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China has emerged as a new center of power in international politics. China pays great attention to Africa not only because of the significant role of the continent’s mineral resource potential, but also because of the growing political importance of the region on the international arena.

The new strategic goals and priorities, hand in hand with the redirection of many African countries in political, economic, military, cultural and business spheres have a communication face.

That’s why to analyze the key objectives and problems, advantages and weaknesses of strategic communication of China in Africa, the role of China’s leadership in the region is important.

China’s strategic communication can be very beneficial, but it can aggravate the situation as well. Nevertheless China’s strategic communication in Africa is a real example of unity words and actions.

Key words: strategic communication, China, Africa

Introduction

The theoretical approaches of the paper is researches of Russian and foreign specialists on strategic communication. Among Russian research it is important to emphasize a book “Communication management and strategic communication”¹ written by Evgeniy Pashentsev. The research is focused on theoretical and practical frameworks of the strategic communication. The strategic communication and informational warfare are also theoretically conscious by A. Manoiolo², I. Panarin³.

American specialists in that area as Paul Ch.⁴, Dennis M. Murphy⁵, Bruce Gregory⁶, Goodall Bud and Trethewey Angela, McDonald Kelly⁷ have made a significant contribution to the theory of the strategic communication.

Chinese concepts in that research area are based on American concepts. Bi Yantao⁸, Ceng Huafeng and Shi Haiming⁹, Zhao Qizheng¹⁰, Shian Bin and Wang Xi¹¹, Wang Jianjun¹² researches should be pointed out.

The strategic communication of China in Africa is the theme of research of Donovan C. Chau¹³.

The methodology of this study is chosen so as to optimally organize and conduct the research. As the basis of political analysis comparative, systematic, structural and functional analyses, cognitive mapping and other methods were applied.
Comparative analysis was applied for the determination of the nature of the China-African relations in the past and in the 21 century; systematic analysis for identification of the role of China in the world and the role of Africa on China’s foreign policy; structural and functional analyses determination China’s foreign policy strategy; cognitive mapping while determine African perception of China’s policy.

The research focused on Sub-Saharan Africa and does not cover North-African countries.

**White House paper “National Framework for Strategic Communication” that was announced in 2010** notes that «Strategic communication(s) refers to (a) the synchronization of words and deeds and how they will be perceived by selected audiences, as well as (b) programs and activities deliberately aimed at communicating and engaging with intended audiences, including those implemented by public affairs, public diplomacy, and information operations professionals.».

That type of communication we can see in China’s foreign policy instruments.

In China strategic communication combine innovative and traditional forms of interactions, closely intertwine national characteristics and foreign borrowings.

The term “strategic communication” is not officially used in official documents, but used by China’s statesman. For example, by Foreign Minister Wang Yi.

In China increase a number of publications devoted to strategic communication and the rapid development of China led to domestic and foreign policy changes.

The strategic communication of China has its features such as close intertwining foreign borrowings and Chinese specificity, traditions and innovations. Let’s consider the example of China’s strategic communication towards Africa.

**The key moments of the evolution of China-Africa relations till 1990 and its transformation after the end of the Cold war**

Let’s consult the history of China-Africa relations and see the evolution of it’s relations

1. The starting point of China-African relations was the Bandung conference in Indonesia, which was held from 18 to 24 April 1955;

2. After that moment two sides had a number of conferences, culminated in creation of The Non-Aligned Movement in 1961;

3. As permanent member of the United Nations Security Council (much credit for the restoration of rights goes to Africans among 76 yes votes 25 (32,9%) were Africans);

4. The TAZARA road had become a symbol that Beijing was ready for using economic opportunities with Africa. It allowed Africans to be persuaded that China could be not only political but potential business partner.
5. Bifurcation. Even then relations between China and Africa had a unique possibility of a quantum leap. But civil war in Angola and China’s support of the National Union for Total independence of Angola (UNITA) paused relations of China and Africa for a long years.

6. Most African countries cut off diplomatic relations with China in protest, and that meant loss of support of African countries in UN on Taiwan issue. After that lose-lose fiasco (UNITA failed and loss of African support), China-Africa relations were damaged and restored only after the end of the Cold war. But the basis was laid at that time.

7. At the end of the Cold War in the early 1990s, both the United States and Russia abandoned their African allies, and China stepped into the vacuum. In place of the ideological and military focus of the Cold War, China concentrated on developing economic relations, not only changing the African economic landscape but also transforming Africa’s relations with the West.

An important representation of that is China-Africa cooperation in various fields, such as:
- in 2000 was created China-Africa cooperation Forum (FOCAC);
- cooperation in recourse areas, especially in Africa oil and mineral sphere;
- China’s cooperation with African Union. (Chinese built its headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, a towering $200-million complex)19.

Defining China’s interests to Africa let’s move its strategic communication.

The conclusion to be done is that China’s interest in Africa is due to the continent’s resource and political importance. Let’s consider how this importance is taken into account in the instruments of the strategic communication of China in Africa, but firstly point out key aspects of the strategic communication of China: informational operations, public diplomacy and public relations.

**Information operations**

Because of the strong economic and political competition among China and Western countries, the theme of informational warfare plays an important role there.

Specialists of American analytical centers such as RAND corporation, urge the US to take actions to ease China’s influence towards Africa.

The US former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton announced: «During the Cold War we did a great job in getting America’s message out. After the Berlin Wall fell we said, ‘Okay, fine, enough of that, we are done … Our private media cannot fill that gap… We are in an information war and we are losing that war. Al Jazeera is winning, the Chinese have opened a
China’s doctrines and highest possible technology in terms of informational warfare are not widely available. Nevertheless, its concepts actively developing.

Chinese views of informational warfare are shaped by the influence of American concepts. So Chinese military suppose that a key to a successful military activity will be informational dominance in a battlefield. That imply to provide an opportunity to access, to analyze, to use an information to influence the opponent.

But its concept is “active defence” - "We will not attack unless we are attacked, but we will surely counterattack if attacked." 21. And its goal to confront a potential military threat.

Depending on the scale, tasks, assets Chinese military define two types of informational warfare:
- in the broad sense – is the state level that could be possible in wartime and in peacetime, it presume to take control over informational space of the states which represents a threat to China’s national interests;
- in a narrow sense, - proceeded only in wartime and limited by a theater for military operations.

Major General Wang Pufeng, The father of Chinese Informational warfare, writes "Information war is a crucial stage of high-tech war. . . At its heart are information technologies, fusing intelligence war, strategic war, electronic war, guided missile war, a war of “motorization”, a war of firepower—a total war. It is a new type of warfare" 22.

China’s Military Strategy 2015 defines the importance of informational warfare23:
‘To implement the military strategic guideline of active defense in the new situation, China's armed forces will adjust the basic point for PMS. In line with the evolving form of war and national security situation, the basic point for PMS will be placed on winning informationized local wars, highlighting maritime military struggle and maritime PMS. The armed forces will work to effectively control major crises, properly handle possible chain reactions, and firmly safeguard the country's territorial sovereignty, integrity and security.

... 

Cultivating new-type military personnel. China's armed forces will continue with the strategic project for personnel training and perfect the system for military human resources. They will deepen the reform of military educational institutions and improve the triad training system for new-type military personnel - institutional education, unit training and military professional education, so as to pool more talented people and cultivate more personnel who can meet the demands of informationized warfare.
Improving the systems and mechanisms of national defense mobilization. China will enhance education in national defense and boost the awareness of the general public in relation to national defense. It will continue to strengthen the building of the reserve force, optimize its structure, and increase its proportion in the PLAN, PLAAF and PLASAF as well as in combat support forces. The ways to organize and employ reserve forces will be more diversified. China will devote more efforts to science and technology in national defense mobilization, be more readily prepared for the requisition of information resources, and build specialized support forces. China aims to build a national defense mobilization system that can meet the requirements of winning informationized wars and responding to both emergencies and wars.

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China is still lag behind the most economically and political development countries. It needs to boost the comprehensive development of all the components of informational warfare, first of all, in military sphere – while developing informational infrastructure and technology with military potential, and special training of personnel.

China combine Western innovations and new technologies of informational warfare with traditional approach such as stratagems and the theory of “People’s war” of Mao Zedong.

Stratagem is (ancient Greek στρατήγημα — military cunning) – a system of hidden strategic techniques, tactics, used to overtake and gain advantage. This is an algorithm of behavior that consider such specifies as situation, psychology etc. It outplay all the possible tricky clauses.

China’s military suppose that practically every computer-skillful person is able to carry out the tasks in the frame of informational operations. Even Mao Zedong theory of “The people’s war” dealt with participation of huge popular masses in war. The theory in the contest of informational warfare supposes mass non-military (civil) mobilization. This is especially urgent because of the fact that Chinese society became more computerizing and the population of China went up 1.3 billion and practically reached 1.4 billion people.

As for China-Africa military cooperation. Sub-Saharan Africa is a huge testing ground for new types and species of weapons, wars and warfare.

China is not anymore support African liberation movements, but under the commercial considerations, is the main supplier of light weapons for African armed groups and governments.

African military have retrain practices in China or in the field in Africa with Chinese training officers.
In November 2015, China made a deal to deploy its military facility in Djibouti. Presumably it will be the military base. It will combine capacities of logistics center, team base, facilities repair center, training center.

The decision to site its first foreign military base in Djibouti shows an importance of the African continent in China’s strategy and informational operations strategy as its integral part.

China’s information operations in Africa are not widely covered in media and in official documents. China actively uses other parts of its strategic communication such as public diplomacy and public affairs that are very difficult to hide from public.

**Public diplomacy and public relations as the elements of the strategic communication**

Chinese government pays more and more attention to public diplomacy. Previously China considered public diplomacy or as an instrument of external propaganda, or as an instrument of its internal policy.

China’s policy of peaceful development pursued to integrate its soft and hard power. Despite the attempts China didn’t pay a lot of attention to public diplomacy till the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Criticizing public diplomacy in the US, China used it as the basis.

On March 19, 2004, was established a new Division for Public Diplomacy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China. Chinese Deputy Foreign Minister Shen Guofang characterized it as a very important sphere in diplomacy and said: “The basic goal of public diplomacy is to enhance the exchanges and interaction with the public in order to guide and win the understanding and support of the public for foreign policies”.

China’s Foreign Minister announced: «We have actively conducted public diplomacy by publicizing China's foreign policies and activities to the Chinese public, thus winning their understanding and support. At the same time, we have extensively sought public views and absorb their wisdom to improve our work.»

In China there is no one governmental body to pursue public diplomacy like the US Secretary of State for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs. This work is divided between the Advocacy at the Chinese Communist Party's Politburo Standing Committee, Committee for Foreign Affairs of the Chinese political consultative conference, the Bureau for External Cultural Relations of The Ministry of Culture (MOC) of China, The Information Department of The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China

**Informational operations of China in Africa**

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**Public diplomacy and public relations of China in Africa**

On December 2015, Chinese Government released its second White Paper on China’s African policy. The first was announced in 2006\(^28\).

China and Africa are described as friends and brothers, and their relations as “a new type of China-Africa strategic partnership featuring political equality and mutual trust, economic win-win cooperation and cultural exchange\(^29\).

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Features and basic characteristics:
- Combination of public bodies and public diplomacy has its roots in China;
- There is no single body for public diplomacy implementation.
- a huge impact of its traditional culture

China and Africa are cradles of human civilization and have a rich cultural heritage, so the two have a cultural exchange potential.

**For that purpose successfully operating Confucius institutes.**
The first institute was set up in Kenya in 2005. Now there are more than 50 institutes there. China creating special educational centers in Africa, providing scholarships, quotas, strengthen interuniversity exchange with African universities. There Africans study China’s history, culture and Chinese language.

The goal is to form African business and political elites who are focused in China. This is one of long-term goals of China’s policy in Africa.

Such unofficial maneuver help ordinary people better understand China. For example, during his speech in Tanzania on April 2013, Chinese President Xi Jinping welcomed African people in Swahili and mentioned TV series that are very popular in Africa. This is a story of young couple who loved Africa after their honeymoon in Tanzania.

**Medical aid**

*Health security and cooperation in medical sphere* have become more and more important in people-oriented public diplomacy. The first medical team was sent from China to Africa in 1963 in Algeria. More than 50 years already China have been providing its medical assistance to Africa Now China deployed more than 20,000 medical workers to 51 countries and regions in Africa.

Medical aid is often called as “most beautiful business card” or “the the brightest brand” of China’s public diplomacy.

**Think thanks programs**

Joint China-Africa research program started on March in 2010, and since than CATTF think tank forums proceeded in Hangzhou, Addis-Ababa, Beijing, Pretoria.

According to Carnegie Institute research, China managed to place second place on the number of analytical centers. But to compare with developed countries China still lag behind them in quality of the centers. On this figure Africa is still lag behind too.

Mostly think tank organizations are closely connected with government. The goal of the centers is to shape perception and understanding of China by African intellectuals and political elites. The way of it is direct bilateral communication without interference of Western values or features. Another one goal is to change an unfriendly rhetoric of China’s activities in Africa.

**Mass media**

In recent years China’s media increased its presence in Africa. Not only government media such as CCTV, China Daily, Africa Weekly, Xinhua, China’s Radio International (CRI), but private companies as well.
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CCTV started its first foreign press-center in Nairobi – Kenya in 2012. – CCTV Nairobi was proclaimed as new voice of Africa. At least 10 hours a week TV Channel cover African invents

In 2012 China Daily started its Weekly Observer, than are distributed among the all African countries and also available in digital format. The paper also cover events that happened in China.

The Media’s goal is to strengthen China-Africa relations by providing alternative but true information about their relations.

Despite attempts to refute Western media that strongly criticize China for its African policy, China creates its own content for African consumers. China’s media help to achieve balance of the news stream and provide an alternative view.

Conclusion

We are considered China’s strategic communication and its components: informational operations, public diplomacy and public affairs and applied it towards Africa.

We are discovered that:

China conducts strategic communication towards Africa. The interest of China into Africa appeared in 1950 years and was transformed.

China’s strategy of informational warfare based on American concepts, but was adapted to China’s doctrine and has innovative and traditional components. China’s informational operations towards Africa are not widely covered in media and documents but are pursued through its ‘soft power’ and other strategic communication components.

Public diplomacy and public affairs of China are very connected and cover different spheres of cooperation with African countries from educational cooperation to medical aid, from think tanks to mass media. This is the way how China implements its strategic communication.

It has problems because China accused of disputing African economy (such as in Zambia), or accused of neo-colonialism, and China’s culture lag behind Western or even Indian culture, and mass media are just emerging.

As Chinese proverb says “the relations between the two states are prospering than the friendship between the two nations was established”. Than more African people use China’s achievements, than more support will get China.

Despite all the problems China’s strategic cooperation in Africa is strengthening. China displaced traditional powers such as the US and European countries who made a lot of strategic mistakes in the region. China’s position is more preferable in Africa because of Historical background, no-politically attached cooperation, its soft power, its flexibility and economic
possibilities and many other reasons. So in the light of these powers China is the least bad solution (the best case scenario). China provides unity of words and actions in its policy and this creates a fundamental breakthrough. And we see it in Africa.

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