



zagadki chińskiego sukcesu

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Wydawnictwo im. Prof. Leszka J. Krzyżanowskiego

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Transformation of China's foreign policy communication tools / *Transformacja narzędzi komunikacji w polityce zagranicznej Chin*

Summary

The study of China's foreign policy has shown a transformation of the country's impact at the international level because the Chinese leadership is aware that there is a correlation between the positive perception of Chinese foreign policy by the world community and the formation of international coalitions for strengthening state power. The features of Chinese Internet communication were formed in the context of the government's controversial attitude towards social media; in particular, the state supports the development of the media but strictly controls the information content because the main purpose of the media, according to the political leaders, is to protect state interests, formation of the nation's consolidation and improvement of the socio-economic development.

In China, there is a process of strengthening control over the content in the national part of the Internet and blocking access to unwanted, from the standpoint of power, content located in the domain zones that are not subject to national jurisdiction. At the same time, the Internet is actively using by the Communist Party of China for implementing its foreign and domestic policy goals: the Internet media is a tool of information and propaganda influence on the border areas and creation of favorable conditions for cooperation at regional level.

As a result, the information space is in the spotlight of the Chinese politicians, in view of the existence of two opposing trends in the Chinese Internet: the first is due to the strengthening of nationalist sentiment or so-called 'network nationalism' and the second is based on the strengthening of Western values that lead to the transformation of the cultural identity of educated Chinese citizens. Realizing the Internet's advantages for active international and domestic communication, government institutions are focused on highlighting the country's attitude to current international issues and ways to overcome them, initiatives to resolve foreign and domestic political contradictions, promotion of political power and the state in the world.

The deep transformation of the system of international relations at the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century determined the necessity of optimizing the foreign policy strategy of China through the implementation of modern foreign policy instruments for the protection of the national interests by means of the formation of the Chinese direction in the field of Internet

communication. On the one hand, the Chinese leadership is seeking to actively use the benefits of Internet communication for creating the positive political and economic reputation in the world and establishing the international cooperation. On the other hand, the national information space develops under strict censorship, forming the special political interaction of the Chinese on the Internet.

In this context, the Ukrainian researcher O. Shevchuk notes that the development of China's foreign policy at the beginning of the 21st century testifies to a departure from the outdated dogmas related to the refusal to participate in large-scale structures and multilateral diplomacy, and the transition to the use of 'soft power'. Because China strives to increase own geopolitical power and develop the non-confrontational relations with other civilizations for the strengthening of international stability, security and mutual understanding (Shevchuk O.V., 2011).

The search for the non-destructive way of state's political reforming, the study of the role of Internet communication in shaping the renewed foreign policy discourse in transformed China, the consideration of media supporting of the Chinese leadership decisions and the analysis of the specifics of the national information space have become the important directions of modern China activity. Along with the preservation of the traditional attributes of the political system that are manifested in the monopoly of power, the tendency to concentrate authority in the hands of one leader, the ideological control over the media, the lack of mechanisms for public control over the actions of state bodies, nevertheless the constitutional reform has been initiated in the country mainly in economic.

The problems of the political and information space and its impact on social changes in China are studied by such scientists as Huang Qin, Xiaoling Zhang, Shumin Su, Mark Xu, Shi Li, Harsh Taneja, Angela Xiao Wu and others in whose works the mechanisms of political information transmission, the use of the Internet for domestic and foreign policy propaganda and the influence of the online media on the development of state-building processes in China are explored. Analyzing the issues of globalized China such scholars as V. Abramov, P. Bilak, V. Golovchenko, E. Yevdokimov, L. Ivanova, G. Ibrahimova, A. Kotelnikov, B. Kuzyk, V. Larin, V. Mikheev, V. Morozova, O. Koval, M. Titarenko, S. Shergin, O. Shevchuk and others examine the features of bilateral relations, the strategy of the People's Republic of China in Internet governance and information security, the problems of the functioning of social media, etc.

The state policy of modern Chinese leadership is aimed at the inclusion of the country in the world information space and the preservation of Chinese national identity while some democratization of political life contrasts with the traditional commitment to maintaining state control over society. The economic progress and political stability of the potential international leader

contributed to the formation of a renewed communication system, developing under a special environment and distinguishing from the other countries because China differs in its political system and its cultural, historical and social achievements. The features of the Chinese Internet communication were formed in the context of the contradictory attitude of the government toward social media. In particular, the state supports the development of the media under strict control of the information content because the main media purpose, according to the Chinese political leaders, is protecting state interests, forming consolidation of the nation as well as improving economic opportunities and social conditions.

The content of China's information policy tasks is determined by the political and socioeconomic conditions of the country's development at the stage of comprehensive modernization and accumulated experience in implementing state policy in creation, dissemination and use of information. Modern China with developed information and telecommunication infrastructure is a key element of the Asia-Pacific political and information space, therefore the primary goals of the state information policy are the formation of common information space and the strengthening of the links between the centre and the regions contributing to guarantee the information security of the person and society; the government also pays attention to the development of various fields of information services and the expansion of the legal regulation of social and political relations on the Internet (Qin Huang, 2006).

The implementation of such policy required the active communication campaign concerning support its main provisions by the public, explain its social focus, substantiation of its expediency that contributed to the adoption of legislative acts for the development of the country's information space. In particular, the Charter of electronic communications of China came into force in 2000 as the first comprehensive collection of administrative legislative acts that determined the further development of this direction on the legal basis. In 2002, such acts regulating the use of the Internet as 'Internet Information Services Management Methods', 'Rules for Managing the Maintenance of Electronic Contracts on the Internet' and 'Temporary Rules for News Managing of Web Sites' appeared also in the Chinese information law (Evdokimov E.V., 2011; Syutszyuan U, 2013).

Chinese researcher Huang Qin believes that the adoption of the strategy for the creation and development of information technologies in 2000, which included provisions on the priority role of ICTs in guaranteeing national information security, regulation and development of the country's industrial sector and the information sector, was an important stage in the implementation of the Chinese informatization program. As a result, the main areas of technological development were named system integration, development

and production of software, ICT development, electronic data processing, information security, telecommunication and network technologies, etc. (Qin Huang, 2007).

The modern stage of Chinese society informatization began with the adoption in 2006 of the State Strategy for Informatization during 2006-2020 which defined the objectives and tasks for promoting the society development in China through the using information technology in the coming years. Among the main objectives of the strategy can be distinguished the ensure of the further development of the national information infrastructure; the expansion of the possibilities of independent innovations in ICT; the optimization of the structure of the information industry; the improvement of actions for guaranteeing information security; the construction of knowledge-based economy; the use of an industrialization model based on ICT; the development and implementation of an effective national information policy and system for regulating the informatization process of Chinese society; enlargement of the possibilities of using information technologies in everyday life (Ibidem).

The Chinese state institutions, that have decided to take part in the development of electronic resources, have created the unprecedented atmosphere of state's openness for the citizens, the transparency during decision-making and the reformation of the country's perceptions on the Internet. For example, during the sessions and congresses of people's representatives at various levels, public email was created to collect citizens wishes and complaints on the Internet (Ibidem).

Despite such 'openness' of the Chinese society, the system of two-stage access of citizens and organizations was offered in 1996 aimed at optimizing the state control over information activity. Thus, all users were able to access the global network only through the state-established hubs, the number of which was limited and subordinated to the ministry, agency or party-public association. At the initiative of the Ministry of Science and Technology, the development and implementation of the 'Project C 219' as the first stage of China with the participation of the national Internet zone began in the creation of an electronic wall around the networks linking government departments, regional administrations, media, corporate computer systems and internet public access hubs. (Zittrain J.L., Palfrey J.G., 2005).

In addition, the so-called 'Chinese agents' operate within the national zone of the Internet whose activity is aimed at supporting and promoting the state policy. For example, the Public Security Bureau has created more than 4,000 official accounts at Sina Weibo, as well as about 5,000 police officers have microblogs for the dissemination of 'correct' facts, dissipation of rumours and confronting government criticism (Kotelnikov A.A., 2010).

China's political leadership, aware of the advantages and disadvantages of the Internet, is actively using Internet communications for the realization of the international political and economic goals. In particular, external propaganda is an important instrument of China's foreign policy, as reflected in the White Paper on the Internet in China (2010). The leadership of the People's Republic of China understands the need to raise domestic media to a level that corresponds to the growing influence and increase of the world status of the state. During the next years, the PRC plans to invest 6.5 billion dollars in the development of media holdings which will be able to compete with global media giants such as News Corporation or Time Warner. Also, the online media, functioning at the central and regional levels in China, target external propaganda in English, Russian, French, Spanish, Arabic and Japanese languages (Ibidem).

Experts of the Asian Internet Market, analyzing the phenomenon of Chinese social media, argue that despite the active growth of the Internet market, such international companies as Google and Facebook, it is difficult to work with a 300 million Chinese audience, 67% of which are represented by the youth, interested in entertainment resources. According to the Chinese Internet Information Center, 538 million people use the Internet, 78% of them mostly from urban areas and half of the Internet users under 25 years of age (Deleon N., 2009). Such features of the Chinese Internet audience are related to certain political, economic and cultural characteristics of the state that must necessarily be taken into account acting in the domestic market.

While Western companies, such as Facebook, are seeking to conquer the market and simultaneously create working business models for the whole world, their Chinese counterparts have already built profitable systems that earn billions of dollars a year (Ibidem). Currently, many local social media are working successfully in China that functional capabilities are not inferior to the leading western online portals. Consequently, the largest social network is Qzone with more than 300 million users; the social network 51.com remains in second place with 130 million users; the student social network RenRen - 40 million registered; the social network Kaixin001 is rapidly gaining popularity among Chinese residents and has about 30 million users (Andrukhaeva A., 2012).

Separately, it should be mentioned the Chinese Internet company Tencent that nowadays takes second place in the world by the number of users and its branches operate not only on the domestic market but also in the USA and Vietnam. The company developed an analogue of the Twitter microblog called Tencent Weibo that currently has 752 million users (90% of China's Internet users) and is considered by experts as an instrument of public and government control. Experts note that the microblog Weibo was able to destroy the state information monopoly and, as an example, they point out about the government's attempts to conceal the first high-speed train accident in 2011 that caused a strong reaction of the Chinese Internet audience about the price that citizens

have to pay for the rapid economic development of the country. The western scholars remark that the Chinese government allows citizens to discuss some social issues in Weibo but such words as a 'demonstration'/'protest', names of the important party officials or the government criticism are automatically removed from the microblog. Since 2009, the Weibo is under the government control, so the microblog can be seen as the government communication channel with the most active citizens for changing the internal information space.

The Chinese scholar Zhang Xiaoling adheres to this view in the study 'The Impact of Social Networks on Relations between the State and Citizens in China'. The researcher believes that the government seeks to neutralize the existing threats of state monopoly power through introducing censorship in cyberspace, so the Chinese content providers are obliged to record the published online information and relate it to the activity of the relevant government institutions (Zhang X., Shaw G., 2012).

The growth of the Chinese social networks is due not only to the market size but also to cultural features, for example, the programs in social media can spread at the 'viral level' in consequence of the Chinese's tolerance to the obsessive invitations. A common practice is a service that forces a user to send invitations or perform various tasks before communicating with the friends as well as interact more with an advertising. Although such methods cannot be repeated on the US market, such companies as Facebook or MySpace must take into account the similar strategies if they want to conquer the Chinese market (Medvedev A., 2012). Thus, it is impossible to predict the consequences of such 'artificial isolation' of China on the Internet because the government supports the domestic producers that do not have tough competition from the web communication giants and the youth is mastering the skills of bypassing the locks that are found in the Chinese sector of the network.

It is important to note that in China there is a process of strengthening the control over the publications in the national part of the Internet and blocking access to unwanted content, from the authority standpoint, located in domain zones that are not subject to the national jurisdiction. At the same time, the Internet is actively using China's ruling Communist Party and the government to implement the foreign and domestic policy goals. In the field of foreign policy tasks, one of the main activities is the formation of public opinion in foreign countries, for this at the central and regional levels, online media functions as tools of advocacy influence on the border-area population, using the latest achievements in information and communication technologies for realizing political goals of the internal development of the state and creating the favourable conditions for international cooperation.

The intensive development of information technologies led to study the issues of the impact of Internet communication on international political

processes. Experts think that modern society is at the stage of active introduction and use of Internet technologies in the political process both at the international and national levels, so international actors are compelled to adapt to the requirements and principles of interaction in the Internet space. Also, the network as one of the forms of international political communication makes it necessary to determine the optimal ways of the practical application and functioning in the state-building process that promotes the establishment of an active dialogue between the public and the authorities.

In this case, the state remains the powerful actor even in the context of the active development of social Internet services as an instrument of international communication, therefore, the Chinese government, aware of the need to maintain parity with the West, contributes to the active development and improvement of own online services that can maintain the integrity of China's information infrastructure and actively engage with the world community.

The deepening of the globalization processes and the intensive development of information technology led to the awareness of the Chinese leadership of the need to upgrade the country's political system. The society, in which the modernization processes take place, aspires to gradually evolve rather than through the destruction of previous organizational structures, consequently, China seeks now the balanced development of the political, legal, economic, social and other systems as well as their internal elements. China's foreign policy is aimed at ensuring favourable external conditions for the state reforms and openness as well as forming a stable political and economic world order based on five principles: mutual respect for state sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in the internal affairs of other states, equality and mutual benefit, peaceful coexistence that allow China to position itself not only as an influential regional but also as a global political and economic actor (*Principles...*, 2010).

The Chinese government is emphasizing the desire to reach a new level in foreign policy. According to the definition of the Zhenmin Zhibao, the 'diplomacy of new internationalism', manifested through the implementation of a 'true honesty policy', will allow China to become a developed state respected by the international community. At the same time, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China develops and implements the foreign policy tasks, taking into account 'Chinese specifics', namely, shifting out of the development of trade and economic relations on the increase 'moral engagement in the world affairs' and the use of 'soft power' tools in the foreign policy activity (Koval O., 2013).

During the XVIII Congress of the Communist Party of China (2012) was elected the new party leadership and determined the political modernization tasks of the country through deepening reforms and openness; changing the economic and social development model; reforming the political system; creating the state ecological culture; and strengthening China's role on the

world area (Tanasiychuk O., 2012). However, the Chinese experts believe that China's modern foreign policy strategy is a reflection of approaches to solving the internal issues, since the idea of 'Chinese dream' is designed primarily for the domestic audience to distract the Chinese from the main problems – the fight against corruption, the collapse of the country's ecosystem and the political legitimacy of the current government, so the effectuation of 'Chinese dream' will depend not on the perception of it by the world community but from the Chinese people's support of their leaders (Summers T., 2013).

Under the circumstances, the information sphere, especially the Internet space, is located in a special area of the Chinese leadership's attention. The Chinese researchers note that there are currently two opposite trends in the Chinese Internet space: the first is connected with the strengthening of nationalist sentiments that contributed to the emergence of the term 'network nationalism', and the second trend is based on the strengthening of Western values that lead to the transformation of the cultural identity of technically educated and active citizens. Therefore, the government is actively pursuing policy strengthening the control over access to information on the Internet, for example, since 2000, there are Internet police units operating in China that track and prevent the emergence of anti-communist materials. China has also gradually developed a complex data filtration system called 'Great Chinese Firewall' that restricts access to problematic, in the opinion of the ruling elite, external resources, blocking 'inconvenient' information in and outside of China as well as controlling information traffic within the country (Morozova V.S., Abramova N.A., 2007).

As citizens access the vast amount of information through the Internet, the Chinese government uses two strategies for Internet censorship: technical filtration of materials and encouragement of citizens to self-censorship through a system of regulatory measures. For example, since 2002, leading Chinese Internet entrepreneurs committed to 'eliminate dangerous information from the network', so they have to hire people who regularly remove problematic materials appearing in chats or forums. Also, civil servants, registering under nicknames, are actively discussing with citizens changing the nature of conversation on political issues in the right direction for the authorities. Since 2005, China's local authorities begun to hire bloggers for expressing positive assessments about the government and its policy that increased after the speech by Chinese President Hu Jintao on more active using modern Internet technologies for disseminating positive information about the country in the world (Volkov N., 2012).

Studying China's adaptation to contemporary globalization processes, the researchers (Su S., Xu M., 2013; Li S., 2013; Robinson 2013) argue that the Chinese Internet is predominantly a national-oriented product because the Chinese are positively supported the domestic projects based on the oriental mentality; also owing to cultural and historical reasons, the ruling elite of the

PRC disapproves of interfering in the internal affairs of the state, therefore, it controls the information dissemination. In particular, it is prohibited to use the Internet for creating, distributing, copying and transmitting information that can provoke non-compliance or violation of state laws, regulations or the Constitution; overthrowing socialism or the state system; breaking the state integrity and supporting terrorist activity; disseminating false information and rumours that could damage the reputation of state authorities (*Regulation...*, 1994).

However, there is an opposite view of the possibilities of data blocking by the Great Chinese Firewall. So, the scholars Harsh Taneja and Angela Xiao Wu studied the impact of Internet censorship in China on the behaviour of users and the functioning of Chinese websites and found that there are 18 world clusters distinguished by linguistic and geographical principles, herewith the cultural preferences inherent in different groups have a greater impact on the choice of visited websites than Internet censorship. The scientists also assumed that the Chinese, who are outside the PRC, have a greater impact on the Chinese Internet than the citizens living in the country. At the same time, researchers believe that the totalitarian state is not able to fully control the Internet because focused on solving the important daily problems and point out that only 56% of 1178 requests from the US officials about receiving personal online data were met, while in China only 50% of the 4 requests from the government officials were supported in 2012 (2013).

Thus, the Chinese Internet strategy is based on the historically specific approach of the country's authorities to the issues of external and internal political modernization that differs from Western civilization perceived as a different world with other values - unacceptable for the Chinese worldview. Nowadays, there is an increase in the number of Internet providers and network users that allows the Chinese government to use the Internet space for realizing own political goals. The active use by citizens of the Internet to meet own needs has led to the creation of a large-scale administrative apparatus serving the public and private structures as well as conducting online monitoring. In particular, the main institution in this area is the Ministry of State Security, in addition, other state institutions have been created among which it is necessary to name (McDonnell S., 2017; *The Ministry...*, 2013):

- the Internet Propaganda Administrative Bureau, created under the State Council Information Office, develops and coordinates state propaganda in the network; verifies information posted on social networks, blogs and forums; tracks public opinion; approves applications for licenses for the provision of Internet services; sends out 'information recommendations' regarding the publications or comments. One of the tools of the institution's activity is the online version of the Zhenmin Zhibao newspaper that is more popular than printed;

- the Internet Bureau and Bureau of Information and Public Opinion under the Publicity Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China track information on the important issues and send it to the CC of the CPC as well as carry out weekly online discussions of actual problems of the state development;
- the Center for Posting Illegal Information under the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the People's Republic of China;
- the Ministry of Telecommunications, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Commerce and the National Administration for the Protection of State Secrets review, manage and oversee thematic issues in the Chinese Internet; since 2011, Ministry of National Defense has created special units (the unofficial name 'Blue Network Army') that conduct cybersecurity training in the information networks of the armed forces of the People's Republic of China for increasing the security level;
- the State Internet Information Office created for providing control over the network and blocking the websites that distribute 'unwanted' information; licensing business projects related to the Internet; monitoring the development of the gaming industry in the network;
- the Internet Office under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the PRC is responsible for coordinating and implementing the foreign policy activity in the network.

Consequently, the Chinese government's Internet strategy depends on an increase in the users' number, the rapid development and spread of information technology and the participation of the state in modern international political processes. So, after joining the World Trade Organization, China pledged to provide wider access for foreign companies to the national Internet market. There is also an intense growth of Chinese multilingual newspapers, magazines, radio and TV channels on the Internet that is helping to strengthen the state position in the global information space.

However, the expert (Su S., Xu M., *op. cit.*) note that such intensive development of China's Internet space is based on 'on-to-many' communication and not on the approach 'many-to-many'. The Chinese authorities, aware that the impact of the Internet space on political processes in the country can be dual, that is, depending on how it can be used to increase the level of citizens' participation in political processes and to implement total state control of own population, seek to balance and promote the development of Chinese Internet technologies in order to minimize the influence of foreign companies.

Internet media are becoming an element of China's foreign and domestic political communication in order to create favourable conditions for the

country's internal development, to increase own world role, to promote non-confrontational models of interaction with other states through partnerships and openness to dialogue. Further using Internet communication tools will contribute to the formation of a positive image of the state because the government is making significant efforts in the dissemination of Chinese foreign policy initiatives in the world information space. Particular attention is paid by the government to intensify the information counteraction of the United States on the Internet through the active involvement of the Chinese Internet audience in spreading positive information about the country, controlling the mood in society, introducing the latest computer technologies for neutralization of anti-Chinese propaganda and dissemination of own information abroad. The main task of China in the implementation of effective international communication is creating the effect of 'pluralism of opinion' in the state that contributes to the less critical perception of the Chinese propaganda abroad and the reduction of pressure on the PRC concerning freedom of speech.

The international communication is the important factor of the socio-political life because the Internet becomes one of the influential tools performed information, social, education and promotion functions as well as political and ideological tasks. Considering, modern China is gradually developing a national model of political communication in the network, taking into account the historical and cultural traditions. The government is effectively using Internet communication for external and internal propaganda, practically isolating Chinese society from external influence. There is no single comprehensive social network in China, and in order to ensure 'universal communication,' it is necessary to register on all Internet portals since users of the same network often do not intersect with the supporters of another. Also, public representatives need to thematically and technically know the social network to understand the principle of its functioning that can be based on short messages, group creation or interpersonal communication. It is also necessary to take into account the peculiarities of the oriental mentality and to avoid direct imposition of ideas for creating an illusion of freedom of choice, words and actions. The growing role of Internet resources as regulators of public opinion strengthens in China through an updating of the legislation to preserve the crucial role of party control over the social media as well as the creation of common standards regulating the media both traditional and online.

Realizing the potential of the network for active international and domestic communication, China is engaged promoting the state in the world, demonstrating the country's attitude to the current international issues as well as participating in the settlement of foreign and domestic political contradictions, etc. Despite the apparent 'openness' of the Internet space for public debate on external and internal problems presented by the Chinese government as a process of political democratization and the next stage in the

formation of civil society, China continues to monitor the social processes in the country from education, the activities of state and commercial institutions to discussions on the Internet.

The People's Republic of China is gradually changing the focus of foreign policy activity in view of the further national growth that depends on strengthening the state's position at the international level and balanced interaction with the USA, the EU and the Russian Federation. The political leadership of China is aware of an interdependence between the positive perception of Chinese foreign policy by the world community and the formation of international alliances or coalitions with China's participation for increasing state influence.

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