

CHINESE EURASIAN INSTITUTIONS IN ITS FOREIGN POLICY: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

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Manuscript received: 17/10/2022

DOI: 10.52123/1994-2370-2022-920
UDC 327(4/9)
CICSTI 11.25.91

Abstract. The article examines the nature of Chinese institution-building in Eurasia. At the moment, according to a number of experts, China's foreign policy is aimed at creating an alternative international order to the US and the West. The introduction and development of such international structures as the Belt and Road, the SCO, as well as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank testify to these changes. The article discusses the strategic and diplomatic features of the development and formation of Chinese institutional policy, within the framework of the formation of the specifics of international regimes and organization. The article emphasizes that the Chinese vision of the development and formation of international institutions is more focused on a flexible platform of cooperation, which expands its field of diplomatic maneuvers. Therefore, Chinese diplomacy to promote its international institutions and regimes has its own characteristics that fit into China's foreign policy strategy.

Keywords: China, Eurasian institutions, SCO, Belt and Road, politics.

Аңдатпа. Мақалада Еуразиядағы Қытай институционалдық құрылысының табиғаты қарастырылады. Қазіргі уақытта бірқатар сарапшылардың пікірінше, Қытайдың сыртқы саясаты АҚШ пен батысқа балама халықаралық тәртіпті құруға бағытталған. Бұл өзгерістерді "Белдеу және жол", ШЫҰ, сондай-ақ Азиялық инфрақұрылымдық инвестициялар банкі сияқты халықаралық құрылымдардың енгізілуі мен дамуы айғақтайды. Мақалада халықаралық режимдер мен ұйымдардың ерекшеліктерін қалыптастыру шеңберінде Қытай институционалдық саясатының дамуы мен қалыптасуының стратегиялық және дипломатиялық ерекшеліктері қарастырылады. Мақалада Қытайдың халықаралық институттардың дамуы мен қалыптасуы туралы көзқарасы оның дипломатиялық маневрлерінің өрісін кеңейтетін икемді ынтымақтастық платформасына көбірек бағытталғандығы атап көрсетілген. Осылайша, Қытай дипломатиясы өзінің халықаралық институттары мен режимдерін ілгерілету үшін Қытайдың сыртқы саяси стратегиясына сәйкес келетін өзіндік сипаттамаларға ие.

Түйін сөздер: Қытай, Еуразиялық институттар, ШЫҰ, "Белдеу және жол", саясат.

Аннотация. В статье рассматривается природа китайского институционального строительства в Евразии. На данный момент, по мнению ряда экспертов, внешняя политика Китая направлена на создание альтернативного США и Западу международного порядка. Об этих изменениях свидетельствует внедрение и развитие таких международных структур, как "Пояс и путь", ШОС, а также Азиатский банк инфраструктурных инвестиций. В статье рассматриваются стратегические и дипломатические особенности развития и формирования китайской институциональной политики, в рамках формирования специфики международных режимов и организаций. В статье подчеркивается, что китайское видение развития и формирования международных институтов в большей степени ориентировано на гибкую платформу сотрудничества, что расширяет поле его дипломатических маневров. Таким образом, китайская дипломатия по продвижению своих международных институтов и режимов имеет свои собственные характеристики, которые вписываются во внешнеполитическую стратегию Китая.

Ключевые слова: Китай, Евразийские институты, ШОС, "Пояс и путь", политика.

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Introduction

China is currently one of the key actors in the contemporary International Relations system. Chinese geopolitical rise implies new political and international structural changes. Within the implication of the Belt and Road Initiative as a geopolitical project, Chinese geopolitical rise generates new forms of the international cooperation, and institutional patterns different from US centric. Due to its economic growth, China has significantly accumulated its power at the global stage, which is primarily embodied within the framework of the international institutions being formed. China does not emphasize the modernization and advancement of its military power as the main mechanism in its conduct of Grand Strategy, but rather focuses on the issues of multilateral economic cooperation and enlargement of the certain institutions. The development of the institutional platform plays an important role in shaping the Grand Strategy of the state, and therefore the Chinese specificity of institutional building differs from American vision or experience of the institutional buildings. Institutional platform implies the presence of certain bureaucratic, but China will develop a global institutional platform within the framework of its strategic vision, based on the theory of international regimes (Keohane), which differs significantly from the structure of hegemonic stability.

The article is aimed at the analysis of Chinese Eurasian strategy through developing its economic and geoeconomic institutions, projects and initiatives. The article reveals the topic of China's institutional building in Eurasia. Basic attention is paid for the development and maturing of such institutions like SCO and BRI, which present Chinese foreign and strategic presence within the Eurasian region.

Methodology

In this article, Robert Keohane's theory of international regimes is used (Keohane, 2005), as a methodological base. The problem with researching Chinese foreign policy is that it is dominated by realistic narratives, which were outlined by John

Mearsheimer (Mearsheimer, 2014) in his famous thesis "Will China's rise be peacefully?". And accordingly, the perception and narratives of Chinese diplomacy are perceived through the prism of offensive realism, which forms the subjective vision of Chinese foreign policy. In this article, an alternative point of view is displayed, where the dynamics of Chinese foreign policy is determined to a greater extent by idealistic narratives and foundations, within the framework of the theory of international regimes.

According to Keohane's theory of international regimes, economic development leads to the institutional formation of the international system (Keohane, 2011), or to the strengthening of its institutional components. Thus, in this case, given the economic potential of the PRC, for Beijing, accordingly, there is a need to formalize the framework of its institutional strategy. According to the theory of neoliberal institutionalism, states unite into institutions to enhance cooperation among themselves (Keohane, 2011), creating a certain amount of interdependence that does not allow them to enter a state of classic security dilemma (Russett, 1978). Also, institutions, among other things, are characterized by the fact that they have a clear administrative-bureaucratic identity, which also forms the internal agenda in the organization itself, between its state-members. Feature of the theory of international regimes, for Chinese diplomacy, is that it fits into the structure of Chinese foreign policy. Why are there no administrative-bureaucratic institutions within the Belt and Road Initiative? The lack of a clear administrative-bureaucratic identity or developed structures, allows Beijing to make flexible diplomatic decisions and, accordingly, to promote its foreign policy in the right directions. Therefore, the theory of international regimes, as a scientific basis, allows to a greater extent to explain the nature of Chinese institutional building.

Mearsheimer's theory of offensive realism, despite its popularity, is too subjective in assessing China's foreign policy, overemphasizing military power, hegemony, and the regional security dilemma. This theory also forms a negative

image of China and creates a theoretical basis for strengthening xenophobic sentiments in the academic environment. The theory of offensive realism does not reflect the real positive trends in China's foreign policy, not only in Eurasia, but also at the global level. Given the size of the Chinese economy, and its format of global economic relations, the theory of international regimes is more in line with the features of the Chinese diplomatic strategy, which relies on geo-economics and globalization. Therefore, in this case, the theory of international regimes fits more into the strategic narratives of China's foreign policy, in terms of the formation of institutional structures in Eurasia.

Chinese Eurasian Institutions

China's Eurasian policy is basically focused on economic mechanisms, and security issues within Eurasia are not a significant and determining factor. As part of the implementation of its foreign policy strategy, China is more focused on the implementation of the Belt and Road projects. It should be noted that this organization does not have any specific institutional form (Sun, 2020), but to a greater extent exists within the framework of the regime. Although some Western experts note that China is striving to create its own international structures (Atlantic Council, 2021) nevertheless, the institutional building of China will be of a slightly different nature, in contrast to the Western or American approaches. First, according to Keohane's definition, the hegemon is the only structure that creates around itself a number of regimes that will adhere to the states that are in the sphere of influence of this hegemon (Keohane, 1980). The regime is determined by cooperation, but international regimes differ from institutions in that they do not have any clear institutional framework for resolving set of problems or agenda. The main feature of international institutions and regimes is the presence of common interests that unite the states participating in this process, and the institutions serve to solve this problem (Keohane, 1980).

In its Eurasian strategy, China takes into account its past mistakes, especially the case with the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, when Beijing proposed to

transform the SCO into an organization with an economic direction, but this proposal was rejected by Russia and Kazakhstan, respectively (Syroyezhkin, 2016). From the beginning, in order to completely understand the case, one should look at the evolution of the SCO as one of the participants, or the architecture of the regional security system. The SCO was originally conceived as an organization aimed at solving regional cross-border problems. Then, the concept of the struggle of three evils - "terrorism, extremism, separatism" began to occupy an important role within the organization. According to experts, in the mid-2000s, China proposed the idea of strengthening the economic component within the SCO by creating a SCO bank, which did not find appropriate support from other member-states. The SCO, as an organization, has an appropriate administrative-bureaucratic apparatus. Within the framework of the organization, there are institutions that are responsible for the implementation of cooperation in one direction or another. The membership of China and other member countries in the SCO requires them to accept a common bureaucratic procedure, and, of course, the approval of other members of the organization. This, in turn, can slow down the decision-making process, or face rejection. The very existence of institutions creates a number of bureaucratic obstacles for the more effective promotion of their interests. So, given the size of the economies of China and other SCO member-states, if the economic component or functionality of the SCO were strengthened, this would lead to an increase in the economic dependence of other members. Even here, the issue is not China's status as a hegemon, the status of which official Beijing always tries to avoid, but in terms of the economic efficiency. The institutional base of the SCO would create inflexible conditions for the implementation of economic projects. It would be obvious the trade and economic dominance of China, which would have already passed into the geopolitical plane (Gabuev, 2017). In the context of new geopolitical realities, the SCO for China, including in the context of expanding the organization, is becoming an even more important and convenient mechanism for promoting its strategy in Eurasia. Despite some statics within the organization, the potential of the SCO, both

in the context of the regional security architecture and in the context of China's growing economic influence, is partially realized and becomes part of the new world order and, particularly in Eurasia.

By contrast, the Belt and Road Initiative has a flexible institutional framework. First, we need to distinguish what are regime and institutions? International regimes have an idealistic basis, i.e., for example, the creation of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, pursued the goal of strengthening peace in Europe, or the Strategic Arms Control Treaty, similarly. Thus, the Belt and Road Initiative, at the strategic level, seeks to promote the image of China as a new center of power that generates economic development from which everyone benefits, i.e., through diplomacy, a strategic goal is indicated. Secondly, the Belt and Road Initiative is not limited to an institutional framework, and this gives Beijing a wide field for diplomatic maneuvers. China is promoting the New Silk Road project as a large-scale transformation of the entire trade and economic structure of Eurasia, and first of all of Central Asia. In this space, this is an overland route that has its own advantages and challenges.

A feature of the Belt and Road Initiative is that participants can prioritize the format of bilateral cooperation, which allows them to make flexible decisions bypassing other participants.

Within the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative, three main directions were identified: the Northern, which covers Northern Eurasia (China-Mongolia-Russia-EU), the central (China-Central Asia-Middle East-EU), and the southern one, which is a maritime Belt and Road. Given the difficulties and confrontational relations between Russian and the West, China does not seek to invest in the northern direction (Shah, 2020). So, at the official level, within the framework of bilateral Russian Chinese relations, as well as at the multilateral level of pairing the EAEU and the Belt and Road, the parties have repeatedly stressed the need to strengthen cooperation in the development of transport and logistics infrastructure, but as real data shows, cooperation between the parties remain on paper.

Another essential element that determines the peculiarities of the PRC's

hegemonic construction is its foreign policy doctrine. China initially recognizes the international system as bipolar, but the Chinese vision of bipolarity is based on an ideological perception of the world order, which is more inclined to see in the context of the Rich North and Poor South (Zhao, 2021).

And another important aspect, within the framework of the Chinese world vision, is the idea of the inviolability of national sovereignty. Russia and China seek to counter the Western expansion of neoliberal institutionalism (Lewis, 2018). At first glance, it may seem that the idea of "Greater Eurasia" is another geopolitical brand that meets more administrative needs than a real strategic situation. But the idea of protecting sovereignty has become a central link in defining strategic policy between Moscow and Beijing. International institutions, as supranational instruments of power, oblige governments to follow a certain standard of behavior. Although in theory, neoliberal institutionalism rejects the realistic approach in terms of the dominance of one state over another, nevertheless, international institutions are a continuation or a product of the hegemon (Mearsheimer, 2011).

For China, as part of its geopolitical ascent, it is very important to abandon the Western understanding of hegemony, which is based on a strict institutional order. China, within the framework of its foreign policy, predominantly adheres to geoeconomic approaches, which mean a game with a positive sum. Here, we can give an example of the states of Central Asia, where China does not have a priority of military security issues. Aspects of military security in Central Asia are mainly limited to the fight against international terrorism, which is significantly represented within the dimension of Afghanistan and Xinjiang. But in general, the region of Central Asia and China complement each other: the Central Asian countries, to a greater extent, export raw materials and minerals to China, receiving finished products in return, there is nothing reprehensible in the context of the system of global interdependence. Objectively, this format of relations is a product of a globalized world, (Baldwin, 2019) and subjectively, the problem lies in the oligarchic structure of Central Asian economies (Umarov, 2019). Another factor that must be considered is

that the growth of Chinese power took place in an environment of global interdependence, and therefore China's geopolitical ascent took shape in an environment of global interdependence (Tellis, 2020).

China is actively applying measures of geoeconomic influence as part of its foreign policy. Western researchers R. Blackville and J. Harris note that «geoeconomics is the use of economic instruments to realize and defend national interests and achieve positive geopolitical results, as well as the consequences of economic actions of other countries for the geopolitical goals of a given country» (Blackwill & Harris, 2017). In this case, we can cite the words of D. Brewster, who claims that China is actively applying geoeconomic measures as part of its broad strategy in the Indian Ocean region (Brewster, 2019). China's economic development is the engine of its overall geopolitical strategy in the Indian Ocean. In any case, China's institution-building strategy will go hand in hand with geoeconomic engagement measures. China is actively applying geoeconomic measures in Eurasia, and therefore the nature of China's political influence is economic in nature.

In addition to strategic aspects, it is necessary to take into account the existing economic prospects, in the framework of various geopolitical projects. Here, accordingly, a logical question arises, which to a greater extent has an economic dimension than a political one. The geopolitical domination of the Anglo-Saxon countries - Great Britain and the United States, became possible thanks to precisely the control over the sea routes that connected different continents, and the economic aspect also played an important role, where the transportation of goods by sea is much cheaper than transportation by land. Therefore, from the American point of view, understanding the Chinese strategy within the framework of the implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative is geopolitical in nature. It is noteworthy that private Chinese companies do not seek to invest in economically weak states within the Belt and Road, and Chinese private enterprises prefer to invest more in the most developed economies - Japan, the EU, and the United States (Wuthnow, 2019). Experts also draw

attention to the fact that Chinese investments go basically to the infrastructure building, which helps to maintain China's economic development, more precisely, to improve its energy supplies.

In general, within the framework of the Chinese institutional building, it is necessary to understand a number of important, strategic points that are of a foreign policy nature. Here, Western experts note that China, and its geopolitical rise, as the formation of an alternative to the US international system, where China, through the development of a network of non-Western institutions, the Belt and Road, as well as the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, seeks to create its sphere of influence on the global level. It would be a priority for the United States if China remained a "trading nation" (Tellis, 2019, p.15). But such important aspects of Chinese foreign policy as the PLA military modernization and China's economic institutional building led to the formation of a Sino-centric of the world order. If we talk in geographic terms of geopolitics, then the strategy of the West, after the end of the Cold War, was designed for expansion into Eurasia, which can include the expansion of NATO and the EU to the east, as well as such geopolitical projects as the Greater Middle East and Greater Central Asia. China, on the contrary, ideology does not play a key role in Chinese foreign policy (Xinhua, 2021), nevertheless, according to a number of Western experts, China is repeating its actions during the Cold War, when China aimed to expand into third countries of the world, which are now called developing countries (RAND, 2018). Therefore, from the point of view of geopolitical perspectives, the United States views the creation of the Belt and Road as the sphere of influence of China in Eurasia and Africa. For example, China intends to increase its economic power by 2035 (Atlantic Council, 2021, p.30) and by 2049 become an advanced military power on a global scale (RAND, 2020). That is, the Chinese leadership, whether it wants it or not, but the implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative carries some geopolitical elements, and therefore, China's economic strategy, in any case, will have some geoeconomic nuances, where at least China's geopolitical image will exist, as the center of any system, and as a maximum,

China will actively use the means of geoeconomic impact to achieve its goals. A feature of China's geopolitical ascent is that it was formed within the framework of a globalized system of international relations, and therefore it is very important for China to maintain a calm situation within the regional security system (Mearsheimer, 2014, pp. 380-381), which will contribute to its geopolitical ascendancy.

Although the implementation of the Belt and Road strategy is designated as an economic initiative, the purpose of which is the mutual benefit of all its participants, nevertheless, this does not negate the geopolitical logic of this project. Although China is geographically a state of East Asia and, accordingly, the Asia-Pacific region, and should become a platform for China's geopolitical ascent, Beijing is facing active opposition from the United States and a number of other QUAD member states. Therefore, it is Eurasia that will become China's strategic aim. For example, the famous American Sinologist John Fairbank in his article «Chinese foreign policy in a historical perspective» pointed out that the continental direction of China plays an important role in its geopolitical formation (Fairbank, 1969).

Although from the standpoint of military modernization, China is developing PLA capabilities that are able to project its power on the Indo-Pacific region, nevertheless, this task serves to counter the United States and its allies. Therefore, China will strive to increase its influence in Eurasia in order to secure its strategic rear in the Indo-Pacific region.

In 2013, Chairman Xi Jinping came forward in Astana with the idea of the Silk Road Economic Belt, which later became the Belt and Road Initiative. In Astana, the Chinese leader proposed the idea of developing a continental Belt and Road, while in Indonesia; he proposed a marine component of the Belt and Road. In general, within the framework of the implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative, 6 main routes were identified:

- Sino-Mongolian-Russian economic corridor;
- New Eurasian land-based economic corridor;
- Economic corridor Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar;

- China-Indochina Economic Corridor;
- Sino-Pakistani economic corridor;
- Economic corridor China - Central Asia - Western Asia.

As noted by the expert N. Roland, before China, a number of international players tried to build and implement an economic belt, represented by the United States, the EU, Japan and South Korea. But the implementation of these projects ran into a number of difficulties, and to a greater extent they were not implemented. All this suggests that the logic of geopolitics is certainly inferior to the logic of the economy. And if China is actively investing in transport and logistics infrastructure, this in any case confirms its geopolitical interest (Rolland, 2017). But the peculiarities of the Chinese strategy, more precisely, its logic of foreign policy behavior lies in the plane of international regimes and does not fully reflect the logic of classical geopolitics.

In March 2015, on behalf of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, the State Development and Reform Committee, the Ministry of Commerce and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China published the document «Vision and Actions to Promote the Joint Construction of the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road». The document indicates that the goal of the Belt and Road is to promote the free movement of economic goods and services, efficient resource allocation and deep integration of markets, as well as to stimulate economic interactions between countries located along the Belt and Road. The project is also aimed at developing larger-scale regional cooperation and joint creation of an open, tolerant, balanced and mutually beneficial framework for its implementation.

According to Chinese expert Li Xin, communication plays a central role in defining the logic behind the development of the Belt and Road Initiative. China can become a central element within the framework of the system of pairing such subjects of international relations as the Belt and Road, the EAEU, the EU and ASEAN (Valdai Club, 2016). All this will require certain investments, since trade with the EU, for example, can be carried out by sea, also partially with Russia, ASEAN, etc. But in general, the tendencies of strengthening multipolarity began to contribute to the

enlarging rapprochement between Russia and China, on the one hand, when Russia protested the expansion of NATO and the EU to the east, in the event of color revolutions that could undermine the Russian geopolitical structure in the post-Soviet space. And on the other hand, this is the tougher and more offensive rhetoric of D. Trump, and a clear designation of China as a strategic rival in official documents (Colby & Wess, 2020). Therefore, the strengthening of multipolarization trends led to the formation of trends in the conjugation of integration processes in the Eurasian geopolitical space (Valdai Club, 2016, p.12).

For China, the issue of hegemony is very acute, since the existence of a hegemon implies the existence of a number of international structures that will be "subordinate" to the dominant hegemonic state. Now China is generating global processes, but at the same time Beijing does not seek to institutionalize them, since, firstly, this will undermine its status as a peace-loving state; and second, it can create a number of problems and prerequisites.

Although China is expanding its zone of strategic interests in Eurasia, nevertheless, China will not be involved in institution building in Eurasia, as well as in the world. This is influenced by a number of factors. Chinese Eurasian institutions are likely to be international or regional regimes. A feature of institutions is that they create legally binding frameworks, and in the administrative and bureaucratic terms create a number of inconveniences. The advantage of the regimes lies in the fact that the regimes do not have a clearly defined institutional shell, and the decisions made in them can be flexible in nature. Thus, Beijing, having created a regime of trade and economic interaction within the Belt and Road, is solving a number of strategic problems. The first problem relates to the fear of Chinese economic expansion. The creation of a political and legal platform, within the framework of institutions, can lead to the economic strengthening of China, where legally binding norms will lead to the strengthening of the Chinese economy, and as a result of its political influence. The second problem is that China may face the problem of imperial congestion. Although Beijing possesses colossal financial resources, nevertheless, Beijing will

concentrate its investments in the most economically profitable and politically stable areas, and therefore the regime's formula helps to preserve its economic flexibility. As mentioned above, although China and Russia declare the priority of cooperation in conjunction within the EAEU and the Belt and Road, nevertheless, as experts note, a small number of economic projects are being implemented (Shah, 2020). The regime contributes to maintaining a flexible approach in the Chinese macro-regional strategy. Another example of a regime is the SCO. The SCO is criticized by a number of experts for the loss of its functionality and for non-definition of the apparent agenda. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization is not an organization of a military-political bloc or economic cooperation. By its structure, the SCO acts as a regional platform for solving actual regional problems. The SCO can be perceived as a regional security architecture, where the interests of Russia and China, as the main members, are balanced. The admission of Iran to the SCO will not fundamentally affect the quality and functionality of this organization. Although Russia, China and Iran have a confrontational potential with the United States, nevertheless, this does not make the SCO a military-political bloc. The SCO's problems and its diplomatic agenda are likely to remain local in nature. Also, there are contradictions within the SCO, where, in the light of recent events with Iran (military activity of Iran on the border with Azerbaijan), Pakistan organized its military exercises on the border with Iran. In any case, this is not a suitable pattern for an institutional form of cooperation. Therefore, the SCO will retain the formulation of the international regime in the short and medium term.

Therefore, Mearsheimer's approach based on political realism is somewhat limited since it appeals to war as the main mechanism in interstate affairs. China, on the contrary, actively is applying for geoeconomic mechanisms, appeals to the format of cooperation within the regime, where cooperation in the context of the regime is conditioned by several strategic factors.

To understand the problem of China's institutional building in Eurasia, it is worth considering the specifics of the economic problems that exist within the framework of

the implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative. As the Chinese expert Li Xin notes: "At the same time, the Chinese initiative "One Belt - One Road" does not claim to form a certain sphere of influence, does not strive for regional domination, does not aim at creating an international institution, and, finally, does not have international legal personality. Through political coordination, interconnection of infrastructure, smooth trade, free movement of capital and rapprochement between peoples, it will open up new points of economic growth, stimulate economic development and contribute to socio-economic prosperity, peace, harmony and stability in the region. It focuses on promoting the development of trade and investment, deepening economic and technical cooperation, and, ultimately, the formation of a common economic space on the Eurasian continent" (Valdai Club, 2016, p.8).

As noted by several experts, the SCO faces with the crisis of identity. The organization has ceased to develop an agenda and has become more of a tool and/or a system of regional security architecture. But, nevertheless, the Chinese analyst Li Xin emphasizes that the SCO has the prospect for creating a platform or base for multilateral interaction of the Belt and Road Initiative, the EAEU, as well as ASEAN, "with vigorous development, it can become the central institution of a potential project to create a community of Greater Eurasia." The expert also emphasizes that "the development and institutionalization of the SCO can create an umbrella organization for the Greater Eurasian Community of Development, Cooperation and Security" (Valdai Club, 2016, p.10).

The Belt and Road Initiative is China's economic project that seeks support trade with the EU through the development of continental routes across Eurasia. China, as part of the implementation of its strategy, intends to develop a transport corridor in Eurasia, in 6 main directions, along the way contributing to local economic development. But the fact itself remains the fact that China predominantly invests in the sphere of non-economic production, namely transport infrastructure, energy, and communication facilities. Institution building is also associated with some bureaucratic issues. As noted by American experts, although

there was a call in the US political establishment for the use of similar geoeconomic mechanisms, within the framework of the Indo-Pacific region doctrine, nevertheless, the Western concept of liberalism does not allow to entirely accept such norms (Blackwill, Harris, 2017, p.259), since they contradict the values of democracy and market economy. China, as noted above, on the contrary, actively resorts to the use of geoeconomic means and methods of influence, but the problem is that China may face an excessive burden on its economy if it actively develops the network of transport corridors. Despite the actively declared idea of the development of economic corridors, China identifies a number of important and most priority ones, among them, which undoubtedly have geopolitical significance. Thus, in general, one can identify three main economic corridors in which China is most interested: first, the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar economic corridor; the second is the Sino-Pakistani economic corridor, and the third is the economic corridor connecting China with Europe, passing through Central Asia, and going out to Iran and Turkey. It is worth paying attention to Chinese pragmatism, where Beijing should calculate its investments and the ability to support them. Thus, Russia and China recognize each other as strategic partners, and the parties at a high level express their desire and readiness to maintain cooperation.

China's strategic calculations boil down to the fact that China, developing only a single transport network, may become overly dependent on Russia. In order to understand China's thinking and its strategic behavior, it is necessary to take into account the amount of investment that China is willing to invest in the development of the transport network, within the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative. China may already in the foreseeable future face the problem of the so-called "imperial reset", and primarily in economic terms. Therefore, in this strategic respect, it is very important for China to calculate its steps. So, despite the official rhetoric that Russia and China are strategic partners, including within the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative, all 40 transport projects that were proposed by the Eurasian Economic Union to China were rejected by the Chinese side. In July 2020, a senior

Russian government official said in an interview with Bobo Lo, a researcher at the Lowy Institute, that little has been done since the official announcement of the integration of the two initiatives (Shah, 2020). Among other things, the problem of connecting the Belt and the Road is that if the borders between China and the EAEU member states are opened, a number of problems will arise in competition between products from the EAEU countries and China (Syroezhkin, 2016). Therefore, this factor hinders the development of economic cooperation between the parties. The peculiarity of the conjugation of Eurasian integration and the Belt and Road is that the parties express a desire to conduct enhanced cooperation, but, in fact, speaking, nothing real is being implemented. Chinese economic activity in Eurasia is predominantly resource-oriented and does not contribute to the real economic development of states in Eurasia.

Features of the Chinese Strategy within the Institutional Building

The western direction of Chinese policy, namely in Eurasia, is of a strategic nature, and is aimed at organizing the rear in a strategic confrontation with the United States in the Indo-Pacific region. In general, the Eurasian region, in the context of the Chinese strategic policy, covers three main directions - Russia, Central Asia and South Asia. These regions, geographically, are located to the west of China, where the transport and logistics routes of the Belt and Road Initiative are laid. Thus, the Chinese strategic policy in Eurasia is divided into three ways, the first is the northern one, which includes Russia, and which through transport and logistics communications goes to Europe. It is represented by the Sino-Mongolian-Russian economic corridor. Second, this is the central direction, which covers all the states of Central Asia, where the network of transport and logistics routes goes to Iran, Turkey, and then to Europe. And the third direction is the southern route that connects Pakistan with China, represented by the Sino-Pakistani economic corridor, which creates a continental relationship between China and the Indian Ocean.

In general, one can also note the classification of regions that exist within the

framework of the Chinese strategic concept. On the one hand, China refers to its neighbors as a group of peripheral states, within the framework of peripheral diplomacy. This thesis comes from the Chinese traditional vision of the middle kingdom, but now, in the context of the economic and, accordingly, geopolitical rise of China, this thesis plays an important role in the formation of the Chinese strategic vision, in terms of identifying its priorities. So, for example, Russia is a state that can be attributed to the group of great powers, but on the other hand, Russia is located on the periphery of China, with which Moscow shares a common border. Also, some experts note the existence of strategic circles that denote a common strategic vision of the world, Beijing (RAND, 2020). Achieving hegemony is a normal and natural process of the development of a state, and the accumulation of its means of influence by military or (geo) economic means, but Beijing's policy has its own strategic features that affect its dynamics and nature, in contrast to the policy of Russia, the EU and the USA.

China's policy in Central Asia can be characterized by the fact that Beijing does not, in fact, have a policy. The term «politics» is predominantly associated with the issues of tough or military-political security. Central Asia is, in essence, a strategic hub for China in its implementation of the Belt and Road strategy. China's strategic policy in the region is characterized primarily by two determining factors:

- First, it is the maintenance of political stability in the region, as well as within the framework of existing political regimes. The existing political regimes are very friendly to Beijing, and welcome China's economic activity;

- The second is the preservation of the geopolitical status quo. China is quite happy with the existing geopolitical status quo. In addition to regional terrorism, the active involvement of the West and the activation of terrorist organizations will pose a great threat to the national interests of the PRC. China as a whole is interested in maintaining a strategic partnership with Russia, and also opposes an expanded American presence, and may be neutral about European participation in the affairs of the region. In general, the existing system within the SCO

fully meets the Chinese strategic priorities in the context of security.

As noted above, China does not have fundamental security priorities, and Chinese politics is, in fact, speaking, and 80% of the aspects of economic cooperation. First of all, for China, the importance of Central Asia is expressed in maintaining the normal functionality of transport and logistics routes that pass through the region. China does not see the countries of the region as states with a large market, and therefore the Chinese direction of economic cooperation is more focused on mineral raw materials such as ferrous and non-ferrous metals, hydrocarbons and maintaining the efficiency of transport and logistics routes.

China has an interest in maintaining geopolitical stability in the Central Asian region, and in the short term, China's security priorities are reflected by political actors such as Islamic fundamentalism and direct American intervention as the Sino-American rivalry intensifies. Central Asia paves the way to Europe, across the Eurasian continental bridge (Pantuci & Oresman, 2018). Therefore, the CA region connects China with Europe, where the importance of the region is growing within the framework of world geopolitics. Central Asia provides access to regions such as the Caucasus, Iran, Russia, Turkey, and the Greater Middle East and paves the way to Europe. This strategic configuration laid the foundation for the development of joint projects, such as conjugation of the Eurasian integration/EAEU with the Belt and Road, as well as the Kazakhstani "Nurly Zhol".

China, as noted above, due to political factors, cannot fully rely on Russia and Kazakhstan. The Chinese political leadership proceeds from the assumption that Kazakhstan may be involved in a system of potential conflicts, and the US position on Central Asia may become offensive. Therefore, it is very important for China to diversify transport and logistics routes. Even though Kazakhstan occupies a central position in Eurasia and in Central Asia itself, the geographical factor of Kazakhstan itself is not decisive. Most likely, Beijing will strengthen transport and logistics routes passing through the territory of Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and part of Turkmenistan. Noteworthy is the fact that there was a conflict between the two

countries of the region - Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan in May 2021. For Chinese diplomacy, the localization and resolution of this conflict is a priority.

China, as part of its regional strategy, is unlikely to rely on states with some level of self-sufficiency. It doesn't make sense for China to be completely dependent on Russia or Kazakhstan for transportation and logistics. For example, trade and economic relations of Kazakhstan are more diversified, in contrast to Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, and this gives to Kazakhstan a space in its economic diplomacy. Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan are economically highly dependent on China.

Here, strong links between geoeconomic and institutional patterns. In previous historical periods, Great Powers applied for the utility of the military as a main source of the international influence. Nowadays, Chinese policy is generally applying for economic mechanisms. Chinese forms of cooperation are boosted by economic means, and it gives base for its economic-diplomatic cooperation.

Conclusion

Thus, we have come to the logical conclusion that the Chinese institutional policy in Eurasia will be based to a greater extent on the specifics and mechanisms of the international regimes. Institutional building, within the framework of Chinese foreign policy, will be shaped in the context of the structure of international regimes. We see this in the dynamics of the development of the Belt and Road Initiative, as the main strategic element in the global Chinese foreign policy strategy, as well as in the case of the SCO enlargement.

The features of China's institutional building are already predetermined by the geoeconomic features of foreign policy mechanisms, as well as by globalization. Therefore, in this case, it is the institutional design that will be formed within the framework of the theory of international regimes. The formation of China as one of the leading centers of international power in the 21st century requires Beijing to develop a certain strategic line, in particular, to develop its own international structures.

China has already gained significant experience in the development of the SCO,

when in the 2000s, Beijing proposed to transform the organization in the economic direction, but where China faced a refusal from Russian and Kazakhstan. Based on its past experience, Beijing, as part of the implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative, has adopted a more flexible mode, within the framework of the international regime, i.e., Initiative. The format of the international regime allows Beijing to be flexible in terms of making strategic decisions. The format of cooperation within the framework of international regimes allows Beijing to bypass some points that do not quite coincide with Chinese national interests.

Therefore, China is not interested in developing a strict administrative-bureaucratic base as part of its global institutional build-up, as this will narrow the field of its diplomatic maneuvers. The

implementation of economic projects requires a flexible diplomatic strategy. The blurred institutional identity of the Belt and Road allows China to make flexible decisions within the framework of the strategy for the development of transport-logistical infrastructure, whose significance has geoeconomic properties. Therefore, the Chinese institutional strategy will primarily be determined by flexibility in terms of making strategic decisions.

The functioning of the SCO and the activities of the Belt and Road in Eurasia is the basis of China's geopolitical and geoeconomic grand strategy in Eurasia. It covers Central Asia, as well as South Asia. This regime allows China to strengthen its positions not only economically and geopolitically, but also to think over its diplomatic strategy in case of internal crises.

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ҚЫТАЙ ЕУРАЗИЯЛЫҚ ИНСТИТУТТАРЫ ӨЗІНІҢ СЫРТҚЫ САЯСАТЫНДА: МӘСЕЛЕЛЕРІ МЕН МҮМКІНДІКТЕРІ

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КИТАЙСКИЕ ЕВРАЗИЙСКИЕ ИНСТИТУТЫ В СВОЕЙ ВНЕШНЕЙ ПОЛИТИКЕ: ПРОБЛЕМЫ И ВОЗМОЖНОСТИ

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