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## CONCEPTUAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA'S INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE POLICY

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**Abstract.** The People's Republic of China is a major actor in global international development assistance. This article analyses white papers and other official documents related to China's international development assistance policy. Through detailed examination, the objectives, principles, and priority areas are identified, highlighting contemporary trend which is shifting from the terms "aid" and "donor – recipient relationships" to "partnership" and "international development cooperation". It is concluded that China actively employs development assistance as a tool in its foreign policy, enabling it to achieve national goals, increase its political and economic influence in the international arena, strengthen the legitimacy of its actions, and promote the Belt and road initiative and the construction of a global community of shared future.

**Keywords:** People's Republic of China; international development assistance; official development assistance; regulatory framework; White paper; Belt and road initiative; global community of shared future.

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## КОНЦЕПТУАЛЬНЫЕ ОСНОВЫ ПОЛИТИКИ СОДЕЙСТВИЯ МЕЖДУНАРОДНОМУ РАЗВИТИЮ КИТАЙСКОЙ НАРОДНОЙ РЕСПУБЛИКИ

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**Аннотация.** Китайская Народная Республика существенно содействует международному развитию в глобальном масштабе. Проанализированы белые книги и другие документы Китая, посвященные политике страны в рассматриваемой области. На основе их детального изучения выявлены главные цели, принципы и приоритетные направления содействия международному развитию, отражены современные тенденции замены термина «помощь» термином «партнерство» и переход от отношений *донор – реципиент* к международному сотрудничеству в целях развития. Автор приходит к выводу о том, что Китай активно использует содействие развитию как инструмент в своей внешней политике. Такой подход обеспечивает государству достижение национальных целей, наращивание политического и экономического влияния на международной арене, укрепление легитимности действий и позволяет продвигать инициативу «Один пояс, один путь» и концепцию глобального сообщества общего будущего.

**Ключевые слова:** Китайская Народная Республика; содействие международному развитию; официальная помощь развитию; нормативная база; Белая книга; инициатива «Один пояс, один путь»; глобальное сообщество общего будущего.

The People's Republic of China is a major actor in global international development assistance. Since the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, especially in the wake of the global financial crisis of 2008–2009, China's significance in the world economy has increased, with a more active foreign policy and stronger international positions. China's substantial economic and political potential has allowed it to deploy a wide range of tools for international development assistance. China has particularly focused on Asian, African, and Latin American countries, demonstrating political affinity with developing nations while continuing to position itself as a developing country.

This article aims to analyse the regulatory framework of China's international development assistance policy. To this end, relevant white papers (2011, 2014, 2021) and other policy documents released by Chinese government agencies were reviewed. Scholarly works by Chinese, Russian, and Western authors informed this research.

Chinese author Huang Meito asserts that development assistance policy is multifaceted, encompassing development aid provided on a bilateral or multilateral basis, either as grants or concessional loans [1]. Ma Xue highlights that China emphasises experience-sharing based on equality and reciprocal benefit in its foreign aid [2]. Examining the regulatory framework and mechanisms of China's assistance, particularly in Africa, Wang Xinying notes significant developments and innovations in foreign aid policy, both theoretically and practically, since 2021 [3]. A. A. Mardashev argues that China has strengthened the conceptual, legal, institutional, instrumental, and resource bases of its external assistance and become a key donor in international development [4]. D. A. Degterev, Li Yan, and A. A. Trusova observe that China's assistance activities are regulated by normative legal acts of the State Council of the People's Republic of China (hereinafter – State Council),

Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China, Ministry of Finance of the People's Republic of China, and other departments [5]. V. G. Baranovskii, Yu. D. Kva-shnin, and N. V. Toganova, in their analysis of China's aid policy, note that the country places significant emphasis on political and image considerations [6]. According to V. L. Nezhdanov, the White paper of 2021 places special emphasis on the cultural and philosophical origins of China's aid practices [7]. J. F. Copper highlights that Western countries and certain international organisations offer critical assessments of China's aid policy, noting that the country, with its substantial resources, has established its own rules [8]. According to J. F. Copper, China shows significant interest in providing aid and investments for various infrastructure projects in countries facing substantial obstacles and risks. R. Schwarz and M. Rudyak claim that China views the provision of official development assistance as a responsibility of developed countries [9]. In contrast, China uses the broader term “development cooperation” to advance the Belt and road initiative (BRI) and the Global development initiative.

Content analysis and a comparative approach were employed to investigate the conceptual foundations of China's international development cooperation.

International development assistance is an integral part of China's foreign policy. This foreign policy tool facilitates the achievement of diplomatic objectives, such as maintaining friendly relations with recipient countries, supporting their efforts to preserve territorial integrity and national sovereignty, promoting global and regional stability and security, strengthening China's position on the international stage and in the global economy, ensuring border security, and creating a favourable external environment for domestic reforms [4]. D. D. Trinidad argues that three aspects define the nature of China's philosophy on international

development assistance: the aid management system, state-civil society relationship, and internal economic changes [10, p. 22]. According to D. D. Trinidad, aid serves as an instrument of China's economic diplomacy, enabling the successful resolution of economic and political challenges.

China implements its development aid based on the five principles of peaceful coexistence, proposed by premier Zhou Enlai during negotiations with the Indian delegation on 31 December 1953. These principles include mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence. They formed the basis of the ten principles proposed at the Bandung conference in 1955, also known as the South – South cooperation principles. In brief, these principles encompass respect for partners' sovereignty, the absence of political conditions, a focus on mutual benefit and cooperation, and the promotion of economic development. China has consistently adhered to them in its policy towards developing countries [5]. Furthermore, China has incorporated these principles into its policy documents on development assistance.

Notably, China is not a member of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and its Development Assistance Committee. This allows China to make independent decisions, set priority areas, and gives it a great degree of latitude in implementing its international development assistance policy.

China's approach to international development is conceptually grounded in white papers and policy directives issued by the State Council. To date, the State Council has released three white papers on this subject in October 2011, 2014, and 2021.

The 2011 document articulated the core tenets of China's foreign aid policy, emphasising following components:

- continuous support for recipient states in enhancing their capacity for self-reliant development;
- absence of political conditions for the provision of assistance;
- commitment to equality, mutual benefit, and collaborative development;
- tailoring aid to the specific needs of recipient countries;
- ongoing improvement of foreign aid delivery, innovation, and management system reform<sup>1</sup>.

The document details primary financial instruments for foreign aid: grants, interest-free loans, and concessional loans. They address the specifics of implementing projects for human resource development, technical

cooperation, in-kind assistance, and the provision of emergency humanitarian aid.

The White paper of 2011 identified various forms of foreign aid, including comprehensive infrastructure and industrial projects, providing goods and materials, technical cooperation, and human resource development. Additionally, it encompasses the deployment of medical teams abroad, emergency humanitarian assistance, volunteer programmes in foreign countries, and debt relief.

The White paper of 2011 presents in full detail the key positions, basic principles, and main provisions of China's foreign aid policy, as acknowledged by Wang Xinying. It further addresses aspects such as aid delivery methods, funding sources, and management mechanisms. Crucially, it underscores that China's foreign aid is not an isolated policy tool but is closely linked with other aspects of foreign policy, as well as trade and investment [3, p. 127].

In July 2014, the State Council published another White paper titled "China's foreign aid"<sup>2</sup>, consisting of five chapters: "Development of foreign aid", "Assistance in improving living standards", "Promoting economic and social development", "Foreign aid in the context of regional cooperation mechanisms", and "International cooperation". The publication was partly driven by the launch of the BRI, which also sought to refine global development and governance. Subsequently, the BRI has evolved to advance China's geo-economic and geopolitical aspirations.

By proposing a new framework for enhancing international cooperation, China aimed to nurture partnerships with a greater number of countries. This framework underlined the imperative of addressing infrastructural disparities that impede the growth of trade and economic ties at both regional and global levels. Moreover, it was envisaged that the BRI would be a means for progressively elevating the foreign policy priorities of Chinese companies within the objectives of international development assistance [6, p. 159, 170].

According to the 2014 document, China endeavours to make a significant contribution to foreign aid, directing substantial efforts to improve living conditions worldwide, promote economic and social development in recipient countries, provide assistance within the framework of regional cooperation mechanisms, and actively participate in international exchanges and cooperation in the realm of international development assistance. It is noted that China's strengthened position on the international stage and expanded financial capabilities have enabled it to engage more actively in aid programmes executed by international organisations, exchange experiences, and analyse the outcomes of practical cooperation on development assistance issues.

<sup>1</sup>China's foreign aid [Electronic resource]. URL: [https://english.www.gov.cn/archive/white\\_paper/2014/09/09/content281474986284620.htm](https://english.www.gov.cn/archive/white_paper/2014/09/09/content281474986284620.htm) (date of access: 15.10.2024).

<sup>2</sup>China's foreign aid [Electronic resource]. URL: [https://english.www.gov.cn/archive/white\\_paper/2014/08/23/content\\_281474982986592.htm](https://english.www.gov.cn/archive/white_paper/2014/08/23/content_281474982986592.htm) (date of access: 15.10.2024).

On 10 January 2021, the State Council information office released a new White paper titled “China’s international development cooperation in the new era”. While retaining core provisions from preceding documents, the 2021 version reflected the evolving political landscape and processes at the turn of the 2010s and 2020s. These included the COVID-19 pandemic and the robust financing of infrastructure projects under the BRI. The title of the White paper reflects contemporary trend in China’s foreign policy, which is shifting from the terms “aid” and “donor – recipient relationships” to “partnership” and “international development cooperation”. It appears that the adjustment in terminology was also linked to China’s desire to distance itself from commercial associations, demonstrate its commitment to socio-economic development, and affirm its dedication to the UN sustainable development goals. Furthermore, changes in international development assistance policy were prompted by increased criticism from Western countries regarding the growing debt dependency on China as a result of participation in the BRI and the implementation of numerous and diverse infrastructure projects.

The White paper of 2021 formulated the concept “international development cooperation” and provided the following definition: “International development cooperation means China’s bilateral and multilateral efforts within the framework of South – South cooperation, aimed at promoting economic and social development through the provision of foreign aid, humanitarian assistance, and other means”<sup>3</sup>. This definition highlights the transformation of China’s approach to aid policy: whereas previously funds were primarily allocated within the context of bilateral relations, the country has now increasingly utilised multilateral platforms.

This document comprises eight chapters: “China’s cooperation in international development based on the concept of a global community of shared future”, “Achieving new progress in international development cooperation”, “Enhancing international cooperation under the Belt and road initiative”, “Contribution to the UN 2030 Agenda for sustainable development”, “Joint response to global humanitarian challenges”, “Supporting endogenous growth in developing countries”, “Strengthening international exchanges and triangular cooperation”, and “Prospects for China’s international development cooperation”.

The White paper of 2011 underscores that the creation of a global community with a common destiny constitutes the overarching goal of China’s international development cooperation in the new era. China continues to expand the scope of its international partnerships, aiming to bridge the North – South divide by prioritising the least developed countries in Asia and Africa, as well as other developing nations participating

in the BRI. The document highlights that South – South cooperation remains central to China’s policy on promoting international development.

The new principles outlined in the White paper of 2021 include conducting development cooperation based on the five principles of peaceful coexistence, fulfilling development commitments in alignment with China’s growing national strength, focusing on improving the livelihoods and development of partner countries according to their specific needs, sharing expertise and technology, training local skilled personnel, implementing effective cooperation in diverse forms, ensuring the sustainability and efficiency of Chinese aid projects, fostering exchanges and mutual learning, and seizing new opportunities in response to domestic and global changes. Notably, the final three principles appear for the first time in such a document, reflecting advancements in the governance mechanisms underpinning China’s development assistance.

A key innovation is the Chinese leadership’s decision to allow recipient countries to manage projects independently, provided they have appropriate legal and regulatory frameworks in place. Previously, the Chinese government oversaw project design, tendering processes, and implementation monitoring.

The White paper of 2021 notes that China engages in development cooperation and contributes to infrastructure, trade, finance, and people-to-people exchanges based on the specific needs of individual countries. This approach creates opportunities and space for successful collaboration. According to the document, China seeks to assist developing countries in enhancing their capacity for self-reliant development by increasing targeted assistance through human resource development and technical cooperation.

The White paper of 2021 further asserts that China is an active proponent of global partnerships for development. It engages in dialogue and exchanges with international institutions and bilateral donors to explore and implement triangular cooperation using an open and pragmatic approach. Prior to the publication of this third iteration of the White paper, the concept of “triangular cooperation” had not been explicitly addressed in China’s official documents on international development assistance.

The document highlights China’s active engagement in multilateral development initiatives through the South – South Cooperation Fund, including with various international organisations (UNDP, UN WFP, UNHCR, UNICEF, WHO, and ICRC), and non-governmental entities. This collaborative approach has enabled China to implement development programmes across diverse sectors, such as food aid, disaster recovery, refugee assistance, and maternal and child health in countries across Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

<sup>3</sup>China’s international development cooperation in the new era [Electronic resource]. URL: [https://english.www.gov.cn/archive/whitepaper/202101/10/content\\_WS5ffa6bbbc6d0f72576943922.html](https://english.www.gov.cn/archive/whitepaper/202101/10/content_WS5ffa6bbbc6d0f72576943922.html) (date of access: 10.10.2024).

China views multilateral development cooperation as a vital tool for achieving national objectives, enhancing its political and economic influence, strengthening the legitimacy of its actions, and improving the effectiveness of its development aid. In turn, multilateral organisations have shown significant interest in cooperating with China to secure its financial support.

The White paper of 2021 emphasises that China will continue to provide comprehensive support for international cooperation, adhere to the concept of a global community of shared future, and act based on the principles of justice and mutual respect. According to the document, China's approach to foreign aid is evolving in alignment with contemporary demands, undergoing a transformation towards international development cooperation. This evolution signifies a transition into a new phase of international engagement, characterised by innovative practices and significant milestones.

The White paper of 2021 highlights China's role as a leading development partner. It notes that in April 2018, the China International Development Cooperation Agency was established under the State Council to enhance the planning and coordination of international development cooperation efforts. China has improved mechanisms for monitoring foreign aid projects to enhance their quality, formulated clear rules and regulations for project management, and refined mechanisms for the allocation of financial resources.

The document notes that China intends to fulfil its international commitments in accordance with its national capabilities and reserves the right to independently determine the volume of funds allocated to achieve international development goals. According to the document, China adheres to the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and regards North – South cooperation as the primary channel for international development cooperation, with South – South cooperation as a complement. China urges developed countries to promptly and fully honour their official development assistance commitments, providing greater support to developing nations. White paper of 2021 articulates a commitment to respecting national sovereignty, non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries, and refraining from making political demands.

China has steadily expanded and modernised its legal and regulatory framework for international en-

gagement. On 28 June 2023, the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress promulgated the law on international relations<sup>4</sup>. This law systematises the ideas and concepts put forward by Xi Jinping in the realm of foreign policy. Notably, Art. 27 of the document is dedicated to the implementation of foreign aid and the provision of international development assistance. According to the document, China provides foreign aid through diverse means, encompassing economic, technical, material, personnel, managerial, and other forms of support, aiming to promote the economic and social development of developing countries, enhance their capacity for self-reliance, and foster international development cooperation.

The White paper of 26 September 2023 titled "A global community of shared future: China's proposals and actions"<sup>5</sup>, emphasises China's dedication to an independent and peaceful foreign policy aimed at maintaining global peace and promoting shared development. The document also advocates for enhanced coordination among major economies for development, policy continuity, consistency and sustainability, and stronger global development partnerships for greater equality and balance, improved multilateral development cooperation to leverage synergies, and expedited implementation of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for sustainable development.

Promoting international development remains a key priority of China's foreign policy. An examination of China's legal and regulatory framework reveals the development of a unique international assistance model, drawing upon the best practices of multilateral organisations and incorporating specific aid delivery mechanisms. This evolving assistance framework demonstrates China's proactive engagement in fostering partnerships with nations across Africa, Asia, and Latin America, predicated on mutual respect and reciprocal learning. This strategy aims to deepen understanding and trust while concurrently promoting its political philosophy.

Support from developing countries for building a global community of shared future and their participation in the BRI facilitates China's pursuit of its foreign economic and political goals, enhances its international standing, and garners support from both partner states and international bodies.

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## CHINA'S FOREIGN POLICY UNDER XI JINPING: FROM THE BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE TO A COMMUNITY WITH A SHARED FUTURE FOR MANKIND

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**Abstract.** The author of the article examines the evolution of China's foreign policy since Xi Jinping's ascension to General Secretary of the Communist party of China Central Committee and subsequent leadership of the country. The analysis centres on Xi Jinping's global cooperation initiatives, specifically the Belt and road initiative and the concept of a community with a shared future for mankind. These initiatives represent significant innovations in China's diplomatic approach. The study concludes that both the Belt and road initiative and the community with a shared future for mankind are predicated on mutually beneficial, responsible, and equitable cooperation. Furthermore, the implementation of these initiatives within the international political framework positions China, under Xi Jinping's leadership, as a predominant actor.

**Keywords:** China; foreign policy; Xi Jinping; community with a shared future for mankind; Belt and road initiative.

## ВНЕШНЯЯ ПОЛИТИКА КИТАЯ В ПЕРИОД ПРЕДСЕДАТЕЛЬСТВА СИ ЦЗИНЬПИНА: ОТ ИНИЦИАТИВЫ «ОДИН ПОЯС, ОДИН ПУТЬ» К СООБЩЕСТВУ ЕДИНОЙ СУДЬБЫ ЧЕЛОВЕЧЕСТВА

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**Аннотация.** Рассматривается внешнеполитический курс Китая после избрания Си Цзиньпина генеральным секретарем ЦК Коммунистической партии Китайской Народной Республики, а затем Председателем Китайской Народной Республики. Анализируются выдвинутые Си Цзиньпином инициативы по глобальному сотрудничеству, а именно инициатива «Один пояс, один путь» и концепт сообщества единой судьбы человечества, которые рассматриваются как примечательные новации внешней политики Китая. В результате исследования определено, что в основу инициативы «Один пояс, один путь» и концепта сообщества единой судьбы человечества положен принцип взаимовыгодного, ответственного, равноправного сотрудничества. При этом в процессе их имплементации в систему мировой политики главенствующая роль отведена Китаю во главе с Си Цзиньпином.

**Ключевые слова:** Китай; внешняя политика; Си Цзиньпин; сообщество единой судьбы человечества; инициатива «Один пояс, один путь».

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## Introduction

The foreign policy landscape of China has undergone significant transformations since Xi Jinping assumed the role of General Secretary of the Communist party of China in 2012 and subsequently became President of the People's Republic of China in 2013.

The era of progressive reforms and adaptation to the evolving geopolitical landscape, which characterised China's foreign policy in the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, has transitioned to a more assertive and dynamic engagement in shaping the international order. China has moved away from a detached stance on global issues, actively initiating revisions to established international norms. A complex interplay of factors, including a reassessment of the China's role in global politics and the increasing complexity of international cooperation and rivalry, has prompted the new Chinese leadership to revise the nation's global positioning strategies fundamentally.

Xi Jinping's tenure has introduced greater diversity into China's diplomatic efforts with ambitious, long-term objectives. Central to these efforts are the Belt and road initiative (BRI) and the concept of a community with a shared future for mankind, representing key pillars of China's redefined foreign policy strategy.

Xi Jinping's official reports, abstracts, and speeches, particularly those concerning the BRI and the shared future concept, are essential for understanding China's current strategic foreign policy direction. These pronouncements articulate China's foreign policy vectors, aims, and objectives, revealing the leadership's stance

on pressing issues in contemporary international relations. They also clarify the principles underpinning China's strategy for international cooperation. Consequently, addressing the conceptualisation of China's foreign policy guidelines during the Xi Jinping era and examining the intricate interplay between the BRI and the community with a shared future for mankind constitutes a critical area of inquiry within international relations scholarship.

Some Belarusian political scientists (J. I. Malevich and I. A. Chuvilov [1], A. M. Baichorov [2], K. I. Yarmoshuk [3]) have examined China's foreign policy, including the BRI and the shared future concept, exploring various contentious aspects of China's international role, including its expanding global influence, competition with other major powers, and bilateral relations. Guo Jinlong's [4] studies examine the challenges and prospects associated with the BRI. Zhang Weiwei's [5] offers seminal interpretations of China's current policy, emphasising the significance of civilisational and humanitarian factors in shaping China's international strategy. Despite these scholarly contributions, the evolving dynamics of the BRI and the community with a shared future necessitate further rigorous academic scrutiny, given their ongoing development and the emergence of new priorities in China's foreign policy.

This article identifies the salient features of implementing the BRI and the shared future concept within China's foreign policy under Xi Jinping.

## The Belt and road initiative in China's foreign policy during the Xi Jinping era

China's foreign policy directives are mainly articulated through Xi Jinping's speeches and pronouncements. Chinese diplomatic practice typically involves disseminating core foreign policy concepts, forms, and methods, initially presented by state officials, with Xi Jinping often introducing new international initiatives and programmes.

One of the China's most consequential proposals for transforming inter-state relations and international organisations is the BRI. It was first unveiled to the global community during Xi Jinping's official visits to Kazakhstan and Indonesia in the autumn of 2013.

The BRI traces its origins to the Great Silk Road, which historically united multiple regions within China and facilitated the growth of trade, economic, and cultural exchanges. «More than 2100 years ago, during the Han Dynasty, the diplomat Zhang Qian – renowned in Chinese history – undertook two peaceful and friendly missions to Central Asia, thereby establishing contacts between China and Central Asian states and laying the foundations for the Great Silk Road from East to West, connecting Europe with Asia» stated Xi Jinping in his 2013 address in Astana [6, p. 187].

Xi Jinping further elaborated at Nazarbayev University: «For millennia, along this ancient Silk Road, peoples from diverse nations have co-authored narratives of friendship passed down through generations. Our two-thousand-year history of engagement demonstrates that by adhering to principles of solidarity and mutual trust, equality and reciprocity, tolerance and exchange of experiences, cooperation and shared benefits, countries with distinct ethnic, religious, and cultural characteristics can coexist peacefully and prosper collectively. This is the invaluable concept that the ancient Great Silk Road imparts to us»<sup>1</sup> [6, p. 388].

The BRI inherits the peaceful ethos of the ancient Silk Road and seeks to foster amicable, equitable, and mutually advantageous relations among its participants. Simultaneously, it addresses contemporary international realities, including emerging global threats. As A. M. Baichorov observes, China's role in world politics has transformed significantly [2, p. 14]. China consciously advocates for a novel path of international development to mitigate negative trends in the global economy, resolve conflicts, and establish new principles of global multilateral cooperation.

<sup>1</sup>Hereinafter translated by us. – *I. Ch.*

Xi Jinping's BRI is advancing along multiple trajectories. One primary dimension of the BRI is economic cooperation, emphasising equitable partnerships among participating states and international organisations. As part of the initiative, China is undertaking numerous infrastructure projects to enhance the prosperity of populations in the Belt and Road area, particularly in Southeast Asia, Africa, and Central Asia.

For example, trade relations between China and the countries of Western and Central Asia have intensified significantly as the BRI progresses. Since the beginning of 2024, rail freight volume to Kashgar for transit has surged, exceeding 100 000 – a 53 300-ton increase year-on-year<sup>2</sup>. Similarly, logistical collaboration between China and European nations has shown positive trends. From 2016 to 2023, the annual number of China – Europe freight train departures surged from 1702 to over 17 000, with the value of transported goods increasing substantially from 8 to 56.7 bln US dollars<sup>3</sup>. The diversity of products transported has expanded to over 50 000 items, including electronics such as laptops and printers, apparel and footwear, vehicles and spare parts, essential goods, food, timber, furniture, chemicals, and equipment<sup>4</sup>.

Beyond economic cooperation, the BRI also aims to consolidate a shared political development strategy, aimed at strengthening political ties and enhancing diplomatic engagement among participating countries.

The first Belt and Road forum for international cooperation exemplifies the interest of contemporary states and international organisations in engaging with the BRI. The inaugural forum in 2017 outlined the initiative's priorities and China's approach to multilateral collaboration. The second forum, held in 2019 under the theme of inclusive and high-quality growth through enhanced coordination, attracted over 5000 participants from more than 150 countries and 90 international organisations, including the International Monetary Fund and the United Nations<sup>5</sup>. Through these forums, China demonstrated its commitment to exploring new cooperative frameworks and articulated a vision for an international order rooted in mutual respect, national interests, and comprehensive collaboration.

At the third forum in 2023, Xi Jinping summarised the BRI's first decade: «This year marks the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Belt and Road Initiative I proposed. The BRI, drawing inspiration from the ancient Silk Road and focusing on enhancing connectivity, aims to improve po-

lity, infrastructure, trade, financial, and people-to-people contacts, inject new impetus into the global economy, create new opportunities for global development, and build a new platform for international economic cooperation. Over these ten years, we have remained committed to this founding mission. Thanks to our joint efforts, Belt and Road international cooperation has been launched, expanded rapidly, and produced fruitful outcomes. Belt and Road collaboration has extended from the Eurasian continent to Africa and Latin America. More than 150 countries and more than 30 international organisations have signed Belt and Road cooperation agreements. We have held two previous BRFs and established over 20 specialised multilateral cooperation platforms under the BRI»<sup>6</sup>.

China's political cooperation has gained particular momentum with African and Asian nations, while ties with European states are strengthening steadily within the BRI framework. Italy, for example, had long shown interest and joined in 2019 – even though it later suspended its participation in 2023, citing productive and effective bilateral cooperation with China outside the BRI framework [7, p. 216]. According to Guo Jinlong, China generally seeks to cultivate friendships with developing countries while strengthening partnerships with Europe [4, p. 224].

In the summer of 2024, Chinese Vice Prime Minister Ding Xuexiang and Luxembourg's deputy Prime Minister Xavier Bettel affirmed their commitment to expanding bilateral cooperation within the BRI framework in a statement issued during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Zhengzhou – Luxembourg «Air Silk Road» international cooperation forum held in Luxembourg<sup>7</sup>.

Humanitarian cooperation constitutes the third pillar of the BRI. China views this framework as an opportunity to develop educational, cultural, and scientific ties with international partners. Through such projects, China introduces the global community to its history, culture, and philosophy.

Confucius institutes play a pivotal role in this domain by offering opportunities for individuals worldwide to learn the Chinese language and engage with Chinese traditions.

China's humanitarian cooperation with Africa has intensified significantly, culminating in the agreement to designate 2026 as the Year of Chinese-African cultural and humanitarian exchanges<sup>8</sup>. China supports African

<sup>2</sup>Since the beginning of 2024, 100 freight train departures have been recorded within the framework of mixed freight transportation «China – Kyrgyzstan – Uzbekistan» [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://russian.news.cn/20240728/b7c9f8ae8a3243d3894e0e52f02a8241/c.html> (date of access: 11.09.2024) (in Russ.).

<sup>3</sup>The number of China – Europe freight train departures exceeded 90 thousand [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://russian.news.cn/20240525/331b487630914525a630ce96cfe1e149/c.html> (date of access: 11.09.2024) (in Russ.).

<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

<sup>5</sup>Belt and Road forum opens in Beijing with Russia's participation [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://tass.ru/ekonomika/6373631> (date of access: 12.09.2024) (in Russ.).

<sup>6</sup>Full text of Xi Jinping's keynote speech at 3<sup>rd</sup> Belt and Road forum for international cooperation [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://english.news.cn/20231018/7bfc16ac51d443c6a7a00ce25c972104/c.html> (date of access: 12.09.2024).

<sup>7</sup>Chinese Vice Prime Minister, Luxembourg deputy Prime Minister agree to expand Belt and Road cooperation [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://russian.news.cn/20240622/33ccd32a0b0f4405805c1ed45e3babd7/c.html> (date of access: 12.09.2024) (in Russ.).

<sup>8</sup>Xi Jinping says China is ready to implement 10 partnership action plans with Africa to jointly advance modernisation cooperation [Electronic resource]. URL: <http://russian.peopledaily.com.cn/n3/2024/0906/c31521-20215672.html> (date of access: 17.09.2024) (in Russ.).

nations through scientific and educational initiatives, contributing to improved educational standards through activities such as school construction and the establishment of Confucius institutes.

Overall, the BRI encompasses multiple vectors for China's international engagement, primarily focusing on economic, political, and humanitarian cooperation.

### **A community with a shared future for mankind: China's international cooperation under Xi Jinping**

Concurrent with the BRI, China is advancing the concept of a community with a shared future for mankind, representing a logical extension of the BRI's political and humanitarian dimensions. Xi Jinping leads in advocating this concept within the international relations framework.

Xi Jinping's advocacy for the shared future concept stems from the recognition of interdependence among the modern states: «With the continued development of multipolarity, economic globalisation, and the informatisation of society, the interests, fates, and security of all countries have become intertwined. Consequently, a community with a shared future for mankind has emerged...» [8, p. 129].

In promoting this idea, China under Xi Jinping seeks to establish a new paradigm of international relations: «China calls on the world to jointly build a community with a shared future for mankind, to create a new type of international relations, the core of which will be mutually beneficial cooperation. We firmly advocate the democratisation of international relations, adhere to a correct understanding of justice and benefit, and firmly advocate the peaceful resolution of inter-state differences and conflicts through dialogue and consultations. We will work with all states to protect world peace, defend equality and justice, and promote shared prosperity» [8, p. 340].

Zhang Xiao, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the People's Republic of China to the Republic of Kazakhstan observed that «building the community with a shared future for mankind consolidates the greatest common denominator of the desire of people of all countries to build a better world, pointing out the right direction for human society leading to common development, lasting peace and stability, security and mutual enrichment of civilisations»<sup>9</sup>. The diplomat further sta-

This multifaceted approach allows China to diversify its relations with other states, addressing all critical sectors. Furthermore, the initiative is evolving to include novel dimensions such as the Green Silk Road, Air Silk Road, and Digital Silk Road. These new formats serve to consolidate the interests of the participating nations further.

ted: «The ultimate goal of the concept of the community with a shared future is to create a clean and beautiful world where universal security, shared prosperity, openness and inclusivity prevail»<sup>10</sup>.

Professor of Shanghai University of Political Science and Law Wang Qingping contends that building a community with a shared future for mankind necessitates unity, action, and cooperation among diverse peoples, cultures, and regions. It offers a significant solution to the challenges of human destiny, yet it requires gradual progress in alignment with historical development's logic and laws [9, p. 127]. Chinese scholar Wang Xin identifies one of the foundational principles of this concept as openness and cooperation, which underscores the importance of collective efforts among nations and peoples to build an open global economy and foster sustainable social development [10, p. 66].

The community with a shared future for mankind prioritises humanitarian cooperation between China and its international partners, emphasising civilisational development and cultural understanding. In constructing this community, China utilises soft power, a hallmark of its foreign policy under Xi Jinping.

Furthermore, China explicitly links the BRI to the shared future concept. A 2023 document «The Belt and road initiative: a key pillar of the global community of shared future», states: «China stands ready to work with other countries to pursue closer and more fruitful cooperation under the BRI framework, implement the Global development initiative, the Global security initiative, and the Global civilisation initiative, and build an open, inclusive, clean, and beautiful world that enjoys lasting peace, universal security, and common prosperity. Our goals are to pass on the torch of peace from generation to generation, sustain development, ensure that civilisations flourish, and build a global community of a shared future»<sup>11</sup>.

### **Conclusions**

China's foreign policy under Xi Jinping is distinguished by several key international initiatives. Foremost among these is the BRI, which has enabled China

to enhance its standing within the global economic system while establishing robust political and humanitarian ties with numerous states and international

<sup>9</sup>Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the People's Republic of China to the Republic of Kazakhstan Zhang Xiao published an article on the topic «Building the community with a shared future for mankind and promoting a bright future for peace, security, prosperity and progress» [Electronic resource]. URL: [http://kz.china-embassy.gov.cn/rus/sgxx/sgdt/202401/t20240123\\_11231051.htm](http://kz.china-embassy.gov.cn/rus/sgxx/sgdt/202401/t20240123_11231051.htm) (date of access: 21.09.2024) (in Russ.).

<sup>10</sup>Ibid.

<sup>11</sup>The Belt and road initiative: a key pillar of the global community of shared future [Electronic resource]. URL: [http://gd.china-embassy.gov.cn/eng/zxhd\\_1/202310/t20231011\\_11159072.htm](http://gd.china-embassy.gov.cn/eng/zxhd_1/202310/t20231011_11159072.htm) (date of access: 21.09.2024).

organisations. The community with a shared future for mankind emerges as China's primary model for international relations under Xi Jinping's leadership. This concept not only complements the political and humanitarian dimensions of the BRI but also provides the international community with alternative frameworks for collaboration. Contemporary China has emerged as a formidable global power, with the influence of the

Communist party of China significantly strengthened under Xi Jinping's guidance.

In recent years, Xi Jinping has introduced additional cooperative frameworks, namely the Global civilisation initiative and the Global security initiative. Collectively, these initiatives underscore the continuity of China's political strategy and reflect the confidence of the Chinese in Xi Jinping's policies on the international stage.

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## COOPERATION BETWEEN CHINA AND ASEAN STATES WITHIN THE BELT AND ROAD INITIATIVE: EDUCATION, CULTURE, AND TOURISM

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**Abstract.** The Belt and road initiative, launched by China in 2013, has not only fostered the expansion of economic and political ties but also served as a catalyst for intensified cultural and humanitarian cooperation between the peoples of China and the ASEAN member states. The considerable potential for enhanced interaction is largely attributed to the inherent geographical proximity of these states. This article identifies and examines the distinctive characteristics of cultural and people-to-people interactions across three principal domains: education, culture, and tourism. Particular attention is paid to analysing successful initiatives and practices that contribute to deepening mutual understanding and respect between China and ASEAN members. These include cultural festivals, joint university alliances, cultural tourism weeks, and tourism initiatives. The author concludes that ASEAN states' participation in the Belt and road initiative has enhanced the ties between China and these nations in the realms of education, culture, and tourism, thereby reinforcing regional interconnectedness and laying a solid foundation for friendship between their peoples.

**Keywords:** cultural exchange; humanitarian cooperation; China; ASEAN; Belt and road initiative.

## СОТРУДНИЧЕСТВО В СФЕРЕ ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ, КУЛЬТУРЫ И ТУРИЗМА МЕЖДУ КИТАЕМ И ГОСУДАРСТВАМИ АСЕАН В РАМКАХ ИНИЦИАТИВЫ «ОДИН ПОЯС, ОДИН ПУТЬ»

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**Аннотация.** Инициатива «Один пояс, один путь», выдвинутая Китаем в 2013 г., не только создала условия для расширения экономических и политических связей, но и послужила основой для активизации культурно-гуманитарного сотрудничества между Китаем и странами АСЕАН. Большой потенциал взаимодействия обусловлен естественной географической близостью стран. В настоящем исследовании выявлены и охарактеризованы особенности развития культурно-гуманитарного сотрудничества по трем основным направлениям (образование, культура и туризм). Отдельно проанализированы мероприятия и практики, к которым относятся культурные фестивали, недели культурного туризма, туристические инициативы и университетские альянсы, способствующие укреплению взаимопонимания между Китаем и государствами АСЕАН. Сделан вывод о том, что участие стран АСЕАН в инициативе «Один пояс, один путь» позволило углубить связи между ними и Китаем в сферах образования, культуры и туризма, что поспособствовало не только укреплению региональных связей, но и заложило прочный фундамент дружбы народов этих стран.

**Ключевые слова:** культурный обмен; гуманитарное сотрудничество; Китай; АСЕАН; инициатива «Один пояс, один путь».

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## Introduction

In 2013, Xi Jinping, General Secretary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee, unveiled the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), a global cooperation framework signifying a new era of Chinese openness to the outside world. ASEAN nations have become significant participants in this initiative. Facilitating the dissemination and exchange of national cultures

is a cornerstone for developing people-to-people connections and constructing a community of shared future for mankind. Cultural exchanges have not only served to deepen amicable relations between neighbouring countries but have also contributed to establishing collaborative ventures and invigorating exchanges across diverse fields.

## Materials and methods

This article aims to identify and delineate the characteristics of cultural and humanitarian cooperation between China and ASEAN states within the BRI framework. To achieve this objective, pertinent policy documents were reviewed, and practical collaboration in the areas of education, culture, and tourism was examined. Academic works in Chinese, English, and Russian were used in the preparation of this article.

The material for this research draws mainly on the works of some scholars. Huang Lili and Lu Yongjiu summarised the decade of people-to-people collaboration between China and ASEAN following the launch of the Belt and Road Initiative [1]. Lu Jianren highlighted the numerous mechanisms for cultural and people-to-people exchange established by China and ASEAN, with particular emphasis on media partnerships in the cultural domain, educational forums, and conferences related to

tourism [2]. Zhang Bin identified challenges in cultural and people-to-people exchanges between China and ASEAN, proposing potential solutions [3]. Wen Zhihong investigated the role of Confucius Institutes and tourism cooperation between China and ASEAN member states [4]. Yang Tijun examined educational collaboration between China and ASEAN within the context of the Belt and Road Initiative [5]. N. V. Kondratskaya analysed educational cooperation between China and ASEAN nations from 2000 to 2020 [6]. K. G. Muratshina examined China's cultural activities in ASEAN countries following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic [7]. He Jing explored the potential of tourism in China and ASEAN states [8]. This research also utilises materials published by official government bodies of ASEAN nations and China, as well as information from news agency websites.

## Culture

In 2005, China and ASEAN signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Cultural Cooperation at the 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of ministers of culture in the "10 + 3" format (ASEAN, China, Japan, and South Korea). This agreement, the first of its kind between China and a regional organisation, opened a new chapter in cultural exchange and collaboration between China and ASEAN member states. The memorandum stipulates that participating nations should promote and support the protection of cultural heritage, cultivate human resources within the cultural sector, and strengthen cooperation between cultural institutions<sup>1</sup>.

During the 12<sup>th</sup> Asia Arts Festival in October 2011, a decision was made in China to establish a mechanism for meetings between Chinese and ASEAN culture ministers, aiming to enhance the competitiveness of the cultural sector at the regional level<sup>2</sup>. The inaugural meeting of China-ASEAN culture ministers took place in Singapore in May 2012. In his opening address, Singapore's minister for information, communications and

arts, Yaacob Ibrahim, described the meeting as a platform for fostering cultural and artistic exchanges, capable of facilitating cooperation in the cultural sphere with dialogue partners<sup>3</sup>. These meetings, held biennially since then, provide a crucial forum for China and ASEAN to discuss the outcomes of cultural exchange and collaborative endeavours.

The document called "Vision for China-ASEAN Strategic Partnership-2030", released in 2018, identifies people-to-people and cultural exchanges, cooperation in political and security affairs, and economic collaboration as the three pillars of the strategic partnership between the two sides. Within the context of successfully implementing national initiatives, particularly the BRI, the document emphasises the intention of both parties to sustain interpersonal and cultural exchanges and cooperation, alongside promoting youth exchanges in the domains of language, culture, arts, and cultural heritage<sup>4</sup>. The publicly released "10 + 3" cooperation plans stress

<sup>1</sup>Memorandum of Understanding on Cultural Cooperation between the Government of the People's Republic of China and the ASEAN member states [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.asean-cn.org/uploadfile/2016/0518/20160518074039996.pdf> (date of access: 15.04.2024) (in Chin.).

<sup>2</sup>China and ASEAN reached a consensus on establishing a mechanism for meetings of ministers of culture [Electronic resource]. URL: <http://www.singapore-china.org/media/11101001.shtml> (date of access: 15.04.2024) (in Chin.).

<sup>3</sup>The first China-ASEAN ministers of culture meeting opened in Singapore on the 24<sup>th</sup> [Electronic resource]. URL: [https://www.gov.cn/jrzq/2012-05/24/content\\_2144442.htm](https://www.gov.cn/jrzq/2012-05/24/content_2144442.htm) (date of access: 15.04.2024) (in Chin.).

<sup>4</sup>Vision for the China-ASEAN strategic partnership - 2030 [Electronic resource]. URL: [https://www.mfa.gov.cn/web/ziliao\\_674904/1179\\_674909/201811/t20181115\\_7947869.shtml](https://www.mfa.gov.cn/web/ziliao_674904/1179_674909/201811/t20181115_7947869.shtml) (date of access: 15.04.2024) (in Chin.).

the importance of fostering cultural exchange, encompassing the regular organisation of cultural festivals, film festivals, and art exhibitions. They also advocate for promoting interaction between practitioners within governmental departments responsible for cultural affairs, as well as providing mutual assistance and developing collaboration in the protection, preservation, and restoration of intangible cultural and historical heritage, etc.

Since the inception of the BRI, exchange and cooperation between China and ASEAN nations in the realm of cultural heritage have consistently expanded. Prominent cultural and museum institutions, such as the Palace Museum and the National Museum of China, have forged close collaborative relationships with museums across ASEAN countries. They have actively conducted cultural and creative exhibitions, advanced scholarly exchanges, and facilitated professional training. For instance, to strengthen China – ASEAN interactions, the Palace Museum and the National heritage board of Singapore jointly launched the China – ASEAN Museum senior management exchange programme in August 2017<sup>5</sup>. In 2019, the vice president of the Palace Museum visited Cambodia, the Philippines, and Indonesia to share expertise in cultural heritage preservation, as well as museum operational and management practices. These visits entailed engagements with cultural and museum institutions and organisations dedicated to safeguarding world cultural heritage sites in those countries<sup>6</sup>. China and the countries along the BRI route are undertaking collaborative archaeological projects and actively promoting initiatives focused on the restoration and preservation of the Angkor Wat temple complex in Cambodia and the ancient city of Bagan in Myanmar. These exchanges not only solidify amicable interaction between Chinese and ASEAN museums but also unlock new avenues and directions for future bilateral cooperation.

At the Conference on dialogue of Asian civilisations held in Beijing in May 2019, Xi Jinping declared China's readiness to collaborate with other nations in implementing the programme of mutual translation and publication of Asian classics and the Asia film and television exchange and cooperation programme. These initiatives aim to facilitate deeper understanding and appreciation of each other's cultures and establish a platform for exchange and mutual understanding to showcase

the splendour of diverse civilisations<sup>7</sup>. Since the launch of the Asian classics mutual translation and publication programme, China has signed memoranda of understanding on mutual translation and publication of classics with Singapore, Laos, Vietnam, and other ASEAN member states.

Collaborative efforts on translation and publication programmes enable countries to disseminate their cultures more effectively, broaden the horizons of readers, and facilitate exchanges and mutual learning between civilisations both within and beyond the region. This cooperation not only holds significant cultural value but also establishes a firm foundation for deepening relations between China and ASEAN member states.

The inaugural China – ASEAN television week, held in September 2019 under the theme “Sharing new opportunities for television development along the Belt and road”, has emerged as another crucial platform for fostering intercultural understanding and strengthening bonds of friendship. The event provided a forum for discussing pathways for television broadcasting development, sharing research findings on industry advancements, and jointly promoting novel products, technologies, and applications. It fostered comprehensive collaboration between China and the ASEAN television industry in the realms of policy, platforms, technology, and other areas, aiming for mutual benefits and win-win outcomes<sup>8</sup>.

On 6 September 2023, the concept paper “2024: China – ASEAN year of people-to-people exchanges” was unveiled. The designated year of exchanges aims to enhance interpersonal and cultural connections, deepen mutual understanding between peoples, promote interaction between civilisations, further strengthen the comprehensive strategic partnership, and jointly construct a peaceful, stable, prosperous, and shared home. Both sides expressed their intention to actively support initiatives and projects undertaken by governmental bodies of China and ASEAN nations, non-governmental organisations, business communities, and academic circles interested in advancing exchanges and expanding cooperation across various domains<sup>9</sup>.

Under the Belt and road initiative, cultural cooperation has significantly strengthened mutual trust between China and ASEAN, facilitated the advancement of socioeconomic collaboration, and injected fresh impetus into the development of bilateral relations.

<sup>5</sup>Notice on organising the China – ASEAN Museum senior management exchange programme [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.chinamuseum.org.cn/detail.html?id=11&contentId=9148> (date of access: 15.04.2024) (in Chin.).

<sup>6</sup>Developing the museum cultural industry to stimulate regional cooperation and development vitality [Electronic resource]. URL: <http://www.hncis.org/newsdetail/906.html> (date of access: 15.04.2024) (in Chin.).

<sup>7</sup>Keynote speech by Xi Jinping at the opening ceremony of the Conference on dialogue of Asian civilisations [Electronic resource]. URL: [https://www.mfa.gov.cn/web/zyxw/201905/t20190515\\_346483.shtml](https://www.mfa.gov.cn/web/zyxw/201905/t20190515_346483.shtml) (date of access: 15.04.2024) (in Chin.).

<sup>8</sup>The 1<sup>st</sup> China – ASEAN television week officially opens [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.ctaa.org.cn/content-10199.aspx> (date of access: 15.04.2024) (in Chin.).

<sup>9</sup>Conceptual document for the 2024 year of people-to-people exchanges between China and ASEAN [Electronic resource]. URL: [https://www.mfa.gov.cn/web/gjhdq\\_676201/gjhdqzz\\_681964/lhg\\_682518/zywj\\_682530/202309/t20230906\\_11139361.shtml](https://www.mfa.gov.cn/web/gjhdq_676201/gjhdqzz_681964/lhg_682518/zywj_682530/202309/t20230906_11139361.shtml) (date of access: 15.04.2024) (in Chin.).

## Education

Strengthening cooperation in the realm of education has also become a significant avenue for expanding people-to-people contacts between China and ASEAN nations. China is vigorously expanding educational ties with countries in the region through diverse joint initiatives [6, p. 92]. Even before the introduction of the Belt and road initiative, both sides actively engaged in collaboration focused on talent cultivation and educational exchanges. Notably, the ASEAN – China Education cooperation week has been held annually since 2008. Following the launch of the BRI, China and ASEAN countries have concluded a series of agreements on educational cooperation, leading to the gradual refinement of the interaction mechanism between the two sides. In 2013, the department of education of Yunnan Province in China and the Laos government signed three memoranda of understanding on educational cooperation<sup>10</sup>. China concluded a Memorandum of cooperation and exchange in education with Singapore in 2015<sup>11</sup>. The governments of China and the Philippines exchanged a Memorandum of understanding on cooperation in higher education in 2019<sup>12</sup>. In 2024, China and Malaysia signed a Memorandum of understanding on higher education collaboration<sup>15</sup>.

The document called “Proposals on improving the work of education opening-up in the new era”, published in April 2016 by the general office of the CPC Central Committee and the general office of the State Council of the People’s Republic of China, outlined key areas of focus for enhancing the quality of education and its openness to the outside world<sup>14</sup>. In July of the same year, the Ministry of Education of the People’s Republic of China formulated the Joint development of the Belt and road education initiative. This document proposed expanding the scale and elevating the level of humanitarian exchanges, cultivating a substantial pool of professionals required for the implementation of the BRI, and deepening educational collaboration<sup>15</sup>. These policy measures demonstrate that China regards educational openness as a pivotal strategy for promoting the realisation of the BRI.

Following the 2<sup>nd</sup> China – ASEAN education ministers round table conference held in Guiyang in August 2016,

the Joint communiqué on the China – ASEAN education cooperation action plan in support of the ASEAN work plan on education 2016–2020 was adopted<sup>16</sup>. This inaugural five-year action plan aimed to invigorate educational exchanges and enhance collaboration between China and ASEAN, encompassing areas such as basic and higher education, vocational training, student exchanges, and partnerships between think tanks.

The Vision for China – ASEAN strategic partnership – 2030 highlights the significance of fostering exchanges and cooperation between the parties. The document calls for the utilisation of platforms such as the China – ASEAN education cooperation week to enhance educational innovation and academic exchanges<sup>17</sup>.

In February 2019, the CPC Central Committee and the State Council of the People’s Republic of China published the document “China’s education modernisation – 2035”. This document advocated for the development of a new model of educational openness, actively promoting educational initiatives within the BRI framework, strengthening cooperation with international and multilateral organisations, particularly UNESCO, and fostering the development of Confucius institutes and Confucius classrooms. The Joint statement on synergising the Belt and road initiative and the Master plan on ASEAN connectivity – 2025 released in 2019, proposed promoting synergistic development in regional education, youth, and human capital through the implementation of the China – ASEAN young leaders scholarship programme<sup>18</sup>. The publication of these documents reflects the importance China attaches to international cooperation and exchanges in the field of education, as well as its commitment to fostering transnational collaboration and exchanges in this domain.

Another significant development in China – ASEAN educational relations has been the conclusion of bilateral agreements on the mutual recognition of academic degrees with Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia, Thailand, and Laos.

Since the inception of the Belt and road initiative, the number of students from ASEAN countries studying

<sup>10</sup>Yunnan and Laos signed relevant provisions to promote exchanges and cooperation in education and other fields [Electronic resource]. URL: [https://www.gov.cn/jrzq/2013-10/12/content\\_2505555.htm](https://www.gov.cn/jrzq/2013-10/12/content_2505555.htm) (date of access: 15.04.2024) (in Chin.).

<sup>11</sup>China and Singapore will sign the Memorandum of understanding on educational cooperation and exchange [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://m.news.cntv.cn/2015/11/06/ARTI1446795509353245.shtml> (date of access: 15.04.2024) (in Chin.).

<sup>12</sup>China and the Philippines exchanged a Memorandum of understanding on cooperation in higher education [Electronic resource]. URL: [http://www.moe.gov.cn/jyb\\_zzjg/kuodong/201908/t20190830\\_396670.html](http://www.moe.gov.cn/jyb_zzjg/kuodong/201908/t20190830_396670.html) (date of access: 15.04.2024) (in Chin.).

<sup>13</sup>Joint statement on building a China – Malaysia community with a shared future [Electronic resource]. URL: [https://www.gov.cn/yaowen/liebiao/202406/content\\_6958425.htm](https://www.gov.cn/yaowen/liebiao/202406/content_6958425.htm) (date of access: 15.04.2024) (in Chin.).

<sup>14</sup>Proposals on improving the work of education opening-up in the new era [Electronic resource]. URL: [https://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2016-04/29/content\\_5069311.htm](https://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2016-04/29/content_5069311.htm) (date of access: 15.04.2024) (in Chin.).

<sup>15</sup>Advancing the Joint development of the Belt and road education initiative [Electronic resource]. URL: [http://www.moe.gov.cn/srcsite/A20/s7068/201608/t20160811\\_274679.html](http://www.moe.gov.cn/srcsite/A20/s7068/201608/t20160811_274679.html) (date of access: 15.04.2024) (in Chin.).

<sup>16</sup>The 2<sup>nd</sup> China – ASEAN education ministers’ round table held [Electronic resource]. URL: [http://www.moe.gov.cn/jyb\\_xwfb/moe\\_2082/zl\\_2016n/2016\\_zl42/201608/t20160803\\_273770.html](http://www.moe.gov.cn/jyb_xwfb/moe_2082/zl_2016n/2016_zl42/201608/t20160803_273770.html) (date of access: 15.04.2024) (in Chin.).

<sup>17</sup>Vision for the China – ASEAN strategic partnership – 2030 [Electronic resource]. URL: [https://www.mfa.gov.cn/web/ziliao\\_674904/1179\\_674909/201811/t20181115\\_7947869.shtml](https://www.mfa.gov.cn/web/ziliao_674904/1179_674909/201811/t20181115_7947869.shtml) (date of access: 15.04.2024) (in Chin.).

<sup>18</sup>ASEAN – China joint statement on synergising the Master plan on ASEAN connectivity (MPAC) – 2025 and the Belt and road initiative (BRI) [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Final-ASEAN-China-Joint-Statement-Synergising-the-MPAC-2025-and-the-BRI.pdf> (date of access: 15.04.2024).

in Chinese universities, research institutions, and other educational facilities has increased annually, rising from 68 418 in 2013 to 99 205 in 2018<sup>19</sup>.

The 10<sup>th</sup> exchange week, held in 2017, encompassed 50 events, including a series of humanitarian and cultural exchanges between China and ASEAN, as well as the China–ASEAN Education cooperation and talent exchange forum<sup>20</sup>. The theme of the 2023 education exchange week was “New vision for education cooperation for shared prosperity along the BRI”. This event not only facilitated educational exchanges but also broadened collaboration in science and technology, culture, healthcare, tourism, sports, and other sectors. Huai Jinpeng, Minister of education of the People’s Republic of China, emphasised the need to fully leverage the supportive, leading, and connective role of education to steer the BRI towards prosperity, innovation, and friendship, thereby contributing to regional peace and stability, and improving the livelihoods of local communities<sup>21</sup>. Statistics indicate that, between 2008 and 2023, the China–ASEAN education cooperation week hosted 484 events and witnessed the signing of 1879 cooperation agreements or memoranda of understanding<sup>22</sup>.

In the domain of education and vocational training, leading engineering universities from China and ASEAN jointly established the ASEAN – China engineering universities alliance in 2014. This alliance aims to achieve

consensus on the collaborative cultivation of high-calibre engineering personnel and promote cooperation in educational and scientific initiatives. As of December 2023, the alliance has expanded to include 26 universities from China, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Thailand, Malaysia, Vietnam, and Myanmar<sup>23</sup>. Alliance members pool educational resources and research capabilities, providing robust support for the joint cultivation of highly skilled professionals who are competitive in the international market.

According to data released by the Centre for language education and cooperation (formerly known as Hanban), China dispatched over 14 000 Chinese language teachers to ASEAN nations between 2014 and 2020 [5, p. 42]. As of August 2024, 50 Confucius institutes and 16 Confucius classrooms were operational across ASEAN member states. These institutions serve as vital links for cultural exchange. Thailand boasts the highest number of Confucius institutes (17 institutes and 11 classrooms), followed by Indonesia (12 institutes), Malaysia (7 institutes and 1 classroom), the Philippines (5 institutes), Cambodia (4 institutes), Singapore (2 institutes and 1 classroom), Laos (2 institutes), Vietnam (1 institute), and Myanmar (3 classrooms)<sup>24</sup>.

These institutions provide extensive opportunities for local students and the general public to learn Chinese and serve as platforms for promoting Chinese culture.

## Tourism

Tourism plays a significant role in people-to-people exchanges between China and ASEAN member states. Firstly, the considerable potential for tourism cooperation between the two sides stems from their geographical proximity. China and ASEAN countries have long been major tourist markets and popular destinations for each other. The tourism sector not only plays a key role in the economic growth of each nation but also facilitates cultural exchange and fosters mutual understanding. In 2018, 31.6 million Chinese tourists visited ASEAN countries, while 25.4 million tourists from ASEAN travelled to China<sup>25</sup>.

Secondly, China and ASEAN have concluded several agreements aimed at strengthening dialogue and cooperation in the tourism sector. These instruments

promote policy and activity alignment, facilitating tourism exchanges.

Numerous specialised exhibitions and conferences dedicated to China–ASEAN tourism development are held, such as the China–ASEAN Expo on tourism and the BRI cultural tourism week. Given the promising prospects for tourism cooperation, the China–ASEAN Expo on tourism has been held annually in Guilin, since 2015. Tourism authorities from all ten ASEAN countries participate, with each nation taking turns as the guest country<sup>26</sup>.

The inaugural BRI cultural tourism week was launched in Guiyang, in 2018. The Malaysian ambassador to China noted that tourism and cultural exchanges in recent years have positively impacted the people of both countries, laying a solid foundation for mutual

<sup>19</sup>2014 Brief statistical comparison of international students coming to China. Beijing : Dep. of int. cooperation and exchanges, 2014. P. 8–10 (in Chin.) ; 2018 Brief statistical comparison of international students coming to China. Beijing : Dep. of int. cooperation and exchanges, 2019. P. 5–6 (in Chin.).

<sup>20</sup>A decade of educational collaboration writes a new chapter for the Belt and road initiative [Electronic resource]. URL: [http://www.moe.gov.cn/jyb\\_xwfb/moe\\_2082/zl\\_2017n/2017\\_zl38/201707/t20170728\\_310311.html](http://www.moe.gov.cn/jyb_xwfb/moe_2082/zl_2017n/2017_zl38/201707/t20170728_310311.html) (date of access: 15.04.2024) (in Chin.).

<sup>21</sup>2023 China–ASEAN education exchange week showcases new developments in the Belt and road initiative [Electronic resource]. URL: [http://www.moe.gov.cn/jyb\\_xwfb/s5147/202309/t20230905\\_1078246.html](http://www.moe.gov.cn/jyb_xwfb/s5147/202309/t20230905_1078246.html) (date of access: 15.04.2024) (in Chin.).

<sup>22</sup>The 2023 China – ASEAN education exchange week opened in Guizhou [Electronic resource]. URL: [http://www.scio.gov.cn/gxzl/ydy1\\_26587/rwj1/rwj1\\_26595/202308/t20230830\\_766996.html](http://www.scio.gov.cn/gxzl/ydy1_26587/rwj1/rwj1_26595/202308/t20230830_766996.html) (date of access: 15.04.2024) (in Chin.).

<sup>23</sup>About ACNET – EngTech [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://acnet-engtech.tju.edu.cn/about/background/> (date of access: 15.04.2024).

<sup>24</sup>Confucius institute [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://ci.cn/qqwl> (date of access: 15.04.2024) (in Chin.).

<sup>25</sup>Chinese tourists are the key to the recovery of ASEAN tourism [Electronic resource]. URL: [https://k.sina.cn/article\\_3974550866\\_ee6d552001012z30.html?from=travel](https://k.sina.cn/article_3974550866_ee6d552001012z30.html?from=travel) (date of access: 15.04.2024) (in Chin.).

<sup>26</sup>The 2015 China – ASEAN Expo on tourism will be held in Guilin [Electronic resource]. URL: [https://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2015-04/10/content\\_2844598.htm](https://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2015-04/10/content_2844598.htm) (date of access: 15.04.2024) (in Chin.).

understanding and trust between different cultures<sup>27</sup>. During the 2019 BRI cultural tourism week, the Guiyang Municipal Government of Guizhou Province, and the city of Penang in Malaysia, signed a Memorandum of understanding establishing friendly cooperative relations<sup>28</sup>. The signing of such cooperation agreements deepens the relationship between China and ASEAN in tourism and culture, opening up further opportunities for collaboration and development within the tourism industry.

The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant adverse impact on the international tourism industry. According to statistics, 28 million Chinese tourists visited ASEAN in 2019, accounting for 22 % of the total number of foreign tourists received by ASEAN that year. In 2020, only 4 million Chinese travellers visited ASEAN, with this figure plummeting to 234 000 in 2021<sup>29</sup>. The pandemic not only posed serious challenges to the tourism industries on both sides but also affected related supply chains and economic development.

In July 2021, Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the People's Republic of China published the Belt and road 14<sup>th</sup> five-year action plan for culture and tourism development. The scope of China's cooperation with BRI participating nations is continuously expanding, with twelve priority tourism programmes established under

the BRI framework<sup>30</sup>. This document provides recommendations for planning and promoting cultural exchange and information dissemination among countries and regions along the BRI. The plan of action for comprehensive strategic partnership between China and ASEAN (2022–2025), released in 2022, highlights the need to facilitate personnel exchanges in the post-pandemic era to revitalise and develop the tourism industry<sup>31</sup>.

As of autumn 2024, all ASEAN countries except the Philippines have implemented varying degrees of visa facilitation measures for Chinese citizens, including visa-free entry, visa-on-arrival, and electronic visa issuance. Vietnam, Singapore, Thailand, and Malaysia grant visa-free entry to Chinese nationals. Cambodia, Laos, Indonesia, and Brunei permit Chinese citizens to apply for visas upon arrival. Myanmar issues electronic visas to Chinese citizens<sup>32</sup>. Following the lifting of COVID-19 restrictions, the Notice on further adjustments to visa and entry policies for foreigners coming to China, published by the Consular department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China on 14 March 2023, stated that, effective 15 March 2023, ASEAN tourist groups could enter Guilin, Guangxi Province, without a visa<sup>33</sup>. This visa-free policy has positively impacted the development of the tourism industry.

## Conclusions

This article examined the interaction between China and ASEAN member states in the cultural and humanitarian spheres. Since the launch of the BRI, an extensive legal and regulatory framework has been established to support bilateral exchanges and cooperation in culture, education, and tourism. Through concerted efforts, China and ASEAN have achieved significant progress in people-to-people exchanges. Successful examples of cooperation in the cultural domain include the organisation of cultural festivals, the China–ASEAN TV week, and the hosting of the China–ASEAN year of people-to-people exchanges. In the education sector, notable achievements include the China–ASEAN education cooperation week, the establishment of the

ASEAN – China engineering universities alliance, and the opening of Confucius institutes and classrooms. In tourism, the China–ASEAN Expo on tourism and the BRI cultural tourism Week stand out as successful collaborative initiatives.

The strengthening of people-to-people exchanges between China and ASEAN member states not only serves the mutual interests of both parties but also contributes to the construction of a peaceful, stable, and prosperous region. By fostering collaboration in the domains of culture, education, and tourism, China and ASEAN nations seek to promote mutual understanding, deepen amicable relations, and establish a solid foundation for shared development.

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<sup>30</sup>The 14<sup>th</sup> five-year action plan for culture and tourism development under the Belt and road initiative is formulated and published [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.yidaiyilu.gov.cn/p/180737.html> (date of access: 15.04.2024) (in Chin.).

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## REGIONAL AVIATION DIPLOMACY OF THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS AND ITS STRATEGIC PARTNERS

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**Abstract.** A robust aviation sector is a source of pride for many nations. The possession of national air carriers (both passenger and cargo), maintenance facilities, advanced air navigation systems, and airports capable of accommodating diverse aircraft is a significant symbol of modernity and international engagement for many states. As societies evolve and international engagements expand, aviation diplomacy is becoming a crucial instrument in the foreign policy strategies of numerous states, including Belarus. The author of this article examines the regional aspects of aviation diplomacy between Belarus and its strategic partners, China and Russia, analyses government documents and cooperative outcomes within the Belarus – China aviation relationship and explores the potential for expanding air routes linking Belarus, China, and Russia.

**Keywords:** aviation diplomacy; new dimensions of Belarusian diplomacy; regional cooperation through aviation connectivity.

## РЕГИОНАЛЬНЫЕ АСПЕКТЫ АВИАЦИОННОЙ ДИПЛОМАТИИ РЕСПУБЛИКИ БЕЛАРУСЬ И ЕЕ СТРАТЕГИЧЕСКИХ ПАРТНЕРОВ

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**Аннотация.** Авиационная отрасль – гордость для каждого народа. Для большинства государств мира важным показателем уровня развития является наличие национальных пассажирских и грузовых авиаперевозчиков, авиаремонтных предприятий, современной аэронавигационной службы и аэропортов, которые могут принимать и обслуживать воздушные суда различных классов и типов. С развитием общества и расширением международного взаимодействия авиационная дипломатия становится важным инструментом во внешней политике многих государств, в том числе Беларуси. Рассматриваются региональные аспекты авиационной дипломатии Беларуси и стран-партнеров (Китая и России). Проводится анализ документов о сотрудничестве в рамках авиационной дипломатии Беларуси и Китая, а также результатов такого сотрудничества. Оценивается потенциал развития авиационных маршрутов между Беларусью, Китаем и Россией.

**Ключевые слова:** авиационная дипломатия; новые контуры белорусской дипломатии; региональное сотрудничество через призму авиационного сообщения.

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## Introduction

The late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries witnessed the advent of flight, captivating Belarusians (like many other European populations) with the spectacle of balloons, airships, aerostats, and aeroplanes. Beyond mere observation, Belarusians actively participated in aircraft construction, fundraising for aeroplane acquisition, airfield development, and mastering new aviation technologies. The nascent Soviet state, building upon Russian aeronautical expertise, prioritised the development of aviation for both civilian and military purposes. Over time, aviation became a significant element in the diplomatic activities of the USSR, including the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic.

In the ensuing decades, Belarusians contributed significantly to the formation and growth of the aviation and space industries. While initially employed primarily for diplomatic mail, transportation of diplomats, and related services, aviation and space diplomacy now occupy a prominent position in international relations.

With evolving societal needs and expanding global contacts, aviation diplomacy has become a vital foreign policy tool for numerous nations, including Belarus. Aviation diplomacy can be defined as all forms of diplomatic processes and structures pursued within the realm of civil aviation [1, p. 293]. It can also be understood as the strategic deployment of air assets to further foreign policy objectives. Notably, air assets and aviation infrastructure can enhance national and regional identity, forge political connections, and facilitate cross-border mobility [2].

Given the strengthening cooperation among Belarus, China, and Russia – manifested in the ongoing development of the Union State and Belarus' comprehensive strategic partnership with China – aviation diplomacy holds significant potential for enhancing these multifaceted interactions.

A limited number of scholars have explored related themes. M. Indriani [3] examined regional aviation diplomacy, while S. G. Zalivako [4], D. Y. Ledyan [5], and T. V. Slivinskaya [6] investigated challenges in passenger air transport and aviation within Belarus. Notably, T. V. Slivinskaya analysed the geographical accessibility of passenger air transport in the Belarusian–Russian border region, concluding that enhancing the air transport network is crucial for the future of Belarusian aviation [6]. Furthermore, Belarusian scholar V. M. Matsel' [7] assesses the prospects for cooperation between Belarus and China, Russian scholar D. Yu. Cheltsova [8] examines the evolving relations between Russia and Belarus, and Chinese scholar Zhao Mingwen [9] explores the dynamics of the Russia – China relationship. This literature review reveals a predominant focus on domestic air passenger transport and bilateral relations, with limited attention to the regional aviation diplomacy of Belarus, China, and Russia. These observations underscore the significance and originality of studying this subject. This article delineates the regional dimensions of aviation interaction between Belarus and its strategic partners, China and Russia, with the view to promoting bilateral friendships and partnerships and enhancing interregional air connectivity.

## Regional aspects of aviation diplomacy between Belarus, China, and Russia

Aviation diplomacy holds substantial promise in fostering interaction among the administrative-territorial units of Belarus, Russia, and China. Given the ongoing development of the Union State, the perspective of the Chinese partners assumes particular significance. On 16 October 2022, the President of the People's Republic of China and General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist party of China, Xi Jinping, delivered a report to the 20<sup>th</sup> National congress of the Communist party of China titled “Carrying the great banner of socialism with Chinese characteristics highly, and striving in unity to build a modernised socialist state in all respects”<sup>1</sup>.

In this address, Xi Jinping highlighted China's advancements: “We have proposed and implemented a new development concept, pursued high-quality growth in depth, cultivated new drivers of development, implemented supply-side structural reforms, and formulated a series of major regional development strategies with

overarching significance. China's economic strength has achieved a historic leap. China has made significant achievements in manned spaceflight, lunar exploration, new energy technology, large aircraft manufacturing, biomedicine and other fields”<sup>2</sup> (hereinafter translated by us. – Yu Yang).

Notably, China has previously articulated the outline of the 14<sup>th</sup> five-year plan for China's national economic and social development (2021–2025). Concurrently, the Civil Aviation Administration of People's Republic of China and the Ministry of Transport and Communications of People's Republic of China released the 14<sup>th</sup> five-year plan for civil aviation development. This document emphasises the necessity to optimise the configuration of the international route network, enhance the new Eurasian continental bridge system alongside other global networks, and collaboratively develop the Belt and road international economic framework. Additionally, it underscores the imperative to facilitate the interconnection

<sup>1</sup>The 20<sup>th</sup> National congress of the Communist party of China opened in Beijing [Electronic resource]. URL: [https://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2022-10/16/content\\_5718884.htm](https://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2022-10/16/content_5718884.htm) (date of access: 03.04.2024) (in Chin.).

<sup>2</sup>Full text of the report to the 20<sup>th</sup> National congress of the Communist party of China [Electronic resource]. URL: [http://ru.china-embassy.gov.cn/rus/zgxw/202210/t20221026\\_10792071.htm](http://ru.china-embassy.gov.cn/rus/zgxw/202210/t20221026_10792071.htm) (date of access: 03.04.2024) (in Russ.).

of the six major corridors and route networks. The plan advocates for proactive negotiations with international partners to establish aviation service agreements, expand and open new routes, enhance transit connectivity, and advance the construction of the Air Silk Road. The objective is to improve the functionality of aviation hubs and establish a model in which world-class airport clusters, international aviation hubs, and regional aviation hubs develop in concert<sup>3</sup>. Notably, the Air Silk road constitutes a vital component of the Belt and Road initiative and represents a core task for civil aviation's involvement<sup>4</sup>.

Consequently, the prospects for trilateral cooperation within the aviation sector are promising. Regional airlines and airports in China's northern provinces can leverage Belarusian and Russian routes in developing the Air Silk Road. This collaboration aligns with Xi Jinping's address at the 20<sup>th</sup> National people's congress of the Communist party of China, wherein he stated that "China will adhere to the principles of amity, good faith, mutual benefit, and inclusiveness", and to continue to deepen "friendship, mutual trust, and convergence of interests with its neighbours through a neighbourhood diplomacy featuring friendship and sincerity"<sup>5</sup>.

Furthermore, the Joint statement on further developing the all-weather comprehensive strategic partnership between the People's Republic of China and the Republic of Belarus in the new era encourages airlines from both countries "to increase direct flights from Belarus to China promptly and following market principles"<sup>6</sup>. Additionally, the Joint statement of the President of the Russian Federation and the President of the People's Republic of China on key areas of Russia – China economic cooperation until 2030 advocates for an interconnected logistics system ensuring the rapid movement of cargo and passengers through all modes of transport: rail, road, air, river, and sea<sup>7</sup>.

The 3045-kilometre border between Heilongjiang Province and the Russian Far East provides a substantial foundation for bilateral cooperation, as well as for collaboration with Belarus. Heilongjiang functions as a key transportation hub, integrating Russia's land and air

routes, and is positioned to play an instrumental role in establishing aerial connections between China, Russia, and Belarus. Presently, flights from Dalian, Liaoning to Vladivostok are operational<sup>8</sup>. Moreover, the company "Hainan airlines" operates services on the Beijing – Moscow, Beijing – Saint Petersburg, Dalian – Vladivostok, and Beijing – Irkutsk routes<sup>9</sup>. With the commencement of the Harbin-Krasnoyarsk route, Harbin now offers six routes to Krasnoyarsk, Vladivostok, Irkutsk, Khabarovsk, Yakutsk, and Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk.

The significant expansion of international air routes has enhanced Heilongjiang Province's export trade with Russia and facilitated cultural and humanitarian exchanges between China and Russia. The growth in air connectivity enhances economic, commercial, and touristic cooperation with Russia, while promoting people-to-people interactions, advancing China's strategic initiative to open up to the north<sup>10</sup>. Additionally, the company "Aeroflot – Russian airlines" operates flights from Beijing to various Russian destinations, including Vladivostok, Krasnoyarsk, Khabarovsk, and Novosibirsk.

Regional aviation diplomacy is clearly a significant component of cooperation and exchange among friendly nations. It is worth noting that P. V. Matyukhin, deputy chairman of the Government of Amur Region, discussed with representatives of Minsk National Airport at the Eastern economic forum in Vladivostok, the possibility of organising direct flights between the Belarusian capital and Blagoveshchensk or developing a route that would include the capital of the Amur Region as a transit city<sup>11</sup>.

The China – Belarus industrial park "Great stone" near Minsk serves as a prominent symbol of friendship between the two nations. The potential of aviation diplomacy is particularly relevant to this context, specifically regarding the park's connectivity with Minsk National Airport. Such a link would enhance the park's attractiveness and provide greater convenience for residents of surrounding areas and employees of businesses operating within it. As reported in December 2020, the development of design documentation for a railway

<sup>3</sup>14<sup>th</sup> five-year civil aviation development plan [Electronic resource]. URL: [http://www.caacnews.com.cn/1/1/202201/t20220107\\_1337586.html](http://www.caacnews.com.cn/1/1/202201/t20220107_1337586.html) (date of access: 27.01.2024) (in Chin.).

<sup>4</sup>Interpretation: implementation plan for promoting high-quality development of the Air Silk Road during the 14<sup>th</sup> five-year plan period [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.yidaiyilu.gov.cn/p/241201.html> (date of access: 28.04.2024) (in Chin.).

<sup>5</sup>Full text of the report to the 20<sup>th</sup> National congress of the Communist party of China [Electronic resource]. URL: [http://ru.china-embassy.gov.cn/rus/zgxw/202210/t20221026\\_10792071.htm](http://ru.china-embassy.gov.cn/rus/zgxw/202210/t20221026_10792071.htm) (date of access: 03.04.2024) (in Russ.).

<sup>6</sup>Joint statement of Belarus and China on the further development of relations of all-weather and comprehensive strategic partnership in the new era [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://china.mfa.gov.by/ru/embassy/news/fb2937bef6398e2d.html> (date of access: 03.04.2024) (in Russ.).

<sup>7</sup>Joint statement of the President of the Russian Federation and the President of the People's Republic of China on key areas of Russia – China economic cooperation until 2030 [Electronic resource]. URL: [https://www.mfa.gov.cn/zyxw/202303/t20230322\\_11046176.shtml](https://www.mfa.gov.cn/zyxw/202303/t20230322_11046176.shtml) (date of access: 28.01.2024) (in Chin.).

<sup>8</sup>Direct passenger route from Dalian (Liaoning) to Vladivostok (Russia) opens [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.china-news.com.cn/cj/2023/10-19/10097062.shtml> (date of access: 28.01.2024) (in Chin.).

<sup>9</sup>Hainan airlines resumes Beijing – Irkutsk flight [Electronic resource]. URL: [http://www.caacnews.com.cn/1/6/202312/t20231228\\_1373483.html](http://www.caacnews.com.cn/1/6/202312/t20231228_1373483.html) (date of access: 28.01.2024) (in Chin.).

<sup>10</sup>Harbin – Krasnoyarsk route officially opened [Electronic resource]. URL: [http://www.caacnews.com.cn/1/5/202312/t20231226\\_1373404.html](http://www.caacnews.com.cn/1/5/202312/t20231226_1373404.html) (date of access: 30.01.2024) (in Chin.).

<sup>11</sup>Blagoveshchensk and Minsk may be linked by a direct flight: air service with the Far East was discussed at the EEF [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://amurobl.tv/news/transport/2023-09-14-blagoveshchensk-i-minsk-mozhet-svyazat-pryamoy-reys-na-vef-obsudili-aviatsionnoe-soobshchenie-s-daln> (date of access: 28.09.2024) (in Russ.).

connecting Minsk National Airport is scheduled for completion between 2021 and 2024. According to news agency “BelTA”, a railway stop named “Industrial park” is planned within the transportation hub of the Chinese-Belarusian industrial park<sup>12</sup>. Regional partners from China, with their extensive expertise in modern railway construction, could expedite this crucial project, further exemplifying the strong partnership between Belarus and China. This development would benefit not only citizens of Belarus and China but also those from other nations [10].

Another instance of leveraging existing infrastructure is the recently renovated airport in Orsha and its adjacent multimodal industrial and logistics complex. This complex is designed for raw material processing, large-scale cargo handling, intermodal transport coordination, transshipment, and short-term and long-term storage. Its strategic location at the intersection of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> pan-European transport corridors facilitates participation in West – East and North – South logistical flows. The presence of a modernised airfield capable of accommodating Boeing 747-400 class aircraft<sup>13</sup>, combined with its capacity for handling air, rail, and road cargo, further enhances its significance. In the current context of sanctions against Belarus, these facilities could be particularly valuable for Chinese partners engaged in air cargo transport between the two countries [10].

During the Belarusian President’s recent visit to China (28 February – 2 March 2023), the two countries issued a Joint statement on further developing the all-weather comprehensive strategic partnership between China and Belarus in the new era. This has led to an increase in residents at the industrial park “Great stone” and a rise in joint projects involving Belarusian and Chinese re-

gional entities, creating favourable conditions for new air routes between Minsk and various Chinese regions. Beyond aviation professionals, representatives from Belarusian business, tourism, and health resort sectors are actively participating in negotiations with their Chinese counterparts.

In mid-December 2023, Luo Shixiong, Minister Counsellor of the Embassy of the People’s Republic of China in the Republic of Belarus, remarked that the launch of a Sanya (Hainan Province) – Minsk flight represents another success for bilateral relations, opening new opportunities not only for tourism and recreation but also for mutually beneficial business cooperation<sup>14</sup>. Furthermore, a new route connecting Minsk with Guangzhou, Shenzhen, and surrounding areas is expected to commence on 25 May 2024. The company “Beijing capital airlines” plans to launch direct flights between Minsk and Sanya International Airport (Hainan Island)<sup>15</sup>.

As these examples demonstrate that aviation diplomacy is actively employed to expand cooperation with Belarus’ international partners. As noted at an expanded meeting of the department of aviation on 6 February 2024, reviewing the 2023 performance and outlining the 2024 outlook: “A broad range of initiatives have been implemented within the sphere of international activities... In July 2023, an Air services agreement was signed between Belarus and the Sultanate of Oman. Throughout 2023, negotiations were conducted with aviation authorities from the Russia, Egypt, China, Oman, Vietnam, Venezuela, Iran, Kazakhstan, and other countries on key issues related to civil aviation development. Currently, domestic procedures are underway to finalise air service agreements with Venezuela, the Seychelles, and Kenya”<sup>16</sup>.

## Conclusions

The importance of aviation diplomacy in the Belarus – China relationship is evident in several key documents, including the Joint statement on further developing the all-weather comprehensive strategic partnership between China and Belarus in the new era, the report to the 20<sup>th</sup> National congress of the Communist party of China, and the 14<sup>th</sup> five-year plan for civil aviation development. Regional air diplomacy between the two countries is expected to facilitate the utilisation and development of the China – Belarus industrial park

“Great stone” and the multimodal industrial and logistics complex of the airport in Orsha. Furthermore, the establishment of interregional air routes linking Belarus, China, and Russia presents significant potential. This interconnectivity not only reflects active governmental cooperation within multilateral and bilateral frameworks but also provides a concrete channel for fostering interregional contacts, positively impacting economic growth, tourism, and humanitarian exchanges among the three nations.

<sup>12</sup>The project of construction of the railroad to Minsk airport is planned to be developed until 2024 [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.belta.by/regions/view/proekt-stroitelstva-zheleznoj-dorogi-v-minskij-aeroport-planirujut-razrabotat-do-2024-goda-421225-2020> (date of access: 28.04.2024) (in Russ.).

<sup>13</sup>Logistics centres [Electronic resource]. URL: [https://vitebsk-region.gov.by/ru/new\\_url\\_1524634188-ru/](https://vitebsk-region.gov.by/ru/new_url_1524634188-ru/) (date of access: 28.04.2024) (in Russ.).

<sup>14</sup>Minsk and the Chinese city of Sanya will be connected by a direct flight [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.belta.by/society/view/minsk-i-kitajskoj-gorod-sanjja-svjazhet-pramoj-aviarejs-605817-2023/> (date of access: 02.04.2024) (in Russ.).

<sup>15</sup>Encouraging news about the opening of new routes to/from China this spring [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.aerostar.by/novy-e-poletny-e-programmy-v-kitaj/> (date of access: 02.04.2024) (in Russ.).

<sup>16</sup>The results of the aviation industry in 2023 and development prospects for 2024 were discussed at the meeting of the Board of the department of aviation [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.caa.gov.by/ru/news-ru/view/itogi-raboty-aviatsionnoj-otrasli-v-2023-godu-i-perspektivy-razvitiya-na-2024-god-obsudili-na-zasedanii-276/> (date of access: 02.04.2024) (in Russ.).

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## FEATURES AND TRENDS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF SINO-RUSSIAN COOPERATION IN THE FIELD OF NON-TRADITIONAL SECURITY

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**Abstract.** The concept of non-traditional security has gained widespread recognition among states in recent decades. For regional and international powers like China and Russia, the non-traditional security domain assumes even greater significance than traditional security during peacetime. These two countries have a longstanding history of cooperation in non-traditional security areas. Amidst the significant geopolitical shifts characterising the contemporary world, both China and Russia have intensified their collaborative efforts in this domain, focusing primarily on scientific and technological, financial, energy, and agricultural sectors. This article analyses the recent developments in Sino-Russian cooperation across these sectors, highlighting notable achievements and persistent challenges. An examination of the tangible outcomes reveals substantial financial investments, close and complementary bilateral partnerships driven by pragmatism, and a positive overall trajectory of development. While certain challenges remain, these are unlikely to impede the accelerating pace of cooperation. It is anticipated that Sino-Russian collaboration in non-traditional security will continue to deepen and broaden in the future.

**Keywords:** non-traditional security; Russia; China; science and technology; finance; energy; agriculture.

## ОСОБЕННОСТИ И ТЕНДЕНЦИИ РАЗВИТИЯ КИТАЙСКО-РОССИЙСКОГО СОТРУДНИЧЕСТВА В СФЕРЕ НЕТРАДИЦИОННОЙ БЕЗОПАСНОСТИ

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**Аннотация.** В наши дни концепция нетрадиционной безопасности признается и серьезно воспринимается многими странами, а для Китая и России в мирное время сфера нетрадиционной безопасности играет даже более важную роль, чем сфера традиционной безопасности. В связи с резкими геополитическими изменениями эти страны ускорили темпы сотрудничества в сфере нетрадиционной безопасности, которое в основном сосредоточено на научно-технической, финансовой, энергетической и сельскохозяйственной областях. В данном исследовании анализируется развитие названных областей в Китае и России за последние годы, выявляются их наиболее значимые достижения и некоторые из существующих проблем. О сотрудничестве двух стран в вышеуказанных областях свидетельствуют большой объем вовлеченных средств, тесные и взаимодополняющие двусторонние деловые связи. Результаты проведенного исследования свидетельствуют о том, что наличие ряда проблем не мешает наращиванию темпов сотрудничества в сфере нетрадиционной безопасности.

**Ключевые слова:** нетрадиционная безопасность; Россия; Китай; наука и технологии; финансы; энергетика; сельское хозяйство.

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## Introduction

An examination of the global rankings of China and Russia across various key national indicators reveals that these two nations occupy the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> positions respectively in terms of territorial area, the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> positions in military strength, and the 1<sup>st</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> positions in GDP at purchasing power parity as of 2023<sup>1</sup>. Both countries possess a vast array of natural resources, with their proportions of highly educated populations standing at 15.47% and 32.4% respectively<sup>2</sup>, indicating substantial human capital resources. Enjoying such advantages and opportunities, China and Russia are, moreover, neighbours and any interaction between them at the national level exerts an influence on the regional and even global geopolitical landscape. This has been repeatedly underscored from the Cold War era to the present day: three of the most influential Western political scientists S. Huntington [1, p. 270–271], and Z. Brzezinski [2, p. 72–73] have articulated this viewpoint, and explicitly likened China and Russia to elite chess players within regional Eurasia and the broader geopolitical arena. They advocated for their countries' interests and cautioned Western governments about the need to disrupt any potential partnership between China and Russia through a balanced foreign policy. However, the anticipated chasm between China and Russia has not materialised as the West had hoped, instead, interaction and cooperation between the two nations have grown closer across various spheres.

The chronological scope of this study spans the period from the establishment of diplomatic relations between China and Russia up to 2023. It aims to delineate the primary avenues of cooperation in the realm of non-traditional security between China and Russia, detailing the main attributes of each sector, identifying challenges encountered during cooperation, proposing measures and recommendations to enhance bilateral collaboration, and concluding on the significance of cooperation in non-traditional security within the broader framework of interactions between the two countries. We employ general scientific methods (induction, analysis, classification, deduction, comparison, generalisation) alongside specific methodologies (narrative, historical-retrospective, historical-comparative, historical-systems, document analysis).

This study examines non-traditional security, focusing on the perspectives of Chinese and Russian scholars specialising in this field and Sino-Russian cooperation across scientific, technological, financial, energy, and agricultural domains. It also incorporates insights from news commentators. The aim is to illustrate the significance of non-traditional security and the tangible pro-

gress and challenges encountered by China and Russia in collaborative efforts within this domain.

Scholars such as Fu Xiaoqiang, Han Liqun [3], Ba Dianyunjun [4], and Pu Sayou [5] contend that non-traditional security has emerged as a novel factor influencing national security. A. V. Lugin's [6] perspectives are employed to characterise the development of Sino-Russian relations. Studies by scholars such as Gao Jixian [7], Wu Tsun [8], Hou Jie, Shi Yejing [9], Wang Yan [10], Gao Mentian [11], and Zhang Jiacheng [12] are utilised to synthesise the characteristics and potential of cooperation between the two nations across diverse sectors.

Cooperation between China and Russia represents the most direct and effective means of maximising both nations' interests. The primary objective of this bilateral partnership is to foster a peaceful geopolitical environment in the Eurasian region and globally, thereby ensuring the development of both nations. However, the establishment by China and Russia of an organisation with substantial military capabilities appears unfeasible as a means of maintaining geopolitical security. China and Russia are global military powers, dwarfing the military strength of both states. Furthermore, some of China's and Russia's neighbours still harbour unresolved territorial disputes due to historical reasons. Should China and Russia form a close military alliance, this would only heighten anxieties and discontent among neighbouring states, inevitably prompting them to seek support from extra-regional powers or form alliances to counterbalance the power of the China – Russia military bloc. This could destabilise the geopolitical balance and undermine the existing peripheral security environment. Consequently, the formation of a tight military alliance remains merely a contingency plan in the face of potential extraordinary threats.

Within the traditional security paradigm, China and Russia have achieved a level of comprehensive strategic partnership at the political level. Diplomatically, the number of visits exchanged by the top leaders of both sides significantly exceeds the number of meetings with leaders of other nations; militarily, maintaining a loosely defined model of collective defence suffices to address the current geopolitical landscape.

In 1983, R. Ullman's seminal article "Redefining security"<sup>3</sup>, challenged the conventional, military-centric definition of security. He proposed broadening the concept to include all threats that could diminish the quality of life for citizens, such as barriers to global trade, terrorism, climate disasters, and human rights crises. Western scholars often credit R. Ullman with pioneering the notion of non-traditional security. Non-traditional

<sup>1</sup>Economies by GDP size [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.worldeconomics.com/Rankings/Economies-By-Size.aspx> (date of access: 29.04.2024).

<sup>2</sup>Seventh National population census: education level of the population [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.stats.gov.cn/sj/pcsj/rkpc/7rp/zk/html/fu03f.pdf> (date of access: 29.04.2024) (in Chin.); Varlamova T. A., Gokhberg L. M., Ozerova O. K. Education in figures: 2023 [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://issek.hse.ru/mirror/pubs/share/856367924.pdf> (date of access: 29.04.2024) (in Russ.).

<sup>3</sup>Ullman R. Redefining security // *Int. Secur.* 1983. Vol. 8. No. 1. P. 129–153.

security can be broadly defined as factors that pose threats to sovereign states or human society as a whole, in addition to traditional factors such as military, political, and diplomatic issues.

As the scope of security expands, an increasing number of issues are undergoing securitisation and weaponisation, becoming tools for interstate competition and accelerating the transformation of non-traditional security concerns into traditional ones. Concurrently, certain traditional security matters exhibit non-traditional characteristics, rendering the boundary between the two types increasingly indistinct. Since the turn of the new century, confrontation has intensified among nations over non-traditional security concerns, with domains such as international economics and finance, global trade, climate change, and biosecurity gradually becoming politicised, securitised, and even militarised [3].

In recent years, relations between the United States and its Western allies, on one side, and Russia, on the other, have gradually shifted from cooperation to competition. This has resulted in significant rifts and confrontations between the Western bloc and the Sino-Russian partnership in trade, science and technology, energy, finance, and other areas of cooperation.

Specifically, in an effort to weaken and contain the geopolitical influence and development of China and Russia, the West is deeply involved in, and exerts influence on, the dynamics between Russia and Ukraine, as well as between China and the island of Taiwan. The confrontation between the West and the Sino-Russian alignment is intensifying, with the possibility of escalating into a hot war, indicating that the world is undergoing profound changes.

Within this volatile environment of shifting geopolitical balances, China and Russia have compelling reasons to cooperate to maintain regional peace and safeguard their respective national interests. This collaboration should, first and foremost, be founded on regional stability and adhere to the previously mentioned principle of restraint in traditional security cooperation. Such restraint aims to avoid triggering anxiety or hostility among neighbouring states and to shift the focus of security cooperation towards non-traditional security challenges.

The Russian-Ukrainian conflict provides a concrete example. The West has not only instigated a proxy war but has also intensified its financial warfare and value chain conflict against Russia, weaponising currency and technology to comprehensively contain Russia. This has far-reaching implications for future global security. The West's use of finance as a strategic tool against Russia has exposed a new form of statecraft that significantly undermines the international political and economic order. This novel strategy of financial weaponisation is as destructive as military conflict, elevating the importance of economic security to the highest priority within national security. The most noteworthy aspect of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict is the involvement of

non-traditional security sectors such as energy and food, leading to regressions in humanity's collective attempts to confront its predicament.

For example, from the perspective of global energy conservation and emissions reduction, the uncertainty surrounding energy security caused by disruptions in gas and oil supplies has prompted nations to significantly increase fossil fuel extraction. This reversal of efforts to eliminate greenhouse gas emissions has intensified the crisis of mineral resource availability and energy security [4]. The Russian-Ukrainian conflict has finally awakened Russia from its illusions about integration with the West, compelling it to adjust the future trajectory of national development and reassess the importance of non-traditional security domains.

The fundamental cause of the conflict between China and the United States lies in the material, cognitive, discursive, and other disparities in national power, which are gradually diminishing as a result of numerous contributing factors. National strength depends not only on material aspects but also on the embedded perceptions of social factors among participants – that is, on how other states perceive and identify their status [5]. The narrowing of the relative power gap between the two countries has fuelled anxieties in the US about its hegemonic status, leading to an exaggerated narrative about the impact of China's rise. This has steered the overall direction of Sino-American relations towards competition. Currently, the United States employs non-violent means to constrain China's growing national power through trade wars, restrictions on scientific and technological exchanges, and interference in Taiwan's internal affairs. It also aims to impede China's development by fomenting conflict in the domains of trade cooperation, scientific and technological exchange, and ideology, areas that transcend the traditional security sphere.

Within China, two approaches to managing Sino-American rivalry exist. The first emphasises compromise and concessions, anticipating that this will restore the United States trust and return relations to their previous state. However, from a practical standpoint, the competition is focused on the advanced sectors of both nations, raising the question of who will take the initiative to relinquish self-gained advantages. It is apparent that relations are unlikely to revert to their former condition. The second approach advocates a firm response to the United States pressure. Yet, since a gap remains between China and the United States in many domains, China cannot address all provocations in the short term. Moreover, the Chinese economy faces numerous structural issues, and a short-term “decoupling” from the United States would only lead to unnecessary turmoil. A viable strategy is to demonstrate a certain degree of compromise with the United States at the tactical level. However, at the strategic level, Sino-American relations will remain competitive for a considerable time.

As neighbouring states, China and Russia have, in recent years, experienced to varying degrees' pressures

from the United States and the West in the realm of non-traditional security. Guided by shared interests and confronting identical sources of threats, the two nations have ample grounds and motivation to engage in more active collaboration in this field, which will undoubtedly be mutually beneficial for both countries in the long term.

Numerous opportunities exist for collaboration between the two nations in the sphere of non-traditional

security, providing an optimal starting point for deepening bilateral security cooperation in the current international landscape. Additionally, a broad spectrum of cooperative spheres can be pursued by focusing on the following four sectors: science and technology, finance, energy, agriculture. The subsequent sections will examine the characteristics of Sino-Russian cooperation and the obstacles impeding this collaboration in various fields.

### Science and technology

The overall trend of cooperation between the two countries in science and technology is advancing positively. However, there are examples of both successful and unsuccessful collaborative projects. Among the triumphs, Sino-Russian cooperation in nuclear energy stands out as particularly fruitful. With Russia's assistance, China explored and implemented second- and third-generation nuclear power technologies and, with technical support from the Russian side, constructed its first experimental fast neutron reactor<sup>4</sup>. However, certain science and technology cooperation projects between the two countries have not progressed as anticipated. For example, the joint Russian-Chinese wide-body long-range CR929 aircraft project has ultimately floundered since its inception in 2016 due to disputes between the parties over design concepts and concerns regarding intellectual property rights<sup>5</sup>.

At the political level, both China and Russia aspire to establish closer scientific and technological cooperation. The rationale is evident: China values Russia's technical prowess, while Russia aims to leverage China's economic potential to address its funding challenges in scientific and technological development. Nevertheless, resistance persists in implementing concrete cooperation projects. Within both China and Russia, voices opposing bilateral collaboration can be heard, and some representatives on the Chinese side hold biased views about Russia. These are primarily pro-Western Chinese experts and scholars who rely solely on their preferences and one-sided experience, according to which Western science and technology surpass other non-Western achievements. In the absence of comprehensive research, it was assumed that Russian technologies are outdated, backward, and less advanced than Western counterparts and that the study of science and technology should occur exclusively at the Western level. However, reality has contradicted the claims of the pro-Western faction. The most compelling example is the cooperation between the two countries in nuclear energy. Despite having previously imported nuclear

power technologies from France, the United States, and Canada, China continues to adopt Russian nuclear technology, demonstrating that Russia retains a competitive edge in this field. Notably, in the first phase of the Tianwan Nuclear power plant project, four Russian VVER-1000 reactors were utilised; in the second phase, two Chinese-made ACPR-1000 reactors were developed based on American AP-1000 technology; and in the third phase, two VVER-1200 reactors continued to be procured from Russia. Beyond the Tianwan Nuclear power plant, in 2021, VVER-1200 reactors were also utilised in unit 3 and unit 4 of the second phase of the Xudabao Nuclear Power Plant<sup>6</sup>. The abundance of new nuclear energy projects utilising Russian technology serves as a compelling illustration that Russian technology is on par with that of other nations, and China would be well-advised to adopt and learn from it.

Russia's hesitation is primarily due to persistent concerns about the potential theft of intellectual property rights by China during scientific and technological cooperation, which is a valid apprehension, however, this issue is not exclusive to Sino-Russian collaboration. Similar challenges have arisen in China's partnerships with Western nations, but the West has long recognised that maintaining technological barriers during such cooperation and exchange is impractical. It is impossible to prevent the other party from examining technologies during exchanges, and a rational strategy involves trading technologies at advantageous prices, thereby generating profits that can be reinvested into the research and development of more advanced innovations. In collaboration with Western companies, both sides have identified optimal methods of interaction to address these issues. To exchange technology for market access, Western firms typically establish joint ventures with Chinese partners, contributing technology in return for shared profitability, thus achieving long-term financial objectives for both parties. China and Russia may consider adopting this cooperative model in future endeavours. As China's scientific and technological capabilities

<sup>4</sup>Wang Qishan and Russian deputy Prime Minister I. Sechin visit Chinese experimental fast neutron reactor [Electronic resource]. URL: [http://mm.china-embassy.gov.cn/eng/zgxw/201110/t20111011\\_1419332.htm](http://mm.china-embassy.gov.cn/eng/zgxw/201110/t20111011_1419332.htm) (date of access: 29.04.2024) (in Chin.).

<sup>5</sup>Lebukhova I. "Chinese miracle": how the CR929 aircraft project instantly stopped being Russian [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://newizv.ru/news/2023-11-07/kitayskoe-chudo-kak-proekt-samoleta-cr-929-v-odin-mig-perestal-byt-rossiyskim-422859> (date of access: 29.04.2024) (in Russ.).

<sup>6</sup>Reactor shaft cladding structure was installed at power unit No. 3 of NPP "Suydapu" [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://ase-ec.ru/for-journalists/news/2021/nov/na-energobloke-3-aes-syuydapu-ustanovlena-konstruktsiya-oblitsovki-shakhty-reaktora/> (date of access: 21.04.2024) (in Russ.).

improve, significant global achievements have been realised in fields such as high-speed railways, 5G mobile communications, superconducting materials, quantum

communications, green energy, and other sectors. It is conceivable that a model of cooperation involving technology exchange will also emerge in the future [7].

### Financial sector

The outcomes of Sino-Russian financial cooperation are currently concentrated in two areas. Firstly, interbank business cooperation has seen major banks from both countries establish local branches and correspondent banking relationships (see table). This arrangement reduces fund transit times, enhances settlement efficiency, and simultaneously promotes transactions in national currencies. In recent years, the scale of interbank business collaboration has expanded alongside the broadening domains of Sino-Russian cooperation. Furthermore, cooperation between Russian and Chinese banks encompasses financing, cross-border e-commerce payments,

anti-money laundering efforts, and combating the financing of terrorism. China Development Bank serves as the primary institution for China's development finance cooperation in Russia, having facilitated the implementation of several key projects undertaken by *PetroChina*, *Sinopec*, *CITIC*, and other Chinese companies in Russia. In addition, to increase the export of automobiles, ships, complete equipment sets, and electromechanical products to Russia, the Chinese government encourages commercial banks to offer preferential loans to Russian enterprises by providing insurance, financing, and interest rate subsidies.

#### Local branches and correspondent banking relations

Bank name	Organisation in the host country	Establishment date
<i>Chinese banks' representative offices in Russia</i>		
Industrial and Commercial Bank of China	ICBC Bank	November 2007
Bank of China	Bank of China	April 1993
China Construction Bank	China Construction Bank	March 2013
China Development Bank	China Development Bank representative office in Moscow	September 2010
Export – Import Bank of China	Export – Import Bank of China representative office in Saint Petersburg	June 2007
Agricultural Bank of China	Agricultural Bank of China	January 2015
<i>Russian banks' representative offices in China</i>		
Russian Credit	Representative office in Beijing	April 1996
VTB Bank	Representative office in Beijing	September 1989
	Representative office in Shanghai	December 2007
Promsvyazbank	Representative office in Beijing	March 2004
VEB.RF	Representative office in Beijing	April 1999
Gazprombank	Representative office in Beijing	July 2006
MDM Bank	Representative office in Beijing	August 2008
Eurofinance Mosnarbank	Representative office in Beijing	July 2009
Sberbank	Representative office in Beijing	June 2010
Russian Agricultural Bank	Representative office in Beijing	June 2015
Central Bank of the Russian Federation	Representative office in Beijing	March 2017

Note. Developed on the base of the following source: *Pan Haifeng, Hou Mengxia, Pan Shuyu. Research of the current situation, problems, and countermeasures of China – Russia financial trade cooperation // Heilongjiang Finance. 2019. No. 2. P. 57–60 (in Chin.)*.

Secondly, the scope of financial transactions in local currencies between China and Russia has expanded significantly. The yuan – rouble exchange transactions have become a pivotal element, liberating both parties from dependency on international clearing organisations and US dollar exchange. Settlements in national currencies also facilitate the development of bilateral

trade. Conducting transactions in domestic currencies is central to Sino-Russian financial cooperation. Such settlements have progressed through three developmental stages from initial border trade to comprehensive trade exchanges. The volume of mutual settlements in yuan and roubles has gradually increased, maintaining a relative equilibrium with rouble-based transactions. This demand

was particularly pronounced following the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, and since settlements in local currencies in bilateral trade reached 95 % by 2023, Sino-Russian initiatives in national currency settlements have proven highly successful<sup>7</sup>.

Chinese-Russian financial cooperation has intensified since Russia became subject to Western sanctions. The achievements of this collaboration are evident, yet certain challenges remain. One priority is the ongoing improvement of the regulatory framework. To ensure orderly financial cooperation between the two countries, enhanced information exchange and joint consultations are essential for establishing a framework for supervising and managing financial institutions in both countries and mitigating financial risks. Firstly, political engagement and information sharing will facilitate the construction of regional regulatory mechanisms and enhance the efficiency of coordinated regulatory systems between China and Russia. Secondly, there is an

urgent need to develop a risk early-warning system and emergency decision-making processes in both countries to regulate the functioning of financial institutions. This necessitates negotiations on the harmonisation of financial indicators and the enhancement of credit ratings for financial institutions. Thirdly, building on the development of international electronic commerce involving financial institutions from both nations, a networked system for information exchange and joint supervision can be created. This would enable financial institutions to promptly request and share information, thus avoiding losses due to information delays, and oversee tax evasion and data leakage during the expansion of international e-commerce. A series of risk prevention mechanisms, which both sides should collaboratively develop, will help to control the financing of terrorist organisations and prevent the loss of investors' interests when they engage in financial activities in the other country [8, p. 16–20].

### Energy sector

Sino-Russian collaboration in the energy field focuses on oil and gas. As China's largest contiguous neighbour, Russia is the world's second-largest producer of petroleum and natural gas and the largest supplier of these resources to China. The supply of Russian hydrocarbons holds paramount strategic importance for China's national energy security. For Russia, exporting oil and natural gas is a traditional means of earning foreign currency. Revenues from the energy sector typically account for more than 40 % of Russia's budgetary income and play a crucial role in stabilising the Russian economy.

In 2021, crude oil imports from Russia constituted 15.5 % of China's total crude oil imports for that year, amounting to 79.64 mln t, with the overall value of Sino-Russian oil trade reaching 42.78 bln US dollars. In 2022, Russian oil exports to China increased by 8.3 %, reaching 86.25 mln t, and the value of these imports rose to approximately 58.4 bln US dollars, positioning Russia as the second-largest supplier of oil to China [9].

Regarding natural gas, in May 2014, *PetroChina* and *Gazprom* signed a purchase and sale agreement for natural gas via the eastern route, stipulating a total supply volume exceeding 1 trln m<sup>3</sup>, with annual deliveries of 38 bln m<sup>3</sup> over 30 years. In 2022, these companies entered into another agreement for the sale of natural gas from the Russian Far East, which enabled an increase in China's imports of Russian natural gas by 10 bln m<sup>3</sup> annually, bringing the total to 48 bln m<sup>3</sup> per year<sup>8</sup>. In 2022, Russia ranked as the second-largest exporter of natural

gas to China, accounting for 18 % of China's total gas imports. Following the sabotage of the pipeline "Nord Stream – 2" in September 2022, the exit of Russian gas from the EU market became an unavoidable reality that Russia was compelled to accept, prompting a shift in its gas exports towards Asia. Presently, Russia plans to construct the power of pipeline "Siberia-2" in collaboration with China, which is expected to transport up to 50 bln m<sup>3</sup> of gas annually from northern Russia to China via Mongolia<sup>9</sup>. Based on the results of existing cooperation, the energy partnership between China and Russia in the oil and gas sector has yielded mutually beneficial outcomes.

Although the energy collaboration between the two nations has been notably fruitful, certain issues persist in practice. Firstly, this cooperation predominantly focuses on a single category of energy sources (namely oil and natural gas) leaving other types of energy carriers and mineral resources yet to be explored. The development of green energy could potentially be integrated into their cooperative framework. Secondly, disputes over oil and gas pricing remain. Despite the mutual benefits derived from this partnership, there are inevitable disparities in gains, leading to contention. Both parties continuously seek greater advantages for themselves, exerting political influence on negotiation processes. However, it would be prudent to separate politics from these discussions and employ business tools to achieve a relatively fair and satisfactory outcome for both sides through negotiations.

<sup>7</sup>Belousov announces that mutual settlements in national currencies between Russia and China amount to 95 % [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://tass.ru/ekonomika/19330101> (date of access: 21.04.2024) (in Russ.).

<sup>8</sup>China – Russia energy cooperation advances with signing of Far East gas supply and sales agreement [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://news.cctv.com/2022/02/06/ARTI17qzVKif618ali6CKgFA220206.shtml> (date of access: 29.04.2024) (in Chin.).

<sup>9</sup>Russia presents technical assessment of mega pipeline to China, set to supply more gas than Nord Stream – 1 [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.cankaoxiaoxi.com/#/detailsPage/8cd1978ad52941828e768dfe42cd5bb6/1/2024-01-26%2013:49> (date of access: 29.04.2024) (in Chin.).

## Agricultural security

The primary challenge confronting China in terms of agricultural security is the supply of staple grains, specifically four key crops: wheat, maize, rice, and soybeans. Firstly, China's production of staple grains has been insufficient for many years. In 2020, soybean imports into China exceeded domestic production by more than fourfold, surpassing 100 mln t. Given the substantial deficit in this particular agricultural commodity, large-scale soybean imports are expected to continue in the future.

According to the China Rural development report – 2020, China is projected to face a gap between food production and demand totalling 130 mln t by 2025, chiefly in soybeans, along with a shortage of 25 mln t of rice, wheat, and maize<sup>10</sup>. Moreover, per capita arable land is limited, and seed reserves are insufficient. The results of the 3<sup>rd</sup> National land survey, released in 2021, indicate that China's cultivated land area is 1.9179 bln ac (128 mln ha), with per capita arable land less than 1.35 ac (0.09 ha) – 40 % below the global average. The overwhelming majority of maize and soybean seeds sown in China are supplied by Western companies such as *Dupont*, *Monsanto*, *Dow*, *Delta Pine Land*, and *Syngenta*, among others.

Secondly, China relies on a limited number of sources for food imports, it brings in bulk commodities mainly from the United States, Canada, Australia, and Russia. With the onset of the trade conflict between China and the United States, Beijing's relations with the West have cooled. To counter Western sanctions, China has imposed higher tariffs on certain Western agricultural products, resulting in a substantial decline in bilateral agricultural trade. When food imports are sourced from a narrow range of countries, unforeseen supply crises may arise [10, p. 17–19].

Russia confronts two aspects of the agricultural security challenge. Firstly, its agricultural base remains underdeveloped. Despite Russia's vast territory, the proportion of cultivated arable land to total land area is relatively small. The low profitability of farming fails to attract capital investment, leading to Russia's agricultural science, technology, and infrastructure lagging behind national development. Seeds and food processing equipment still predominantly rely on imports. Owing to the limited capacity of Russian processing facilities, much of the produce is not transformed into higher-value food products, resulting in low economic added value from the harvest, which in turn dampens incentives for investing in the agrarian sector.

Thirdly, Russian grain exports are currently impacted by the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, leading to a contraction in export operations. Russian wheat is primarily exported to Egypt, Turkey, Bangladesh, and several Middle Eastern nations. Following the outbreak of the conflict,

trade volumes plummeted, and orders declined sharply. In an era of globalisation, shifts in regional supply and demand are rapidly transmitted worldwide, causing food security issues [11, p. 16–17].

China, as a densely populated nation, inevitably needs to import food. Therefore, it is imperative to establish a diversified overseas mechanism for substituting food imports. Russia, facing sanctions, is likewise seeking new markets. It can be argued that food security concerns between China and Russia are mutually complementary. Since 2014, the structure of the Russian economy has undergone significant changes, with the agricultural sector becoming prominent. The Far East, as the region with the greatest potential for agricultural development in Russia, has become a development priority.

Due to its favourable land conditions and strategic location, the Russian Far East has consistently been viewed by China as a promising region for agricultural collaboration with Russia. However, due to historical factors and Russia's reliance on nationalism to foster internal cohesion during the “shock therapy” period following the collapse of the Soviet Union, various China threat theories have emerged within Russia. Assertions such as “the Chinese are occupying the Far East” and “Chinese territorial claims on the Far East or regions east of Lake Baikal” significantly hindered the joint development of Sino-Russian agricultural initiatives in the Far East [10, p. 294–301]. On a positive note, recent years have seen an increase in mutual trust under the leadership of both nations. Civil interactions have become more frequent, enhancing understanding between the two peoples, and China and Russia are beginning to set Sino-Russian agricultural cooperation in the Far East on the right course.

Chinese and Russian investors are currently engaged in negotiations for a soybean processing plant construction project in the Far East, while the Amur Region in the Far East is initiating a national soybean deep processing project. In 2019, China's General Administration of Customs issued an announcement permitting the import of soybeans from Russia. In 2020, 3884 t of soybeans arrived at Qingdao Port in China, marking the official commencement of a new phase in Sino-Russian soybean trade. Confident in its capabilities, Russia exported 693.75 thsd t of soybeans to China in 2022, and 1.293 mln t in 2023 – an increase of 86.32 % compared to the previous year. As collaboration deepens, the Russian Far East is working to obtain and expand the list of Russian suppliers to the Chinese market, aiming to broaden the range of exported crops. Furthermore, Russia has proposed allocating nearly 1/6 of the Far East to Chinese investors for agricultural cooperation projects [11]. The expanding Chinese market for agricultural

<sup>10</sup>Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs of the People's Republic of China holds press conference on grain market operation and production situation [Electronic resource]. URL: [https://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2020-08/26/content\\_5537711.htm](https://www.gov.cn/xinwen/2020-08/26/content_5537711.htm) (date of access: 29.04.2024) (in Chin.).

products complements Russia's need to increase exports, creating a mutually beneficial scenario. China's substantial demand for food significantly stimulates

Russian agriculture. It is imperative for China to balance and optimise its agricultural structure and ensure supply stability through food imports.

### Conclusions

It is unequivocally clear that non-traditional security has become an integral component of contemporary national security, encompassing areas that impact daily life and future development. The examples provided in this article demonstrate that the significance of non-traditional security extends beyond that of traditional security during peacetime. A lack of security in any non-traditional domain can place a nation at a disadvantage or even lead to defeat in global competition.

In this article, we have synthesised the features, achievements, and challenges in the most significant areas of collaboration between China and Russia. From this examination, it can be concluded that there is an overarching trend towards the dynamic advancement of partnership between the two nations in the sphere of non-traditional security. Nevertheless, certain issues persist in various sectors such as energy and agriculture, which can be readily resolved through market mechanisms or

mutual consultations. In contrast, matters within the scientific-technological and financial domains affect the vital national interests of both countries.

Some complex challenges require both parties to establish high-level governmental, economic, and research expert committees to continue coordinating joint actions. Responding to the evolution of the current international geopolitical landscape, China and Russia are, to varying degrees, resorting to import substitution policies. This signifies that each nation possesses a substantial substitutable market share accessible to the other. The involvement of market economies exerts a naturally stimulating effect on the development of cooperation in non-traditional security between the two sides. Moreover, the interplay of economic interests with collaboration in non-traditional security leads to the strengthening and enhancement of bilateral relations.

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## INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION ON MIGRATION IN AFRICA IN THE 1950s: AN ANALYSIS OF UN HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES REPORTS

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**Abstract.** This article analyses United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees reports to the United Nations General Assembly (sessions 6–16), examining international cooperation on forced migration in Africa through UN High Commissioner for Refugees activities. The study concludes that the 1950s marked the beginning of dynamic international cooperation in migration. As decolonisation began, migration patterns shifted towards forced displacement. UN High Commissioner for Refugees, initially responsible for a small number of persons of concern, gradually expanded its programmes across regions. States and international organisations supported these efforts through resettlement and local assistance programmes. The Algerian crisis highlighted the need to broaden the scope of the 1951 Convention relating to the status of refugees. The 1950s can be divided into two distinct phases: 1951–1956, when international bodies first engaged with African migration issues, and 1957–1960, marked by an active emergency response to forced migration.

**Keywords:** migration; Africa; international cooperation; forced migration; refugees; UN High Commissioner for Refugees; decolonisation.

## МЕЖДУНАРОДНОЕ СОТРУДНИЧЕСТВО ПО ВОПРОСАМ МИГРАЦИИ В АФРИКЕ В 1950-х гг. (ПО ДАННЫМ ДОКЛАДОВ ВЕРХОВНОГО КОМИССАРА ООН ПО ДЕЛАМ БЕЖЕНЦЕВ)

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**Аннотация.** Проанализированы доклады Верховного комиссара ООН по делам беженцев на 6–16-й сессиях Генеральной Ассамблеи ООН. Международное сотрудничество по вопросам вынужденной миграции в Африке показано через призму деятельности Управления Верховного комиссара ООН по делам беженцев. Сделаны выводы об интенсивном международном сотрудничестве в сфере миграции. С началом деколонизации миграция стала носить главным образом вынужденный характер. Управление Верховного комиссара ООН по делам беженцев, начавшее свою работу в 1950-х гг. с небольшого количества подмандатных лиц, стало расширять свои программы. Данная деятельность (переселение, оказание необходимой помощи на местах и др.) поддерживалась государствами и международными организациями. С началом алжирского кризиса появилась необходимость расширения рамок Конвенции о статусе беженцев 1951 г. С точки зрения сотрудничества по вопросам миграции в Африке в рассматриваемое десятилетие можно разделить на два этапа: 1951–1956 гг. – период знакомства международных структур с проблемами миграции в Африке; 1957–1960 гг. – период активного реагирования на чрезвычайные ситуации в сфере вынужденной миграции.

**Ключевые слова:** миграция; Африка; международное сотрудничество; вынужденная миграция; беженцы; Управление Верховного комиссара ООН по делам беженцев; деколонизация.

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In recent years, scholarly interest in African studies has grown across various countries, with African migration emerging as a key research area. The 1950s marked the beginning of decolonisation in Africa. While existing literature addresses specific regional migration patterns and rural exodus during this period [1–3], international cooperation receives limited attention, except regarding forced displacement and refugees [4]. This study aims to characterise international cooperation on African migration issues during the 1950s, drawing on UNHCR reports to the UN General Assembly.

The UN High Commissioner's for Refugees (hereinafter – High Commissioner) report to the sixth General Assembly session, covering the first five months of operations, makes no mention of African issues<sup>1</sup>.

By the seventh session (June 1951 – May 1952), the reports began addressing African issues, starting with Egypt. The document noted that Near and Middle Eastern governments faced “serious problems of their own ethnic refugees”. Egypt and other Arab nations were “devoting very considerable efforts” to assist Arab refugees, supported by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees. Egypt also hosted a small number of refugees who fell under UNHCR's mandate. As stated in the report, “from the first rapid survey of the situation, it would appear that the countries in these areas which have given asylum to the refugees within the mandate of my office are not in a position to take the necessary measures to ensure the final establishment of all of them. The very large numbers of Arab refugees in Egypt, Syria and Jordan and the relatively difficult economic conditions are necessarily the main preoccupations of the government”<sup>2</sup>.

In the eighth session report (June 1952 – May 1953), the High Commissioner addressed broader migration concerns, particularly through participation of his representative in the third session of the Intergovernmental Committee on European Migration (ICEM)<sup>3</sup>. The UNHCR office “requested that the committee should concern itself not only with the movement of refugees of European origin from Europe but also with the movement of refugees of European origin from countries outside Europe where they could not be assimilated”<sup>4</sup>. While ICEM agreed to provide technical assistance and funding, the

African continent remained outside this cooperation framework.

Regarding Egypt, the report reiterated that “the considerable number of Arab refugees is necessarily a primary preoccupation” for states in the region<sup>5</sup>. It further stated that “the number of refugees in Egypt is greater than in any other part of the Middle East”. Although precise figures were unavailable, the High Commissioner estimated their population at approximately 3000, comprising individuals who had arrived both before and after World War II. He also highlighted the Egyptian government's interest, noting that it had “given... possible assistance and cooperated closely... to establish a working arrangement for the future” with a representative of the office who had visited the country to develop a solution to the refugee problem. However, due to “relatively difficult economic conditions”<sup>6</sup>, employment prospects for mandate refugees remained limited, necessitating resettlement assistance. The Refugee Emergency Fund provided modest grants to refugees in need, though the exact amount went unspecified.

The report covers Ethiopia in addition to Egypt. In March 1950, Ethiopia signed an agreement with the International Refugee Organisation enabling refugee resettlement. This initiative brought approximately 250 refugees to Ethiopia, though near 70 later moved to other countries. A separate programme admitted up to 60 additional refugees and stateless persons<sup>7</sup>. Ethiopian authorities, like their Egyptian counterparts, fully supported the office's representative in addressing refugee matters.

Notably, the report states that “a significant number of refugees are working for the government and can be considered to be well established”<sup>8</sup>.

In the ninth session report (June 1953 – May 1954), the High Commissioner stated, “in my submission to the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly at its eighth session, provision was made for the establishment”<sup>9</sup> of a UNHCR office in Cairo. By February 1954, both parties had signed the agreement, pending only staff appointments<sup>10</sup>.

In 1953, international cooperation enabled surveys of “the number and conditions of institutional cases of refugees in need of institutional care... in various

<sup>1</sup>Refugees and stateless persons and problems of assistance to refugees: report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. UN Doc. A/2011 [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/704494> (date of access: 12.06.2024).

<sup>2</sup>Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to the General Assembly. UN Doc. A/2126. P. 30 [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/839476> (date of access: 12.06.2024).

<sup>3</sup>Now this agency is called the International Organisation for Migration. It has been a specialised agency of the United Nations since 19 September 2016.

<sup>4</sup>Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. UN Doc. A/2394. P. 6 [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/703561> (date of access: 12.06.2024).

<sup>5</sup>Ibid. P. 17.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. UN Doc. A/2648. P. 5 [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/712108> (date of access: 12.06.2024).

<sup>10</sup>Ibid. P. 5.

parts of the Near East”<sup>11</sup>. According to partly incomplete estimates, 10 720 individuals were categorised as difficult refugees under UNHCR’s custody and those in need of special care. European countries accepted some of these cases, though the report omits specific figures for African refugees.

In Egypt, refugees outside government welfare programmes required urgent assistance, particularly “the group of ageing white Russian refugees”<sup>12</sup>. The 1954 aid budget of USD 45 000 covered medical care and supplementary food.

The report also examines UNHCR efforts to address the challenges faced by professional categories of refugees who struggle with resettlement. With support from UNESCO, the World Health Organisation, and voluntary organisations, the agency achieved positive results, enabling some of these individuals to find opportunities in countries like Ethiopia and Iran<sup>13</sup> (the report does not define what constitutes professional categories. – A. S.)

The tenth session report highlights High Commissioner – ICEM cooperation in planning the “transfer of a small group of refugees in Ethiopia to the Central African Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland”, with ICEM providing funding<sup>14</sup>.

The High Commissioner recognised the active cooperation between the UNHCR office in Cairo, established in July 1954, and the Egyptian government to clarify the number of persons of concern to the agency in the country. For this purpose, a dedicated bureau was created within the local migration structure. Refugees seeking residence rights and other documents had to apply to this bureau<sup>15</sup>.

Emergency assistance to refugees in Egypt, including food, medical supplies, clothing, fuel, and shelter, with 228 US dollars allocated for such support in 1955 was also provided by the High Commissioner. Furthermore, small amounts for emergency relief were paid from the accountable funds of the Geneva headquarters and Cairo office<sup>16</sup>.

The High Commissioner emphasised the positive progress in obtaining up-to-date information on the situation of refugees facing “difficult cases” in Egypt and finding solutions to their problems. For example, an effort to establish a home for 30 elderly persons with

assistance from the UN Refugee Fund was mentioned. In addition, the feasibility of implementing a pension scheme in several countries in the Near and Middle East was explored<sup>17</sup>.

The report of the eleventh session also highlighted the African dimension of cooperation between the UNHCR and ICEM. This involved resettling small groups of refugees in other parts of the world with ICEM’s support. These were mainly refugees who had difficulties integrating “in certain areas of the Middle East and in Ethiopia”<sup>18</sup>. For instance, the committee successfully secured residence and work permits for around 20 Ethiopian refugees to settle in the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland.

Within the framework of the High Commissioner’s cooperation with the Egyptian government, the registration of refugees under the office’s authority continued to facilitate their acquisition of residence rights and necessary documents. The report noted that the Egyptian Constitution prohibited the extradition of political refugees. However, the state acknowledged the situation of the few “refugees whose presence in the country is considered undesirable”<sup>19</sup>. These individuals managed to obtain the required residence documents while awaiting High Commissioner assistance for resettlement.

At the twelfth session, the High Commissioner reported on activities from May 1956 to May 1957. Notably, the accompanying table indicates that Morocco (4283.57 US dollars), Tunisia (2857.14 US dollars), the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland (10 025.82 US dollars), and Ethiopia (10 000 US dollars) are among the countries that pledged or disbursed contributions to assist Hungarian refugees, alongside the Union of South Africa, which received 1292 Hungarian refugees from Austria (as of 1 May 1957)<sup>20</sup>. In 1956, with ICEM support, South Africa received an additional 25 Hungarian refugees<sup>21</sup>.

As noted in the report, “as a result of the events which took place in the Middle East at the beginning of 1957, a number of persons left Egypt for certain countries of temporary asylum in Europe”<sup>22</sup>. The High Commissioner granted over 70 000 US dollars to host governments and voluntary organisations. This issue was actively discussed at the fourth session of the Executive Committee

<sup>11</sup>Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. UN Doc. A/2648. P. 11–12 [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/712108> (date of access: 12.06.2024).

<sup>12</sup>Ibid. P. 14.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid. P. 16.

<sup>14</sup>Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. UN Doc. A/2902. P. 2 [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/712869> (date of access: 12.06.2024).

<sup>15</sup>Ibid. P. 9–10.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid. P. 11.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid. P. 14.

<sup>18</sup>Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. UN Doc. A/3123/Rev.1. P. 15 [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/710945> (date of access: 12.06.2024).

<sup>19</sup>Ibid. P. 18.

<sup>20</sup>Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. UN Doc. A/3585/Rev.1. P. 3 [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/712993> (date of access: 12.06.2024).

<sup>21</sup>Ibid. P. 11.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid. P. 5.

of the United Nations Refugee Fund, held in Geneva from 29 January to 4 February 1957<sup>23</sup>.

An engaging discussion occurred at the fifth session of the Executive Committee of the fund (3–7 June 1957). The “observer for Egypt stated that he was not clear on the term “refugees from Egypt” to which reference had been made by one of the representatives of non-governmental organisations who had addressed the committee”<sup>24</sup>. He provided statistics on those who had left Egypt and on the situation of those remaining. The representative of Israel noted that since November 1956, his country had received “nearly 15 000 Egyptian Jewish refugees, the great majority of whom, although technically stateless, had resided in Egypt for many generations and had now been forced to leave this country, while all their property has been sequestered”<sup>25</sup>. The French representative added that “over 2300 stateless persons from Egypt had been granted asylum in France”<sup>26</sup>.

Regarding Egypt, the solution to the problem of “difficult” refugees included “building a Home for aged refugees in Cairo”<sup>27</sup>. Additionally, the Swiss government, “under the UNREF Plans of operations for 1955 and 1956”, had taken in seven individuals and placed them in institutions.

Morocco was discussed in the High Commissioner’s report at the twelfth session: on 7 November 1956, the state joined the 1951 Convention relating to the status of refugees<sup>28</sup>. Morocco established the Office for refugees and stateless persons to define refugee status and issue necessary documents, and an Appeals board, which included a UNHCR representative. The latter became the Moroccan government’s advisor on refugee issues<sup>29</sup>.

The report of the High Commissioner at the thirteenth session covered the period from May 1957 to May 1958. Concerning Egypt (identified in the report as a province of the United Arab Republic (UAR)), the document highlighted the refugees’ plight, mainly due to employment issues. UNHCR assisted in obtaining residence permits and travel documents<sup>30</sup>.

The report also referenced discussions on refugee issues in the UAR, sometimes specifying the Syrian part

and other times not. It noted that 27 refugees in the UAR “have been finally settled”, and another 30 have been assisted, although not yet settled. The report frequently omits specific regional references within the country<sup>31</sup>, which is worth noting.

The Moroccan Office for refugees and stateless persons “has recognised the validity of the majority of eligibility certificates issued during the period of transition and has itself issued some 700 further certificates”<sup>32</sup>.

During the period covered by the report, Tunisia was added as another African country of interest. It was noted that the High Commissioner had been asked to assist the refugees who arrived in 1957. High Commissioner provided emergency assistance to these refugees in cooperation with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). The ICRC had already been offering such help and accepting the distribution of “food and clothing placed at their disposal through UNHCR or purchased with funds which the UNHCR received from several states for this purpose”<sup>33</sup>. Significantly, Tunisia was the second African state to become a party to the 1951 Convention relating to the status of refugees, joining in November 1957<sup>34</sup>.

The High Commissioner also highlighted the assistance provided to refugees in Tunisia through them, which “so far amounted to USD 116 000”. This aid addressed the urgent needs of refugees during the winter, and the League of Red Cross Societies (LRCS) continued to assist them “with the funds obtained in response to the joint appeal launched by the league and the International Committee of the Red Cross under the terms of the resolution adopted by the Conference of Red Cross Societies at New Delhi on 10 December 1957”<sup>35</sup>.

By May 1958, the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland and the Union of South Africa had received 60 and 1300 Hungarian refugees from Austria and Yugoslavia, respectively<sup>36</sup>. Additionally, with the support of the ICEM, 17 and 8 individuals were resettled in these countries, respectively<sup>37</sup>.

Notably, there were two critical resolutions by the United Nations General Assembly:

- resolution A/RES/1166(XII), which requested the Economic and Social Council to establish an Executive

<sup>23</sup>Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. UN Doc. A/3585/Rev.1. P. 27, 28, 36, 41, 42 [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/712993> (date of access: 12.06.2024).

<sup>24</sup>Ibid. P. 54.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid. P. 17, 18.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid. P. 6.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid. P. 7.

<sup>30</sup>Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. UN Doc. A/3828/Rev.1. P. 9 [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/714091> (date of access: 12.06.2024).

<sup>31</sup>Ibid. P. 16.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid. P. 9.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid. P. 6.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid. P. 5.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid. P. 11.

Committee of the High Commissioner's programme to replace the Executive Committee of the United Nations Refugee Fund<sup>38</sup>, as noted in the High Commissioner's report<sup>39</sup> and subsequently implemented;

- resolution A/RES/1286(XIII), which first addressed the issue of Algerian refugees in Morocco and Tunisia and recommended "to continue his action on behalf of the refugees on a substantial scale and to undertake similar action in Morocco"<sup>40</sup>.

The reports from the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth sessions, covering the period from May 1958 to March 1961, demonstrated international cooperation in addressing the problem of Algerian refugees in Morocco and Tunisia. These sessions adopted resolutions mandating that UNHCR continues its concern for these refugees<sup>41</sup>.

Notably, the first report notes a rise in the number of refugees to 180 000. It states that "as the High Commissioner's office is non-operational, the League of Red Cross Societies has agreed to undertake the distribution of relief supplies". Both entities appealed to states "for funds and supplies". The High Commissioner remarked that the involvement of the LRCS "is a guarantee of the essentially humanitarian and not political character of the operation"<sup>42</sup>. The same report also mentioned 200 000 refugees in Tunisia and Morocco<sup>43</sup>.

Furthermore, the report notes that "the UNREF programme has been replaced by UNHCR programmes, each designed to deal with a specific refugee problem or a specific aspect of a refugee problem... The relief operation for refugees from Algeria in Tunisia and Morocco falls outside these programmes as it is financed from emergency funds specially contributed for this purpose"<sup>44</sup>.

The reports of the High Commissioner for these three sessions of the UN General Assembly should be viewed holistically, as the agency's activities in Africa largely focused on the Algerian refugee crisis.

In 1957, the refugee problem worsened in Tunisia, prompting the government to request High Commissioner assistance. During 1957–1958, the ICRC facilitat-

ed contributions totalling 116 000 US dollars. Additionally, under a bilateral agreement, nearly 1 mln US dollars worth of goods were sent to Tunisia. Following an ICRC and LRCS appeal to the National Red Cross, Red Crescent, and Red Lion and Sun societies in 1958, the Tunisian Red Crescent received donations of money and goods from 42 societies, amounting to more than 1 mln US dollars by the year's end<sup>45</sup>.

The situation in Morocco was similarly challenging, prompting the High Commissioner to send a special representative to assess the refugee situation there<sup>46</sup>. According to the report, goods for refugees did not arrive in sufficient quantities, and certain products (such as olive oil and sugar) had to be cut back and replaced with cheaper alternatives (like wheat). In March 1959, "one government, which was already making wheat available for refugees in Tunisia, generously agreed to provide wheat and rice for refugees in Morocco also". Several states responded to the High Commissioner's appeal by stating they "had already provided or intended to provide various supplies through their Red Cross or Red Crescent societies". By 30 April 1959, donations had been received from Laos (1000 US dollars), Liechtenstein (700 US dollars), Monaco (400 US dollars), and the United States (250 000 US dollars), with British and Dutch firms contributing soap<sup>47</sup>.

In 1959, the form of assistance to refugees in Morocco and Tunisia began to evolve. Beyond food distribution (with 60 distribution points – 37 in Tunisia and 23 in Morocco) and medical care (including laboratories and mobile clinics), sewing rooms, mat-weaving workshops, and other employment opportunities were organised for refugees<sup>48</sup>.

The report emphasises that the expansion of the assistance programme was made possible by significant contributions from states, international non-governmental organisations, and the Red Cross and Red Crescent societies. It underscores the special roles of the LRCS, Moroccan and Tunisian authorities, and the Red Crescent societies in these countries<sup>49</sup>.

Significantly, in 1959, contributions amounting to 1 487 656 US dollars were made to help Algerian refugees

<sup>38</sup>International assistance to refugees within the mandate of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. UN Doc. A/RES/1166(XII) [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/207272> (date of access: 01.09.2023).

<sup>39</sup>Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. UN Doc. A/3828/Rev.1. P. 17 [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/714091> (date of access: 12.06.2024).

<sup>40</sup>Refugee in Morocco and Tunisia. UN Doc. A/RES/1286(XIII) [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/206913> (date of access: 01.09.2023).

<sup>41</sup>Refugees from Algeria in Morocco and Tunisia. UN. Doc A/RES/1389(XIV) [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/206379> (date of access: 01.09.2023) ; Refugees from Algeria in Morocco and Tunisia. UN Doc. A/RES/1500(XV) [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/205890> (date of access: 01.09.2023) ; Refugees from Algeria in Morocco and Tunisia. UN. Doc A/RES/1672(XVI) [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/204571> (date of access: 01.09.2023).

<sup>42</sup>Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. UN Doc. A/4104/Rev.1. P. 1 [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/715928> (date of access: 12.06.2024).

<sup>43</sup>Ibid. P. 35.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid. P. 2.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid. P. 10.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid. P. 27.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid. P. 10.

<sup>48</sup>Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. UN Doc. A/4378/Rev.1. P. 5 [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/715259> (date of access: 12.06.2024).

<sup>49</sup>Ibid. P. 5.

in Morocco and Tunisia. This amount only includes contributions made directly to High Commissioner and does not account for bilateral contributions requested by the High Commissioner or funds and goods provided to LRCS<sup>50</sup>.

In 1960, the High Commissioner noted the continuation of the assistance programme for Algerian refugees in Morocco and Tunisia, primarily supported by High Commissioner and the League of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. The cost of food and clothing was estimated at 7 mln US dollars, and the High Commissioner anticipated that these funds would be provided as long as the programme was needed<sup>51</sup>. An additional 160 milk distribution points for children were also established (100 in Tunisia and 60 in Morocco)<sup>52</sup>.

The 1950s witnessed the beginning of significant international cooperation in migration in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Given the colonial nature of most African territories (with only Egypt, Liberia, Ethiopia, and the Union of South Africa that could be counted as independent at the start of the decade) and the subsequent process of decolonisation, international cooperation on migration issues was initially limited. Colonial empires attempted to resolve these issues within their territories. However, as decolonisation generated internal and international conflicts, migration increasingly became forced.

High Commissioner engaged with new territories to assess the need for refugee assistance, starting with

Egypt and Ethiopia. It then had to respond to new challenges: the refugee exodus from Egypt due to the Suez crisis and the emergence of refugees in Morocco and Tunisia resulting from the Algerian War of Independence.

The cooperation between UNHCR and the ICEM on refugee resettlement, along with other UN agencies, international organisations, and governments (e. g., Egypt, Ethiopia, Morocco, and Tunisia), demonstrated both the importance of international collaboration and the central role of the High Commissioner in migration issues in Africa.

The Algerian crisis starkly illustrated the need to extend the scope of the 1951 Convention relating to the status of refugees. It also served as a positive example of international cooperation in the humanitarian field, with individual states, international organisations, and non-governmental organisations worldwide aiding Algerian refugees.

The 1950s witnessed two distinct phases in international migration engagement in Africa. The first phase (1951–1956) saw the introduction of international structures to the continent. Then, from 1957 to 1960, there was the first active response to forced migration emergencies. In 1961, a new era of international cooperation began. At its sixteenth session, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution on the new African region, addressing the issue of Angolan refugees in the Congo and recommending that the UNHCR provide assistance<sup>53</sup>.

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<sup>50</sup>Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. UN Doc. A/4378/Rev.1. P. 20 [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/715259> (date of access: 12.06.2024).

<sup>51</sup>Report of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. UN Doc. A/4771/Rev.1. P. 2 [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/716623> (date of access: 12.06.2024).

<sup>52</sup>Ibid. P. 10.

<sup>53</sup>Problem raised by the situation of Angolan refugees in the Congo. UN Doc. A/RES/1671(XVI) [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/204570> (date of access: 12.06.2024).

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## WHEN AND WHERE WILL STATE-BASED CONFLICTS OCCUR IN THE REMAINING 21<sup>st</sup> CENTURY?<sup>1</sup>

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**Abstract.** This study seeks to identify the timing and location of state-based conflicts in the remaining 21<sup>st</sup> century and to estimate the probability of future state-based conflicts by world regions. The methodology employs a four-step forecasting model utilising wavelet analysis to predict death estimates from state-based conflicts before 2100. These estimates generate forecasts of the probability of state-based conflicts in each world region over the next decades. The findings suggest that before 2100, the probability of state-based conflicts, measured by resulting fatalities as a proxy, is estimated at 54 % in Asia and Oceania (excluding the Middle East), 31 % in Africa, 8 % in Europe, 6 % in the Americas, and 0 % in the Middle East.

**Keywords:** state-based conflicts; wavelet analysis; forecasting; war; peace.

**Conflict of interest.** The authors declare no conflict of interest, ethical concerns, or permission requirements related to this article.

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## КОГДА И ГДЕ БУДУТ ПРОИСХОДИТЬ ГОСУДАРСТВЕННЫЕ КОНФЛИКТЫ ДО КОНЦА ХХІ В.?

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**Аннотация.** Определяются время и место возникновения государственных конфликтов в оставшиеся десятилетия XXI в., а также оценивается вероятность начала государственных конфликтов во всех регионах мира. При проведении исследования используется четырехэтапная модель прогнозирования с применением вейвлет-анализа для выявления смертности от рассматриваемых конфликтов в период до 2100 г. Оценки смертности позволяют предположить вероятность возникновения конфликтов на государственной почве в регионах мира в течение следующих десятилетий. Результаты исследования показывают, что в период до 2100 г. вероятность возникновения государственных

<sup>1</sup>The data supporting this study's findings are openly available in Our world in data (<https://ourworldindata.org/war-and-peace>), with references to International Peace Research Institute (<https://www.prio.org/projects/1292>) and Uppsala conflict data programme (<https://ucdp.uu.se/>).

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конфликтов составляет 54 % в Азии и Океании (за исключением Ближнего Востока), 31 % в Африке, 8 % в Европе, 6 % в Северной и Южной Америке и 0 % на Ближнем Востоке.

**Ключевые слова:** государственные конфликты; вейвлет-анализ; прогнозирование; война; мир.

**Конфликт интересов.** Авторы заявляют об отсутствии конфликта интересов, этических проблем и запрета на воспроизведение материалов из других источников.

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## Introduction

This research aims to identify when and where state-based conflicts will occur in the remaining 21<sup>st</sup> century. It also seeks to measure the probability of such conflicts by world region. This is achieved by generating forecasts of deaths from all types of state-based conflicts for 2021–2100 using wavelet analysis. State-based conflicts are defined as conflicts between states or a state against a non-state armed group. Deaths in these conflicts include those of soldiers and civilians due to fighting but exclude deaths from disease or famine<sup>2</sup>.

Figure 1 illustrates the historical trend of deaths from 1946 to 2020, showing deaths from state-based conflicts by world regions. It reveals a decline in such deaths during this period. Asia and Oceania (excluding the Middle East) accounted for 49 % of global deaths from state-based

conflicts, Africa for 27 %, and the Middle East for 17 %. Americas (3 %) and Europe (3 %) had comparatively fewer deaths.

Significant conflicts in Asia and Oceania (excluding the Middle East) with over 1 mln deaths included the Partition of India (1947), the Korean War (1950–1953), the Vietnam War (1955–1975), the Bangladesh Liberation War (1971), and the ongoing Afghanistan conflict (1978 – present days). In Africa, major conflicts with over one million deaths included the Algerian War (1954–1962), the Nigerian Civil War (1967–1970), the Ethiopian Civil War (1974–1991), the Second Congo War (1998–2003), and the Second Sudanese Civil War (1983–2005). In the Middle East, the Iran–Iraq War (1980–1988) was a significant conflict involving over 1 million deaths.

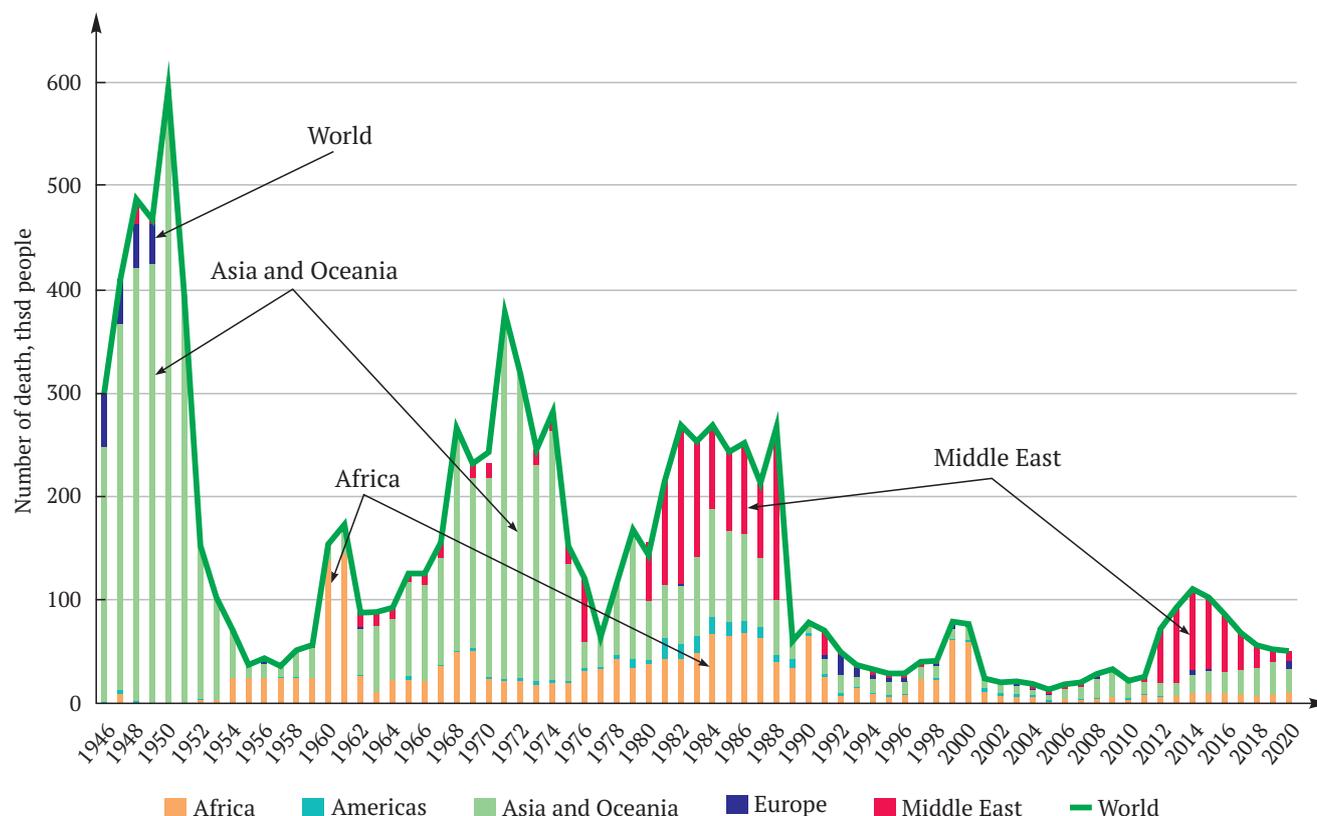


Fig. 1. Historical annual death estimates in state-based conflicts by world regions and state-based conflicts with more than 1 million deaths between 1946 and 2020.

<sup>2</sup>Herre B., Rodés-Guirao L., Roser M. War and peace [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://ourworldindata.org/war-and-peace> (date of access: 12.04.2024).

## Literature review

This section reviews the literature on the context of potential future conflicts in terms of the global balance of power.

Research on armed conflict prediction remains limited. A notable contribution comes from H. Hegre and his co-authors, who forecast global and regional armed conflict trends for 2010–2050. Their study employed a dynamic multinomial logit model using 1970–2009 cross-sectional data to analyse transitions between no conflict, minor conflict, and major conflict. Key predictors included population size, infant mortality rates, and ethnic divisions. The authors projected significant conflict reduction in Western Asia and North Africa, while anticipating increased hostilities in East, Central, and Southern Africa, as well as East and South Asia [1].

Regarding future warfare, D. C. Ndidigwe argues that the post-Cold War era has produced greater instability rather than peace [2]. Since 1946, global power has shifted from Western European nations to the United States and the Soviet Union. Western Europe aligned with the United States through NATO (established in 1949 as a counter to Soviet influence), while Soviet-allied states in Central and Eastern Europe united under the Warsaw pact (1955)<sup>3</sup>.

Following the Soviet Union's dissolution in 1991, many former Soviet allies joined NATO. The European Union, established by the 1993 Maastricht Treaty with 12 initial members expanded to 27 states, including former Soviet allies. Beyond its economic role, the EU has emerged as a key player in peacekeeping, conflict prevention, and international security.

While NATO's 30 members maintain solidarity with the United States, developing nations show more nuanced positions. Historian E. Todd suggests that approximately 70 % of the world's population does not align with US interests<sup>4</sup>. The ongoing conflict in Ukraine may serve to crystallise public opinion in the developing world against the United States. China's alignment with Russia in the Russian-Ukrainian conflict proves particularly significant, as both powers seek to challenge United States hegemony.

Russia and China ranked second and third position<sup>5</sup> globally in military strength after the United States in

2024. The Russian-Ukrainian conflict has strengthened this partnership, further challenging American dominance. The BRICS nations (Brazil, India, China, and South Africa) have aligned with Russia, either explicitly or implicitly, refusing to participate in Western sanctions. This stance is evidenced by record-high India – Russia trade volumes and Brazil's continued reliance on Russian fertilisers<sup>6</sup>.

India and Brazil maintain an ambivalent stance as allies of both the United States and Russia. In April 2023, Brazilian president L. I. Lula da Silva, while declaring neutrality, offered to mediate between Russia and Ukraine<sup>7</sup>.

Since the beginning of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, the BRICS alliance has attracted 19 potential members, including Saudi Arabia, Iran, Argentina, UAE, Algeria, Egypt, Bahrain, Indonesia, Turkey, Mexico, Kazakhstan, Nicaragua, Senegal, Thailand, Nigeria, Afghanistan, and several unnamed African nations<sup>8</sup>. The BRICS alliance offers an economic and political alternative to the G7.

This expansion would create an economic bloc surpassing the United States by 30 % in GDP, representing approximately 30 % of global GDP, 50 % of world population, and controlling 60 % of global gas reserves. World Bank data of 2023 shows that, as of 2021, BRICS countries accounted for 26 % of global GDP compared to G7's 44 %. Population-wise, BRICS represented 40 % (3.2 trln people) of the global population (8 trln people), while G7 nations comprised only 10 % (771 mln people) according to Worldometers<sup>9</sup>.

The G7 appears to be acting as a counterweight to this growing movement towards independence from United States influence. The G7's response mirrors the ancient Roman strategy of *divide et impera* (divide and rule), exemplified at the 2023 Hiroshima summit. The choice of Hiroshima, the city where 120 000 Japanese perished within 4 days of the 6 August 1945 atomic bombing, served as a stark reminder of American military capability.

The summit strategically included guest nations: Australia, Indonesia, Brazil, Comoros (African Union chair), Cook Islands (Pacific Islands Forum chair), Republic of Korea, and Vietnam. The summit's primary

<sup>3</sup>Balance of power [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/balance-of-power> (date of access: 12.04.2024).

<sup>4</sup>Lownie R. Emmanuel Todd: world war III has already begun [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://unherd.com/thepost/emmanuel-todd-world-war-iii-has-already-begun/> (date of access: 12.04.2024).

<sup>5</sup>2024 Military strength ranking [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.globalfirepower.com/countries-listing.php> (date of access: 12.04.2024).

<sup>6</sup>BRICS nations offer a new world order as an alternative to the West [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://frontline.thehindu.com/news/brics-nations-offer-a-new-world-order-as-alternative-to-the-west/article66667657.ece> (date of access: 12.04.2024).

<sup>7</sup>Malleret C. Ukraine criticises Brazil's peace efforts and invites Lula to see the invasion's effects [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2023/apr/18/ukraine-lula-brazil-peace-effort-russia> (date of access: 12.04.2024).

<sup>8</sup>Vecchiato P. BRICS draws membership bids from 19 nations before summit [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2023-04-24/brics-draws-membership-requests-from-19-nations-before-summit#xj4y7vzkg> (date of access: 12.04.2024).

<sup>9</sup>Countries in the world by population (2023) [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/population-by-country> (date of access: 12.04.2024).

objectives focused on strengthening Russian sanctions and reducing Chinese trade dependence<sup>10</sup>. China, as the world's second-largest economy, directly challenges United States economic supremacy. The United States, citing China's position on the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, has urged G7 partners to restrict Chinese trade, potentially reinforcing American economic hegemony.

Australia's invitation to the G7 summit reflects the strategic importance of its economic ties with China. In 2019, China accounted for 39% of Australia's exports and 25% of its imports, making it Australia's top trading partner [3]. The invitations extended to Brazil, Indonesia, Comoros, and the Cook Islands highlight the G7's strategic considerations. Brazil, a BRICS member and a potential counterweight to the G7, was likely invited as part of the divide and rule strategy. Indonesia, which has expressed interest in joining BRICS, may have been asked for similar reasons.

Comoros serves as the chair of the African Union, a political and economic union of 55 African member states. Since 2000, China has significantly increased its involvement in Africa and has far surpassed the United States economically. By 2021, China was Africa's largest two-way trading partner, with 254 bln US dollars in trade, four times greater than that of the United States<sup>11</sup>. The Cook Islands is the chair of the Pacific Islands Fo-

rum, an intergovernmental organisation that aims to enhance cooperation between countries and territories of Oceania, including the formation of a trade bloc and regional peacekeeping operations.

In 2022, China's foreign minister Wang Yi visited several South Pacific nations, including the Solomon Islands, Kiribati, Samoa, Fiji, Tonga, Vanuatu, Papua New Guinea, and East Timor, in a display of China's growing military and diplomatic presence in the region<sup>12</sup>. The United States perceives China as a threat in Africa and the Pacific and has once again used the G7 to counter this threat.

As T. Hobbes articulated in 1651, competition, diffidence, and glory are the primary drivers of conflict in human nature<sup>13</sup>. Competition between great powers is the main driver of wars today. Ben Sira's adage of 180 BC "there is nothing new under the sun"<sup>14</sup> captures the enduring nature of power struggles in human history.

BRICS positions itself as the global south's representative, offering an alternative to G7 leadership through diplomatic engagement and development financing outside Western frameworks<sup>15</sup>. Its imminent expansion suggests increasing political and economic counterweight to Western influence. This evolving dynamic will likely influence future conflicts, with belligerents aligning with either bloc.

## Methodology

This study employs a wavelet analysis forecasting model to predict deaths in state-based conflicts by world region (Africa, Americas, Asia and Oceania excluding the Middle East, Europe, and the Middle East) from 2021 to 2100. The model utilises historical data (1946–2020) on annual deaths from all types of state-based conflicts. The four-step wavelet analysis forecasting model is detailed in [4; 5].

Step 1 involves de-noising and compressing the first-order difference of the time series. This process suppresses noise within the signal (i. e., the 1946–2020 time series of deaths by world region) and extracts a cleaner underlying function.

Step 2, wavelet decomposition, breaks down the signal into its constituent parts, allowing for the analysis of different frequency components at their respective scales.

In step 3, Burg extension of approximations and details, the Burg model fits an autoregressive model to

the input signals. This is achieved by minimising (least squares) the forward and backward prediction errors.

In step 4, wavelet reconstruction, the forecasted signals are recomposed (reconstructed) after Burg extension.

Wavelet analysis is well-suited for this research question as it effectively identifies trends, seasonality, and cycles embedded within time series data. Fluctuations in the number of deaths are specifically captured by the cycle component. Wavelet analysis excels in revealing hidden periodicities within data, which may be indicative of cyclical behaviour or recurring processes. Additionally, its proven ability to generate long-term forecasts makes it a valuable tool for this study. This paper utilises 75 years of historical data (from 1946 to 2020) to predict 80 years of future estimates (from 2021 to 2100). The forecast window slightly exceeds the historical window, demonstrating a conservative approach to the forecasting horizon.

<sup>10</sup>Golubkova K., *Irish J. G7 tightens Russia sanctions, looks to cut China trade reliance* [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.reuters.com/world/g7-leaders-reckon-with-ukraine-haunted-by-hiroshima-nuclear-legacy-2023-05-18/> (date of access: 12.04.2024).

<sup>11</sup>Sheehy T. P. 10 Things to know about the US – China rivalry in Africa [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.usip.org/publications/2022/12/10-things-know-about-us-china-rivalry-africa> (date of access: 12.04.2024).

<sup>12</sup>Explainer: what's at stake for China on the South Pacific visit? [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://apnews.com/article/penny-wong-solomon-islands-china-fiji-40cca61cd3160caabb9dc60aeb66c426> (date of access: 12.04.2024).

<sup>13</sup>Hobbes T. Leviathan. Chapter 13 [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://www.litcharts.com/lit/leviathan/chapter-13-of-the-natural-condition-of-mankind-as-concerning-their-felicity-and-misery> (date of access: 12.04.2024).

<sup>14</sup>Ecclesiastes [Electronic resource]. URL: [https://vulgate.org/ot/ecclesiastes\\_1.htm](https://vulgate.org/ot/ecclesiastes_1.htm) (date of access: 12.04.2024).

<sup>15</sup>BRICS nations offer a new world order as alternative to the West [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://frontline.thehindu.com/news/brics-nations-offer-a-new-world-order-as-alternative-to-the-west/article66667657.ece> (date of access: 12.04.2024).

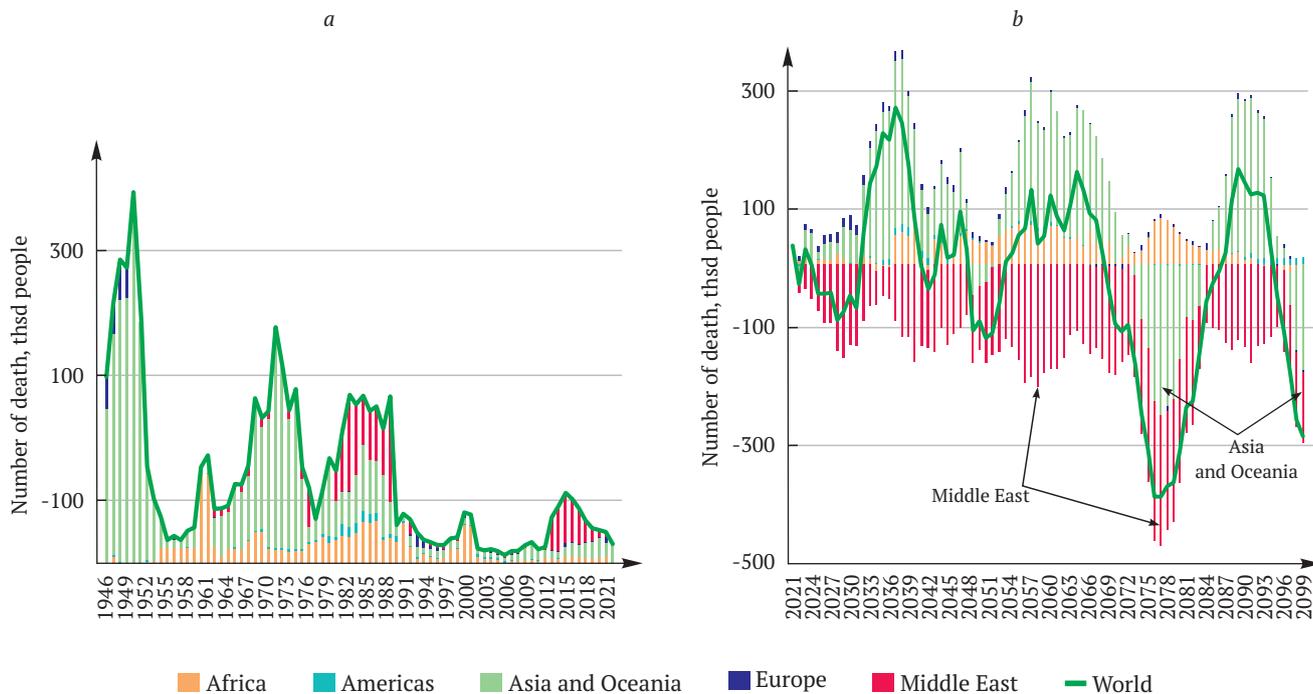


Fig. 2. Historical death estimates for 1946–2020 (a) and forecasts for 2021–2100 (b) for state-based conflicts by regions

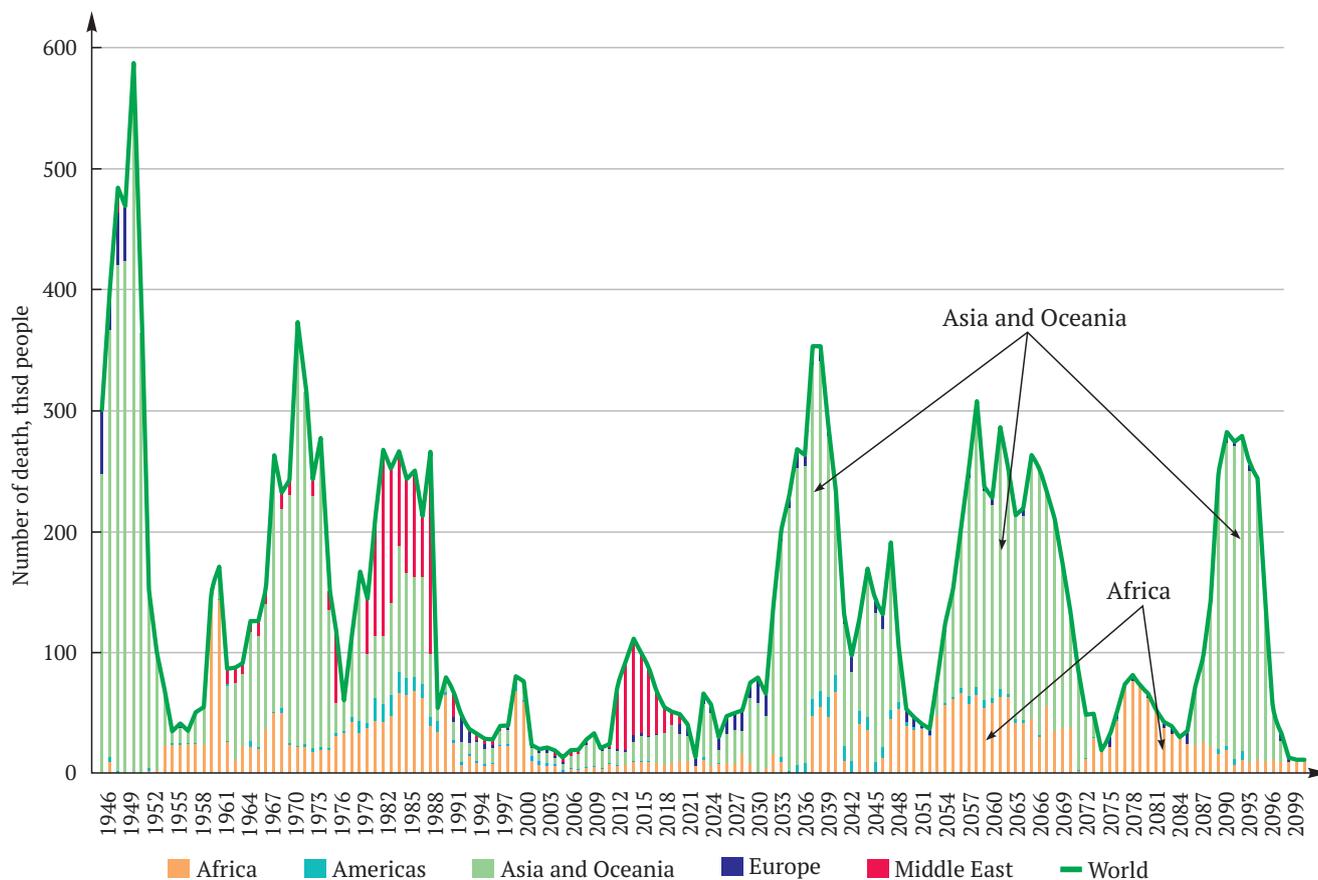


Fig. 3. Adjusted historical death estimates for 1946–2020 and forecasts for 2021–2100

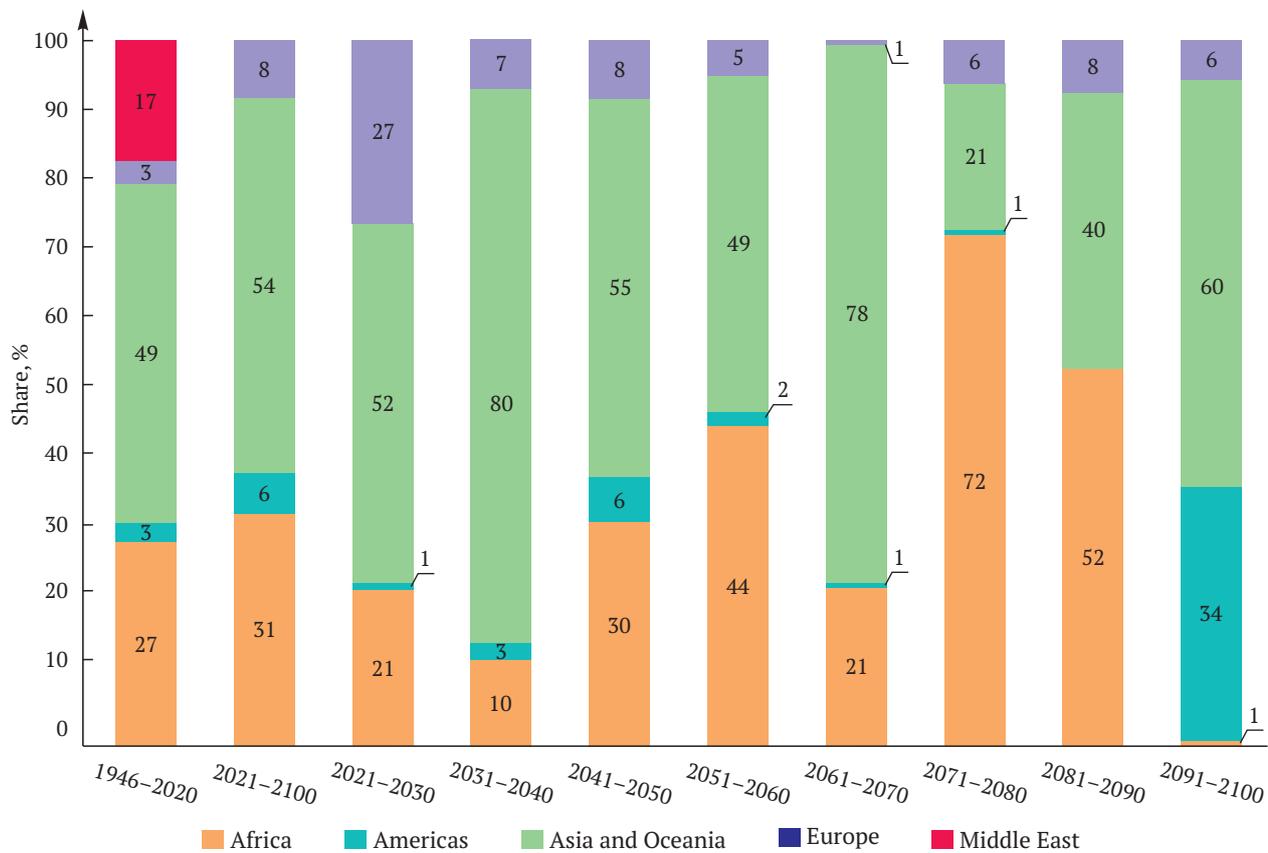


Fig. 4. Regional conflict probability by decade for 2021-2100

## Results

The study forecasts state-based conflicts and their casualties across world regions for the remainder of the 21<sup>st</sup> century using wavelet analysis.

Figure 2 presents intermediate forecasts of fatalities resulting from all categories of state-based conflict between 2021 and 2100.

### Intermediate death forecast results by region.

There are 75 historical data points and 80 annual forecasts (2021-2100) for conflict-related deaths by regions (see fig. 2). The forecasts, which are structured in waves over time to mimic historical patterns used for generating these forecasts, initially resulted in negative estimates for the Middle East and Asia and Oceania due to the absence of constraints on negative values in the forecasting model section 4.2 addresses this limitation by adjusting negative estimates to zero.

**Adjusted regional death forecasts.** Figure 3 shows the adjusted forecasts, indicating that Asia and Oceania

(excluding the Middle East) and Africa will experience the highest conflict-related casualties through 2100. Americas and Europe show minimal conflict projections, while the Middle East indicates peaceful conditions.

**Conflict probability analysis.** Figure 4 shows the probability of state-based conflicts by world regions and decade for 2021-2100. These probabilities are derived from conflict-related deaths as a proxy measure, calculated by dividing regional deaths per decade by global estimates.

The overall probability of state-based conflicts in 2021-2100 is projected at 54% in Asia and Oceania (excluding the Middle East), 31% in Africa, 8% in Europe, 6% in the Americas, and 0% in the Middle East (see fig. 4). By decade, probabilities remain high in Asia and Oceania (21-80%) and Africa (1-72%), while moderate in the Americas (1-34%) and Europe (1-27%).

## Conclusions

This study uses wavelet analysis to forecast state-based conflict deaths for 2021-2100, aiming to identify temporal and spatial patterns of conflicts and their regional probabilities. State-based conflicts are defined as

conflicts between states or between a state and a non-state armed group. Deaths in such conflicts include those of soldiers and civilians resulting from combat but exclude deaths from disease or famine<sup>16</sup>.

<sup>16</sup>Herre B., Rodés-Guirao L., Roser M. War and peace [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://ourworldindata.org/war-and-peace> (date of access: 12.04.2024).

The study divides the world into five regions: Africa, Asia and Oceania (excluding the Middle East), Americas, Europe, and the Middle East. The model applies wavelet analysis to historical data (75 annual death estimates by region in 1946–2020) to generate 80 annual forecasts (2021–2100). Wavelet analysis effectively identifies wave structures, mean-reverting processes, and potential future rebounds in time series data.

Key findings indicate that Asia and Oceania and Africa will experience the highest conflict levels during 2021–2100. Asia and Oceania shows predicted conflict peaks in 2037, 2058, and 2091. Africa, with projected casualties 3.6 times lower, shows peaks in 2040, 2056, and 2078. Americas and Europe show minimal conflict projections, with casualties 17.7 and 12.1 times lower than Asia and Oceania, respectively. Americas shows peaks in 2039 and 2094, while Europe's peaks occur in 2030, 2054, and 2085. The Middle East is projected to remain conflict-free.

In this paper, probability estimates are derived from conflict-related deaths as a proxy for conflict occurrence probability, calculated by dividing regional deaths per decade by global estimates.

Following years of sectarian conflicts in the Middle East, particularly the 2014–2023 Yemeni Civil War that concluded with the China-brokered Tehran – Riyadh peace agreement on 10 March 2023, Arab leaders have embraced reconciliation, adhering to Islamic principles of cooperation and righteousness (Quran 5:2).

However, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict remains a significant destabilising factor. The 2023–2024 conflict, which expanded into Lebanon resulting in over 47 000 casualties (predominantly Palestinian), represents a continuation of hostilities dating back to 1948, following the partition plan of UN Resolution 181. Arab states have shifted toward diplomatic solutions, acknow-

ledging the military superiority of Israel (the world's 18<sup>th</sup> strongest military power) and its alliance with the United States. Additionally, regional priorities have shifted toward economic development.

From a broader perspective, the United States is perceived as maintaining instability in the Middle East to preserve its global political and economic dominance through a divide and rule strategy. Israel and the United Nations are seen as instruments for achieving this goal. This situation applies to other regions of instability worldwide where the United States, often referred to as the world police, is involved. Over the past 5000 years, since 3100 BC, more than 100 empires have been identified; history demonstrates that regardless of technological advancement and military power, empires do not endure indefinitely. Consequently, instability in the Middle East is not expected to persist indefinitely. This article supports this observation.

One limitation of this paper is that the authors of the database<sup>17</sup> divided the world into five regions, isolating the Middle East from Asia. Another potential limitation is that state-based conflicts in the database involve human combatants. Some suggest that within 20 years, state-related conflicts will predominantly involve robots and be directed by artificial intelligence. Therefore, future conflicts may not be assessed based on soldier casualties. While this assumption could alter predictions made in this paper, it does not affect its current conclusions.

The fundamental premise is that historical patterns are cyclical, and the predictive model, utilising wavelet analysis, identifies recurring patterns that enable researchers to estimate both the frequency and magnitude of regional conflicts. While the post-1946 database may appear limited in scope, extending it further could compromise data reliability and collection consistency.

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<sup>17</sup>Herre B., Rodés-Guirao L., Roser M. War and peace [Electronic resource]. URL: <https://ourworldindata.org/war-and-peace> (date of access: 12.04.2024).

**АННОТАЦИИ ДЕПОНИРОВАННЫХ В БГУ РАБОТ**  
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Электронный учебно-методический комплекс (ЭУМК) по дисциплине «История и теория международных отношений» предназначен для студентов учреждений высшего образования по специальности 1-21 03 02 «Регионоведение». ЭУМК включает теоретический раздел, который предполагает изучение истории и теории международных отношений. В практическом разделе приведены списки рекомендуемой литературы и тем докладов, примерные задания для семинарских занятий и УСР, материалы для подготовки к учебной дискуссии. В ЭУМК также включены раздел контроля знаний и вспомогательный раздел.

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