

U.S.-CHINA RIVALRY AS A GROUND FOR TRANSFORMATION OF GLOBAL SECURITY STRUCTURES

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ABSTRACT

Relations between the United States of America and China are marked by cooperation and rivalry in terms of the qualitative change of security structures in the global dimension in the 21st century, which translates into political, social and, above all, economic issues, to which the logic of conflict between Washington and Beijing is closely related. China is a global economic superpower and is able to economically challenge the U.S., which has political consequences in terms of a possible change of leadership in the international context, towards a relative weakening of the U.S. position and a significant strengthening of the status of China, which is guided by the philosophy of Confucianism and the concept of the “long march” for dominance in the modern world, which – as economic determinants show – is very successful, given the phenomenon of its expansion in Asia, Africa and South America. The main intention and purpose of this paper are to present the complex topic of security structures in the global dimension, indicating the wide range of multifaceted U.S.-Chinese rivalry, attempting to diagnose the international situation and the formation of a specific new dimension of security since the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries (until 2019), determining the economy, politics and society.

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ABSTRAKT

Relacje między Stanami Zjednoczonymi Ameryki a Chinami przebiegają pod znakiem współpracy i rywalizacji na płaszczyźnie jakościowej zmiany struktur bezpieczeństwa w wymiarze światowym w XXI wieku, co ma swoje przełożenie na kwestie polityczne, społeczne, a nade wszystko gospodarcze, z którymi to ściśle związana jest logika konfliktu między Waszyngtonem a Pekinem. Chiny są mocarstwem ekonomicznym w skali globalnej i są zdolne pod względem gospodarczym rzucić wyzwanie USA, co ma swoje konsekwencje polityczne w płaszczyźnie ewentualnej zmiany przywództwa w kontekście międzynarodowym, w kierunku relatywnego osłabienia pozycji USA i znaczącego wzmocnienia statusu Chin, kierujących się filozofią konfucjanizmu oraz koncepcją – by tak się wyrazić – „długiego marszu” o dominację we współczesnym świecie, co – jak wykazują determinanty ekonomiczne – doskonale im się udaje, zważywszy na fenomen ich ekspansji w Azji czy w Afryce, tudzież Ameryce Południowej. Główną intencją i celem niniejszego opracowania jest przedstawienie złożonej tematyki struktur bezpieczeństwa w wymiarze światowym, ze wskazaniem na szeroki zakres wielopłaszczyznowej rywalizacji amerykańsko-chińskiej, podejmując próbę diagnozy sytuacji międzynarodowej i kształtowania się swoistego nowego wymiaru bezpieczeństwa od przełomu XX i XXI stulecia (do 2019 roku), determinującego gospodarkę, politykę i społeczeństwo.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE

ekonomia, bezpieczeństwo, rywalizacja międzynarodowa, transformacja

INTRODUCTION

There is no question that the United States is China's greatest obstacle to world domination. Indeed, Beijing's primary geopolitical objective is to realize a multipolar world in which China will occupy a key position economically and perhaps militarily. The PRC, in order to realize its priorities, must increasingly open its economy to the external environment so that it can win political support for itself from states with different perceptions from Washington on categories such as democracy and human rights. It is undeniable that the long-term goal of the Communist leadership is to oust the U.S. from East Asia, and in particular to counterbalance U.S. naval power in the Western

Pacific. The fact that Washington maintains significant forces in the Far East (as opposed to Europe, where they were reduced after 1989), has prompted the Chinese authorities to make efforts to modernize their military arsenal and modify their military strategy. China is of course intensively arming itself, but it is also using cyberweapons against its adversaries and, in order to acquire modern technologies, it is using economic espionage and continuing to transfer military technology from Russia and possibly India. The PRC, by forming a modern army, is ready to use such means in its relations with other countries as: conquering disputed territory (building artificial islands)¹, acquiring natural resources, strengthening its economic power, creating diplomatic ties and promoting cultural and civilization values, which are also of great importance.

It is estimated that China is second only to the U.S. in terms of military spending². Its current strategy focuses on building up its naval power and protecting trade routes that can be disrupted or cut by U.S. military forces, which are well equipped with aircraft carriers. China's military doctrine is therefore based on so-called active defense, which means that Beijing will not directly initiate armed conflicts, but will engage in disputes and conflicts that are important for protecting sovereignty and preserving territorial integrity in the event of aggression from the other side. What is at stake here is the orientation towards short but intense conflicts taking

¹ As P. Behrendt writes, in 2016 the U.S. diplomatic offensive in Southeast Asia and India did not produce the expected results, noting that the situation in the South China Sea remains stalemated: China continues to excavate artificial islands and build them up, and the Americans conduct Freedom of Navigation Protection Operations (FONOP). Nevertheless, the PRC has once again increased the pace of its operations by installing batteries of the HQ-9 long-range anti-aircraft system on Woody Island in the Paracel Archipelago. At the same time, objects that could be radar stations have been observed on artificial islands within the Spratly Archipelago and on several of the Paracel Islands. This is perceived as a clear signal of Chinese preparations to establish an Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ). It is apparent that the U.S. has no idea how to effectively counter Chinese policy in the region. So far its actions have amounted to reacting to PRC actions. Besides, the U.S. has many other problems that draw its administration's attention away from Asia. The issue is further complicated by the restrained attitude of the countries in the region, which are trying to draw maximum benefits from cooperation with both superpowers. China is well aware of this fact and takes full advantage of it; P. Behrendt, *The South China Sea: limited effectiveness of U.S. policy, consistent action by China*, „Analiza Centrum Studiów Polska – Azja”, nr 3, 2016, s. 2–3.

² K. Hołdak, *Strategiczna rywalizacja Chin ze Stanami Zjednoczonymi*, „Bezpieczeństwo Narodowe”, nr 3–4, 2007, s. 212–216.

place at sea, on land and in the air, and even in space, with Taiwan or Korea involving another external actor (which implicitly means the U.S.). Missile and nuclear weapons are being developed on this occasion, but the latter seems to be negligible in terms of its potential relative to Washington's nuclear capabilities. Of course, China is capable of hitting Japan, Korea, Taiwan, India, the Philippines, Vietnam, and Russia with medium-range missiles³. The Chinese army, however, lacks the direct combat experience that the U.S. and Russian armed forces can boast. Regardless, it should be reiterated that China is focusing its efforts on developing cyberweapons. As K. Holdak eloquently, and in a way humorously, writes:

China's doctrine of «informatic people's war» assumes that if several hundred million Chinese, supported by hackers from Russia, Iran, North Korea, Venezuela, Cuba, etc., are able to use cyberweapons, they will be able to develop their own cyberweapons. If a few hundred million Chinese, backed by hackers from Russia, Iran, North Korea, Venezuela, Cuba, Syria and other anti-American countries sympathetic to China, join forces, they will be able to use their personal laptops and computers to block sensitive segments of the functioning of the American state, especially the economy (banking system, industry, telecommunications, water, gas and fuel supplies, etc.) and the administration, thus rendering the U.S. defenseless (sic!)⁴.

THE ASIAN THREAD OF THE UNITED STATES

Leaving aside the economic issues *sensu stricto*, it should be noted that the United States, due to its close relations with Japan, South Korea and Taiwan, appears to China as a geopolitical adversary that hinders its expansion and is aimed at limiting Beijing's sphere of influence. This situation is complicated by the fact that Asia, becoming the main center of gravity of the world economy, manifests significant instability and political uncertainty due to the growing ambitions of individual states, especially China. However, the continent lacks multilateral cooperation and security structures that would neutralize potential territorial, ethnic and interstate conflicts. This includes China's attempts to control Taiwan; China's territorial disputes with several Southeast Asian states in the South China Sea⁵ over access to valuable raw material and energy resources

³ Ibidem, s. 224.

⁴ Ibidem, s. 228.

⁵ Z. Brzeziński, *Wielka Szachownica*, tłum. T. Wyżyński, Warszawa 1998, s. 190–198; Por. R. Ciastoń, *Strategia Pekinu wobec Morza Południowochińskiego*, „FAE Policy Paper”, nr 1, 2013, s. 1–7.

at the bottom of the sea; economic rivalry between China and Japan, including territorial disputes; the partition of Korea with an underlying conflict between China and the U.S.; the China-Russia border dispute, as well as Beijing's turn toward Siberia; the dispute over the Kuril Islands between Russia and Japan; and tension between China and India. As can be seen from the above, the key player in East Asia is China, whose economic potential and growing military capabilities terrify the economic and military planners in Washington, who rightly perceive in the Middle Kingdom as a threat to U.S. dominance on a global scale. As Zbigniew Brzezinski writes:

China, whatever future awaits it, is growing in power and becoming a potentially dominant regional power. The American role of guarantor of the region's security depends more and more on cooperation with Japan. (...) Russia's role has diminished significantly, and the previously dominant Central Asia has become an object of international rivalry. The division of Korea is increasingly difficult to maintain, and the future status of the peninsula is of increasing geostrategic interest to its major neighbors⁶.

At this point, it should be emphasized that Russia in Asia is weakening, and India does not seem to be as serious a threat to China, while more or less the same should be said – from the perspective of today – about Japan, which is experiencing a serious demographic crisis and its economy is no longer as vibrant as it was in the seventies and eighties of the twentieth century⁷. Thus, according to Brzezinski, China considers the United States to be its main competitor, and for the time being the United States appears to be the hegemon of the modern world. S. Yimin, to whose diagnosis Brzezinski referred, was to state that:

The strategic goal of the United States is to strive for hegemony over the entire world; they do not want to allow a major power to emerge in Europe or Asia that would threaten their dominant position⁸.

⁶ Ibidem, s. 190–198.

⁷ According to some experts on the subject, Japan has been mentally colonized by the West, which has to do with the issue of internalized individualism, reluctance to have children, or lack of resistance to the Western sexual revolution, all of which are reflected in the tradition and sense of old Japanese patriotism.

⁸ Z. Brzeziński, *Wielka...*, s. 213.

Thus, the conflict between the U.S. and China is, in a way, inscribed in the nature of international relations and Washington; the more it engages militarily in Asia and the Pacific, the more the Chinese economy, which has most likely already dethroned the American economy, develops. Meanwhile, as Z. Brzezinski points out, the main goal of Chinese policy is to use American power to peacefully dismantle American hegemony without arousing Japan's regional ambitions. In 1994, Deng Xiaoping is supposed to have stated in a circumspect manner that: First, it is necessary to counter hegemonism, superpowerism, and defend world peace; second, a new political and economic order must be built⁹.

This statement can be interpreted in the sense that China has the task of limiting U.S. domination in the world and at the same time avoiding military confrontation with the U.S., as this would put an end to its economic power. At the same time Beijing should build a new balance of power in the international forum, taking advantage of the dissatisfaction of individual countries with the U.S. hegemony in the global dimension¹⁰.

Despite its economic power, China does not have too many allies or alliances (coalition capacity). It should be noted that China's economic power is largely dependent on the inflow of Western capital and technology, not to mention foreign markets. These facts limit China's possibilities, and it should be pointed out that an alliance with Russia, which is unlikely to agree to the status of junior partner, and even less likely to consent to Chinese colonization of Siberia, although (leaving aside purely formal issues) it is gradually becoming something tangible given the economic, migration and demographic processes taking place between the two countries, appears to be less promising¹¹. It seems more reasonable for Beijing to provide assistance and establish closer relations with Pakistan or Iran¹², although the Middle Kingdom does not have to give up its plans to "quietly" conquer the Far East. At this point, it should be noted that some surprise is aroused by China's ability to build and create its own technology, symbolized by the 5G infrastructure, which the West is not able to counter with an effective alternative that would be cheaper and economically competitive (trade war between the U.S. and China and the spy scandal in Poland, indicate not only the issue

⁹ *Ibidem*, s. 214.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*.

¹¹ *Ibidem*, s. 236.

¹² *Ibidem*.

of different interests in the economic field but also technological, which is closely related to the aspect of gaining military advantage).

Meanwhile, the power of China is opposed by Japan and the countries of Southeast Asia (ASEAN), which is used by America to achieve its strategic goals, aimed at weakening Beijing. An extremely important issue for the Middle Kingdom is the issue of joining Taiwan, which will become more and more important the stronger China becomes economically and militarily. Perhaps peaceful reunification of China would become a reality if Beijing was to democratize internally, but the logic of political events rather suggests that in China, with the support of information technology, the process of oligarchization and totalitarianism of social relations is advancing. A second solution is a forceful option, but it would probably be met with a military response from the United States. Objectively speaking, however, one has to admit that time works in Beijing's favor, as well as geographical considerations – Taiwan is located only 100 miles from the mainland, while American supply lines lead across the Pacific. As K. Bobkowski aptly writes:

The emergence of such a political conflict would be seen as the result of Washington's inept policy, for most Asian states look to the United States to create a stable, enduring framework in its relations with China, Japan, and Taiwan. In the face of such events, the vast majority of Asian countries would cut themselves off from America, and China would take over as the stabilizer¹³.

Currently, Taiwan, under the U.S. military umbrella, is in a particularly difficult situation. On the one hand, it receives support from President Donald Trump, and on the other, it has to reckon with the need to make concessions to Beijing (their absence could spell disaster for the island's economy). The entity may soon lose the remnants of international support for its sovereignty. Today, Taiwan is recognized almost exclusively by small island states and the U.S., but unofficially. In practice, the only important partner for Taiwan remains the United States, which, however, would rather quietly stoke separatist sentiment on the island than engage in a direct clash with Beijing. In this situation, the Taiwanese government must accept the failure of its

¹³ K. Bobkowski, *Chiny w grze o dominację nad Eurazją*, „Przegląd Geopolityczny”, t. 6, 2013, s. 55–56.

independence policy and reactivate good relations with China¹⁴. In the long run, the Taiwan issue, from the standpoint of U.S. interests, appears to be a lost cause for a variety of reasons, including historical, geopolitical, and, of course, economic.

According to some experts, Taiwan is a necessary project for the rebirth of Greater China – it involves the reunification of the entire country, with Hong Kong and Macau (Macau) having been annexed to the Middle Kingdom as special autonomous regions, albeit under the control of Beijing, which imposes its political and economic narrative on subordinate entities. However, beyond Beijing's control remains the Republic of China, which consists of Taiwan and numerous adjacent islets of great strategic and military importance. In essence, the annexation of Taiwan to China means the end of the democratic regime. In addition, Beijing seeks to absorb Taiwan because of its desire to break China's blockade from the sea, which consists mainly of the Japanese islands, the Riukiu archipelago, Taiwan and the Philippines. Mastering Taiwan would give China the opportunity to go into the Pacific, which would mean a serious problem for America¹⁵.

CHINA'S ECONOMIC EXPANSION AS A TOOL FOR ITS POLITICAL AGENDA

In recent years, it is important to note the overly significant economic growth of China, which has proven to be disastrous for the American economy. At the same time, this fact has caused an increase in the country's demand for raw materials, and this mainly refers to energy resources. China obtains them from various countries of the world, including the Middle East, Africa, South and Central America, noting that the transport routes of the main raw materials are under the control of the U.S. Navy. Thus, the alternative for Beijing has become the countries of the Middle East, as well as Central Asia and Russia – without their resources, further development of the Chinese economy seems to be problematic. In this case, the relatively short distance from the Middle Kingdom comes into play¹⁶. However, Beijing's focus on the Middle East, for obvious reasons, is not tolerated by Washington, fighting for spheres of influence in the region with

¹⁴ J. Furmanek et al., *China In (Sight) Report*, vol. 2, 2017, s. 10.

¹⁵ W. Tomaszewski, *Chiny w oczach Tajwanu*, „Najwyższy Czas”, nr 31–32, 23.07–5.08.2018, s. 52.

¹⁶ J. Skrzyp, *Stany Zjednoczone i Chiny w ujęciu geopolitycznym*, [w:] *Kultura bezpieczeństwa: potrzeby i uwarunkowania*, t. 1: *Księga jubileuszowa dedykowana profesorowi Marianowi Cieślarczykowi z okazji siedemdziesiątych urodzin*, S. Jaczyński i J. Kunikowski (red.), Siedlce 2016, s. 296–297.

Moscow, which remains in an informal alliance with Tehran and Damascus. A possible war between the U.S., Israel, and Iran would greatly complicate China's position in terms of using trade routes.

It cannot be overlooked that China is implementing its expansion plan primarily through economic means, making weaker partners dependent on it, while not imposing a specific vision of development on countries. The Middle Kingdom is developing in a way that is peculiar to Asian countries, starting with an economy based on cheap labor, through strong development of industrial and agricultural economy, and ending with intensive technological development. It is a country that belongs to the highly developed countries, with the Chinese economy developing in many areas and sectors, in particular: coal mining, metallurgy, machinery, textiles, petrochemicals, agro-food, automotive, footwear and electronics (including IT)¹⁷. Already in 2008, at the time of the massive global economic crisis, the Chinese economy showed its considerable potential, calming the negative mood on international financial markets. It turned out that Chinese finances are healthy, the credit policy is based on a controlled money supply and the Chinese currency marked its strong position in international finances. Moreover, thanks to its massive dollar surpluses (over 2 trillion), China was able not only to calm the crisis and balance its own economy but also to stabilize U.S. finances¹⁸. As Z. Wiktor writes convincingly:

For this reason, the Chinese government and financial institutions launched an active policy in early 2009 to stabilize not only Chinese but also global finance. First of all, they mobilized their own foreign exchange reserves by buying up U.S. bank bonds for a total of about \$600 billion, a sum that rose to nearly \$1 trillion in the following months as a so-called «stimulus package», which calmed U.S. financial markets and allowed most U.S. companies to get back on their feet. This action has been interpreted by experts as a significant shift of the focus of global finance to Asian markets, mainly China, but at the same time has contributed to a significant weakening of the dollar by about 15–20% and is another step in the dependence of the U.S. economy on China¹⁹.

¹⁷ M. Rybicka, W. Wieszczycka, *Chiny – rosnące mocarstwo innowacyjności*, 2015, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/282643797_Chiny_-_rosnace_mocarstwo_innowacyjnosci_China_-_growing_power_of_innovation (dostęp: 21.04.2022), s. 13–14.

¹⁸ Z. Wiktor, *Chiny a światowy kryzys gospodarczy*, „Wschodnioznawstwo”, nr 4, 2010, s. 176.

¹⁹ Ibidem.

There is no question that the second decade of the 21st century has been marked by the gaining of significant advantage of the Chinese economy over the U.S. economy, which became particularly evident after 2014. This issue raises a number of new problems not only in the world economy but also in the area of international politics and its military aspects in the plane of transformation of the existing balance of power, which until the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries was dominated by the United States.

Referring to the above, it should be pointed out that the Chinese authorities reject lucrative and “favorable” proposals from the U.S. in economic matters, which would make it possible to neutralize its economic power in a certain way. It should be noted that China initially did not want to respond positively to the appeals of former World Bank President Robert Zoellick to become a “responsible co-participant” on the world stage, while it also did not agree to the proposal of the Obama administration. The Chinese leaders did not agree with the proposal of Barack Obama’s administration, made to Beijing by economist Fred Bergsten and brought personally to the Chinese side by Zbigniew Brzezinski, to form a kind of duo or tandem in the world under the name of G-2, which would probably entail limitations in terms of operating (and investing) Chinese capital on a global scale²⁰. So far, the Chinese leadership does not share the Western mentality, not to mention human rights, but refers to the Confucian philosophy and a specific formula of meritocracy. It should be mentioned in this context that China does not so much want to closely cooperate with the U.S. as to overtake it economically and geopolitically. November 29, 2012. Xi Jinping made his first public speech after the 18th CCP Congress, which he subordinated to the slogan that the Chinese state is entering a new era or an era of *Zhongguo meng* – the Chinese dream²¹. The allusion contained in this is all too clear.

Taking the above into account, it should be noted that China is increasingly radical in formulating the need for the reunification of the Middle Kingdom, and thus its absorption of Taiwan. As B. Góralczyk:

During the period 2008–2016, when the Guomindang (National Party) was in power (...), apparently convinced that China was rapidly growing into a new power, an unprecedented rapprochement took place between the two Chinese entities.

²⁰ B. Góralczyk, *Geostrategia Xi Jinpinga – Chiny ruszają w świat*, „Rocznik Strategiczny”, 2016/2017, s. 287.

²¹ *Ibidem*, s. 288.

The two previously completely isolated organisms signed more than 20 bilateral agreements during this time, including a key Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement (ECFA), essentially leading to a merger of the two sides' economies²².

Thus, the significant role of the U.S. as Taiwan's protector has significantly weakened and China, on the basis of its strong economy, seems to be gradually realizing its policy objectives.

There is no doubt that China's policy in Southeast Asia is primarily directed against the power of the United States, which is intended by Chinese strategists to be dethroned, Russia, however, is not eager to ally with the U.S., rightly calculating that after neutralization of Beijing, it may become the closest target of the game, according to Zbigniew Brzezinski's plan, which assumes the division of Russia into several independent states, so that it would be easier to colonize that country. On the other hand, it should be emphasized that the full sinicization of the West in economic terms will put in question the question of Russia's possession in Siberia, and that is precisely the "nightmare" of Moscow's strategic position. Meanwhile, in the case of the U.S. and China, what is at stake is primarily rivalry in the South China Sea, and it should be noted that without gaining full control over it from Beijing, it is impossible to imagine the implementation of the Maritime Silk Road²³.

According to Peter Navarro – a person close to Donald Trump – China has committed a series of offenses against the U.S., ranging from trade and currency manipulation to flooding foreign markets with counterfeits and resorting to hacking attacks, to polluting the environment, or rapidly building its own navy and military power. On this basis, he urges the U.S. administration to counteract and respond quickly. In contrast, according to Thomas J. Christensen, China is already a challenge to American policy but is not yet strong enough to pose a direct threat to U.S. global dominance. As one might guess, the point is that China does not yet have sufficient military potential to effectively repel a possible U.S. attack²⁴.

As far as the EU is concerned, China is one of its most important trade partners, but on the other hand, it should be noted that Brussels, Berlin and Paris, including Warsaw (due to its close alliance with Washington), treat Bei-

²² Ibidem, s. 291.

²³ Ibidem, s. 294.

²⁴ Ibidem, s. 295.

jing's economic expansion in Europe with a certain restraint, which is not true of Hungary, Serbia, Romania, Bulgaria or Croatia. On the other hand, it should be noted that certain circumstances that occurred during Trump's presidency (e.g. his withdrawal from the Paris climate accords, or the U.S. trade war with the EU) may bring Brussels and Beijing closer, as China appears to be the first candidate to fulfil the role of the main promoter of free trade and the Paris climate accords, although – as has already been clearly stated – it is not in Berlin's and Paris' interest to have an excessive economic presence of the Central State in Europe, given the case of US-China economic cooperation, which to a large extent has enabled Beijing to build a sinister power²⁵.

We are leaving aside here the issue of differences between the EU and the PRC in the matter of human rights or fundamental freedoms. As far as climate and energy issues are concerned, it should be stressed that, as K. Pająk, J. Mazurkiewicz and P. Lis argue, a comparison of Chinese energy policy priorities against selected EU member states reveals that Chinese goals have been very ambitiously set, and their implementation is possible given the country's level of economic development, population and economic potential²⁶. On the other hand, at the current stage of political developments and China's pro-environmental efforts, it is extremely difficult to assess the real intentions of Chinese decision-makers in this matter. It is not known to what extent tactical or diplomatic considerations play a role in this sphere, aimed at winning the favor of certain entities and countries for the policy of the Middle Kingdom. It is, therefore, difficult to make a clear-cut decision on this issue, such as decarbonization, or leading the Chinese economy to a low-carbon state (in terms of emitting carbon dioxide into the atmosphere), in accordance with the assumptions of "sustainable development", would probably lead to a regression or even a collapse of the PRC's economy. The fact is that the dominant share of coal in the structure of electric energy production in China is estimated at almost 80%²⁷. This makes the implementation of the "green ideology" in this country somewhat problematic. China has a serious

²⁵ T. Morozowski, „Jeden Pas i Jedna Droga” *Chin do Europy?*, „Biuletyn Instytutu Zachodniego”, nr 319, 17.07.2017, s. 5.

²⁶ Pająk K., Mazurkiewicz J., Lis P., *Droga Chin do niskoemisyjnej gospodarki*, [w:] *Polityka energetyczna państw Azji i Pacyfiku*, J. Marszałek-Kanwa, K. Pająk (red.), Toruń 2015, s. 181.

²⁷ J. Malko, *Powrót do świata dwubiegunowego: Chiny i USA. Zagrożenia czy szanse?*, „Energetyka”, nr 7, 2011.

problem with ecology, partly due to the fact that it is deprived of crude oil and natural gas. The only thing China has in abundance is coal, estimated at 13–14% of the world's reserves – no wonder the country's energy sector is based on it and it will be very difficult to change its character²⁸.

As T. Morozowski, significant problems for the U.S. and the EU may arise from China's Made in China 2025 plan, which intends to make the leap to a 21st century economy and achieve self-sufficiency in industry. The point is that the components and raw materials are to come from their own production and technical thought so it will be possible to limit the share of foreign suppliers in the Chinese market. The realization of these ambitious plans by 2025 is linked to the recent practice by Chinese entities of buying up technologically advanced European companies. Such acquisitions are often carried out by Chinese companies, financially supported by the state. This creates a specific threat of unfair competition, economic dependence of the EU on China and selling out key enterprises of strategic importance for the security and state interests. Of course, this plan seems to be as ambitious as it is unlikely to happen in such a short time perspective, and it may come up against a barrier of a kind of "overheating" of the Chinese economy²⁹ (there is a serious danger that the People's Republic of China will fall into an investment spiral, forced by the need to maintain a legitimizing fast pace of economic growth)³⁰.

Such a significant Chinese GDP in 2014 has given Beijing the basis for a strong and modern military in the future, with the prospect of not only adapting and transforming other people's technologies but also introducing its own innovations. The situation in the West is exacerbated by the fact that the U.S. appears somewhat weaker vis-à-vis the PRC in economic terms, with the U.S.'s debt to the Middle Kingdom playing a significant role, and Beijing itself benefiting from trade surpluses with Washington and using U.S. dollar bonds to depress the Chinese currency to the benefit of domestic exports³¹.

²⁸ B. Góralczyk, *Geostrategia energetyczna Chin*, „Centrum Strategii Energetycznych”, https://cse.ibngr.pl/wp-content/uploads/cse-bogdan_goralczyk-geostrategia_energetyczna_chin.pdf (dostęp: 22.04.2022), s. 1–7.

²⁹ T. Morozowski, op. cit., s. 5.

³⁰ M. Wołangiewicz, *Chiny – niereformowalna gospodarka w nierównowadze*, „Instytut Misesa” 15.08.2014, <https://mises.pl/blog/2014/08/15/wolangiewicz-chiny-niereformowalna-gospodarka-nierownowadze/> (dostęp: 22.04.2022), s. 1–2.

³¹ Ibidem, s. 38.

There is no question that Washington is extremely concerned about Beijing's rising arms expenditures in the late second decade of the 20th century due to international turmoil and desire of the U.S. to defend the status quo, and above all, China's increased ambitions to play a greater role in international forums. Washington's concerns about PRC's military investments, supported to a certain extent by Russia (technology transfer and arms sales), are reduced to the issue of U.S. obligations towards its allies, especially Taiwan and South Korea, and international burdens of the "war on terror", as well as difficulties in increasing military expenditures in times of economic crisis when China's economic condition is relatively good. An equally important issue is the relative weakening of the U.S. global position at the end of 2018, which seems to provoke the Middle Kingdom to take comprehensive measures to reactivate the empire. In this context, there are also concerns related to the international position of the liberal-democratic system, for which in countries outside the Euro-Atlantic circle, an attractive alternative seems to be the authoritarian and effective Chinese model, promoting a strong and centralized economy³².

As for the centralized economic sphere, it is precisely this that determines China's advantage in global competition, with cultural considerations playing an important role here, promoting a collective solidarity, as opposed to Western individualism. It cannot be denied that the success of maintaining a double-digit GDP growth rate in China for almost 25 years is determined by the fact that Beijing did not follow the liberal development model of Western democracies. China has, of course, rejected the neoliberal development model upheld in the U.S.³³ At stake is opposition to the so-called Washington Consensus of the late 1980s, the content of which boils down to 10 basic points: maintaining financial discipline; targeting public spending on areas that condition high efficiency of the outlays incurred; introducing tax reforms aimed at lowering marginal tax rates and broadening the tax base; liberalizing financial markets to unify interest rates; maintaining a unified exchange rate; liberalizing trade; eliminating barriers to foreign direct investment; unrestricted privatization of state-owned enterprises; deregulating markets in terms of market entry and promoting competition, guaranteeing property rights (these

³² Ibidem, s. 46.

³³ J. Sulmicki, *Chiny umacniają dominującą pozycję w gospodarce światowej*, „ZNUV”, nr 41(3), 2015, s. 38.

determinants and principles became, in a way, the basis for the Balcerowicz Plan)³⁴. Thus, China has challenged the concept of economic reform based on the minimization of the state in the economy, liberalization of trade and capital flows, and rapid and unlimited privatization.

However, Beijing is successfully pursuing its own development paradigm, based on the state's active participation in the economy and a kind of enfranchisement of the nomenklatura (benefiting from the rent of power), although other groups are now also being "drawn into" the sphere of ownership. The key issue here is that the state administration in China uses appropriate tools and instruments to influence socio-economic life, including the control of foreign capital flows. This peculiar development paradigm is called the "Beijing Consensus"³⁵.

According to Xin Li, Kjeld Erik Brødsgaard and Michael Jacobsen, the Chinese development model boils down to the following principles: Adoption of a socialist market economy – a combination of free-market capitalism and appropriate government influence on the economy, which is expressed in China's five-year plans. The use of the best experiences of other countries while adapting them to their own socio-cultural realities, based on the assumption that the ready-made models should not be adopted in their entirety, since the conditions of development of each country are quite different. In contrast to the "shock therapy" proposed by the Washington Accord, there is a gradual implementation of reforms according to the scale of importance and difficulty, while simultaneously working to increase and improve the social division of labor. Each country should have the right to choose its own development strategy, while highly industrialized countries should not have their own vision imposed on them, which is supposed to protect mainly their interests. Thus, a stable political environment comes into play, which is a prerequisite for economic development. Soft authoritarian power provides such a basis. Thus, independence in decision making is emphasized and constant modernization of industry is stressed. The importance of developing its own innovation system based on education and development of new technologies is emphasized.

Prudent financial liberalization is obligatory, as too rapid liberalization leads to the actions of speculators and unexpected crises such as the

³⁴ Z. J. Stańczyk, *Konsensus waszyngtoński a reformy w krajach postkomunistycznych*, „Zeszyty Naukowe” nr 2, Kraków 2004, s. 59–61.

³⁵ J. Sulmicki, op. cit., s. 38.

sovereign debt crisis of Latin American countries in the 1980s and 1990s, the Asian crisis in 1997, or the crisis in Russia in 1998; the development of a “harmonious society”³⁶ is emphasized.

It should be mentioned in this context that China is not interested in ideologically spreading the values of the free market, but it should be noted that domestic producers can count on the support of their government, while foreign companies have to reckon with the fact that their activity in the Middle Kingdom will be subject to numerous and complex conditions if it happens at all. A Western company wishing to tap into China’s vast market must do so through a so-called joint venture with another company, for example, a Chinese one, which facilitates the flow of technology and enriches the Chinese economy with Western ideas. This shows that the Chinese authorities are primarily protecting the interests of their own entrepreneurs and their own economy against the interests of Western corporations and concerns, although it can be assumed that with the intensive economic growth of the Middle Kingdom, this may change dramatically in favor of the “transnational” economy paradigm³⁷. China has achieved the status of an economic superpower in the 21st century by not adopting the neoliberal reforms of Milton Friedman’s or Jeffrey David Sachs’ theory, which would have drawn Beijing into a network of unfavorable ties with leading Western economies.

RUSSIAN-CHINESE COOPERATION AND GLOBAL SECURITY ISSUES

The change of leadership in the world economy in favor of China’s emergence in the first place is conditioned by the insufficient competitiveness of Western countries. Low competitiveness of the USA and the EU has led them to excessive indebtedness, and its increase requires a radical reduction in the standard of living of the population, which Western societies are too unaware of – this situation may lead to mass protests, threatening the stability of the countries, which can be ended by an authoritarian dictatorship. In the EU countries financial stability is systematically deteriorating, as the

³⁶ J. Stojek, *W kierunku konsensu pekińskiego?*, „Kultura i Polityka”, nr 9, 2011, s. 118–119; Por. A. Goldstein, *Rising to the Challenge: China’s Grand Strategy and International Security*, Stanford 2005, s. 187–188.

³⁷ W. Świder, *O co USA walczą z Chinami?*, „Nasz Dziennik” 19.09.2018, <https://naszdziennik.pl/ekonomia-finanse/201341,o-co-usa-walcza-z-chinami.html> (dostęp: 24.04.2022), s. 1–2.

governments are compensating for the lack of effects in the sphere of raising international competitiveness and stimulating a low rate of economic growth. The relatively low economic competitiveness of the U.S. and the EU is reflected in huge debts, which are simply not sustainable in the long term. In order to counteract stagnation, programs are used to increase the amount of “empty money” in circulation (especially electronic money, which does not exist in physical form), for example in the USA, in the Eurozone, in Great Britain or even in Japan, whose economy is “slowing down”³⁸ (the Americanization or westernization of Japan is connected not only with a weakening of the economic potential but also with demographic crisis and undermining of traditions)³⁹. As J. Sulmicki prophetically, and in a way controversially, predicts:

In the long run, China’s rivalry with the U.S. and the EU is likely to end in Chinese success. One may doubt whether one country (China) will be able to snatch global supremacy from several countries united by alliances (USA and Eurozone member states). But this apparent paradox becomes understandable when we compare their demographic and territorial potentials. China’s demographic potential is twice the combined potential of the U.S. and EU. China is lifting its existing restrictions on reproduction in the form of its one-child policy and therefore China’s demographic advantage will increase further⁴⁰.

Of course in this overly positive outlook for China, one has to take into account the danger of the Chinese economy “overheating” if reform measures are not taken that would increase internal demand and lead to the formation of a large middle class, which is currently degrading in Western countries in terms of income and prestige (France, Spain, Italy). The problem signaled does not seem so simple and requires bold changes within the Chinese state and society.

China, in order to continue on its path to global supremacy, must solve a number of important internal problems. The country’s socio-economic challenges include: equalizing the standard of living between the highly developed regions and the very poor areas of western

³⁸ J. Sulmicki, op. cit., s. 40.

³⁹ P. Behrendt, R. Pyffel, *Oblicza westernizacji Azji*, „nczas.com” 16.05.2011, <https://nczas.com/2011/05/16/oblicza-westernizacji-azji/> (dostęp: 27.04.2022), s. 1–3.

⁴⁰ J. Sulmicki, op. cit., s. 42.

China; equalizing the standard of living between urban and rural populations; strengthening community security; adjusting population policy in favor of a natural increase in demographic potential; improving social welfare; the need to develop the domestic market; increasing the importance of residential construction; and raising the level of education for highly skilled workers and initiating its own solutions in the field of technology and innovation. All indications are that China's political leadership has already taken this course of change.

The anti-Americanism of China's ruling elite, which cooperates with the U.S. out of economic necessity, is causing Beijing to turn to a tactical alliance with Russia (but not a strategic partnership, due to conflicting fundamental interests). Russia has vast gas and oil resources and controls important pipelines connecting Asia and Europe and thus affecting the energy security of EU countries. However, Russia does have the military technology that the Middle Kingdom needs. It is important that Russia's infrastructure is outdated and requires large investments, which China can support financially using the world's largest currency reserves, calculated at over \$2 trillion, but it should be noted that Beijing's support can only become a reality if it obtains concrete and measurable benefits from it.

There is no doubt that the relatively close relations between China and Russia are a simple consequence of their joint protest against the dominant position of the U.S. in the world. It should be mentioned that for K. Waltz, the primary cause of Moscow's alienation and increasing incentives for China was American policy. Admittedly, K. Waltz does not prejudge the inevitability of a conflict between the PRC and the U.S. but does not rule it out in the future. The PRC undoubtedly opposes Washington's domination of the international system and advocates the consolidation of a multipolar system, but Chinese policy is based primarily on soft power, due to its significant economic position and relatively weaker military potential than the U.S. As for Russia's position in the above context, it should be emphasized that after the economic crisis in 2008 the process of change of the balance of power in Russian-Chinese relations in Beijing's favor was significantly accelerated, and this phenomenon was visible on the bilateral, regional and global levels.

These dynamics of change remain extremely unfavorable for Russia, as China's potential and international position continue to grow,

while Russia's international status has slowed down, although it should be noted that Moscow's position has recently undergone a certain relative strengthening due to its successful military intervention in Syria, which is extremely important from the point of view of Chinese interests, on the other hand, Russia's power is being effectively undermined on the territory of the so-called Holy Rus' by pulling Ukraine out of its custody thanks to the actions of the U.S. and Poland. Currently, the Kremlin is pursuing a policy of closer relations with the PRC, which in practice means that Russia will resist attempts to involve it in any form of cooperation that could be anti-Chinese in nature. On the other hand, of course, the growing imbalance in Russian-Chinese relations makes it more difficult for Moscow to use the "China card" in its policy towards the West.

SUMMARY

Taking into account the above, it should be emphasized that in the coming decades the rivalry between the U.S. and China on a global scale may intensify, and although Beijing has significant economic assets, Washington operates with sophisticated tools of influence, which include international organizations and non-governmental entities⁴¹, which take specific actions inside the Middle Kingdom, aimed at changing the mentality of the decision-makers (democratization and liberalization), or strengthening the internal opposition, both political (although it is weak) and minority-nationalist and religious. Which on the one hand are supposed to weaken or break Moscow's ties with the periphery, and on the other hand introduce creative democratic chaos to certain state entities in order to make it easier to take over their economic resources, according to neoliberal

⁴¹ Por. *Rotary Clubs in China*, "Rotary International", <https://www.rotaryclubone.org/makeups/articles/rotaryclubsinchina/> (dostęp: 28.04.2022); *Rotary Expands To Nine Clubs in China*, "Rotary International", <https://portal.clubrunner.ca/50155/stories/rotary-expand-s-to-nine-clubs-in-china> (dostęp: 28.04.2022); *Lions in China*, "Lions International", <http://lions100.lionsclubs.org/EN/media/touchstone-stories/global-expansion/35-lions-china.php> (dostęp: 28.04.2022); *China Council of Lions Club Established*, "China Trought a Lens", <http://www.china.org.cn/english/2005/Jun/132216.htm> (dostęp: 28.04.2022); *Lions Clubs China set up in Beijing*, "People" http://en.people.cn/200506/15/eng20050615_190438.html (dostęp: 28.04.2022).

concepts and actions of Western corporations⁴². Of course, at this point the question arises, is it possible to destabilize China internally along the lines of the method of conduct outlined in this way? Some analogies are evident here, but a major obstacle to the implementation of these plans is the relative economic stability of China (so far), although the country is also diverse in terms of nationality and language.

China, aware of its relative military weakness in relation to the U.S. military potential, is cautious about getting involved in local conflicts, something that neither the U.S. nor Russia are shying away from as they clash with each other in Syria and indirectly in neighboring countries. However, the PRC Ministry of National Defense, in its 2015 military strategy, stressed the vital importance of military cooperation with Russia and addressed the need for a broader Beijing-Moscow strategic partnership, while maintaining efforts to build confidence between China and the U.S. in the defense sphere and developing interaction with regional partners within the Shanghai Cooperation Organization⁴³ (effectively an anti-American position)⁴⁴ and Asian forums. Nevertheless, among the international processes of concern to Beijing, Chinese strategists singled out, in particular, the expansion of the U.S. military presence in Asia and U.S. alliances in the region, noting China's claim to Taiwan and separatist tendencies in China's Turkestan (this refers to "anti-Chinese forces" preparing a "color revolution" along the lines of the pattern in post-Soviet areas). Among the dominant threats, China's May 2015 National Security Strategy cited hegemonism, power politics, and neo-interventionism⁴⁵.

⁴² G. Nycz, *Strategiczna rywalizacja USA – ChRL i amerykańskie oceny zagrożeń łączonych z wyłanianiem się antyzachodniego porozumienia sino-rosyjskiego*, [w:] J. Ciesielska-Klikowska, M. Marczuk-Karbownik (red.), *Stany Zjednoczone – Chiny. W stronę dwubiegunowości?*, Łódź 2017, <http://dSPACE.uni.lodz.pl:8080/xmlui/bitstream/handle/11089/24926/25-53-nycz.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y> (dostęp: 13.06.2022), s. 27.

⁴³ Ibidem, p. 33.

⁴⁴ P. Trzaskowski, *Instytucjonalizacja Współpracy w ramach Szanghajskiej Organizacji Współpracy*, [w:] B. Bojarczyk, A. Ziętek (red.), *Region Azji Centralnej jako obszar wpływów międzynarodowych*, Lublin 2008, s. 227.

⁴⁵ G. Nycz, op. cit., pp. 33–34.

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