



WESTERN RATIONALISTIC APPROACHES TO THE PROBLEMS OF GLOBAL LEADERSHIP OF THE USA AND CHINA: THE AUTHORITARIAN “BEIJING CONSENSUS” AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE LIBERAL “WASHINGTON CONSENSUS”

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ABSTRACT

This article is focused on the problems of global leadership of the United States of America and China. Also, the article discusses the main peculiarities and factors of “Beijing consensus” as an alternative to the liberal “Washington consensus”.

In science, there are two main approaches to the problem of leadership¹. The first prophesies the “decline of the West”, the erosion of the leading international positions of the United States and the principles of the existence of the world order formulated over the past seventy years due to the emergence of new centers of power capable of promoting and implementing their own agenda². For example, stimulate the wider use of national currencies in mutual settlements, create regional organizations without the participation of the United States, and open a system of social order on their own terms. The second approach – the school of “structural leadership” – recognizes the collective West, led by the United States, as having undeniable dominance in the innovative and scientific and technical fields, and high receptivity to new ideas that should help it successfully transform into some other quality, preserving and developing the idea of democratization and transformation of the national system. social order. Adaptation to the changing realities of the structure of interstate relations created by the West partly takes on the character of a challenge to the idea of a universalist democratic path of development. The Chinese alternative is presented as one of the options for “anti-leadership,” a policy that runs counter to the leader’s course³. An anti-leader is considered to be a major regional power capable of pursuing such a line. At the same time, the actions of the anti-leader as a whole may not undermine the leader’s policy, but only partially erode its foundations,

¹ Воскресенский А.Д. Китай в контексте глобального лидерства / А.Д.Воскресенский // Международные процессы. – 2004. – №2(5), Т.2. – С. 21-23.

² Сергеев В.М. Политика «мейнстрима» и ее альтернативы в современном западном мире: на пути от мирового экономического кризиса к «невозможной политике»? / В.М.Сергеев, А.А.Казанцев, К.Е.Петров // Полис. Политические исследования. – 2017. – №3. – С. 11-17.

³ Воскресенский А.Д. Китай в контексте глобального лидерства / А.Д.Воскресенский // Международные процессы. – 2004. – №2(5), Т.2. – С. 24.



changing the principles of functioning of the regional, and in the future, the world political-economic order. Not a single regional state has been able to come closer to China in terms of the potential it accumulated during the post-reform period. It is noteworthy that China acted so carefully that its “rise” until recently did not encounter obvious opposition from other states and did not lead to the formation of an anti-Chinese coalition. He was able to formulate an alternative, flexible version of the socialist idea with elements of Confucianism and capitalism⁴. Thus, the specificity of the Chinese factor lies in its special nature, unlike the “Soviet challenge,” which is why it is difficult for the West, as well as its neighbors, to formulate a response to it. The consequences of China's rise against the backdrop of weakening US leadership are highlighted in realism, liberalism and constructivism. Let us also consider developments in the field of the Chinese school of international relations theory. Despite the differences in interpretation of the behavior of this Asian giant and the future of the American-centric liberal world order, these scientific approaches rather complement each other. Knowledge of the main theoretical paradigms, according to the domestic researcher P.A. Tsygankov, helps only if one understands the conventions inherent in each of them, as well as the need for their combination to consider complex phenomena of world politics⁵. The scientist emphasizes that in life everything is much more complex and varied than in any theory.

T.A. Shakleina identifies the following parameters of the “great power” of our time⁶: 1) a very high or absolute degree of independence in foreign and domestic policy; 2) world-regulating activity, which manifests itself in a decisive influence on individual countries and regions; 3) the presence of the will to such activity, corresponding historical experience of participation in world politics; 4) possession of the traditional parameters of a “great power”: population, territory, natural resources, efficient economy, powerful armed forces, scientific and technical potential, attractive culture, highly professional personnel. The scientist emphasizes that great power is not formed solely through military and economic power. The situation in the Asia-Pacific region is not characterized by a weakening of the American-centric system of military-political ties. Despite the expansion of Chinese economic presence, cooperation does not acquire a structural, qualitatively new character. At the same time, Asian states are exploring alternative development options that would rely on different centers of power in economic and military-political relations.

According to the offensive realist J. Mearsheimer, China will defend its interests more and more assertively. His behavior will meet with opposition from the United States, the only superpower, which will lead to an armed conflict between them⁷. Confrontation is inevitable as states seek to maximize power by achieving regional hegemony and restraining others' attempts to establish their own sphere of dominance. China will not be satisfied with building

⁴ Воскресенский А.Д. Китай в контексте глобального лидерства / А.Д.Воскресенский // Международные процессы. – 2004. – Т.2, №2(5). – С. 26.

⁵ Цыганков П.А. Тенденции классических парадигм в западной теории международных отношений / П.А.Цыганков // Общественные науки и современность. – 2004. – №2. – С. 129-130.

⁶ Шаклеина Т.А. Великие державы и региональные подсистемы / Т.А.Шаклеина // Международные процессы. – 2011. – №2(26). – С. 34.

⁷ Mearsheimer J.J. Can China Rise Peacefully? [Electronic resource] / J.J.Maersheimer // The National Interest. – 25.10.2014. – Mode of access: <https://nationalinterest.org/commentary/can-china-rise-peacefully-10204> (date of access: 22.08.2018).



up purely economic power within the existing order; it will strive to eliminate the US presence in Asia and build a new Sino-centric system of relationships in the region; it will try to dominate Asia in the same way as the US does in the Western Hemisphere. As a result, competition in the field of regional security will significantly intensify. For this reason, the “rise” of China is unlikely to be calm, says J. Mearsheimer. The researcher is trying to predict the trajectory of development of Sino-American relations in the long term, when China will have much greater relative power, comparable to the economic and military potential of the United States. J. Mearsheimer names the arms race, crises and conflicts, and hostile rhetoric on both sides as characteristic features of such rivalry. We should expect, the scientist believes, that we will witness proxy wars in various parts of the world with the participation of allies of both powers providing them with their support. Tensions will also increase in bilateral relations. Visa restrictions are possible, as well as stricter export control requirements. For example, the United States may prohibit Chinese citizens from studying subjects related to the development of advanced weapons and related technologies at American universities.

The Western order is based on norms, rules and institutions, a number of which China has already adapted for its own purposes. On the one hand, to protect state sovereignty and economic interests. On the other hand, in order to convince the world community of the peaceful nature of their intentions. China's work with partners does not imply adopting other people's values and political beliefs. Rather, as A. Goldstein notes, it is a recognition of the benefits of such joint activities for China, because it allows it to become more powerful and wealthy. By analogy, one can explain the US interest in deepening China's integration into the existing world order. The economic and security benefits of institutionalizing cooperation are clear. China, writes A. Goldstein, considers similar factors as a powerful incentive for smoothing out contradictions with valuable economic partners. However, among institutionalists there are also skeptics who doubt the successful “socialization” of China into a liberal order⁸. Multibillion-dollar initiatives such as the Belt and Road Initiative and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank could place China at the center of decision-making. A similar strategy was used by the United States, for example, when developing the Trans-Pacific Partnership agreement. New parallel structures call into question the necessity and effectiveness of multilateral formats previously created at the initiative of Western countries. In democratic peace theory, the non-use of force to resolve disputes is limited to Western liberal democracies that share similar ideological, political and economic views.

The famous American scientist J. Anyu believes that the determining influence on the nature of China's rise will be the dynamics of the international system itself, within which new rapidly growing states are emerging that do not agree with the fundamental principles of the Western world order⁹. In such a constantly changing international environment, China cannot

⁸ MacDonald A. Analyzing China's Rise in International Relations Theory: Liberal Institutionalism – Part 3 [Electronic resource] / A. MacDonald // CDA Institute. – 04.11.2015. – Mode of access: <https://cdainstitute.ca/analyzing-china-s-rise-in-international-relations-theory-liberal-institutionalism-part-3/> (date of access: 15.04.2018).

⁹ Agnew J. Emerging China and Critical Geopolitics: Between World Politics and Chinese Particularity / J. Agnew // Eurasian Geography and Economics. – 2010. – Vol. 51, Iss. 5. – Pp. 569-582; Agnew J. Looking Back to Look Forward: Chinese Geopolitical Narratives and China's Past / J. Agnew // Eurasian Geography and Economics. – 2012. – Vol. 53, Iss. 3. – Pp. 301-314.



predict with certainty which tasks will be its top priority in the future. Other American researchers A.I. Johnston and T. Christensen believe that China's actions in the international arena are subject to the logic of offensive realism, which is associated with its desire to gain a greater range of maneuver in its immediate geographic environment. There is also an opposite point of view. According to her, Beijing's strategic culture is inherently revisionist, as evidenced by its assertive foreign policy regionally and globally. However, the idea of an "assertive China" is somewhat reminiscent of the myth of the early 1990s. about the "Chinese threat", characterized by a free and selective analysis of the facts. The emergence of such concepts testifies to the politicization of modern Chinese studies, when China is deliberately presented as an aggressive force destabilizing the world order. In this regard, J. Hayes's approach to viewing the democratic world through the prism of identity is interesting, which the scientist understands as the commonality of democracies and citizens' ideas about themselves and their expectations in relation to others¹⁰.

The discussion around the term "Beijing Consensus" China's "success story" attracts the attention of not only theorists and analysts, but also the elites of developing countries around the world. China's modernization has followed the path of finding a balance between economic growth and political stability, a market economy and authoritarianism. In 2004, J.C. Ramo published a paper in which he used the term "Beijing Consensus" to describe the Chinese approach to development and identified three of its characteristic features: a commitment to innovation and constant change; a focus on sustainability and equality as a measure of progress rather than GDP per capita; self-determination in international affairs. According to J.K. Ramo, for developing countries the principles of the "Beijing consensus" are an alternative to Washington, including the status quo based on American hegemony. In the expert community, the concept described by J.K. Ramo caused controversy. For example, according to S. Halper, the "Beijing consensus" is about promoting market authoritarianism in the developing world without reference to the characteristics of political regimes and the human rights situation¹¹. China's main goals are to ensure access to natural resources necessary for economic growth, as well as to create a network of states that are friendly towards it, including in ideological terms, and not purely economic ones. The punctuality and specificity of the Chinese in implementing large-scale infrastructure projects contrasts favorably with the liberal capitalism of Western institutions, which require lengthy approvals taking into account non-economic factors. In general, the argument of critics of the "Beijing consensus" boils down to the following. First of all, in recent history the Chinese have not been and, perhaps, are not yet leaders in the field of modern innovation. Essentially, their technology initiatives are imitative in nature, since Chinese enterprises predominantly manufacture products and provide services that were developed outside the country. The most successful Chinese high-tech companies enter global production chains as assemblers or manufacturers of already developed models. The bulk of

¹⁰ Ананьина К.А. Теоретические аспекты демократической идентичности в осмыслении угроз национальной безопасности. Рецензия на книгу: Hayes, J. Constructing National Security: U.S. Relations with India and China. Cambridge University Press, 2013. 211 p. / К.А.Ананьина // Сравнительная политика. – 2018. – Т.9, №3. – С. 162.

¹¹ Halper S. The Beijing Consensus: How China's Authoritarian Model Will Dominate the 21st Century / S.Halper. – New York: Basic Books, 2010. – 312 p.



the added value of Chinese information technology exports is generated abroad, and about 85% of such exports are produced on the basis of either joint ventures or representative offices of transnational corporations whose head offices are located in developed capitalist countries. However, one should not underestimate the importance of innovations that were gradually introduced and subsequently used in various areas of the Chinese economy. R&D funding has increased, including in the private sector. The range of attracted specialized specialists (scientists and engineers) has expanded. The payoff from innovation in the manufacturing process was a rapid increase in the number of registered patents, copyrights and trademarks. The Chinese leadership has set the task of developing domestic high-tech products. We are talking about original technical standards in the field of information technology. Subsequently, they could be used by other countries of the world whose companies are interested in working in the Chinese market.

If we compare China's policy with the "Washington Consensus", it turns out that eight out of ten recommendations were implemented¹². China has strictly adhered to fiscal discipline, maintained a competitive exchange rate, and liberalized trade and foreign direct investment. Work continues on the four remaining points: financing public goods, expanding the tax base, simplifying market access rules, and strengthening property rights. The least progress has been observed on the issue of liberalization of interest rates and privatization, although since the late 1990s many state-owned enterprises were transferred into private hands. It is worth paying attention to the conclusions of the research team from the Copenhagen Business School (Li Xin, K.E. Brodsgaard and M. Jacobsen), who identified ten features of the "Beijing Consensus".

China invites the world to think about creating a "community with a common destiny for humanity," one of the practical embodiments of which is the "One Belt, One Road" initiative. According to Xi, China is ready to share its experience with the outside world, but it allegedly does not intend to export its model, much less demand others to copy it. Thus, in a broader sense, the term "Beijing Consensus" provoked a discussion about the prospects for Western economic dominance in the context of multipolarity and new successful country development models. The very existence of the latter poses a challenge to the universality of Western-centric norms and rules not only in the economic but also in the political sphere. The considered rationalistic approaches - realism, liberalism and constructivism - analyze the specifics of China's leadership at the regional level of international relations, as well as the consequences of its "rise" for global politics and American hegemony. Realists believe that economically and militarily, a powerful China will seek to oust the United States from its sphere of influence and interests in Asia, which is fraught with an armed conflict between the two powers. Supporters of liberalism believe that China's deep integration into modern international institutions has allowed it to gain power and influence, so it is not interested in their radical transformation, especially in open conflict with the United States. However, recently, among supporters of the liberal approach, the idea has prevailed that authoritarian China will seek to limit the influence of democratic models in all social segments of the world.

¹² Виноградов А.В. «Пекинский консенсус» в международном и внутрикитайском политическом дискурсе / А.В.Виноградов, Д.А.Дегтерев, Д.В.Спирина, А.А.Трусова // Проблемы Дальнего Востока. – 2018. – №3. – С. 18-20.



From the point of view of constructivists, the incompatibility of ideological principles (interpretation of history, identity, nationalism) gives rise to a biased attitude of participants in international interaction towards each other, therefore, in crisis situations, democratic states, as a rule, see an existential threat in the “rise” of authoritarian China. Since 2012, Chinese President Xi Jinping has been actively promoting two concepts: the “Chinese Dream” (the great revival of the Chinese nation) and the “community with a shared future for mankind” (building a harmonious world through the joint efforts of states).

China demonstrates its readiness to share its successful experience of socio-economic development, which the expert community, at the instigation of J.K. Ramo, began to call the “Beijing consensus.” The term is controversial in the academic community, including due to its similarity with the neoliberal “Washington Consensus”, on the one hand, as well as China’s pragmatic approach to providing development assistance without links to human rights issues or the political regime.