

INFORMATION CONTROL IN CHINA’S FOREIGN POLICY PROPAGANDA

Ma Kun

Tashkent State University of Oriental Studies
Independent Researcher

Abstract: *The article provides a comprehensive analysis of information control mechanisms and foreign policy propaganda in the contemporary People’s Republic of China. Particular attention is paid to the institutional, technological, and ideological tools used to shape the information environment, as well as their role in maintaining domestic stability and promoting national interests abroad. The study examines the distinctive features of China’s information governance model, including digital sovereignty, state regulation of media, and the development of soft power strategies. It also analyzes key channels and forms of China’s external communication aimed at constructing a favorable international image and strengthening its global influence.*

Keywords: *information control, foreign policy propaganda, China, soft power, digital sovereignty, state regulation, media policy, international communication, information security, global influence.*

INTRODUCTION

The evolution of communication tools employed in the sphere of political communication has, in a natural manner, transformed the information function of diplomatic institutions. However, as researchers emphasize, the key changes are associated not so much with technological innovations as with a qualitative rethinking of the very content of diplomatic communication. This refers to a shift from one-way transmission of information to more complex and interdependent forms of interaction. In contemporary conditions, the informational and communicative function of diplomacy is primarily oriented toward the formation of a sustainable dialogue between states.

The informational and communicative function of foreign relations bodies is of a complex and multi-layered nature. First and foremost, it includes the systematic preparation and transmission of analytically processed information by diplomatic representatives both of the central apparatus of the foreign ministry and of overseas missions. This involves the regular collection, interpretation, and transmission of data concerning the political, economic, and social situation in the host country, in international organizations, as well as within the framework of

participation in multilateral negotiations and collective international initiatives. This information is intended for the highest political leadership of the state and relevant governmental bodies, forming the basis for the formulation of a balanced and pragmatic foreign policy course.

DISCUSSION

The content and priorities of China’s state information policy are determined by a combination of political and socio-economic factors characterizing the stage of comprehensive national modernization. A significant role is played in this regard by the accumulated practical experience in the implementation of state programs in the production, dissemination, and utilization of information. In parallel, the Chinese leadership actively adapts and incorporates international experience in information policy-making, including practices of developed countries, while taking into account national interests and the specific features of domestic development.

Contemporary China, as an independent geopolitical actor, is characterized by a high level of development of its information and telecommunications infrastructure, enabling it to occupy a significant position in the global information space. Under these conditions, the priority directions of state information policy are focused on the formation of a unified national information space, as well as on strengthening institutional and communicative linkages between central and regional levels of governance.

Particular importance is attached to ensuring the information security of the individual, society, and the state as a whole, which is regarded as a key element of sustainable political development. In this context, the government consistently develops various segments of the information services market while simultaneously expanding the legal and regulatory framework governing socio-political processes on the Internet.

The adoption of a set of legislative acts has contributed to the institutionalization of the digital environment and the establishment of effective mechanisms for managing information flows. At the same time, there is a discernible trend toward strengthening state control over the content of information resources hosted within the national Internet segment. Restricting access to materials deemed undesirable from the perspective of state interests, including those hosted outside national jurisdiction, serves as an important instrument for maintaining information sovereignty and political stability.

A distinctive feature of China’s state information policy in recent years has been the deliberate and active utilization of mass communication potential to

consolidate and expand its presence in the global information space. This strategy reflects the state’s aspiration not only toward the internal consolidation of its information environment but also toward the strengthening of its external informational influence. In this context, there has been an intensive development and modernization of Chinese foreign-language media outlets, including print publications, television, and radio channels oriented toward international audiences¹. A significant role in this process is played by China Radio International, which broadcasts in 38 languages, thereby substantially expanding its global audience reach.

In addition, the process of digitalization of information policy has gained considerable momentum: the active creation and dissemination of Chinese internet resources in English, Russian, Spanish, French, Japanese, Arabic, and other languages contributes to strengthening China’s position in the global digital space. This not only enables the projection of the national agenda but also facilitates the formation of alternative discourses within the framework of global informational competition.

According to experts, one of the key characteristics of China’s information policy is its non-confrontational nature, which implies a reliance on soft forms of influence, the avoidance of direct informational confrontation, and an emphasis on shaping a positive international discourse². This finding is empirically supported by the results of the “Report on the Study of China’s National Image in 2014,” prepared by Chinese analysts. According to the data presented, the country’s international image demonstrated a positive trend, increasing by 0.8 points compared to the previous period³.

The relatively high level of China’s resilience to external informational influence is attributed by experts to the existence of an extensive and institutionally structured system of domestic propaganda, which is largely oriented toward the implementation of the strategic interests of the state leadership. An additional significant factor is Beijing’s ability to selectively project into the global information space content that corresponds to the priorities of state policy, thereby shaping a managed external information agenda⁴.

¹ Лю Ханьянцзы. Внешнеполитический курс современного Китая в отражении национальных СМИ // Век информации: СМИ и внешняя политика Китая: сб. науч. статей № 4 / Ред.-сост. Р.В. Бекуров, Ю.С. Данилова, С.Б. Никонов. СПб.: С.-Петерб. гос. ун-т, Ин-т «Высш. шк. журн. и мас. коммуникаций», 2014. С. 12-13.

² Евдокимов Е.В. Политика Китая в глобальном информационном пространстве // Международные процессы. 2011. № 1. С. 74.

³ Алешина М., Горшкова О. Имидж по-пекински // URL: <https://rg.ru/2015/06/24/kitai-site.html>

⁴ Политика Китая в глобальном информационном пространстве // Международные процессы. 2011. № 1. С. 75

A key role in the implementation of this model is played by the Communist Party of China, within whose structure specialized departments operate to ensure the development and execution of information policy. These institutional mechanisms coordinate activities in the production, dissemination, and regulation of information flows. At the same time, central news agencies, television channels, publishing structures, as well as leading internet portals are under the direct or indirect control of the relevant party-state organs.

Centralized control over the activities of mass media in China, despite sustained criticism from Western journalism, provides the state leadership with significant advantages in implementing its foreign policy information strategy. This is primarily reflected in the ability to conduct a coherent and ideologically calibrated external propaganda effort aimed at promoting national interests on the international stage. At the same time, contemporary Chinese discourse transmits not only communist doctrines but also other socially significant ideas, including traditional Confucian values, which indicates the synthetic nature of its ideological foundation.

At the regional level, similar functions are assigned to external affairs bodies such as foreign affairs offices or information departments of people’s governments at the corresponding administrative levels. In accordance with current Chinese legislation, foreign media correspondents’ offices may be officially established only in a limited number of key metropolitan areas, including Beijing, Shanghai, Chongqing, Guangzhou, and Shenyang, which reflects a high degree of institutional control over external information flows.

China’s information market is rightly regarded as one of the largest in the world, which is обусловлено by the scale of its media space and the high level of its institutional development. According to the National Bureau of Statistics of the People’s Republic of China, the total range of periodical publications in the country exceeds 9,000 titles with an aggregate circulation of approximately 40 billion copies. Within the structure of print media, more than 2,000 titles are newspapers with a combined circulation of around 10 billion copies, while over 8,000 are magazines of various thematic orientations. This indicator reflects a high degree of diversification of informational content and its accessibility to a broad audience. Electronic mass media have also experienced significant development: more than 300 radio stations and approximately 320 television stations operate in the country, including around 30 central channels and several hundred regional television

broadcasters. This forms a multi-level hierarchical broadcasting system encompassing both national and local tiers⁵.

In recent years, China has witnessed a notable expansion of the English-language segment of print media outlets focused on international affairs. This trend reflects the state’s strategic aspiration to strengthen its presence in the global information space and to shape an alternative agenda for foreign audiences.

Alongside the magazine Beijing Review, which is administered by the State Council Information Office of the People’s Republic of China, and one of the most influential English-language newspapers, China Daily, operating under the control of propaganda authorities, the media holding People’s Daily has launched an English-language version of the publication Huanqiu Shibao under the title Global Times. This publication features analytical materials by Chinese authors that are more critical and polemical in nature compared to the traditional formats of Chinese media outlets oriented toward external audiences.

CONCLUSION. Thus, the combination of stringent control over information resources with the capabilities of modern information and communication technologies enables China to significantly expand the channels for projecting its foreign policy agenda abroad. This, in turn, contributes to strengthening the country’s position not only in the global information space but also within the international system as a whole, where the informational factor is acquiring increasingly strategic importance. At the same time, such a model cannot be regarded unambiguously. Restrictions on media activity and the high degree of state control are regularly criticized by Western states and the expert community as being inconsistent with the principles of freedom of speech. However, it is precisely centralized management of information flows that provides the Chinese leadership with the ability to concentrate resources on priority areas of foreign policy and to construct a coherent foreign policy narrative.

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2. Алешина М., Горшкова О. Имидж по-пекински // URL: <https://rg.ru/2015/06/24/kitai-site.html>

⁵ Лю Ханьянцзы. Внешнеполитический курс современного Китая в отражении национальных СМИ // Век информации: СМИ и внешняя политика Китая: сб. науч. ст. № 4 / Ред.-сост. Р.В. Бекуров, Ю.С. Данилова, С.Б.Никонов. СПб., 2014. С. 14, 42.

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