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*Adam Olechowski*<sup>1</sup>, *Jarosław Wiśnicki*<sup>2</sup>

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## COMPETITION BETWEEN CHINA AND THE USA IN THE NOOSPHERE

**Keywords:** Information operations, mechanisms of social impact, information, dez-information, nanosphere, creating public opinion

**ABSTRACT:** This paper is devoted to the accompanying formation of the new order of the international Chinese-American struggle in the nosphere or otherwise the sphere of human reason. An analysis of the experiences of conflicts between the two-polar order that took place at the end of the 20th century and the present, in which the new world order emerges, leads to the conclusion that one of the most important goals of contemporary wars is to win the battle in the mind of man. This is perfectly understood by Chinese people who have centuries-old experience in fighting for the minds of opponents. In addition to the general outline of the old and present Chinese concepts of conducting the information and psychological war, the diagram of the Chinese information apparatus and methods of its operation are also presented. The focus was also on the image of China and its opponent's head – the USA – created by this apparatus and addressed to the international audience. In writing the Article, methods of system analysis and critical analysis of public discourse were used.

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<sup>1</sup> Dr, lecturer at Academy of Applied Sciences in Wrocław; ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4331-8428>; [adaole@wp.pl](mailto:adaole@wp.pl).

<sup>2</sup> MA, assistant at Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń; ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1164-4624>; [jar.wisnicki@gmail.com](mailto:jar.wisnicki@gmail.com).

## INTRODUCTION

As wrote C. Clausewitz – every epoch has its own wars. So it has it, and our era, which was called the era of information. Although discussions are still ongoing, when it practically started, most of the discussion participants agree that the 21<sup>st</sup> century is its symbolic beginning. The evidence may be the fact that at the threshold of the 21<sup>st</sup> century we experience intensification of conflicts of the fourth generation, in which operations on the information and communication plane dominate. It is interesting that the advantage in these operations can be gained by intergenerational entities of much smaller size, but with significant opportunities and energy resources and more developed information and its capabilities, allowing to dominate the energy and information dimension in the potential (capabilities, resources, capabilities) of the armed forces (Clausewitz, 2022, p. 53). Armed conflicts that have been taking place since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century have already shown that the battles that are significant for the fate of the conflict are played not only on the military level, but also in areas such as economic, political, cultural or religious areas. According to modern Chinese military theory, there is no (so) difference between what is and what is not a battlefield (Spradling, 2022, p. 253).

The space uniting all these dimensions of battle is the infosphere, which together with the physical and geographical space creates a full spectrum of unlimited wars of the new type. So, the media of both traditional and modern ones grows to the rank determining the fate of the war. These interdisciplinary, large-area information platforms allow for unlimited social impact operations with countless actors participating in them (Wojciszke, 2022, p. 276). A similar thesis is also expressed by Chinese strategists, who believe that: in all future wars, in addition to the basic method of military strikes, the media will be a new player and in determining the course of the war will play a role comparable to military strikes (Spradling, 2022, p. 165).

China has a long tradition, which dates back more than two thousand years, in conducting activities that we now call the information war. Evidence in support of this thesis can be found in the works of thinkers representing the two most important Chinese philosophical schools –

con-fucianism and Taoism. It was the Taoist philosopher and writer, Zhunagzi, who claimed that the best protection would be provided by the so-called “sharp weapon”, i.e. diplomacy, means of political struggle and intelligence (Zhuangzi, 2009, p. 110). However, a particularly important proof is the work of the strategist and philosopher Sun Tzu, who lived in the 6<sup>th</sup> century BC, “the Art of War”, which is considered the first textbook of the information war. Recommendations on information and psychological impact on the counter-reader were also included in the Treaty “six secret strategies of the venerable Jiang”, written in the period of warring kingdoms (from 480–221 B.C.). The author of this Treaty stated that in order to defeat the opponent’s army, one must first win the hearts of his people (Plebaniak, 2021, p. 161). The thoughts of ancient philosophers and strategists have not been forgotten by the Chinese. The attention of contemporary Chinese theorists of war art also pays a lot of attention to conducting actions on the information and psychological level. An example of this is the book “Unlimited War actions”, published in the late 1990s, which the authors of Colonel Qiao Liang and Wang Xiangsui claim that in the modern war, actions on non-military levels will be decisive, including, above all, on the information, psychological and social level. The political and state leader of the PRC, Xi Jinping, is also aware of the importance of information, psychological and cultural activities for the security of the state. This is evidenced by his statement of 2013, immediately after he took over power, in which he stated that China should improve information activities, public diplomacy and social and cultural exchanges with neighboring countries (Xi Jinping, 2015, p. 307).

## **CHINESE, CIVIL INFORMATION INSTITUTIONS**

The considerations of Chinese philosophers and strategists and statements of politicians are confirmed in the practical information activities of the PRC. The state-owned Xinhua Information Agency (the New China Information Agency), which was established in 1931 in the then-communist Jiangxi province, plays a major role in conducting such activities. This agency is directly subject to the State Council of the PRC and is the high-

est state media body in China (britannica.com, 2022). Its main office is located in the PE-Kino near the Zhongnanhai government district. In addition, it has offices in 31 Chinese provinces, and its foreign correspondents have offices in 181 countries around the world (asianetnews.net, 2022). The agency publishes dozens of newspapers and magazines in eight languages – Chinese, English, Russian, Spanish, French, Portuguese, Arabic and Japanese. Since 1997 it has had its website. In 2010, Xinhua launched China Xinhua News Network Corporation (CNC), a Sino and English-speaking satellite television network, which broadcasts news to all countries of the world 24 hours a day (xinhuanet.com, 2019). The agency also cooperates with foreign information agencies, including from 2015 with the pro-Russian state media, and from 2018 with the American press agency associated press.

In addition to the Xinhua agency, Chinese International Radio (CRI) and China Global Television Network are also engaged in information and communication activities for foreign audiences. Both of these institutions were merged into the Central Radio and Television Station of China in 2018 as part of the “Plan for deepening institutional reforms of the party and the state”. CMGT) (baike.baidu, 2022a). The CMGT is directly subject to the State Council of the PRC, namely the Central propaganda Department. Its main tasks include the implementation of the CCP’s propaganda principles and policies (gov.cn, 2022).

The longest traditions in this Chinese media group have CRI, operating since December 3, 1941. Today, it covers the whole world and its daily transmission is more than 2000 hours of programs in 61 languages of the world. CRI also has its online platform, which contains 61 portals, and also publishes its magazines, among others in the Polish language “Amber”. CRI has more than 40 offices in China and more than 30 offices abroad. The main headquarters of the radio is located in Beijing (polish.cri.cn, 2019 a). Since August 15, 1954, it has been broadcasting its programs to audiences in Taiwan. However, the official launch of the special Voice of Taiwan program took place only on March 24, 2021 (baike.baidu, 2022b).

A kind of antagonist of Chinese international radio is established in 1951 and broadcasting mainly to China Continental Radio Free Asia. Today, Radio Free Asia continues its mission by presenting a different

version of the events, both current and historical ones, than in official Chinese state media. One of such activities, carried out today, is the discovery of the face of war in Ukraine. Thanks to a grant from the United States Agency for Global Media, Radio Free Asia worked with the Reporter, Taiwan's investigative service, to develop a series of articles on the effects of the Russian invasion of Ukraine (rfa.org, 2023). The presented columns are also broadcast in Mandarin, in order to provide Chinese customers with greater ease in the reception of the transmitted content.

China Global Television Network is the youngest institution to serve Chinese international information activities. This institution was directly subject to the Council of the PRC State, because it was officially established only in December 2016. However, the first broadcast in English was broadcast on trial in 1997.

The official press authority of the Central Committee of the CCP – “people’s Journal” (Renmin Ribao) has also contributed to the Chinese information and propaganda activity addressed to a foreign recipient. This newspaper was established in 1948 since 1997 and also has its multilingual online edition. Besides, it is present on foreign social platforms Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube. The “people’s Journal” is closely linked to the international news newspaper “Global times”, which has been going out since 1993. This web-based magazine about tabloid character, which also has its own internet edition in a more radical and sharper way than other foreign-oriented media, presents the position of China and the CCP in relation to the events taking place in the country and in the world. A weekly addition to Global Times is the popular comic book magazine “satire and humor” (*Fengci yu youmo*) among the Chinese. Due to its strictly propaganda nature, the Global times is sometimes referred to as the Chinese Fox News (hd-globaltimes-cn, 2022).

The United States identifies and qualifies the Chinese information agencies in the public security threat categories. Confirmation of such actions is found in the order of the Department of State of 18 February 2020 classifying the information agency Xinhua, China Global Television Network, China Radio International, China Daily Distribution Corporation and Hai Tian Development USA. The next step to expand the list of Chinese agendas is in the middle of the same year and includes China

Central Television, China News Service, people's Daily and Global Times (state-gov, 2023).

## **DIPLOMACY AND CULTURE TOOLS IN THE CHINESE INFORMATION AND PROPAGANDA STRUGGLE**

Diplomacy also plays an important role in Chinese information and propaganda activities. This is not unusual, because it is the responsibility of diplomats to promote their own country in the host country. In the case of Chinese diplomats, information and propaganda activities began, since around 2013, to become aggressive. Western diplomats and politicians are mainly critical of China. Wide application is found in this activity of Chinese online diplomats social media, mainly, Twitter. This new way of conducting diplomatic activity by China is referred to in the West as the “diplomacy of the Wolf War” (nbr.org, 2022). The support of the “Wolf warriors” is provided by an army of trolls and bots leading false and hacked accounts. In March 2019, their number was estimated at 10 thousand. The number of trolls involved in all Chinese social media activities in April was estimated at 300 thousand. According to a study by the Australian National University, the number of accounts established by Chinese diplomatic, consular and diplomatic missions has increased by 250% since March of the year. This meant an average of 720 new followers per day, compared to an average of 30 in previous years. The mentioned Hua Chunying and Zhao Lijian divide 3423 out of the last 10 new followers. Of this figure, as many as 40% are accounts created between March 1 and April 25, 2019” (konflikty.pl, 2023). Twitter alone has removed 23 750 accounts that show a strong commitment to the disinformation campaign. It also blocked another 150 000 accounts, acting as resonance boxes, strengthening Chinese source information.

The main space for spreading the versions of the events, consistent with the adopted line of narratives of the CCP, has unexpectedly become social media with particular emphasis on Twitter. This activity confirms the intention to conduct information activities aimed at the international audience, even because Twitter in China is blocked. It is interesting that

in response to questions about the situation in China, the accounts served by Chinese bots flood the asking pornography and advertisements of people providing sexual services (theguardian.com, 2023).

The Confucius Institutes also promote the Chinese point of view in the world. They were considered an important part of the propaganda structure of the PRC, among others, in 2007 by one of the high officials of the propaganda Department of KC CCP, Li Changchun (Yang, 2022). However, the primary objective of this institution, established in 2004, is to promote Chinese language and culture in the world. In 2020, there were 561 Confucius Institutes and 1170 Confucians in 162 countries (baike.baidu, 2022c). In terms of substance, responsibility for the work of Confucius Institutes is borne by the Office of the International Council of Chinese Language Hanban (Hanban, 2017). In some Western countries, however, the activities of the Confucius Institute arouse some controversy. The institutes are accused of scientific and technical espionage and of presenting a selective and politicized image of China (Edwards, 2017).

The main document illustrating the influence of Confucius Institutes in the United States is a cross-party report on Confucius Institutes at American universities and K-12 grades published in 2019. The study describes in detail the financing of institutes and the unilateral treatment by China of American schools and key programs of the Department of State in China and documents the lack of supervision by the departments of State and Education of American Confucius Institutes. Senator Rob Portman, co-creator of the document, commented on the work on its creation: “We learned that schools in the United States – from kindergarten to college – provided the Chinese government with the level of access that the Chinese government refused to the United States” (Senators Portman & Carper Unveil, 2023).

Another action to minimize the impact of Confucius Institutes on the perception of recent history under the Chinese dictatorship is the statement entitled ‘Confucius Institutes are funded by the PRC and part of the global apparatus of influence and propaganda of the Communist Party of China’ of 13 August 2020. In it, we learn that the State Department described the American Confucius Institute Center as the foreign mission of the PRC, recognizing it as an entity developing global Beijing propa-

ganda and campaign of evil-acting influence on US campuses and K-12 classrooms (edition.cnn, 2023).

The perception of the functioning of Confucius Institutes on the British islands is important from the point of view of the analysis undertaken. The assessment of their activities is well defined by the British MEP from India and the applicant for the position of Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, calling China the “greatest threat”. Rishi Sunak postulates to ban all 30 Confucius Institutes in the UK. His assessment of the impact of Chinese culture-promoting institutions is in line with the activity of Mrs Kearns, a member of a cross-party group of deputies, who are the authors of the amendment to the government law on higher education (Law on freedom of speech). It requires the transparency of funding and the Confucius Institute of Program-studies. It believes that “the fact is that we are in a hybrid war that we have not chosen, but where every potential influence is used against us, including in the academic Community.” In an interview with Radio 4, she said: “We have Confucius Institutes that undermine the integrity of Mandarin education in our country. And I am afraid that too many scientists do not want to admit that education is used by those who are against us” (standard-co-uk, 2023). This position is strengthened by the Chinese-based analyst of the Alliance for Security democracy in the German Marshall Fund, who claims that Confucius Institutes are real “pro-pagandas tools” (bbc-com, 2023). Matt Schrader, claims that websites are “platforms for an author of a friction party that is fundamentally hostile to liberal ideas, such as freedom of speech and free investigation, to promote a narrative approved by the state.” In an interview with the BBC, he added: “And since the Communist Party of China has no free press or rule of law that would control the use of power, it is no wonder that there are strong indications that the Confucius Institute is being used for wrong secret activities such as intelligence gathering and facilitating military research” (bbc, 2023).



## THE ROLE OF “GREAT IMAGES” IN SHAPING THE IMAGE OF CHINA

The multiplicity and diversity of institutions capable of carrying out information and propaganda activities on the international stage does not guarantee success in the information war. Therefore, China, in order to succeed in the information space, in addition to the development of information institutions and the implementation of new technological solutions, also focuses on the so-called “human factor”. They know that in order to achieve the desired effect, priority is given to the professional skills of both people working in information institutions and decision-makers responsible for the information policy of the state. One of the most important tasks of these specialists is to shape the international visa-market of China and to promote new ideas that are attractive to the world. The international image of the state and the ideas they promote (and ideologies) play a significant role in the fight on the information plane (Heywood, 2007, p. 16).

The importance of the idea in building the international power of the state has already been noticed by ancient Chinese philosophers. The word Lao TSE can prove that “when someone holds the great images the whole world lags to him” (Tse, 2022, p. 83). In the 1960s and 1970s, the role of such a “great image” was played by the Chinese version of communism – Maoism. This ideology was particularly popular among national and revolutionary movements in the so-called The third world and groups of left-wing intellectuals in the West (Fenby, 2009, p. 575). Since the early 1980s, China has already promoted a different ideology – socialism with Chinese specificity (*Zhōngguó tè sè shèhuìzhǔyì*). In the international dimension, this ideology emphasizes the peaceful coexistence of States and nations, and the harmonious development focused on ensuring prosperity for people (npc.gov.cn, 2023). As Chinese propagandists emphasize, socialism with Chinese specificity is an alternative to globalization (global-times.cn, 2023 a). In the version of socialism with Chinese specificity, which is addressed to Asian countries, it takes the form of a good neighborhood policy.

Another great image in Chinese international information policy is the initiative of the Chinese state authorities one Belt and one Road (Yidai yilu) referred to in international journalism as the New Silk Road. Economically and economically, it is a strategic project aimed at strengthening China's economic cooperation with the countries of Central Asia, the Middle East, Africa and Europe. According to the ideologico-propaganda justification of the project, one is also about raising the standard of peaceful development (*Héping fāzhǎn qízhì*) and building an atmosphere of political trust and cultural tolerance (baike.baidu, 2023 d).

### THE IMAGE OF THE WEST IN CHINESE PROPAGANDA

The promotion of ideas and ideology is a strategic action. However, in the current information and propaganda struggle, the speed of reaction to the current international event and imposing its interpretation on the world public opinion is important. It is also important to respond quickly and skillfully to the adversaries' allegations, such as human rights violations. In this context, there is a question of the opponent's image drawn by propagandists. This is a fairly complex problem because it depends on the international situation and the current state of economic and political relations between rivals, or otherwise – the need for the moment. A specific example of this can be two comments posted on the website of the Polish radio station of the Chinese International Radio, which concerned Chinese-American relations. The first of these, published on 24 December 2020, States that “China and the United States can expand their cooperation on global issues, contributing to the sharing of knowledge and strength with the world, and promoting the development of bilateral relations” (polish.cri.cn, 2023b). On the other hand, in the second comment of 5 December 2022, Chinese propagandists accused the United States and the European Union of lack of responsibility in foreign policy, and interference in the internal affairs of China (polish.cri.cn, 2023c). The first of these comments was posted immediately after Joe Biden's victory in the presidential election. China could then count on the improvement of relations with the USA, which were torn by Donald Trump's presidency

The second one was published during the period of tensions between China and the US and the EU.

Taiwan is the specific opponent of the PRC. According to the prevailing principle of the United China, it is an inalienable part of the Chinese state. The Taiwan issue is addressed in the Chinese information policy in two contexts – American and Chinese national. In the first of these contexts, the US is criticized for disregarding the principle of one China and for providing assistance and political support to Taiwan. An example of this is the criticism expressed in the Chinese international media by the American politician Nancy Pelosi for her visit to Taiwan in August 2022. The international Chinese information newspaper “Global times” even described this provocative and reckless visit, quoting the opinion of some Western media, diplomats and politicians, including the former US ambassador to China, Max Baucus and former Prime Minister of New Zealand, John Key, in support of this statement ([globaltimes.cn](http://globaltimes.cn), 2023 b).

In the national context, Taiwan is considered to be a rebellious province of China, and those Taiwanese politicians who seek the independence of the island are subject to criticism. The current President of Taiwan, Tsai Ing – wen and the Democratic Party of Progress striving for independence of the island are subject to particular criticism. This party and Mrs Tsai are accused by the Chinese media of colluding with foreign forces and pushing Taiwan into the abyss of disaster ([english.news.cn](http://english.news.cn), 2023).

The national context associated with Taiwan is present not only in the Chinese news and propaganda messages addressed to the international audience. It is also widely used in the impact on the Taiwanese themselves. The main objective of the Chinese activities is to undermine the confidence of the Taiwanese people in the current authorities of the island and to convince them that only the union with China guarantees Taiwan further development, and its inhabitants peace and prosperity. In their campaign aimed at the Taiwanese people, the Chinese use the internet and social media widely. They also have a rather interesting modus operandi, which is to distribute fake accounts on popular Taiwanese social media wanted by Beijing, which then as the voice of the inhabitants of Taiwan are publicized by Chinese media, and then again they go to Taiwanese social media platforms as a kind of confirmation of previous theses. It is

also important that these theses are also confirmed by some of the traditional Taiwanese media, which have finance links with mainland China (Becerra, 2022).

Another constant topic in China's information policy, which can be classified as a group of topics depending on the international situation and the current international policy of the authorities in Beijing, is human rights, including the situation of national minorities, and ethnic groups. When analyzing this topic, we should remember about cultural differences between China and Europe and the USA. In European culture, human rights are granted to man as an individual only because he is a human being (Przybyszewski, 2010, p. 21). It is completely different in Chinese culture. According to the Confucian tradition, an individual does not exist as a person, but as a part of society, so the rights of such a perceived individual do not play any role. (Przybyszewski, 2010, p. 21). Therefore, in its human rights propaganda, the Chinese focus primarily on ethnic and social groups. In this broad social context, the social inequalities and racism that exist in the West are highlighted. According to the Chinese, social inequalities and racism are growing rapidly in the US, which are named the "lighthouse" of human rights, in every possible way they disregard or hide human rights violations by their own administration and organizations. (polish.cri.cn, 2023d). The Chinese also accuse the United States of supporting terrorists under the guise of fighting for human rights (polish.cri.cn, 2023e). This accusation came when the American media accused China of the persecution of the Chinese Sinciang Uyghurs.

China's response to the USA allegations of Uighur persecution was not just the US accusation of human rights violations. In Chinese media, including social media, addressed to foreign recipients, began to publish materials presenting the dynamic development of Sinciang, which in recent years results in an increase in the well-being of its inhabitants. An example is the information provided by CRI in February 2021 that: "The problem of absolute poverty in Sunciang has been historically solved". In the same material it was also stated that: More than 60 diplomats in Geneva and senior officials of the UN agencies who took part in the video conference highly appreciated the Chinese government's efforts to promote sustainable development and protect human rights (polish.cri, 2023).

The US is becoming the main opponent of Chinese propagandists also in the in-formations and comments on current events in the international arena. An example is the global pandemic of infectious coronavirus disease (COVID-19) caused by SARS-cov-2 virus. Chinese news sites and internet portals not only criticized the US for politicizing this pandemic, but also began to proclaim the theory that the virus was spread by the American army (nytimes, 2023). By attacking Americans and criticizing them for their inability to fight the pandemic, the Chinese have also highlighted their achievements in this regard. (polish.cri, 2023). In addition to the media, diplomats were also involved in the fight against American disinformation on covid and defending the good name of China. On the official websites of Chinese embassies appeared information materials, the authors of which, citing foreign professionals, refuted alleged myths about the coronavirus epidemic, spread by the American media. (china-embassy, 2023). Unfortunately, such an opinion of foreign experts can be considered as the use of the rule of authority used in psychomanipulation.

Western, including American media, accuse the Chinese of concealing the truth about the COVID-19 pandemic. There are also claims that practically China cannot cope with the pandemic. This last allegation may be particularly inconvenient for Chinese state authorities because according to the traditional Chinese philosophy the ineffective authority loses, the so-called “mandate of heaven” and thus the right to rule the state (*Encyklopedia historyczna świata*, 2000, p. 276).

The US is also criticized by China in the context of the war in Ukraine. In this case, the Chinese media accuse the United States of provoking the Russian-Ukrainian conflict and its escalation (globaltimes.cn, 2023). They also indicate that further escalation of the conflict and the supply of Western arms to Ukraine may lead to the outbreak of war between Russia and NATO. At the same time, it is emphasized that China is in favor of a peaceful settlement of the conflict and respect for Ukraine’s sovereignty (globaltimes.cn, 2023). In response, Western countries claim that the Chinese are practically copying the Russian narrative in matters of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict. Attempts are also made to present the Western picture of the situation in Ukraine to recipients in mainland China. One of such activities is the already mentioned joint project of Radio Free Asia

and the Taiwanese investigative website The Reporter, under which materials informing about the effects of the Russian invasion of Ukraine are broadcast.

## CONCLUSIONS

To sum up, it should be noted that the information and propaganda picture of Western countries and in particular the USA, presented in information messages addressed to the international public, despite some, depending on the international situation, is negative. The main accusations against Western democracies are destabilizing the international situation, deepening social inequalities and racism. During the period of the new international order, such accusations can significantly over-harden the reputation of Western democracy and thus seriously harm their economic and political interests, especially in the countries of South America, Africa and Asia that are vulnerable to Chinese influence. The West, however, does not remain debt accusing China of authoritarianism, human rights violations, expansionism and duplicity.

The authors of this paper are fully aware that the subject discussed by them was not fully and thoroughly discussed. However, a full and thorough discussion of this complex topic would go far beyond the framework of our study. Taiwan itself is a subject for many different and extensive studies. Not without significance for the discussed topic of Chinese American struggle in the noosphere are also issues dividing both countries cultural differences. This subject would also require separate and thorough research. The role of the Information and political apparatus of the people's Liberation Army of China has also been deliberately omitted in this paper. There is no doubt that apart from civil information, he also has his tasks in the Chinese-American nospheric struggle. However, due to its complexity, this issue requires more extensive research and a separate study. However, aware of the imperfections and shortcomings of this paper, the authors hope that it will not only show and allow to understand the information and psychological mechanisms related to the formation

of the new international order, but also contribute to a better understanding of the new phenomenon of the war in the noosphere or cognitive war.

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