CHINA'S RESPONSES TO THE NEW WORLD ORDER

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Abstract: The last decades of the 20th century were very turbulent and caused major changes in international relations. To a significant extent, the changed balance of power between the world's leading countries has had an impact on international security. The changes became even more drastic with the transition to the 21st century. And while the majority of countries in the world met them unprepared, the People's Republic of China (PRC) distinguished itself by its ability to respond to them in a way that ensured its growing role in international relations.

Keywords: international relations, international security, People's Republic of China, strategic partnership, Russian Federation

INTRODUCTION

The end of the 20th century marked the collapse of the international order established at the end of World War II. As a consequence of that collapse, the world faced the process of regrouping forces in post-Cold War international relations, and the outcome of the regrouping was the creation of a formally multipolar world in which the dominance of one state, the United States of America (USA), stood out. In this way, the period of Pax Americana has begun, which a number of theorists of international politics refer to as the time of US hegemony (Lađevac, 2020).

The absolute dominance of one state in international relations, or at least the impression that such dominance exists, leads to a transformation of the balance of power, which, as such, presents a challenge to other states. In such circumstances, the given countries, first of all, change their foreign policy strategy, and if they cannot catch up with their competitors, they opt for alliances with similar countries in order to thwart the current hegemon.

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In contemporary international relations, this hypothesis is confirmed by the foreign policy strategy of the People's Republic of China (PRC), apparently caused by 'dissatisfaction with the world order led by America' (Bolt, 2014, p. 49).

ABOUT THE WORLD ORDER

The term order comes from the Latin word *ordo*, which in its original interpretation means order, series, or class; that is, it represents a whole organised by establishing a hierarchy of parts included and integrated into that whole based on certain rules.

When we talk about the concept of order, we must always keep in mind that it is primarily about public order as a political entity that integrates other parts in itself, following certain rules based on common values and rights, and that it ultimately builds a political order of institutions with the state as its end by explanation (Simić, 1999).

The concept of order is always radically opposed to the concept of disorder as its antithesis, which prevails in a state of anarchy, irregularity, and chaos. It is precisely at this point that international relations, which in part of the already described literature are defined as anarchical and chaotic, therefore as a state of disorder, try to prevail by creating a particular order of states that should regulate them by means of particular rules. It is about the efforts of states throughout history to bring some order to their relations and create, at least for one part of them, regulatory rules that will generate some kind of prerequisite for peace and development, which most of them have generally strived for (Деспотовић & Дробац 2020).

There have been numerous efforts throughout the history of international relations to create some kind of International Order as a condition for the peaceful coexistence of nations. In the modern phase of the development of international relations, the term system is increasingly used in theory, which should cover more or less the same meanings as the term order in the case of many theoreticians, while for a number of them it has acquired a completely new, more specific meaning.

According to some of them, the term order was used more in the traditional school of thought and primarily for the state and its accompanying phenomenology, while the term system is more recent and should reflect the

specifics of changes in international relations and express the essence of international relations in an elastic and more scientific-informatics way through the theoretical matrix of systems and subsystems. For example, realists are more inclined to use the concept of order in a traditional way, as it is more suitable for them to express the essence of international relations as power relations. At the same time, institutionalists, legalists, and a number of neorealists are more inclined towards the concept of system as an expressive analytical expression (Trapara, 2017).

The world has been in a constant process of changing since the 1970s, even before the new, massive challenges of the 21st century. Global connectivity was made possible by fast information and communication technology. The field of international relations has grown increasingly intricate. Worldwide, there have been new disturbances in international relations.

The end of the bipolar world called into question the place and role of the state, exposing all problems of power. The geopolitical transition of power from the Euro-Atlantic to the Asia-Pacific region (especially from the United States to China) is still ongoing. It was confirmed by geopolitical analysts such as Nye, Brzezinski, and Kaplan (Lađevac & Mileski, 2022).

Changes in international relations, new driving processes, and directions of development are not only the impression of member states of the international community but an objective fact recognised in the United Nations system as well. Although this organisation is often criticised for failing to adapt its activities to the changed circumstances, under its auspices, there have been attempts to identify the challenges faced by the actors in international relations.

Thus, at the session of the General Assembly of the United Nations at the end of 2004, the then Secretary General, Kofi Annan, presented a document in which he pointed to the fact that the world is at a crossroads and that it is necessary to reach a consensus regarding threats and challenges with which the world organisation, as well as its individual members, meet every day. With particular emphasis on the differences in the characteristics of international relations in 1945 and international relations in 2004, the afore-mentioned document summarises six categories of threats that the world is facing today:

1. Threats of an economic and social nature, which include poverty, infectious diseases, and destruction of nature;
2. Interstate conflicts;
3. Internal conflicts, including civil wars, genocide, and other forms of serious criminal offences;
4. Nuclear, radiological, chemical, and biological weapons;
5. Terrorism;
6. Transnational organised crime (see more: United Nations, 2004).

In addition to these new or non-traditional challenges, regardless of globalisation as a phenomenon that erases borders, states continue to face traditional, realistic challenges and issues of strengthening and preserving power, which show that territory, as one of the basic categories of realism, just like political geography, has not lost its importance.

CHINA AND THE NEW WORLD ORDER

International relations abound with diverse circumstances and factors that pressure states to opt for alliances and/or partnerships instead of confrontational relations. In the background of such determinations, there was always the interest of preserving the territory, the population, and, to a possible extent, political stability. However, modern international relations, under the influence of globalisation and the growing interdependence caused by it, differ in the fact that states, as well as their populations, face new challenges and threats to which it is not always easy to find an answer. Precisely, these new challenges and ways of overcoming them made states more creative in responding to them (Lađevac, 2020). China showed its creativity through the development of new strategies.

In the first decade of the twenty-first century, China often proved willing to play by international rules and norms. As its economy grew, however, Beijing assumed a more active role in global governance, signalling its potential to lead and challenge existing institutions and norms. The country boosted its power in four ways: it took on a more significant role in international institutions, advertised its increasing influence, laid the groundwork to create some of its own organisations, and sometimes subverted global governance rules.

A prominent challenge appeared in 2013 when Chinese President Xi Jinping introduced the remarkable initiative of restoring an old idea, the idea of the One Belt, One Road Initiative, which very soon became globally known as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Although this initiative, by its nature, was an example of connectivity politics—it includes investment in infrastructure and international lending, broadening cooperation with and influencing institutions in research, finance, and policy-making, acquiring international media houses, and disseminating technical and regulatory standards—reactions that followed were not positive. The idea was criticised as pursuing hegemon policy, Chinese intentions to rule the world, and even splitting the European Union (Lađevac & Jović-Lazić, 2022).

For Chinese, the Belt and Road Initiative has elements immanent to connectivity policy: proactivity, multidimensionality, discourse power, and the internationalising impact of the Communist Party. Some scholars consider "proactivity" (*zhudongxing*) as a key aspect of connectivity politics because it can be asserted in political rhetoric that one's own foreign policy is committed to the idea of "openness". China is also pursuing this strategy beyond the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and is attempting to involve more and more countries by using "openness" and "expanding the circle of friends" among groups such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and BRICS (Lađevac & Jović-Lazić, 2022).

Although the Belt and Road Initiative turned out to be very effective and equally successful in responding to the changing world order, China designed a few new initiatives: the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative, and the Global Civilization Initiative, as a practical contribution to the concept of community with a common future for humanity. These initiatives offered China's solution to facing the changes in the world.

Global Development Initiative

President Xi Jinping proposed the Global Development Initiative (GDI) at the General Debate of the 76th Session of the United Nations General Assembly, calling on the international community to accelerate implementation of the 2030 SDGs for more robust, greener, and more balanced global development and foster the development of a global community with a shared future. The GDI embraces the people-centred core

concept, follows the guidelines of practical cooperation, and advocates the spirit of open and inclusive partnership. Focusing on the development agenda, the GDI meets the needs of various countries and attracts nearly 70 countries to join the Group of Friends to work together on poverty alleviation, food security, COVID-19 and vaccines, financing for development, climate change and green development, industrialization, the digital economy, and connectivity.

The core concepts and principles of the Global Development Initiative are: prioritising development as a key to all problems but also as the prerequisite for safeguarding world peace and protecting and promoting human rights; people-centred as an expression of the need to continuously improve people's livelihoods and enhance their sense of happiness, gain, and security; leaving no country and no one behind as a promotion of inclusive development (MFA, 2021).

Priority areas addressed by the Global Development Initiative are: poverty alleviation, food security, COVID-19 and vaccines, financing for development, climate change and green development, the digital economy, and connectivity.

There is no doubt that defined priority areas request a cooperation network, i.e., multilateral cooperation.

Above all, the GDI should effectively mobilise and allocate resources to forge the greatest possible synergy for development and continue to build consensus around development as a priority to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Global Security Initiative

The Global Security Initiative (MFA, 2023a) as the concept of "China's vision of shared, comprehensive, cooperative, and sustainable security" was presented by the President of the People's Republic of China during the Boao Forum in April 2022. Although a closer explanation of the content of this concept was not given on that occasion, it became clear in the following period that this initiative aimed at strengthening multilateral forms of cooperation essential for preservation of global security. At the same time, traditional and non-traditional security threats were equally defined as the basic challenges.

The key principles of the Global Security Initiative are formulated as: commitment to the vision of common, comprehensive, cooperative, and sustainable security; commitment to respecting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all countries; respecting the goals and principles of the UN Charter; commitment to taking seriously the legitimate security concerns of all countries; commitment to peaceful resolution of differences and disputes between countries through dialogue and consultation; and maintaining security in traditional and non-traditional domains.

In that respect, China is ready to conduct bilateral and multilateral security cooperation with all countries and international and regional organisations under the framework of the Global Security Initiative and actively promote coordination of security concepts and convergence of interests. China calls on all parties to carry out single or multiple forms of cooperation in aspects including but not limited to the following ones so as to pursue mutual learning and complementarity and to jointly promote world peace and tranquility.

The GSI pursues the long-term objective of building a security community and advocates a new path to security featuring dialogue over confrontation, partnership over alliance, and win-win over zero-sum. Over 80 countries and regional organisations have expressed their appreciation and support.

Global Civilization Initiative

On March 15, 2023, General Secretary Xi Jinping introduced the Global Civilization Initiative (GCI) at the CPC in Dialogue with World Political Parties High-Level Meeting as another important public good China shared with the world in the new era (MFA, 2023b). After the Global Development Initiative (GDI) and the Global Security Initiative (GSI), the GCI will inject strong impetus into advancing humanity's modernization process and building a community with a shared future for mankind.

The Global Civilization Initiative includes everything China has been doing and creating in the last ten years. In contrast to the economic and security elements discussed earlier, the Global Civilization Initiative was first concisely presented in a speech by the Chinese President Xi Jinping in March 2023. It rests on the fact that we are all different. Of the two directions, one of which is to reduce diversity and the other to promote respect for differences between

cultures, the Global Initiative proposes to take the best. It is necessary to preserve differences, but not at the cost of destroying what is good.

The Global Civilization Initiative advocates respect for the diversity of civilizations, the common values of humanity, the importance of inheritance and innovation among civilizations, and robust international people-to-people exchanges and cooperation.

CONCLUSION

Even in the current state of international relations, burdened with numerous challenges, China remains devoted to advocating the idea of creating a Global Community of Shared Future. But it goes even further than simple advocating. China offered exact solutions: the Belt and Road Initiative, the Global Development Initiative, the Global Civilization Initiative, and the Global Security Initiative.

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