

GLOBALISM WITH CHINESE CHARACTERISTICS

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For the Chinese, the new age in their history began on November 29, 2012, when Xi Jinping, Secretary General at the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, proclaimed a long-term plan, Chinese Dream. He said speaking at the ceremony at that time: “The never-ending struggle going on for 170 years since the time of Opium Wars has opened brilliant prospects of great rejuvenation for the Chinese nation. Today, we are as close to the implementation of our goal – great rejuvenation of Chinese nation – as at no time in history, and are sure in being capable of succeeding on this way as never before.”

This is exactly when China started moving forward towards the new role in global governance. Prior to that, the country was catching up with what had been missed over the period of “Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution,” “Great Leap” and other experiments. However, the economic potential and capitals accumulated over the years of “reforms and openness,” as well as energy and passion accumulated during the period of accelerated growth finally translated into a new quality. Xi Jinping has become the symbolic figure of this new stage in Chinese history. His Chinese Dream is a long-term plan worked out for the period to 2049. In 2049, the country will celebrate the 100th anniversary of the People’s Republic of China. 2021 is one more landmark date in the history of China, as Chinese Communist Party will celebrate its 100-th anniversary. By the latter date, China is to do away with poverty and build “xiao kang,” a society of moderate prosperity. The second anniversary – 2049 – is to be marked by transformation of

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the country into a “rich, powerful, democratic, civilized, harmonious and advanced socialist state.”

Chinese Dream long term plan includes several sections dealing with development strategies. One of them is devoted to the economic reform “Xin chang tai,” or “the new normality.” The core of this reform lies in reducing dependence upon global production chains and foreign markets, as well as innovative development with reliance on domestic market. The second strategy is “I fa zhi go,” or “state administration on the basis of law,” which means combating corruption in the first turn. The third major strategy is “I dai I lu” – “One Belt and One Road,” which is referred to as the “New Silk Road” outside China. This strategy, which first dealt with creating a reliable land transport corridor for Chinese exports to Europe, has quickly turned into the framework of China’s geopolitical and geo-economic policy pursued in Eurasia, the channel for the promotion of Chinese capital, goods and services, as well as the tool of political influence on dozens of countries located in the vast area of the Eastern Hemisphere.

After burning fingers while making various “leaps” in 1950s-1960s, China has become more cautious and prefers to “cross the river feeling the way from one stone to another.” Chinese Dream was the starting stone on the way to more prominent role in global governance or even to global leadership. Then its elements – New Normality economic strategy and State Administration on the Basis of Law anticorruption policy – followed. Now we see how China is making itself at home on the huge stone referred to as “One Belt and One Road.” This stone is very big and has global dimensions. “It’s important for the country to carry out the One Belt and One Road initiative smoothly, through which countries along the route can benefit from enhanced connectivity and new rules for global trade can be built, said the “Global Times” daily a few month ago. The next big stone is already visible – it is the landmark of 2021, when the country will sum up the results of Xi Jinping’s decade-long rule and elaborate the plan of “reaching the opposite river bank” by 2049 in detail.

Thus, the longed-for “opposite bank” is to be reached in 2049. At first, its contours looked vague enough – “rich, powerful, democratic, civilized, harmonious and advanced socialist state.” However, the horizons started

clearing up in September 2016 at G20 Summit held in Hangzhou. Speaking at the forum, Xi Jinping presented not only criticism of the deteriorating economic and financial world order but also offered serious changes from current trend of de-globalisation to a new healthy global system. Many experts considered his speech as a claim for Chinese global leadership for the first time. Beijing evidently drew on the political and economic crisis in the West, as well as steady (6-7% annually) economic growth rate in China even at the painful stage of reformatting national economy. During the World Economic Forum in Davos in January 2017, Xi Jinping made a step further on the way of substantiating China's global leadership. He outlined the Chinese vision of new global economic and financial order.

Chinese plans for the global leadership didn't come out of nowhere. The sluggish deterrence on the part of the USA in the years of Obama's presidency made it easier for China to move forward. It enabled the country to substantially build up its financial, economic and military potential, challenge America in the South China Sea, and further develop strategic partnership with Russia. The Chinese retained hopes for the comparatively slow roll-back of American global domination even after the election of Donald Trump, whose coming to the White House came unexpected for Beijing. Being a presidential candidate, Trump would continuously say that America was unwilling to carry the burden of globalization. Moreover, one of his first decisions in presidential position dealt with canceling the US membership in the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), which made it much easier for China to take up leadership at least in East Asia.

At the peak of optimism, my colleagues, political scientists from China, started projecting future developments. According to them, China is to account for about 30% of the global GDP by 2049. Chinese currency – renminbi – will become equal to the US dollar as minimum. Thanks to the "One Belt and One Road" strategy, the major part of Eurasia is to become the area of China's economic domination. China will acquire powerful Navy including several aircraft carrier groups, advanced cyber defense and space strike groups. These experts would ask me: "What will happen to America in 2049? What share of the global GDP will the USA account for? What will happen to the EU? Will it collapse into national states after

Brexit? What will happen to Russia suffering from extended stagnation, as well as demographic and confessional problems?”

One of the most optimistic points of view was presented by the “Global Times” daily on the February 28th this year. It said: “From the very beginning, Trump’s egocentrism and protectionism have upset the outside world. It should be also noted that the US political chaos and dysfunction also offer an opportunity for other countries to more actively engage in rebuilding global order. If we cannot expect the US to play an active role, other global powers, including China, should enhance coordination to promote globalization and multilateralism and establish a new order of global governance. Globalization has powered global growth in the past few decades. Given the heavy economic interdependence among countries, the only way out for global economic woes is to make concerted efforts to strengthen management on globalization so as to make it better serve the people. There is growing demand for China to play a major role in further promoting globalization. China now has become more powerful and should meet the expectations of the world.

The Chinese are great realists and are capable of clear thinking. The political scientists adhering to both pro-Western and anti-Western schools of thought admit that China cannot soon become the global leader in the American meaning of the term, i.e. the military hegemon and universal currency emission center. “Yes, we have money. Our banking system controls \$33 trillion outpacing the American and EU’s ones. Our GDP in terms of purchasing power parity (PPP) accounts for almost 18% of the global one exceeding America’s share (15.5%). Yes, our economic presence is distributed all over the world, but we lack military force to secure our investments. Moreover, we will hardly have such force in the foreseeable future as we cannot deploy 1,000 military bases abroad,” one of my colleagues argued. “Neither can we create the “soft power” equal to the American one. We have neither Hollywood nor CNN. Even dozens of CCTV foreign languages channels and 1000 Confucius Institutes planned for 2020 cannot change the situation. The key reason behind it lies in hieroglyphic barrier. Neither we nor any other country can surmount this Great Wall. Our ideological doctrine – “Socialism with Chinese Characteristics” – is successfully applied by 25% of the human race, yet these are the Chinese

alone. The Chinese model of proven success attracts the attention of other nations. Yet, we neither promote it worldwide, nor impose our ideology on other countries “by sword and cross,” like the western states do. First of all it is America fussing over its “tolerance,” “pluralism” and “universal human values.” We may be weaker than the USA if traditional methods of calculating the country’s might are used. But we never intended to copy the American model of domination in the world. We want a new role in the world – the one of global leadership with Chinese characteristics.”

In the context of “China’s global role,” the question on Russia’s place in the picture inevitably comes about. I think that China will also “move forward gradually stepping from stone to stone” in this regard. The answer to this question depends more upon us than upon China. If Russia stays afloat, Beijing will take advantage of one strategy. If Russia sinks to the bottom, another one will be used. When I have a chance to talk to Chinese colleagues in a sincere and honest way, I often hear the following considerations: “What do we need Russia for? First of all, you are shielding our northern frontier, which is very important in the conditions of China being surrounded and contained by the West. You will continue to shield it, until Russia remains an independent state because it combines national security interests of the both nations . Currently, you also ensure reliable land transit for exporting our products to Europe. The “New continental bridge” has been working since 1992. It is a combination of railroads built on the territory of Russia, Kazakhstan and Belarus in the Soviet time. This great railroad route is the backbone of our proposed Silk Road Economic Belt. All of this meets our current needs,” the Chinese experts say. “You supply raw materials to us, and will supply even more of them, as you do not have much else to export. Yes, you have certain technologies, and we will buy them from your country. However, the most important thing for China from the viewpoint of moving towards global leadership lies in the fact that Russians act as “zhan dou min zu” – a “combative” nation. Having no serious global geo-economic interests or even plans, you, nevertheless, always pick quarrels. In this situation, we are seen as a lesser evil, though it is China with its goods and money that poses a real threat to the West and the United States in the first turn.”

The optimism of Chinese experts and strategists has visibly slackened in the first months of President Trump's rule. His contacts with Taiwan separatists, threats to crack down on North Korea, as well as provocative maneuvers of the American battleships and aircraft in South China Sea, have, mildly speaking, put Beijing on the alert. At the cost of Chairman Xi Jinping's extraordinary visit to the USA and promises of serious trade and economic concessions, Beijing has managed to prevent the most unpleasant 35-40% rise in customs duties in China's trade with America, which exceeds \$500 billion annually. Yet, further deterioration of relations with Washington is currently a likely scenario for Beijing. Having compared their own and American potential, the Chinese strategists have obviously come to the conclusion that the Americans are superior in terms of combined might. Thus changes are introduced to the schedule of implementing the plan of achieving a major new role in global governance.

The current situation in the world and the prospects of global leadership are actively analyzed in China on the eve of the 19th Congress of Chinese Communist Party. Having studied the materials of this crucial event, we will soon learn many interesting new things about the implementation of "Chinese dream of the great revival of the Chinese nation," and the emerging global leadership with Chinese characteristics.

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