ABSTRACT

The doctoral thesis by Kanat Massabayev, entitled « Transformation of China's political system in the context of globalisation and its reflection on interaction with the Republic of Kazakhstan», submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in the specialty «6D020900 – Oriental Studies»

Relevance of the Research. In the context of the transformation of the modern system of international relations, China has established itself as an independent civilisational project and one of the key centres shaping the global order. The stability and effectiveness of the PRC's political system, which has demonstrated immunity to 'democratic transition' scenarios, require re-evaluation through the prism of the integration of artificial intelligence, big data and the concept of 'digital Confucianism'. The practical significance of the study stems from the transition of Kazakh-Chinese relations from a raw materials model to a high-tech partnership, which necessitates the development of mechanisms to preserve Kazakhstan's political and economic autonomy in the context of global instability. The relevance is also determined by the need to align Kazakhstan's course towards building a 'Just Kazakhstan' with the Chinese concept of a 'Community with a Shared Future for Mankind'.

The research topic's degree of scholarly development. The issues surrounding relations between Kazakhstan and the People's Republic of China have been thoroughly examined in the works of Kazakhstani academic researchers. In particular, K. L. Syroezhkin's works explore security mechanisms, ethno-politics and the impact of China's domestic stability on relations with Kazakhstan through the problems of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. Analysis in the field of international security and contemporary global politics is provided in the work of M.T. Laumulin. The work of Nabizhan Mukhamedkhanuly discusses China's foreign policy and diplomatic relations with the Republic of Kazakhstan. The joint work by N. Aldabek, P.E. Bekturganova, A.E. Serikkalieva, D. Dauen and M.B. Asyl provides a comprehensive analysis of the Chinese reform model and an assessment of how the PRC's economic and political growth influences Kazakhstan's socio-economic development. In Russian historiography, a number of works of particular interest to the issues under consideration in this study should be highlighted. First and foremost, these are the works of A.V. Lukin, who analyses the Chinese model as an alternative to Western liberalism. The works of A.V. Lomanov analyse the transformation of the PRC's foreign policy ideology since 2013. The works of the Orientalist N.N. Vavilov are devoted to an in-depth analysis of internal political struggles, the structure of the PRC's state apparatus, and the mechanisms of power transition. S.G. Luzyanin's work is devoted to an analysis of the PRC's strategy towards neighbouring states.

Among Western researchers, the works of S. Heilmann, K. Lieberthal, M. Oksenberg, S. Huntington and R. Inglehart, which analyse the political system of the PRC, are particularly noteworthy. In Chinese historiography, special attention should be paid to official documents and materials from the PRC's top leadership.

The works and speeches of PRC President Xi Jinping were of fundamental importance for analysing the conceptual foundations of this study.

However, most works written prior to 2022 do not take into account the qualitative changes following the 20th CPC Congress, including the strengthening of centralised power and the launch of new global initiatives (GDI, GSI, GCI), which creates a research gap that this study aims to fill. The novelty lies in a systematic analysis of how Beijing's political strategies impact the Republic of Kazakhstan (RK), for example, in the context of aligning the Chinese initiative with domestic reforms in Kazakhstan.

Aim and Objectives of the Research. The aim of this study is to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the transformation of the PRC's political system in the 21st century and to identify the patterns by which these processes influence Beijing's foreign policy strategy and the mechanisms of its partnership with Kazakhstan. Achieving this research objective involves addressing the following tasks: to examine the evolution of China's political system since it entered a phase of active globalisation, focusing primarily on the systemic changes that have taken place during Xi Jinping's time in power; to explore how exactly the PRC's political system has transformed under the pressure of globalisation, and to identify the mechanisms through which a high-tech, monocentric model of governance has emerged; to provide a theoretical justification for the concept of 'digital Confucianism', understood as a hybrid method of legitimising and consolidating political power, combining traditional ethical norms with digital instruments of control; to analyse the nature and role of China's global initiatives (GDI, GSI, GCI, GGI, BRI) in order to identify the prospects for Kazakhstan's integration into the new architecture of regional security and cooperation initiated by Beijing; to identify the direct link between domestic political reforms in Beijing and changes in the format of engagement with Astana within the framework of the 'eternal comprehensive strategic partnership'; to assess Kazakhstan's role as a key transit hub within the 'Belt and Road' initiative and to identify the benefits and risks for its economic and strategic security; to examine and systematise priority areas of inter-state cooperation, including transit and logistics capacity, the energy sector, water resource management and regional security, whilst identifying existing contradictions, particularly in the field of regulatory and legal frameworks governing the use of transboundary rivers; develop and justify mechanisms enabling Kazakhstan to strengthen its autonomy in relations with China, reduce imbalances in interests and adapt bilateral cooperation more effectively to national priorities.

Dissertation's Research Methods. The theoretical and methodological framework of this doctoral research is a comprehensive approach based on the principles of neo-institutionalism and political systems theory. In this study, the theory of new institutionalism is identified as the primary theoretical approach. It helps to explain how the activities of state bodies and the CCP, combined with Confucian traditions and political culture, shape the direction of development and maintain systemic stability. The modernisation theories of S. Huntington and R. Inglehart are applied to understand the 'Chinese path' of development. The study analyses the phenomenon of authoritarian modernisation, in which economic

openness is combined with political centralisation. J. Mearsheimer's theory of neoclassical realism served as the methodological basis for explaining the PRC's foreign policy aspirations, particularly during Xi Jinping's leadership.

The research methodology is based on the principles of objectivity, systematicity and predictability. The use of comparative analysis and systemic modelling methods makes it possible to identify the determinism of the PRC's foreign policy activity by internal institutional reforms and to assess their impact on the strategic dialogue with the Republic of Kazakhstan. The study employs both general scientific and specialised research methods – including systemic, historical, comparative and structural-functional approaches – as well as methods of empirical analysis, such as content analysis and event analysis, which have enabled a comprehensive and objective examination of the issues surrounding Sino-Kazakh relations. The historical-genetic method allows us to trace the evolution of the PRC's political system from traditional imperial models and Maoism to Deng Xiaoping's reforms and Xi Jinping's 'new era'. The comparative political science method is used to compare the institutional foundations of modernisation in the PRC and the Republic of Kazakhstan, identifying similarities and differences in approaches to public administration in the context of globalisation. Structural-functional analysis is used to examine the role of the Communist Party of China as a key link ensuring the stability of the system amidst profound transformations. Content analysis and event analysis are necessary for studying official documents of the CPC, including congress resolutions and reports, as well as speeches by the leaders of the PRC and the Republic of Kazakhstan. Thus, the application of these theoretical and methodological approaches to the study of China's institutional development has enabled a comprehensive investigation of the stated issues.

Object and Subject of the Research. China's political system in the context of globalisation and transformation. The processes and mechanisms of transformation within China's political system and their impact on the nature, forms and instruments of strategic cooperation with the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Scientific Novelty of the Research.

– the specific nature of the transformation of China's political system in the context of globalisation has been identified and described, which has led to the formation of a high-tech, monocentric model of governance that effectively utilises the tools of globalisation to strengthen national sovereignty;

– the concept of 'digital Confucianism' has been introduced and theoretically substantiated as a fundamental foundation of the modern Chinese state;

– the specific nature of China's 'parallel globalisation' has been revealed through the prism of the GDI, GSI, GCI and GGI initiatives;

– an approach has been substantiated that allows the Republic of Kazakhstan to maintain its independence and build relations with China more confidently on the basis of its own national interests;

– an approach has been formulated aimed at reducing imbalances in bilateral relations and taking the interests of both sides into account more effectively;

– a comparative study has been conducted of the institutional foundations of modernisation in the two countries, represented by the concept of the 'Community

with a Shared Future for Mankind' (PRC) and the 'Fair Kazakhstan' policy (Kazakhstan), which has made it possible to identify points of strategic convergence and potential areas of interest.

Key points of the Research submitted for defense:

1. The transformation of the PRC's political system in the context of globalisation has led to the creation of a high-tech, monocentric model, in which the tools of global integration are used not for liberalisation, but to strengthen national sovereignty and the adaptability of the Party leadership;

2. 'Digital Confucianism' serves as the fundamental pillar of the PRC's contemporary leadership, representing a synthesis of centuries-old ethical and philosophical imperatives and digital technologies;

3. China's 'parallel globalisation' strategy, implemented through the GDI, GSI, GCI and GGI initiatives, is aimed at creating its own institutional environment;

4. Kazakhstan can maintain an independent stance in its relations with China by combining active technological cooperation with strengthened internal control over financial processes and compliance with national regulations;

5. To reduce inequality in bilateral relations, it is proposed to shift from predominantly trade-based interaction towards the development of joint production and technologies;

6. The PRC's political system demonstrates a high degree of adaptability to the challenges of globalisation through a combination of a rigid party hierarchy and flexible mechanisms of state governance;

7. The institutional alignment of the modernisation agendas 'Community of Shared Future for Mankind' and 'Fair Kazakhstan' is based on shared interests in the areas of sovereign development and technological security, which enables the establishment of pragmatic and long-term cooperation.

Theoretical and practical significance of the Research The theoretical and practical significance of this thesis lies in the potential for its propositions, conclusions and assessments to be utilised in further research into Kazakhstani-Chinese relations and the transformation of the political system of the People's Republic of China. The results of the study can be applied in the formulation of the Republic of Kazakhstan's foreign policy priorities regarding China and serve as recommendations for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the Administration of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The practical significance of the work stems from the relevance of analysing the impact of China's policy transformation on Kazakhstan's multi-vector foreign policy course amid intensifying international tensions. The research materials may be used in the educational process when developing courses in international relations, political science, Oriental studies and Chinese studies.

Conclusion. The study concludes that the transformation of China's political system in the context of globalisation is accompanied by increased institutional stability, centralised governance and the active use of digital technologies in state regulatory mechanisms. The PRC's current development model demonstrates an

ability to adapt to external challenges whilst maintaining political stability and strategic continuity.

It has been found that internal reforms in China have a direct impact on the nature and mechanisms of interaction with the Republic of Kazakhstan, including issues of transit and logistics cooperation, energy security, technology exchange and regional stability. In these circumstances, it is of particular importance for Kazakhstan to develop a pragmatic model of cooperation with the PRC, based on the principles of national interests, economic sustainability and strategic autonomy.