

CHINA'S POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC DIPLOMACY IN THE MIDDLE EAST

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses China's political and economic diplomacy in the Middle East. The concept of Chinese foreign policy is based on fundamental approaches to all issues of international relations, such as China's full independence and freedom, resistance to military force and hegemony, non-alignment, as well as avoidance of strategic ties with superpowers.

Keywords: *China, China's political, China's economic, Xi Jinping,*

АННОТАЦИЯ

В этой статье обсуждается политическая и экономическая дипломатия Китая на Ближнем Востоке. Концепция внешней политики Китая основана на фундаментальных подходах ко всем вопросам международных отношений, таким как полная независимость и свобода Китая, сопротивление военной силе и гегемонии, неприсоединение, а также избегание стратегических связей со сверхдержавами.

Ключевые слова: *Китай, политика Китая, экономика Китая, Си Цзиньпин,*

INTRODUCTION

The People's Republic of China is the second largest economy in the world today after the United States. It is noteworthy that the role of this country in the global economy and governance is constantly strengthening. One of the contradictory consequences of this is the growing competition between the PRC and the United States in the economic, political and military spheres. China is announcing its plans to become a global leader. According to the country's scientific community, "China has a duty to contribute to human development and the future. Increasingly, this contribution is reflected in global governance, "or Xi Jinping's" the world is a big space, full of problems. The international community wants to hear China's voice and see its plan. China must be there now[1]".

Also, the conclusions of the world's leading political scientists, including the controversial "Has China won?"[2] The author of the book, the famous Singaporean

professor Kishor Mahbubani, predicts that the coronavirus pandemic will not change the direction of global economic development, i.e. it will accelerate the exchange of U.S.-centered globalization processes with China-oriented globalization.

The growing concern of the developed Western world, led by the United States, is growing, with China taking steps to prevent the entry of modern technologies that could help accelerate development. On the other hand, China's ever-increasing power is reflected in the form of its hyper-scale geopolitical initiatives and continues to change the world map. As a result, not only countries directly adjacent to China, but also far away from it, are forced to look for a suitable place in the new geopolitical reality. In particular, the One Place, One Way initiative is causing international and often controversial repercussions. The Central Asian countries, including the Republic of Uzbekistan, located in the heart of this initiative or geopolitical hyperproject on land, are among the developing countries in such conditions.

DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

The concept of Chinese foreign policy is based on fundamental approaches to all issues of international relations, such as China's full independence and freedom, resistance to military force and hegemony, non-alignment, as well as avoidance of strategic ties with superpowers.

In recent decades, China has made significant progress in international relations with neighboring countries. First, a partnership and strategic partnership was established with many of them. In particular, strategic partnerships have been established with Turkmenistan, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan during bilateral visits. Relations with Indonesia and Malaysia have risen to the level of a comprehensive strategic partnership. Second, the effectiveness of intersectoral communication has increased. Third, trade and economic relations are developing rapidly: the trade turnover with neighboring regions is estimated at 100 billion US dollars. and 1.3 trillion. Dollars[3]. Fourth, regional cooperation is deepening. In addition, China has made a number of commitments to neighboring countries. In the field of education, special projects are being implemented in the next 10 years to allocate more than 40,000 state scholarships for foreign students, and in the next 5 years, continuous student exchanges with Indonesia, training 100 Chinese language teachers for Pakistan and increasing the number of Confucius Institutes.

For Uzbekistan, departments of Confucius Institutes were established in 2005 at the Tashkent State Institute of Oriental Studies, and in September 2013 at the Samarkand State Institute of Foreign Languages. At the same time, the funds

allocated by the fund, which specializes in the Central Asian region of China, amounted to 200 million. yuan (\$ 32.9 million).

One of the aspects that has been reflected in the foreign policy of the PRC in recent years is called the “Concept of Justice and Profit”. In its relations with developing countries, China pursues a number of goals at the same time. These include strengthening political trust at all levels, deepening mutually beneficial cooperation in relevant fields, expanding mutual exchanges in the humanitarian sphere (tourism, health, education, etc.), pursuing close cooperation in finding solutions to international and regional issues, and more. Within the framework of the mentioned concept, China has developed separate strategic projects for each region. The “Concept of Justice and Benefit” was previously announced during Chinese President Xi Jinping’s 2013 visit to Africa. According to him, China has expressed its willingness to base its relations with developing countries on the principles of mutual trust, equality, friendship, and support their just aspirations and progressive aspirations. According to Chinese leaders, the benefits should be mutual, and China is ready to pursue development together with the relevant countries[4].

As the Chinese Foreign Minister pointed out, the “Concept of Justice and Profit” is a crossroads between the traditions of Chinese diplomacy and the ideas of the PRC, a unique socialist country. The concept has become an important factor in expanding China's relations with developing countries and a "flagship" of Chinese diplomacy. Its essence is the effective use of the "soft power" factor in foreign policy.

But the Western world is worried that China is entering Africa. Western media rightly associates China’s interest in Africa with its search for natural resources to fully meet the needs of the emerging economy of a powerful state. At the same time, they accuse China of supporting dictators in Africa with its investments.

Zambian economist D. Moyo argues that the use of "soft power", access to and accumulation of resources such as land, water, and mineral resources still serves as a key quality of China's development strategy "[5]. It is also possible that the country will use a military factor-based colonial strategy to seize resources, especially African resources, using “hard power”.

The Gulf region is the richest region in oil and gas, with 65 percent of the world’s oil reserves and 30 percent of its gas reserves[6]. It includes oil-producing countries such as Iran, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, as well as Qatar, which owns more than 15% of the world’s natural gas reserves. At the same time, the region is characterized by political instability. The situation here has been complicated by the long-running arms race, the unresolved Iranian nuclear issue, the

tense situation in Iraq and Syria and Yemen, the rise of international terrorism and the interference of foreign forces in domestic politics.

Undoubtedly, one of the main participants in the struggle for influence in the region is China. The underlying factor is the economic issue. That is why China has now become a major investor and business partner in a number of Gulf countries. Beijing participates in various UN-sponsored peacekeeping missions in the Middle East peace process, calls on Russia and other UN member states to find a political and diplomatic solution to the Syrian conflict, and strongly opposes terrorism and drug trafficking.

However, according to some researchers, China did not have a significant impact on developments in the Gulf region until the mid-1980s - early 1990s. For example, according to Fred Holiday, a professor of Middle East studies at the London School of Economics, it is true that until recently, modern Middle Eastern history was written without any mention of China[7].

Russian diplomat, MGIMO professor at the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs S.Z. Jiznin explains this with the conditions of the second half of the 1980s. The PRC has gone from being a pure exporter to an undisputed importer of energy carriers, making its foreign policy guarantees of energy security a priority for energy diplomacy, including diversifying oil imports, providing the country with stable hydrocarbons and diplomatic support[8].

China's interest in the natural resources of the Gulf countries stems from the need for an ever-increasing volume of energy raw materials due to the rapid pace of economic development[9]. This, in turn, has traditionally led to increased regional competition with the largest oil importers.

Considering the importance of the Persian Gulf region in terms of China's geopolitical interests, the logistical value of the Strait of Hormuz should be emphasized. Through it, China imports 55 percent of its oil resources[10]. The uniqueness and strategic weight of this waterway is that Hormuz is the only transit route for the transportation of Arab and Iranian hydrocarbons to third countries. This is rightly one of the most important directions of oil supply to the world market, including the United States, the European Union and the Asia-Pacific region. More than 40% of the world's oil supplies (mainly Iraq, Kuwait, UAE, Iran) and oil products (mainly from Qatar - liquefied natural gas) and 93% of total exports in the Persian Gulf pass through it[11].

The risk of blocking this water transport artery can arise for both technical and political reasons. In order to enter the Persian Gulf, any ship will have to sail a certain

part of the joint through the territorial waters of Iran. However, despite the fact that the passage of ships through Hormuz is controlled by Part 3 of the UN Convention on the Transit of Ships, Iran, like the United States, has not ratified this international agreement. It follows that Tehran does not have to allow foreign ships to pass through its own waters, although at present the EIR does not interfere with this and the water flow is operating normally.

In July 2012, more than half of Iran's parliament approved a law blocking the Hormuz artery in response to Western sanctions that imposed an embargo on Iranian oil purchases. The attitude of China, one of Iran's economic partners, did not last long. While the European Union, Japan and the Republic of Korea have shown only declarative solidarity with their U.S. allies against the country's embargo, they have been limited to statements that the search for an alternative oil exporter has begun. Turkey, South Africa, India and Sri Lanka have not heeded Washington's calls, while China has begun talks to expand oil supplies from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, while cutting Iranian oil imports by almost half[12].

Beijing's position is explained by its greater interest in developing friendly relations with Washington and Tehran, as U.S.-led Western countries are a major market for products and a major source of investment and innovative technology for Chinese companies. That is why China has repeatedly had to choose in favor of the United States. Thus, in 2006-2008, China supported the UN Security Council's decision to impose sanctions on Iran, and in 2008 Chinese banks suspended cooperation with Iranian banks for four months after US Secretary of Defense R. Gates' visit to Beijing in late 2007[13].

At the same time, foreign aid from China and Russia has allowed Iran to continue the negotiation process on its nuclear program and has helped ease economic sanctions gradually. Therefore, despite some contradictions in Sino-Iranian relations, they are dominated by a positive vector.

In addition to trade in hydrocarbons, cooperation in military-technical, industrial, agricultural fields, China and Iran have joint plans to restore the Great Silk Road. China sees this project as an alternative to sea and air. Given the instability in Iran's relations with the West, Hormuz is not considered the most reliable route for energy supply.

Another obstacle in the way of "black gold" that can be transported from the Persian Gulf region to Asian markets is the threat of blocking the Strait of Malacca[14]. More than 30% of international cargo is on the Malacca waterway and 90% of its cargo flow is oil from the Persian Gulf and Africa[15]. The difficulty of

this sea route is only 2.5 km, which is what makes it so attractive to pirates and terrorists who want to take advantage of others. With this factor in mind, in late 2010, according to a project planned by the Chinese government, the construction of a transcontinental railway from Kashgar, China to Afghanistan via Herat and connecting China with the Persian Gulf via Central Asia was announced.

China is considering two options as the last route of the transcontinental highway. The first is the port city of Bandar Abbas, which is a strategic object of the Strait of Hormuz off the coast of Iran due to its geographical location. The second is the port city of Bushehr, off the coast of Iran, west of Bandar Abbas, where Iran's first nuclear power plant is under construction.

Of course, Iran plays an important role in China's interests, but strengthening ties with the countries of the Arabian Peninsula and, above all, Saudi Arabia is crucial in Beijing's strategic plans.

The sharp confrontation between Iran and the SAP for regional leadership, as well as existing political and religious animosity, make it difficult to maintain friendly relations between them. But now Beijing is able to maintain a certain balance and maintain good relations with both countries, mainly due to "smile diplomacy", ie good neighborly diplomacy and appropriate political initiatives of people's diplomacy[16], which is in line with China's national interests and traditional Confucianism. .

Stable and rapidly developing relations with Saudi Arabia depend on clear economic and political factors related to China. In particular, Saudi Arabia is a major supplier of crude oil to China. In 2013, SAP accounted for 19% of "black gold" imports to China[17]. From a political point of view, cooperation with Saudi Arabia is important for China because the Arab League plays an important role in multilateral international cooperation platforms in the OIC format. Undoubtedly, the political significance of the SAP for the PRC is an important mechanism in defending its interests in the Middle East[18].

At present, there are relations between the countries built on a mutually beneficial basis and supported by high-level official visits. The strengthening of relations between Beijing and Riyadh is constantly expanding in the fields of energy, space technology, infrastructure construction, railways, nuclear energy, agriculture, culture and education, as well as military-technical.

Since 1981, the Islamic pilgrimage of Chinese Muslims to Mecca and Medina has been revived, the work of publishing the Qur'an in China has been intensified, and mosques have been reconstructed[19].

In 2014, a 20-year contract to supply oil to China signed by the largest state oil companies - UAE oil companies - came into force. A strategic partnership agreement has been signed with these oil giants.

It is noteworthy that the joint China-Arab Investment Fund and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank are consulting on the implementation of projects that are part of the project to form the Silk Road Economic Belt through Sino-Arab efforts. They are expected to form the Maritime Silk Road, which will connect Asia, Europe and Africa.

In order to deepen Sino-Arab cooperation, President Xi Jinping proposed the "1 + 2 + 3" formula, in which 1 - energy cooperation, 2 - infrastructure construction and trade, and the creation of favorable conditions for improving the investment climate; these are the three main high-tech sectors: nuclear energy, the space and missile sectors, and new energy sources[20]. This format was put forward by the Chinese leader in August 2014 at a ministerial meeting of the China-Arab Cooperation Forum, a mechanism for continuous cooperation - established in 2004.

By 1991, China was the leading producer of Iraqi oil, with more than 60 Chinese companies operating in Iraq, and since then more than 500 contracts have been signed under the UN's Oil for Food program[21]. Obstacles to this cooperation actually emerged after the arrival of the Americans, who monopolized control of many of Iraq's oil fields, which weakened China's position here for a long time.

Only in 2006 did Sino-Iraqi relations begin to gradually recover, resulting in Beijing becoming Baghdad's largest customer. By 2013, China's investment in Iraq's oil sector was \$ 2 billion a year, hundreds of Chinese oil engineers had come to Iraq to service oil fields, and China had even built its own airport on Iraq's borders to transport workers.

CONCLUSION

But the bright prospects of China's economic development began to fade with the arrival of the ISIS terrorist group. China has refused to take part in the activities of the coalition to fight ISIS, fearing the emergence of centers of instability in its territory[22].

Thus, despite the difficult situation and political instability in the Arabian Peninsula, China continues to fight for its "place under the sun" in the region, strengthening its economic position in the Persian Gulf and expanding its geopolitical activities to enhance its economic development.

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