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EDUCATION AS A SOFT POWER INSTRUMENT OF CHINA'S FOREIGN POLICY

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Soft power tool is more and more often accepted by states – members of the global political process as the most important non-military tool for implementation of foreign policy's tasks. Soft power is applied by a state via a wide range of instruments: communications (TV, radio, Internet), international economic programs, public diplomacy, scientific and educational exchange, large-scale cultural and sport events. In the contemporary research on the matters in connection with soft power, a great place is occupied by the analysis of educational component in soft power instruments which is explained, on one hand, by intrinsic acceleration of internationalization in higher education, and on the other hand – by focused state policy of world's countries on increase of students exchange considered as own soft power tool.

Today, the PRC is also actively realizing its ambitions in soft power buildup including by way of stimulation of student mobility in the country. Growing significance in the formulation of foreign political strategy is assigned to soft power and cultural diplomacy – an efficient instrument for establishment of attractive image of China and Chinese. Cultural diplomacy of the PRC is represented by two fields: cultural and, which is of great importance, educational exchanges. In China, there is a comprehensive program of state management of international educational processes – the crucial promotion channel of the country's soft power.

Keywords: *soft power; higher education; internationalization; international relations; China.*

ОБРАЗОВАНИЕ КАК ИНСТРУМЕНТ «МЯГКОЙ СИЛЫ» ВНЕШНЕЙ ПОЛИТИКИ КИТАЯ

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Все чаще инструментарий «мягкой силы» признается государствами-участниками мирового политического процесса как важнейший невоенный механизм реализации внешнеполитических задач. Применение «мягкой силы» (soft power) государством осу-

ществляется посредством широкого спектра инструментов: коммуникаций (телевидения, радио, сети Интернет), международных экономических программ, публичной дипломатии, научных и образовательных обменов, крупномасштабных культурных и спортивных мероприятий. В современных исследованиях по проблематике применения «мягкой силы» значительное место отводится анализу образовательной составляющей в спектре инструментов «soft power», что объясняется, с одной стороны, объективным ускорением процесса интернационализации в сфере высшего образования в условиях глобализации, с другой – целенаправленной государственной политикой стран мира по наращиванию студенческих обменов, рассматриваемых в качестве механизма собственной «мягкой силы».

Сегодня КНР также активно реализуют свои амбиции по наращиванию soft power, в том числе стимулируя процессы студенческой мобильности в стране. Все большая значимость при формировании внешнеполитической стратегии придается «мягкой силе» и культурной дипломатии – действенному инструменту формирования привлекательного образа Китая и китайцев. «Культурная дипломатия» КНР представлена двумя направлениями: культурными и, что немаловажно, образовательными обменами. В Китае действует комплексная программа государственного управления международными образовательными процессами – важнейшим каналом продвижения «мягкой силы» страны.

Ключевые слова: *мягкая сила; высшее образование; интернационализация; международные отношения; Китай.*

At the present stage in world history, international relations include a set of multiple, largely contradictory contacts. Despite the rapid development of information, international law and humanitarian ties, nations still adhere to the belief that power is a fundamental argument for gaining foreign policy objectives and the protection of their own national interests. The superpowers often impose their will upon other participants of world politics, resorting to showing their impressive military and economic potential. However, the high risk of a large-scale or even global military conflict with using of unprecedented amounts of weapons, including WMD (mass destruction weapon), accumulated on the planet, makes the problem of finding new, non-military methods of providing national interests on the world political process more urgent for the international community. Therefore the instruments of «soft power» is often recognized by the great powers as important political resources in international relations. The concept of soft power is being actively implemented in the foreign policy practices of

the U.S. and its allies (for example, the Republic of Korea and Japan), more recently it became the basis of official foreign policy documents of the PRC and Russia.

Joseph Nye, the author of a term coined in 1990, defines «soft power» as «state's ability to win others over, ensuring support for their agendas in international relations by demonstrating their cultural and moral values, their policies' appeal, and the efficiency of their political institutions» [7; 10].

Russian scholar A.M. Bobylo notes that soft power is the ability of a state or another actor of international relations to provide intellectual, cultural and informational influence on the surrounding world, without the use of direct «hard» economic and military means. The researcher considers the flexibility of soft power as an option of the subject to attract and act together in the name of common interests, to convince others, by constructing the appropriate interpretation of the facts or reality, to do what they otherwise wouldn't do. Through the approval of their own interpretations of what is «good» or «fair» idea, theory, model or project, the state can count on the support of their goals and interests by other actors of international relations [2; 52].

The state demonstrates its soft power to other participants of international relations, using a complex mechanism, which includes instruments of cultural influence such as public diplomacy, cultural, scientific and educational exchanges, international sports events, religion, cinema and music, popular elements of national culture (ethnic cuisine, literary folklore). It is important to note the increasing role of communications – television, radio, and also the Internet, which has become the main way for distribution of information last decade. States are trying to spread throughout the world their ideology, national idea, material and moral values, and show a desire to respect human rights, and build civil society. Foreign policy mechanisms of soft power are aimed on demonstrating the quality and effectiveness of the national decision-making process, attractiveness of state diplomacy, the competence of the political elite. In general, foreign policy means of soft power are used to create a positive reputable image of the state-peacemaker. Finally, according to «soft power» logics, the implementation of various international economic programs that promote the development of national economies of other countries and enhance the international cooperation also should be considered as very important tool of foreign policy.

Nowadays the educational component, or the «degree of internationalization in the field of higher education» is becoming probably the most important part in the spectrum of instruments of soft power. So the countries pursue policies to increase the number of inbound foreign students and the number of outgoing host country students studying abroad. Premier institutions are often magnets for students from other countries. Moreover, students that are well educated typically have high exposure and connectivity to the global community, which elevates the host country's soft power [10].

As mentioned earlier, today the concept of soft power is a relevant theoretical basis for the foreign policy practice of the People's Republic of China. During the 17th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, held in October 2007, Hu Jintao officially announced the beginning of new era in foreign policy of China, based on his idea of «harmonious world», according to which China's main objective was the perpetuation of the system to achieve the «lasting peace» and «common prosperity» needed for internal economic growth and international expansion. President Hu named soft power and cultural diplomacy among effective and necessary instruments for the formation of an attractive image of China and Chinese all over the world [4]. Internationalization of higher education was determined as a major tool of rapid-growth China's soft power.

According to China's National Plan for Medium and Long-term Education Reform and Development (2010-2020), the internationalization of higher education in China serves to «enhance the nation's global position, influence and competitiveness in the field of education» [9]. The following forms of internationalization have been singled out:

- participating in the setting up of «collaborative international academic organizations or global science plans»;
- «running demonstrative joint schools or joint projects in cooperation with foreign partners» and encouraging high-quality Chinese educational institutions to «run branches overseas»;
- supporting the teaching of Chinese as a foreign language in other countries [5].

Russian scholar A. Antonova guesses that the internationalization of higher education in China is aimed to improve the reputation of Chinese universities in order to implement the idea of creating world-class universities; to make Chinese higher education more open and affordable; to increase international student international cooperation and exchanges and accelerate the development of joint educational programs and researches [1; 222-223].

China is simultaneously developing two areas of the integration process in the field of higher education: on the one hand, students from China are actively involved in international student exchanges, at the same time, the government of China conducts a deliberate policy to attract foreigners in Chinese universities, expanding the list of academic programs: as the result, the number of foreign students in China is growing on 10 percent annually, from 60 000 in 2001 to more than 290 000 in 2011, according to the Ministry of education of China [6].

Great popularity in the world find such educational instruments of Beijing's soft power as Confucius Institutes – non-profit public institutions affiliated with the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China whose stated aim is to promote Chinese language and culture, support local Chi-

nese teaching internationally, and facilitate cultural exchanges. After establishing the first Confucius Institute on 21 November 2004 in Seoul, about two hundred have since opened in 108 countries around the world with the highest concentration of Institutes in the United States, Japan, and South Korea by 2012. Today The Ministry of Education estimates over 480 Confucius Institutes in dozens of countries on six continents. The PRC authorities aim to establish 1,000 Confucius Institutes by 2020 [3]. It is necessary to note that the rapid expansion of Confucius Institutes as an effective element in strategy of Chinese soft power has led to a backlash, especially in the United States and other Western countries.

At the same time, some well-known researchers who work in Chinese universities under the program of visiting professors, noted the disadvantages of the Chinese vector of internationalization in the field of higher education. Questions have been raised over the quality of China's university education.

«On international rankings, Chinese universities did not perform as well as other countries, in particular given the size of the system, but there have been improvements in recent years», said Nick Clark, from World Education Services, a New York-based education research organization. Yang, who regularly visits universities across China for his research, agrees. «I get many complaints about the quality of the teaching (from foreign students studying in China), especially with regional universities». Professor Darryl Jarvis from the Hong Kong Institute of Education said there is enormous diversity among the tertiary institutions in China, and far less quality programs that use English for instruction compared to countries like the U.S., UK, Australia, and Canada, the top destinations for overseas university students in 2012, according to UNESCO [6].

Scholars from leading research and educational centers of China note that universities often try to achieve high quantitative indicators, not paying sufficient attention to the process of implementation of the curriculum at the appropriate level. For example, Guan Gui Hai, Director of Russia Studies Centre, Beijing University, says that cooperation between universities in Russia and China should be oriented more towards quality and originality than the number of students involved in exchange programs [11].

The author of «soft power theory» J. Nye insists that China, as well as Russia, does not takes into account the main condition to successful implementation of «charm» instruments: they will be effective only in a case of civil society, which is, in fact, the only source of soft power of any state.

China has spent billions of dollars on a charm offensive to increase its soft power. The Chinese style emphasizes high-profile gestures. But for all its efforts, China has earned a limited return on its investment – it's domestic crackdown on human rights activists undercut its soft power gains. China

makes the mistake of thinking that government is the main instrument of soft power. As the Economist noted about China, «the party has not bought into Mr. Nye's view that soft power springs largely from individuals, the private sector, and civil society. So the government hastaken to promoting ancient cultural icons whom it thinks might have global appeal» [12]. But soft power doesn't work that way. As Pang Zhongying of Renmin University put it, it highlights «a poverty of thought» among Chinese leaders [8].

However, according to report «The New Persuaders III. A 2012 Global Ranking of Soft Power», in 2012 China ranked only 22nd place in the global soft power index list, however, Beijing was fifth, after the U.S., Great Britain, Australia and Germany according to such sub-index indicator of soft power as Education. The authors of report insist the results do show continued improvement for China in the Culture and Education sub-indices. Indeed China's investment in public diplomacy assets, overtures to cultural promotion, and commitment to improving higher education all contribute to its soft power. But ultimately, China's curbs on individual freedom, heavy-handed management of the press, and an aversion to political criticism, undermine its efforts to generate soft power. This is not to say that the Chinese model is not without its merits. But China's gains in the areas of Culture and Education have not translated to overall gains in the full index. But China's movement could herald the start of a new trend [13].

The paper «Rapid-growth markets soft power index. Spring 2012», prepared by scholars of The Skolkovo Institute for Emerging Market Studies and Ernst & Young's Emerging Markets Center, shows China easily wins the soft power race among the RGMs (rapid-growth markets). China has devoted significant resources in recent years to an attempt to augment its soft power. Some of China's efforts have paid dividends. The strength of China's soft power within the emerging world is primarily driven by the growth of its multinational corporations, increased tourism and the rapid expansion and ranking of its universities. China's support of international students has recently lifted the number of foreign students studying in China. Some polls now list no Chinese universities ranked in the Global 100, but the Chinese still score high in this category because of the sheer number of universities [10].

Thus, the beginning of the XXI century is marked for China with a significant transformation of the foreign policy strategy: at the present time PRC's authorities consider soft power, or non-violent means – cultural diplomacy, educational exchanges, economic and humanitarian cooperation programs – as the leading instruments of ensuring national interests and security of China. The promotion of Chinese language, culture and education contributes to the creating of a favorable external environment for its country's long-term socioeconomic growth.

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