

**“XI JINPING THOUGHT ON DIPLOMACY”:  
THE CENTRAL WORK CONFERENCE  
ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF 2018**

Lance L P GORE

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## **Executive Summary**

1. At the “Central Work Conference on Foreign Affairs” in Beijing on 22 and 23 June 2018, Xi Jinping delivered a lengthy speech outlining his foreign policy.
2. The conference formally adopted “Xi Jinping thought on diplomacy of socialism with Chinese characteristics for a new era” (“Xi Thought on Diplomacy” in short), which is expected to be the guideline of Chinese foreign policy for the next five years and beyond.
3. Since Xi Jinping took over the top office, China has practically abandoned Deng Xiaoping’s cautious foreign policy with a series of large-scale and high-profile foreign policy initiatives. The conference synthesised Xi’s ideas in practice into a guiding ideology.
4. The 2018 Work Conference witnessed a radical shift from the regional to the global. “Promoting the progress of humanity” and “actively participating in guiding the reform of the global governance system” are added as the overarching foreign policy objectives.
5. The key ingredients of “Xi Thought on Diplomacy” include the new security concept, building a new type of international relations and “the community of common destiny for mankind” and defence of free trade and globalisation.
6. The new security concept covers “collective security”, “integrative security”, “cooperative security” and “sustainable security”.
7. Xi proposed a 10-point foreign policy framework with him as the core, a move which he believes is necessary when fundamental structural changes are taking place in both the world economy and politics.
8. Xi has envisioned a Chinese role in spearheading the changes and shaping them towards more equitable international relations based on mutual respect, mutual

consultation and win-win cooperation. This role draws strength from China's status as an ancient civilisational state and a champion of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

9. China intends to further build up its weight on the world stage via a dense network of partnerships with various countries, actively pushing for multilateralism amid the global backlash against US unilateralism. However, such an ambitious agenda may strain China's resources and put its long-run sustainability at risk.
10. Under Xi, political loyalty is emphasised over professionalism in the Chinese bureaucracy. With reduced internal debate and deliberation, Xi's strong personality may lead to unnecessary confrontation with the United States on trade and other issues.