been focusing on anti-poverty. I visited many poor places and it's fascinating to see the emphasis on every poor person - each identified, defined and followed with a dossier and reporting and with some official responsible for every poor person. That's an example of what it means to be comprehensively doing each of these. And we can, go through each of the Four Comprehensives to show the difference that the description 'comprehensive' brings to it. So looking at President Xi 's way of thinking, you see a systematic approach. You see his approach to governance, economy, governing the party, international - all of these aspects.**



**HOST: But still there are lots of challenges are still there as well as domestic differences here, the slowing of economic growth and so the middle-income trap, etcetera. And globally we are facing deep problems in terms of the global security situation and also the rise of protectionism and populism in the world, etcetera etcetera. There will be difficulties, but as history is created by the brave, do you think he's going to create history?**



**RLK: Well Xi Jinping has already created history. And the big issue in the 19<sup>th</sup> Party National Congress is that CPC General Secretary Xi is consolidating his power, his people, his way of thinking, in order to go to the next stage. Clearly there are difficulties. You have to position China in the world in a unique way. People talk about the middle income trap – I'm not sure that's so significant to China because provinces in China are bigger than most countries in the world, so China really has its own dynamic to it.**



**RLK: China is more dependent on the international community and international stability and peace than any other developed country, so China is very much dependent upon what happens in the world. If you look at the economy itself, reform as it goes on gets more and more difficult cause reform confronts entrenched groups. They're called 'interest groups'. There are many different kinds that really want to protect their own interest by definition, and so they like to maintain the status quo. And in order to have breakthroughs you need to have a much more dynamic economy. And how this works with a socialist market economy as President Xi and the party wants to do is challenge it because on the one hand we talk about the market playing a decisive role in the economy, and on the other hand the government is still playing a dominant role.**



**HOST:** How do you articulate what on the surface could look like a contradiction, and how does it apply to state owned enterprises? What happens? And that's one big category. Another big category, which China is focusing on, is innovation. And that's the first, Number One, of the 'Five Major Development Concepts' focusing on the economy. This is very significant. First time innovation has literally put in the number one spot. It's primarily in science and technology, raising the percentage of GDP on R&D in the country to international standards. So China is looking to become a major world power in all of science and technology – especially in artificial intelligence and biotechnology. All the new kinds of technology that will drive the economy.



**RLK:** So how do you do that? You can't legislate innovation the way you can with other kinds of reform, so that's a challenge. State owned enterprises are a challenge. Another big one is land reform for farmers: how to give the peasants in China more access to the value of their wealth and feeding that back into the economy. So I picked those three areas too watch: state owned enterprise reform, facilitating innovation particularly in science and technology, and land reform for farmers.



**HOST:** So what's your prospects for the future? Five years are we going to see continuation of the current policies or any adjustments will be made?

**RLK: I would look for some significant differences in the next five years, over time, as I think we've passed a landmark, with the 19<sup>th</sup> Party National Congress being a watershed. It recognizes the success. It has the framework of what President Xi wants to do. And now I think we need implementation - and some of them will be continuing the same policies but in order to achieve the right kind of reform, there will have to be some differences, such as in financial market regulation and in state owned enterprise reform. These are areas are key. Obviously, pollution has to be controlled and there are a lot of other things we need to talk about as well. But I would look for some significant differences. I look for the anti-corruption campaign to continue and to hopefully be institutionalized.**



**RLK: The National Supervisory Commission is a big idea that might work. Anti-corruption has to become systematic, not just because you have some good people promoting it, like President Xi and others. So China needs to see an institutionalization of its policies because that will give us the greatest confidence and success.**

**HOST: Thank you very much indeed, Dr. Kuhn.**

