

Global peace and the mission of the Chinese and Russian social scientists *



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Continuing from the end of the Cold War, the global campaign against terrorism, as well as a series of provocative "color revolutions" pushed the issue of democratization into the foreground of the international agenda. Since the beginning of the new millennium, we are witnesses of ardent political sermons under such slogans as "Democracy as a universal value", "Democratization as a global trend" and so on.

In recent years, economic development and politics of China and Russia attracted the attention of the Western countries. In particular, in late 2007 and early 2008, leading Western media described a lot about the growing economic power of China and Russia, arguing that "the rise of China and Russia turns out to be a problem and even provides a threat to the entire Western world"¹. It is necessary to be noted that, instead of serious analysis of the unity and features of Chinese and Russian paths of development, Western scholars cautiously or with irritation consider China and Russia as "challenges". Some Western media reproach Putin's Russia with the suppression of freedom and democracy, the restoration of the dictatorship, while the number of experts and think tanks has released some publications, arguing

that "political model of China and Russia is a problem and a threat to the Western model of freedom and democracy"².

In fact, both China and Russia are searching for political and economic development, adapted to their particular national peculiarities. Naturally, as a potentially neither Western nor American way of development, this process indicates a larger scale of way search to national development, which can enrich the forms of all mankind. Western society has to overcome the installation of superiority and take calmly national development and democratization in other countries.

Collapsing building

The year of 2008 can be reliably recorded in the textbook of World History as symbolic and significant. All we witnessed the remarkable organization of Olympic Games in Beijing, the Russian-Georgian military conflict in South Ossetia, as well as the global financial crisis with far-reaching and not completely predictable consequences.

Scientists in different disciplines have given different interpretations of international events. Experts on military security tried to substantiate appearance of a new confrontation between

¹ Henry Porter. The new world order that threatens Uncle Sam // The Observer. – 2007. – December, 23.

² Thierry Wolton. Pour comprendre où va la Russie, regardez la Chine // The Observer Le Figaro. – 2008. – January, 5.

* The text is a revised version of the report made at the fourth China-Russia Forum on Social Sciences (Beijing, June 2009).

Russia and the United States in the context of a five-day Caucasian War. Experts on international policy tried to interpret changes in global geopolitics, caused by the war and the economic crisis. Economists searched their mind, hoping to find a means of salvation of the world economy after the financial tsunami and the collapse of the market. Experts on culture and communication have focused on the differences between civilizations and ideologies, stating a lack of national ideas and the insufficient level of intercultural communication.

Chaotic international situation has undoubtedly increased the differences and disputes between the Eastern and Western thinkers. It touched judgments on globalization, opinions on “universal values and the universal way”, estimates on the American way of economic, political and social management, approaches to capitalism and its method of production and consumption, and expectations of socialist perspectives and definition of China’s role.

In the article “The Great Crash, 2008: A Geopolitical Setback for the West”, published in “Foreign Affairs” in early 2009, ex-deputy minister the USA Treasury Department Roger Altman noted that “the financial and economic crash of 2008, the worst in over 75 years, is a major geopolitical setback for the United States and Europe. Over the medium term, Washington and European governments will have neither the resources nor the economic credibility to play the role in global affairs that they otherwise would have played. These weaknesses will eventually be repaired, but in the interim, they will accelerate trends that are shifting the world’s center of gravity away from the United States”³.

Altman also said that “a brutal recession is unfolding in the United States, Europe, and probably Japan – a recession likely to be more harmful than the slump of 1981 – 1982 ... This damage has put the American model of free-market capitalism under a cloud. The financial

system is seen as having collapsed; and the regulatory framework, as having spectacularly failed to curb widespread abuses and corruption. Now, searching for stability, the USA government and some European governments have nationalized their financial sectors to a degree that contradicts the tenets of modern capitalism. Much of the world is turning a historic corner and heading into a period in which the role of the state will be larger and that of the private sector will be smaller. As it does, the United States’ global power, as well as the appeal of the USA style democracy, is eroding, ... and the crash of 2008 will carry the world away from a unipolar system regardless”.

At the same time Altman did not say definitely whether “the Great Crash” is the end of the USA financial system or a model of American free market style? Does this mean that neo-liberalism and the capitalist mode of production are deadlocked? Or should it be seen as a failure of American (and generally Western) hegemony and the restructuring of the international system as a whole? He also did not explain what this disaster will lead – to the widespread destruction or, conversely, to the busy scenario of a new stage of human development.

Ideology and history: end, embodiment or nirvana?

Two decades ago, when the Berlin Wall fell, an American scientist of Japanese origin Francis Fukuyama presented a theory of “the end of history”. He announced to the world that the Western model of freedom and democracy won a historic victory and since that time the ideological differences in a society have disappeared forever. According to him, the world entered into a unique era marked by the triumph of capitalist democracy and freedom. Nevertheless, recently the same Fukuyama has taken a diametrically opposite point of view, opposing American conservatism. He destructively criticized the practice of armed imposition of USA of “free and democratic model” in Iraq, arguing that each country should move on its own path of development in accordance with certain historic circumstances.

³ Roger C. Altman. The great crash, 2008: a geopolitical setback for the west // Foreign Affairs. – 2009. – January – February.

Over the past two decades, the power and advantages accumulated by the West for centuries reached its climax. In the atmosphere, caused by the collapse of the Soviet Union and a temporary setback in the socialist countries there was “verbal hegemony” of the Western world. Following the September 11, 2001 loud anti-terrorist operations and provocative “color revolutions” were held. However, now the armed parade on behalf of “freedom and democracy” has come under question. By the end of 2008, the large-scale financial crisis embraced the world and especially the Western economic system. As the Western scientist pointed out, “the current crisis is potentially comparable with the period of “the Great Depression” in the years 1873 – 1896 and the World economic crisis in 1929. This crisis is “general”, reflected in Western systems, ideologies and models, even though it may not last as long as 20 years as it did in the previous two depressions in the late 19th century and 30-ies of the 20 century. Crisis is also a sign of “the failure in the Western theories, failure of regulation and market failure”⁴.

Recently, Russian leaders President D.A. Medvedev and Prime Minister V.V. Putin, having in mind primarily the USA, noted that only selfishness and irresponsibility of some Western powers, led the world to the current global economic crisis. They assumed that these countries are unlikely to remain leaders in the global economy, therefore the existing international political and economic order should be reformed.

On the background of drastic changes that took place in the world economy, politics and military in 2008 the theme of Chinese and Russian models of development has become particularly acute. Feeling issue in special Chinese ways and the Russian revival, some leading Western media tend to call them related to the models of authoritarianism or even dictatorship. Some think tanks launched a series of

reports in which there is serious discussion about whether it is worth to convert or assimilate China and Russia, or use a deterrent, and suppression, to separate or even destroy them. As a result of the global financial crisis in early 2008, China and Russia were in the thick of international events. The whole world is watching whether these two countries do come from the crisis and thus make a successful turn in their own development.

The world is diverse, a path is multifarious

Despite harsh statements in the world media in 2008, we are glad to see some encouraging predictions for the fate of the world. This does not mean hotly debated topic, which the Western media covers, whether the new president will save the American economy from disaster. We pay attention to the research report, prepared in a U.S. think tank. In September 2008 the National Intelligence Council of the United States issued a report under the name “Global Trends of 2025: transformed world”. As it is stated in this document, the appearance of the multipolar world is expected soon. The world political situation will undergo substantial transformation. The influence of certain Western powers will diminish, while many of the developing countries will gain international or regional recognition. In this case, one of the brightest moments in the proposed the noosphere will be changes of Russia and China’s development.

Since the 1980’s, China has achieved great successes in building socialism and implementing reforms. Russia, being plunged into crisis and confusion at the end of the last millennium, is also gradually returning to the path of stability and development. It is not only great pleasure for long-suffering, but never losing heart two great nations, but also great contribution to the development of human society. Unlike some countries – admirers of western democracy – China and Russia are seeking ways of political development, adapted to their own national circumstances.

⁴ Shenming Li. Analysis of today for the current economic crisis // Socia Sciences Academic Press. – Beijing, 2009. – Pp. 42-43.

China and Russia: from interaction to co-development

We must assume that such forecasts of world development will attract attention of many scholars, especially philosophers and political scientists. There are strong reasons to expect the emergence of more research in the fields of political philosophy, geopolitics, international relations, military security. Therefore, Chinese and Russian social scientists should make joint efforts to develop academic exchanges, deepen mutual understanding, and expand its influence in the political and economical processes in the world.

1. Intensification of scientific exchanges in the social and human sciences between China and Russia for expansion of the spiritual foundation of bilateral relations.

The system of academic exchanges can play an indispensable role in the development of China-Russian relations. Being revived after the time of failure and bounce the theoretical value is the fruit of wisdom and laborious survey of two peoples. In order to summarize and learn lessons from the recent past, Chinese and Russian social scientists should enhance mutual trust and implement extensive exchanges in the region's fields of linguistics, culture, history and issues of democracy, development, legal system and administration. Such exchanges are relatively easy, because we have many common interests. China and Russia will dispel unnecessary doubts about each other and become closer strategic partners. Establishment and strengthening of such relations will not only be beneficial for the development and prosperity of two nations, but also help maintain peace, development and prosperity worldwide.

2. Maintaining an active intellectual and political dialogue in response to a common external challenges.

In recent times, such characteristic phenomena of the modern hegemony as intimidation and interference in the internal affairs of other countries were a major obstacle to the democratization of international relations. Arguments in favor of "a clash of civilizations",

"neointerventionism", "pre-superiority of human rights over sovereignty" and "theory of limited state sovereignty", "new democratic colonialism" not only harm the process of democratization, but also pose a serious threat to the world development. Ardor of some Western strategists to create "democratic unions" or impose "western model of democracy" on countries puts the world on the brink of a new Cold War. Some western countries have found it possible to appeal on behalf of democracy to the armed forces, ignore the decisions of the United Nations Organization, abuse international law and intervene in the internal affairs of other states.

China and Russia respect the diversity of world cultures and social systems, and try to build an international political and economic order based on the ideas of equality, justice and rationality. Today the fate of the world should be in the hands of all the nations of the globe. Democratization of international relations is a necessary path for the harmonious development of the international community. Therefore, in addition to contacts at the official level, China and Russia must create conditions for joint theoretical work. Some results can be obtained only by the academic community. At this Forum, the Chinese and Russian scientists exchanged ideas, demonstrated theoretical advances and innovations in methodology. I would suggest that similar mechanisms of interaction have been used at full strength to strengthen the influence of the international community. Of course, Chinese and Russian social scientists have a long way to be able to resist Western "word hegemony" that lasted for over three centuries.

3. Chinese and Russian social scientists should have sufficient courage for the formulation of their own ideas about international politics and international economic relations.

On the one hand, China have quiet and skeptical attitude to the recent provocative ideas of the United States on "Chinese savior", "Chinese-USA joint management" and "G2". On the other hand, the global financial crisis

forces Western society to remember the “values of China and China’s role” and to be attentive to the voice of Russia. The sources of evil in the modern world are economic imperialism, liberal hegemony, democratic fundamentalism and governing of international financial oligarchs. Against this backdrop, China and Russia are strong healthy force in the international arena for reconstruction of rational and justified international political and economic order. Chinese and Russian scientists should have sufficient courage to assess the status quo and make their own assessment of what is happening, and give each other support to strengthen the role of the international political and economic life.

4. Creating of favorable environment for the Sino-Russian friendship and promoting of practical cooperation between China and Russia.

China and Russia should strengthen cooperation in infrastructure and large projects such as energy, transport and investment. It should also be strengthened by cooperation in capital markets and restructuring of enterprises, procedures for bilateral trade should be adjusted and simplified, judicial coordination should be improved as well as coordination of regional cooperation and promotion of integrated industrial development.

5. Chinese and Russian social scientists should make efforts for training.

The bottleneck for further development of economic and cultural cooperation between China and Russia today are the problems of lack of knowledge of language and lack of professional staff. Training and selection of required personnel are included in the agenda

of the Russian government. In the future, China and Russia could sign an intergovernmental or interagency agreement for the joint training. Relevant Chinese and Russian experts will have to organize regular training and practice for young and promising personnel in the field of geography, law, language, culture, management, communication and information. Responsible similar task of Chinese and Russian scientific community is to enrich cultural exchange and prepare a new generation of specialists.

The great Confucius more than two thousand years ago said: “Virtue is not left to stand alone. He who practices it will have neighbors”. We sincerely hope and belief that fair demand and voices of Chinese and Russian scientists will find greater understanding and meet a positive response in the world.

Dear colleagues and friends! In Chinese culture 60 years is a complete zodiac cycle. On the anniversary of the establishment of Sino-Russian diplomatic relations let us wish the everlasting friendship between China and Russia. “If you wonder why the water in the reservoir is so transparent, it is because it is continually and vividly comes from a source” as the great Song Dynasty philosopher Zhu Xi (1130 – 1200) figuratively reflected.

We believe that the Chinese and Russian scientists will be able to clear the way for strategic cooperation between China and Russia. Let us put together our minds and efforts to cultivate the tree of friendship! The big tree will put down deep roots. The deeper are the roots, the thicker are leaves.

Let the tree of Sino-Russian Friendship become evergreen and flowering!