

Artículo de investigación

“One Belt, One Road” in global governance: Paradoxes of the restructuring of the initiative

«Один пояс, один путь» в системе глобального управления: парадоксы перестройки инициативы

"One Belt, One Road" en la gobernanza global: Paradojas de la reestructuración de la iniciativa

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Abstract

Involvement in the project of foreign experts on the "One Belt, One Road" initiative of the Renmin University of China has provided an opportunity to comprehend how and for what purpose information is formed on the initiative of Chinese President Xi Jinping, as well as the role of the mass media in the formation of a positive image of the proposed initiative. The study deals with the information component of the initiative of the People's Republic of China in the framework of the vector focused on the Russian Federation. More than five years have passed since Chinese President Xi Jinping announced in Astana, Kazakhstan a new Chinese initiative called "One Belt, One Road". From the reports of various Chinese agencies, it follows that the initiative of the People's Republic of China is quite successfully implemented in all areas. The forums held in Beijing in 2018 and 2019 showed that the main emphasis was made on the image component of the "One Belt, One Road" concept, which was a demonstration of the increased role of China as an independent center of power. According to some Chinese scientists, China no longer denies its desire to become a leader in the current world order. Moreover, while until

Аннотация

Работа в проекте иностранных экспертов инициативы «Один пояс, один путь» Renmin University of China предоставила возможность понять, как и с какой целью формируется информация по инициативе Председателя КНР Си Цзиньпина, роль СМИ в формировании позитивного имиджа инициативы. Исследование посвящено информационной составляющей инициативы Китайской Народной республики по вектору, направленному в сторону Российской Федерации. Прошло более пяти лет, как председатель КНР Си Цзиньпин, в Казахстане в Астане, огласил новую китайскую инициативу, получившую название «Один пояс, один путь». Из отчетов различных китайских ведомств, следует что инициатива Китайской Народной республики достаточно успешно реализуется на всех ее направлениях. Проведенные Форумы в Пекине в 2018 и 2019 годах показали, что основной упор делался на имиджевую составляющую концепции «Один пояс, один путь» - демонстрацию возросшей роли Китая как самостоятельного «Центра силы». По мнению некоторых китайских ученых, Китай

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recently China has been limited to economic domination, today its influence extends into the (geo) political sphere.

Keywords: China, China's foreign policy, information, mass media, "One Belt, One Road".

уже не отрицает своего стремления стать лидером в нынешнем мировом порядке. Причем, если до последнего времени Китай ограничивался экономическим господством, то сегодня его влияние перетекает и в (гео)политическую сферу.

Ключевые слова: КНР, «Один-пояс, один путь», внешняя политика Китая, СМИ, информация.

Resumen

La participación en el proyecto de expertos extranjeros en la iniciativa "One Belt, One Road" de la Universidad Renmin de China ha brindado la oportunidad de comprender cómo y para qué propósito se forma la información por iniciativa del presidente chino Xi Jinping, así como papel de los medios de comunicación en la formación de una imagen positiva de la iniciativa propuesta. El estudio aborda el componente de información de la iniciativa de la República Popular de China en el marco del vector centrado en la Federación de Rusia. Han pasado más de cinco años desde que el presidente chino, Xi Jinping, anunció en Astana, Kazajstán, una nueva iniciativa china llamada "One Belt, One Road". De los informes de varias agencias chinas, se deduce que la iniciativa de la República Popular de China se implementa con bastante éxito en todas las áreas. Los foros celebrados en Beijing en 2018 y 2019 mostraron que el énfasis principal se hizo en el componente de imagen del concepto "One Belt, One Road", que era una demostración del mayor papel de China como un centro de poder independiente. Según algunos científicos chinos, China ya no niega su deseo de convertirse en un líder en el orden mundial actual. Además, aunque hasta hace poco China se había limitado a la dominación económica, hoy su influencia se extiende a la esfera (geo) política.

Palabras clave: China, política exterior de China, información, medios de comunicación, "One Belt, One Road".

Introduction

It is generally accepted that the theory of global governance arose in connection with the globalization trends. Globalization is a holistic process of socio-historical changes, which is characterized by the fact that a kind of internal, indissoluble, and ever-increasing relationship emerges on the basis of economic integration around the world. Among them, economic globalization is the main driving force, expressed in the form of globalization of capital, globalization of products, and globalization of communications. These modern economic elements increasingly require overcoming barriers by nation-states so that they could move as freely as possible around the world. This free movement has created new actors in the international community, namely, transnational corporations and international organizations. Global markets and transnational organizations, which are inherently contrary to traditional notions of the national territory, also challenge the sovereignty of nation-states. Since the nation-state is a concept of modernity, some scholars view globalization and global governance as the embodiment of postmodernism in international

politics and international relations (Keping, 2002). The macrolevel trends of globalization and the emergence of global governance and its causes are supplemented by changes in the post-cold war international situation. The proliferation of violent conflicts at the international level and information technology have led to the fragmentation of international forces. Scientists define global governance as "a process, in which participants in the international arena solve global common problems through collective actions" (Cerutti Furio, 2014). In other words, "global governance is democratic consultation and cooperation among governments, international organizations, and citizens in order to maximize their common interests, and its central element should be the strengthening and development of a new international political and economic order that ensures security, peace, development, well-being, equality and human rights for everybody, including global rules and systems relating to international political and economic issues" (Keping, 2000). Chinese scientist Yu Keping also believes that there are even extremely dangerous factors in Western

theories of governance and global governance that cannot be ignored.

First, one of the main elements of global governance is the subject of governance entity, in which international organizations and global civil society organizations are largely governed by developed Western countries led by the United States, making it difficult for global governance to be completely free from Western manipulation.

Second, global governance regulation and mechanisms are largely developed and established by Western countries that inevitably reflects a large extent of the intentions and values of Western countries.

Finally, it should be noted that the governance doctrine, and the global governance doctrine, in particular, are based on the assumption that the role of government and the sovereignty of states are insignificant, that the boundaries of nation-states are blurred, while the transnational and global nature of governance is being emphasized. The danger here consists in weakening state sovereignty and the important role of sovereign governments in national and international governance, the objective possibility of providing theoretical support for powerful and transnational corporations in interfering in the internal affairs of other states and in the implementation of international hegemonic policies, as well as in the theoretical basis for some transnational corporations and states, which interfere in the internal affairs of other states and seek international hegemony.²⁰⁸

The fifth anniversary of the "One Belt, One Road" (OBOR) initiative has already been presented to the world community as a "poetic poem of the future" (Wang Peng, 2019). Four years later, it turns out that the Summit on sustainable development at the headquarters in New York, held on September 25, 2015, has adopted a document, which the People's Republic of China has consciously interfaced with the development of the OBOR.

According to the authors of the report of the Chinese international publishing group of the Beijing People's University "The agenda for sustainable development for the period up to 2030" brings the UN development planning and the history of mankind into a new era". (Wang Peng, 2019). All the years since the declaration

of the OBOR initiative in Astana in 2013, the concept was supplemented with the semantic content, and by the beginning of 2019 it had acquired the following scope:

- Free movement of capital;
- The connection among the people;
- Unhindered trade;
- Infrastructure interconnection;
- Political communication;
- Global perception.

However, strange though it may appear, the semantic content requires interpretation.

Neither the official documents nor the speeches of the leaders of the countries involved in the OBOR initiative, do not contain any specific references to the action plan. It should be assumed that the world community is presented with a new foreign policy philosophy, with which a single international entity is trying to implement its foreign economic and foreign policy strategy. There is nothing wrong with this, and while China's economic elites intend to use the current state of affairs in world politics, covered in the mass media, their actions fall under the definition of Noopolitics (A.V. Baychik, S.B. Nikonov, 2012). A year later, after his speech in Astana, Xi Jinping stated: "It is necessary to intensify efforts to increase communication opportunities in the international arena, to learn new ways of conducting foreign propaganda, to strengthen the construction of a discursive system. It is necessary to work on the creation of new concepts, categories, and formulations, acceptable to both Chinese and foreigners, to thoroughly explain everything that concerns China, to spread the voice of China, to strengthen our right to vote in the international arena" (Xi Jinping, 2014). As it seems to the authors, exactly this is disguised under the OBOR initiative.

Methods

The following methods were used in the course of the study:

- Sociological approach, where it was supposed to clarify the dependence of politics on society, the social conditionality of political phenomena, including the impact on the political

²⁰⁸ 俞可平(2004).论全球化与国家主权.《马克思主义与现实》, (1), 4-20.

system of economic relations, ideology, and culture. This method was presented in the theory of A. Bentley's stakeholder groups.

- Cultural approach, focusing on the identification of dependence of political processes on the political culture.
- The functional approach, i.e. studying the relationship between political phenomena and the level of economic development.

Results

The Chinese-Russian strategic partnership, according to the leaders of these states, holds an important place in the global economic and political structure of international relations. Both leaders, when speaking to the world community, make political statements about practical steps in the implementation of the OBOR concept. The present article summarizes the information obtained from publically available sources to understand what in fact the Chinese initiative is; either it is an economic project, or it is an information strategy to manipulate international processes.

It is supposed that all of the above suggests that the economic situation, through which China wants to be awarded the status of one of the world order leaders, has the right to exist, though under the sole condition that China invests in the information component of the OBOR initiative on the territory of Russia and other interested countries, and if China wants to prove that this initiative is not economic expansion.

China needs to develop an information strategy to promote (manipulate) the initiative using the mass media of the countries adjacent to the OBOR states.

Individual contracts concluded between budget-forming companies, as well as investments should not be considered as the implementation of the OBOR program. The mass media should highlight positive examples of involvement of small and medium-sized businesses supported by funds provided by the member states. Involved states should publish a request through the media about the professions necessary for the implementation of the initiative. To date, the OBOR initiative does not include the development vector focused towards Russia, and therefore is not the subject of the agenda in the Russian media. At the same time, there are timid attempts on part of China to master the Russian

information space. The political and economic elites of Russia and China are waiting for the leaders of Russia, China, and the United States to decide to build a high-speed rail line connecting China to the United States through the Northern regions of Russia and American Alaska. Just then the Russian information machine will be involved in the implementation of the OBOR project.

Discussion

In 2017, a Summit of the OBOR international cooperation initiative was held in Beijing, which, according to Chinese scientist Yao Le, "caused a wave in the world media and analytical centers, during which the "Belt and Road" was at the peak of public interest. In 2018, at the time of the fifth anniversary of the initiative, international opinion was still strong" (Yao Le, 2019).

It is impossible not to agree with this statement. Indeed, the mass media covered the Summit in Beijing. At the same time, the initiative came under the close attention of analytical centers, in particular, the Brooklyn Institute, the Carnegie Foundation, the European Committee on Foreign Policy, and the Mercator Institute for China Studies (MERICS). They published a number of articles and reports. The main point of these publications was that China was looking for places to sell their goods.

But while the Chinese party perceived this attention as a success, in the authors' opinion, this evidenced rather the opposite. The initiative was not perceived as a phenomenon aimed at increasing the economic well-being of the people living on the path indicated in the initiative. The initiative was understood as a "conspiracy" and a proposal of the political and economic oligarchy of China for cooperation. All the above-mentioned institutions study the political movement of China, rather than its actual attitude to the problems of the peoples.

In April 2019, Chinese scientist Liu Dian, when arguing the need to develop the OBOR initiative, cited the example of Djibouti. This referred to the Afar region. "The predatory exploitation of these lands led to decline and impoverishment, so many young people left their homes and went to work in the city. But now the OBOR initiative has enabled these lands to acquire a new look. We have always been poor, and since colonial times to activities of Western companies, we have not changed the backwardness of the country until Chinese companies arrived here

and began to invest in the construction of roads, terminals, and factories." (Liu Dian, 2019). Everyone understands that by investing in a poor country, any power receives economic leverage to gain political loyalty. This example shows that the thesis "One Belt, One Road" is the desire of the oligarchic economic elite to increase their capital by means of politicians. None of the enterprises will operate at a loss, while the search for cheap labor is work that falls in the state interests. In this context, the People's Republic of China is successfully fulfilling the tasks set before the state by its leader, as was mentioned earlier. In the scientific literature, articles by Chinese authors appear where this is said quite accurately. "China considers developing countries as the main object of its diplomacy because it considers itself a developing state. China needs the third world, while the third world needs China. China needs political support, for example, in the Taiwan issue, and in the issue of human rights. In the economic sector, China needs energy, raw materials, and third world markets" (Lee Shin et al, 2019).

In today's political environment, when the struggle for the right to be second has become obvious, China is ready to give political leadership to any of the powers, retaining hegemony in the economy. While the World Trade Organization (WTO), according to some experts, should be reformed, China will be ready to offer its rules of the economic game. The political elite in the United States, being at the same time the economic elite, has brought to power a new type of leader, namely, the protectionist leader.

This leader believes that the rules of the game in the economy should be dictated by someone who is formally a world leader, while the OBOR initiative is designed to enlist allies through the conclusion of international treaties with China. At that, the more such bilateral agreements are concluded, the more confident the Chinese establishment will feel itself on the world stage. Chinese scientist Liu Ying openly states that the OBOR initiative is aimed at creating a trend of open, comprehensive, innovative, and balanced globalization. Promoting the principles of untrammelled trade, the OBOR initiative opposes protectionism and unipolarity, supporting the idea of WTO multilateral trade" (Liu Ying, 2019).

He also cites data, which show that from 2013 to 2017 the total volume of exports of Chinese products began to prevail over imports.

Moreover, Chinese scientist Cheng Zhiheng believes that the creation of an open platform to exchange economic information can contribute to the merger of the economies of all countries. "On its basis, they will share their basic statistics, strategic courses, cooperative projects, in order to facilitate the analytical work of organizations of other states..." (Cheng Zhiheng, 2019). Naturally, these are not the only works showing that the People's Republic of China is playing its geopolitical game on the basis of information strategy.

The works of Chinese authors increasingly demonstrate a revision of the basic concepts that were fundamental in a world where political and economic hegemony belonged first to two powers, and then to one. In the unipolar world, an economy was born and developed capable of dictating the political rules of the game. A new concept of interests was born.

The state interests in China are divided into several categories: security, economic interests, and national prestige. Chinese scientist Li Xing believes that "it is necessary to reinterpret the concept of "state sovereignty", which has always been considered as the fundamental interest of any country. In the new era of global order, sovereignty must be adaptive, pragmatic and flexible." (Lee Shin, 2019).

All of the above gives the opportunity to make the assumption that there is an obvious information strategy which consists in manipulation of international processes through the formation in the public by mass media of positive or negative attitude to the foreign and domestic policy of the state or a block of states in order to create a positive or negative image of ideas and promoted moral values, called noopolitics (Nikonov et al., 2015).

Objectively, the OBOR initiative announced in Astana for the international community (the foreign policy of the state) was paraphrased by the Secretary-General of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the Chairman of the People's Republic of China Xi Jinping in December 2013 during his visit to the exhibition "Way to revival". The idea of the "Chinese dream" consists in solving the following tasks:

- Reaching state power;
- Reviving the nation;
- Achieving well-being of the Chinese people;
- Providing social harmony.

Li Xing notes that in the understanding of the Chinese elite, this project, presented by Xi Jinping in Kazakhstan at the Nazarbayev University in September 2013, is of strategic importance. From the standpoint of geopolitics, it can be argued that the Eurasian continent has always played and still playing a decisive role in the history of international relations.

The "Silk Road initiative" put forward by the same leader began to disappear somehow imperceptibly from the agenda of the Chinese media. In the authors' opinion, this initiative has not disappeared but has been transformed into the OBOR initiative. The fact is that the name of the "Silk Road Economic Belt" proposed by China is very similar to the title of the "New Silk Road" implemented by the United States. Both projects are focused on Asia, but the US project provided for unification to resolve issues with Afghanistan.

The Chinese "Silk Road Economic Belt" initiative provided the following:

1. Exchange of macroeconomic policies;
2. Exchange of transport services;
3. Exchange of goods;
4. Exchange of currency;
5. Cultural exchange.

All items correspond to those that have been indicated in the introduction.

It should be noted that the OBOR initiative, in fact, proposes to the leaders of Russia, Kazakhstan, and Belarus to extend the Eurasian Union, and then China's path with its economy to Europe will be achieved without any problems. Problems arise in those places, where the OBOR project vector was directed through Russia.

Judging by the final publications in the Chinese mass media, the Forum, organized by China in 2018, has achieved success. State bodies of China, as it was mentioned in the media, had concluded many new agreements and contracts. But while looking at the final declaration of the forum, it is written in the spirit of "for all good against all bad."

The Russian party faced the problems when implementing simple agreements with China within the framework of the initial Silk Road project. Neither the Power of Siberia project nor the Moscow-Kazan high-speed rail line project have moved from a dead point.

However, regarding this, China can parry with the following: "as of September 30, 2018, China's investments in the construction of 113 economic and trade cooperation zones located in 46 countries in the framework of OBOR initiative, including the investment in the operation of 4,663 enterprises of these zones, exceeded the amount of 33.63 bln US dollars" (Liu Ying, 2019, p. 35).

Among them are the Ussuri zone of trade and economic cooperation, the Tomsk timber industry zone, and the zone of trade cooperation in the Primorsky Territory. All projects are aimed at raw material flows from Russia to China: not products and commodities, but specifically raw materials.

Another aspect of the OBOR concept development is a humanitarian one. According to Chinese scientists, exchanges and cooperation in the field of education are also widely welcomed and supported by countries in the framework of OBOR initiative. One can't but agree with these. But according to Chinese scientist Cao Mindi, "communication between nations is achieved through the use of soft power" (Cao Mindi, 2019).

He also states that in the course of building "One belt, One Road" concept, think tanks are created, which play an important role in political communication. They are designed for research and the response of the international community to China's OBOR initiative. In other words, they are aimed at studying media reviews of the promoting initiative. At the same time, it is difficult to assume that such think tanks financed from the Chinese budget will be able to objectively describe the current situation. There is a certain probability of not noticing critical comments in the mass media about the undertaken initiative. In this article, the authors do not question the objectivity of the information provided by the Chinese party, but the use of soft power implies the presence of an enemy or ill-wisher in the implementation of the program. But if soft power is used with regard to the idea partners, this can lead to the opposite political effect, rather than the results that China would like to see in the end.

Think tanks, such as RAND Corporation, were created to develop certain strategies, including information ones. But the results of implementing such strategies should be for the benefit of the United States, rather than other states.

The information component of the OBOR initiative is currently underdeveloped. Vice-Premier of the State Council of China Li Keqiang has repeatedly confirmed that the policy of openness towards the West is an important component of China's activities. Perhaps, "China-US Dialogue on South China Sea between Chinese and US think tanks" was created on his initiative. In the history of peoples there was already an example, where openness to the West was accepted by the West, and then used by Western countries to disintegrate the Soviet Union into parts.

Conclusion

The authors of this article have no doubt that in the near future the political situation will not be as stable as it is now. The geopolitical environment in the Middle East and North Africa has deteriorated and still continues deteriorating. As the strategic center of influence moves from West to East and strengthens its military and economic presence in Asia, the USA will strengthen its control over the maritime space in the West Pacific in order to implement a strategy of global rebalancing and deterrence of China. Taking into account the changing geopolitical situation in the world, this work should be continued since the scientific results should be considered in the development dynamics of the OBOR concept. The authors question the existence of the so-called global civil society, the organization of international cooperation, which could be separated from the state system. In this context, cooperation in the mass media between China and Russia remains dependent on the government.

However, a distinction still needs to be made between the roles played by different levels of government. In the framework of the national strategy aimed at regional economic cooperation, as well as the openness and flexibility of global governance, at the level of specific media cooperation mechanisms, regional authorities should play a leading role in coordination.

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