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US FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS CHINA DURING THE TRUMP PRESIDENCY

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ABSTRACT: The aim of this article is to present the main motives, assumptions and dimensions of the US foreign policy towards the People's Republic of China during the Trump presidency. The essence and purposefulness of the slogans, threats and attacks used by Donald Trump. Checking useness of the slogans „America First” and „make America great again” in the 2016 election campaign and while in office; their implications for the most serious structural competitor in the international arena, which is already the People's Republic of China on many levels. In the author's opinion, the turn of successive US presidential offices towards the PRC and the Asia-Pacific region in recent years is dictated not only by economic factors, but also by a wide range of collision paths and serves to maintain the position of the US hegemon in the region in the face of the growing power of the PRC. When Trump took office in 2017, he used the Chinese threat as the cornerstone of foreign policy. To illustrate the nature of the involvement of the Trump against PRC the focus was on the dimensions of the analyzed issue: mainly diplomatic and mutual economic relations, especially blast of trade war and less military aspects. Article shows what measures were applied under the so-called the trade war between the US and the PRC and the evolution of the measures used. The continuity of US-China relations by successive presidents was also noted, and it was considered whether the relations are clearly doomed to confrontation. The purpose of this paper is to analyze the manifestations of the changes taking place in US foreign policy during the Trump presidency. The hypothesis of the work is that the American turn towards the PRC is inevitable, and it is dictated to a large extent not only by purely economic factors, but this turn serves to maintain the strong position of the US in the region in the face of the growing imperialist tendencies of Chinese power. Analysing the most important affairs allows to identify and understand the main principles of the United States' actual foreign policy.

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INTRODUCTION

For decades, US-Chinese relations have been characterized by disputes, competition and cooperation. In recent years, the competition has gained momentum in particular. Successive US National Security Strategies (National Defense Strategy-Department of Defense, 2018) openly indicates China's growing technological potential as a key threat to the US – not only economically, but also military. From the beginning of the second decade of the 21st century, a new phenomenon emerged and gradually intensified in East Asia – competition, and then increasing Sino-American rivalry. It was usually discreet, hardly visible to less careful observers, but sometimes it took on the features of an almost frontal confrontation of the great world powers. It all happened regardless of various events on the level of Sino-American relations, which may prove a good atmosphere in mutual relations. A relations between the USA-PRC had already entered the stage where competition began to prevail over cooperation and covers all areas of relations, while differences of positions are deep and difficult to reconcile, and any incident, especially in the seas surrounding China and near Taiwan, has very serious consequences (Shambaugh, 2015).

The PRC is a country that at the turn of the 21st century is playing an increasingly important role in international relations. Specialist literature suggests that the PRC, as a contender for the role of hegemon in the post-Cold War world, is on a „collision course” with the current hegemon – the United States (Góralczyk, 2012). One fact is that over the last 30 years the Chinese economy has grown at a rate of about 10 percent annually and Everything indicates that it will be similar in the coming years. Meanwhile, the US, at least until the election of Trump, recorded much worse results. Therefore, the clear order of logic of the Cold War division of the world is gradually being replaced by a multipolar system with emerging powers, which is difficult to unambiguously define and forecast. among which the PRC seems to be in the lead. There are many indications that the declining role of the United States and the ambitions of China (but also of other pretenders to hegemony, such as India) will be factors determining the future international order. Such as that new order does not suit the United States' book. It is visible how the PRC is gaining more and more impor-

tance in its neighborhood, as well as in traditional US control zones, e.g. the South China Sea Basin, Malacca Strait, Philippines, Singapore. All indications are that the PRC has ended the period of post-Maoist trauma and want to come back to historical role, dreaming of being a *de facto* world hegemon (Pillsbury, 2016).

PRC wants regaining its power lost over the last 100 years of humiliation, to change Jalta- Potsdam's order and becoming more and more expansive, what clearly conflicts with the USA (B.Góralczyk, 2016). All these activities has begun to worry more offices of US presidents. The PRC on the back of American globalism has risen to the position of the continent's leader and is subordinating itself to more and more space on the international arena. Therefore, it should be expected that the stronger a country becomes, the more its policy becomes more assertive, not to say aggressive, only because it now has the means to run it. The USA must slowly prepare for this aggression. Increasing military and economic strength gives Chinese politicians the tools to pursue a more independent foreign policy, and the presidency of Donald Trump has so far escalated the conflict. The rivalry escalates cyclically basis and the conflict emerges a specific form- a trade war

The US realized the growing importance of the PRC in the 1980s, but it was not until the next decade that, as a result of profound geopolitical changes, the American authorities began to emphasize more and more clearly the key importance of China for the US (Kissinger, 2011). In the days of Clinton, in the post-Cold War era, the United States dictated its conditions to almost the entire world in virtually all areas: politics, economy, technology, not to mention the strategy and military sphere. The American columnist Charles Krauthammer put it aptly: „a unipolar moment has come” (Krauthammer, 1990, p. 23-24). It was an unprecedented in modern times the supremacy of one superpower on a global scale. USA had a domination also in the field of the soft power, i.e. in the media, culture and all non-economic or non-military measures. For the past 20 years, no one has questioned American domination. The „Pax Americana” concept was dominant. However, the dynamic development of the PRC has become a threat to the position of the United States and the unilateral model of global leadership. In geopolitical terms, the situa-

tion resembles that of Sparta (hegemon) in the 5th century BC, in the face of the growing position of Athens (contender), which is known as the Thucydides trap. Realizing the threat that undoubtedly is the rapid growth of China as a power not only regional, the United States during Trump's tenure decided to start a policy of limiting China.

From the During a presidency of Barack Obama from 2009 to the 2017, good U.S.-China relations have been crucial to the two countries and to the world at large. As Obama himself has said, "The relationship between the United States and China is the most important bilateral relationship of the 21st century." Forty-four years after establishing diplomatic relations, the world's two greatest economic powers have forged unprecedentedly close ties. No wonder, the relationship reflected varying degrees of alignment as well as competition.

From Obama's own view, during his filling his office U.S.-China relations started off at an imbalance. In Obama's perspective, in the twenty-first century, America should evolve from a leader into a partner. As U.S.-China relations become unprecedentedly complex, parts of American public opinion have degenerated into hostility, including open calls for the use of force to solve disagreements. In the latest decades, the biggest change in the U.S.-China relationship stems from China's new status as the world's second-largest economy and related risks for the current post-war order.

GATHERING PACE OF COMPETITION

In Donald Trump's election announcements, China has emerged as the main opponent, primarily economic, but also in political and military terms. Trump has based a large part of his foreign policy on confrontations with the People's Republic of China. In numerous statements by Trump, it dominated the political discourse during the election campaign, leaving even loud, catchy slogans about isolation and building a wall on the border with Mexico. Chinese thread and its subjugation of its imperialist tendencies were the theme dominated the election campaign in matters related to foreign policy. This should not come as a surprise when you look

at the potential of the PRC on many levels, often catching up with or equal to that of the US.

The confrontational tone began to be noticed especially at the end of January 2017 at the press conference after the end of the world economic forum in Davos, when words were said that will probably go down in history. The director general of the Department of International Economic Relations of the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Zhang Jun said that China is ready to take on the role of a world leader should the need arise (Jun, 2017). These words are significant because it is probably the first time that a representative of the PRC of such a high rank spoke directly about Beijing's superpower ambitions, which definitely go beyond the current policy of „keeping a low profile”. Trump could not watch all this helplessly. The confrontational tone has been gathering pace for years.

With PRC continuing to gain economic power compare to the United States, the present hegemon undeniably feels under pressure. Both countries must continue customising to this new reality and look for balance in their actions. Long before Trump took office, numerous media had urged China and the United States to establish the G-2 (Group of Two). This idea originated from U.S. National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski (Brzeziński, 2009)

In the second decade XX century, the sphere of U.S.-China relations has significantly expanded and is no longer restricted to the conventional issues like: bilateral trade, climate change, the RMB exchange rate, and the Tibetan issue. Issues such as cybersecurity, domination in space, tensions in the East China Sea (building artificial islands), the South China Sea dispute, denuclearization and intelligent technologies or espionage began to dominate.

Relations between the US and China have never been more complex when Trump was taking the most important office in the state. One of the most significant breakthroughs in US policy towards China of latest decades was when secretary of state Hillary Clinton introduced America's strategic „pivot to Asia.” (Clinton, 2011). Obvious and argue incentives for an Asia-centered U.S. strategy included booming Asian economies, the increasingly alarming threat of the North Korean which is, in a sense, an ally of China nuclear proliferation, and various regional tensions that

posed a risk for conflict. However, Beijing strongly resisted the “strategic pivot,” which many considered nothing but a suppression policy aimed at China. China’s overreaction pushed the United States into a defensive posture. On the trade front, the TPP began as a neutral trade agreement but later evolved into a counterweight to China’s expanding regional influence. When China established the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank in early 2016, the Obama administration saw it as an attempt to rewrite the global rules of engagement and therefore accelerated TPP negotiations. Obama hoped to make the TPP a late-term policy achievement, and no doubt he was going to strive to promote it for as long as he is in office. China’s economic development has necessitated adjustments in trade and economic policy. Hindering China is no easy task. The United States is a global power with unique norms, perspectives, and strategies, and China should not interpret every U.S. action as an effort at suppression. By the same measure, it is misguided for the United States to consider every Chinese activity as a challenge to its dominant position. U.S.-China relations are shaped by actions on both sides, and thus actions by either party cannot be evaluated outside of a wider context. Trump’s engagement with Japan illustrates this point (Dąbrowski, 2019). The current strengthening of U.S.-Japan ties is not only attributable to a changing U.S. assessment of the tensions in the East China Sea, but also comes in answer to warming China-Russia relations.

In Beijing, Trump’s presidential victory was received calmly. Many of his harsh statements about US-Chinese relations were deemed to be of little relevance to electoral rhetoric. Only the perspective of trade relations was viewed with undisguised concern. In the political sphere, it was believed that Trump’s policy would be much less ideological, that is, much less involved in attempts to influence the way the government and society functioned in China, than it would have been in the case of Hillary Clinton’s victory. The real shock to China, however, was the brief spell when it seemed Trump was actually rejecting the „One China” policy. The statements of Chinese politicians at the time were very cautious and measured, but left no room for doubt that the matter was extremely serious and led to a full confrontation. The Chinese media reacted much more nervously.

Trump has repeatedly emphasized that the Chinese boom is a boon to the world and a serious threat. China must seek to adopt and transmit global values that the international community can accept and appreciate (Paal, 2017). Otherwise, if China's perspective does not resonate with other nations, China's rise will be interpreted as a threat in U.S. China's power and status are on the rise, new forms of media are emerging, and science and technology develop rapidly. These changes often occur faster than government policies can react. Likewise, the global economy has yet to fully stabilize after the financial crisis; the world order is still undergoing reshuffling. All current problems will test in upcoming years.

SOURCES OF CHANGES IN TRUMP POLICY

Already during the presidential campaign and after assuming the presidency, Donald Trump repeatedly presented a critical approach to key elements of the post-Cold War balance of power (Reinert, 2018). Most often it concerned the presence of the United States in institutions, organizations or projects which – according to Trump – was unprofitable or unfavorable for the USA. An example of such rhetoric, in which the US interest comes first, was the historic departure from the Trans-Pacific Partnership in 2017. He argued, *inter alia*, by the lack of actual profitability of participation, which made the world aware that the 45th president of the USA would conduct foreign policy on a different basis compared to his predecessors. Another example was the process of renegotiating the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the shape of which has been repeatedly criticized by Trump. Eventually, the process ended with the signing of a new United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (UMSCA) 3 November, 2018. Another notable example of a significant reconfiguration of US foreign policy during Donald Trump's tenure is the declaration on US withdrawal from the so-called the Paris Agreement. It all shows how much the Trump cabinet differed from its predecessors. During the term of office of George W. Bush and Barack Obama, the USA took greater account of the need to cooperate with other entities and institutions on the international arena (Lindsay, 2017, p. 765-779). Trump, on the other

hand, emphasized to us, above all, a more selfish approach, in a rather superficial understanding of the protection of own interests. However, it was the open confrontation with China that seemed most important. In order to understand the background of the above changes, and above all the direction of shaping the US foreign policy, which is the subject of this article, it is worth analyzing the main postulates of the „America first” program, their meaning and origin. For many reasons, this program is considered to be the main source of the so-called the Trump doctrines (M.Anton, 2019). Although the term is not commonly used in common circulation in the US, it is popularizing and quickly attracted the interest of many political scientists. Despite this, it can be seen that the concept is relatively broad.

ECONOMIC PROTECTIONISM IN TRADE WAR

A trade war begins when one country introduces solutions that protect its market from imports from another country. Classical solutions (customs), non-tariff or parallel instruments (e.g. weakening the exchange rate; introducing requirements regarding e.g. certification; voluntary quantitative restrictions; requirements for fair trade, content of ingredients, compliance with in the proportion of ingredients from specific markets, etc.) Trade wars are a byproduct of protectionism and are part of a government-led effort to limit international trade commercial. Various arguments are given in the policy of protectionism, depending on the level of economic development and its commitment to the international division of labor. In developed economies, it is more often said about protecting jobs against foreign competition, and in developing economies it is an argument based on the concept of protection of emerging industries (Rymarczyk, 2015).

Firts signals of a trade war between the US and the People’s Republic of China could already be seen in the slogans of Donald Trump during the 2017 election campaign. In 2018, the US administration began introducing campaign slogans into trade policy practice.

Major changes in the relations between the US and the PRC were triggered by President Trump’s subsequent decisions on tariff increases in

January 2018, changing US trade conditions. They were introduced not by a law passed by Congress, but at the president's executive request. The decision on this issue was an integral part of the new president's commercial policy. Trump increased tariffs on imported solar panels and washing machines by 30-50%, then steel by 25% and aluminum by 10%. (Lynch, 2018). However, these decisions did not apply to all countries that were exporters to the US market. On May 10, 25% tariffs were introduced on 818 commodity groups imported from the Chinese market (Office of the United States Trade Representative). In the case of imports from the PRC, it is estimated that duties were imposed on imports worth US \$ 50 billion. In June 2018, the application of the introduced duties was extended to the EU, Canada and Mexico – the main US partners; Australia was not subject to duties. China responded to the actions of the Trump administration on March 22, 2018, and announced plans to retaliate tariffs on 128 US goods, including pork, wine, fruit, steel and modified ethane (Paletta, 2018). Beijing announced that measures against the US will be introduced gradually in two phases if no agreement is reached with Washington. The value of the protection measures was estimated at USD 3 billion, based on the value and structure of the turnover achieved in 2017. A duty of 15% was announced. Initially, no further details on the application of the planned duties were defined. It was indicated that the main blade of the adopted protective duties will be directed primarily to agricultural and food products, including soybean and pork. President Xi Jinping's administration announced that it would take action at the WTO, which validated the instruments in trade policy. From February 2018 to January 2020, President Trump's administration raised tariffs on goods imported from the PRC worth US \$ 550 billion (Office of the United States Trade Representative). In response, China imposed tariffs on US imports worth US \$ 185 billion. Steps from both sides were introduced gradually as agreement was expected to be reached. The structure of imports and exports of the economies involved in the conflict shows that the imposed burdens hit the Chinese market more than the US. Nevertheless, their effect is felt in both economies, as well as in the markets of other trading partners.

EFFECTS OF THE TRADE WAR

PRC and USA declared a agreement in the trade war at an ornate signing ceremony at the White House involving President Trump and Chinese Vice Premier Liú Hè 刘鹤, the 11th ranked member in the Chinese leadership (*Office of the United States Trade Representative*, 2020). Although the full text of the truce has not been made public, reports say the agreement commits China to purchasing an extra \$200 billion in American products over two years above 2017 levels. The text of the agreement that has been made public shows China committing to protect American intellectual property, halt coercive technology transfers, and refrain from using currency devaluation as a trade weapon. It also included an enforcement mechanism that would allow for the imposition of import tariffs if disputes are not resolved.

The preliminary agreement „phase one deal” – signed on January 15, 2020 by representatives of China and the US, was only a „ceasefire” in the economic rivalry that will probably dominate the first half of the 21st century. However, this does not solve the most important problem, which is the far-reaching interference of the Chinese state in the economy. Most of the tariffs imposed by both sides remained in force, illustrating the distance between Beijing and Washington from reaching full agreement.

Many experts were of the opinion that the PRC felt the stronger party in the conflict, hence, among others, the opinion that the US is reaching for heavier-caliber instruments. The moves made show the escalation of the steps taken and their scale, and the limited scope of actions, which indicate a withdrawal from the measures used. The level of duties in the US at the start of the conflict was 3.1% and in the PRC it was 8%; after 25 months it was respectively: for the USA – 19.3%, for the PRC – 20.3%. Since the signing of the first phase of the agreement, customs duties for imports from the PRC to the US market have been reduced by 1.7%, and for China and imports from the USA by 0.8% (*USTR*, 2020). The USA announces a slow withdrawal from customs duties, which gives the opportunity to observe the partner's behavior. Such an approach is justified due to the limited confidence in the promises made by the Chinese side on compliance with the agreed arrangements. The trade war between the US

and the PRC had major repercussions on the global economy. The background for her was the previously recorded economic downturn, in 2020 the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic and the policy of overcoming its effects, an important element of which is closing borders, as well as lockdown individual segments of the economy. The three above-mentioned phenomena have similar effects both for the world economy and for both partners to the conflict, and make them more vulnerable, which is a factor mobilizing for greater flexibility in negotiating the agreement and may accelerate the process of reaching it. It could be assumed that sensitivity was present on both sides of the conflict. In addition, each country felt pressure exerted through diplomatic channels on its politicians to end the third-year-long dispute. There is no doubt that the changes caused or aggravated by the conflict will lead to profound changes in the international division of labor and will accelerate structural changes in the world economy. Under the new conditions, the US-China trade war should be treated as a conflict setting a certain trend. More and more is being said on the new terms of trade liberalizing agreements, whether of a bilateral, regional or global nature. The US-PRC conflict did not turn into a deep collapse similar to that of the 1930s because the institutional and real (production) links between economies changed (Bartosiak, 2020). They create bonds of interdependence, which favors reaching a consensus. The channels and methods of communication have also changed. The crisis before World War II favored the increase in protection. We currently have a specific situation in which interdependence inhibits protection, but its use is favored by the COVID-19 pandemic and often limited knowledge of politicians about international agreements. Nevertheless, the „common enemy” of the coronavirus should at some point bring the warring parties closer. Controlling a pandemic in one country is not a solution – it must be controlled in all countries. A step-by-step comparison of the individual phases of the conflict shows that the US announced certain actions, but did not implement them immediately. The PRC also did not implement retaliatory measures immediately. Although the level of protection of the US market after the conflict period is higher than at the starting point, the level of customs protection in the PRC is decreasing. It is a slow process,

but it has only just begun. The problem of customs protection is not the only one in relations between the US and China.

Another problem here is the PRC's failure to comply with contracts for the purchase of intellectual property. So far, a first stage of the agreement has been agreed, which is limited to applied tariffs, tariff protection and the value of bilateral transfers of industrial, agricultural, food and services products. However, there are no detailed IPA arrangements as expected in the next steps in the US-PRC arrangement.

In the economic dimension, the introduction of customs tariffs by Washington and Beijing brought about a noticeable decline in the value of bilateral trade. In 2019, turnover fell to 558.87 billion, compared with 659.82 billion in 2018 (Paszak, 2020). On the political level, the agreement concluded on January 15, 2020 strengthened Donald Trump's position ahead of the presidential election and impeachment procedure. At the same time, however, the import targets adopted by China in the agreement will be extremely difficult to achieve. The chaos related to the coronavirus epidemic will further reduce China's production and consumption levels and disrupt international supply chains. Thus, the implementation of the provisions of the contract is questionable. However, verification of the real impact of the agreement on trade relations will take place during the tenure of J. Biden.

COMPETITION IN SPACE

After China became the third country to land on the moon and fetch rock samples, it joined an elite ranks alongside Russia and the United States that are actively exploring space. This event was widely commented and promoted in the Chinese media as the next step in the conquest of outer space. Its exploration is also another field of strategic and propaganda rivalry with the United States

There is a widespread opinion among the American politicians and Supreme Command of the U.S. Armed Forces that the New Space Race between the biggest countries is already afoot (National Security Strategy of the United States of America, 2017). In compliance with this mindset,

some countries, especially China, are challenging the dominant position of the United States in Earth orbit. There is a common view that New Space Race is run by China to try to disempower the United States of its position. That is why it is widely indicated that the United States must not only take part in this clash, but winning is absolute necessity for keeping past order. We have to behold that USA space policy are crucial for the successful execution of the American military strategy. This ability, in turn, reflects significantly on the effectiveness of the broad-brush foreign policy of the (*National Security...*). The endeavour to create new organism of the spaceactivities started formally in March 2018, when President Donald J. Trump officially mentioned of idea to establish the United States Space Force as a different division of the military which explicitly targets Chinese expansion.

Although the space forces may seem like a futuristic idea, the idea of this venture dates back to the 1960s. Moreover, such a formation already existed in the American military. It was founded by Ronald Reagan in 1985, in the era of the so-called star wars, when the US and the USSR were on the brink of nuclear conflict (Strategic Defense Initiative, 1983). After the collapse of the Soviet state and the consolidation of America's domination, the importance of space forces began to decline. The breakthrough was the attacks of September 11, 2001. Financial resources were transferred to the fight against terrorism, and the space forces were disbanded.

Currently, the subject of space competition has returned, and the reasons for this are, among others: the creation by China of the Beidou satellite navigation system (it is said to be more precise than the GPS known to us), the first landing in human history on the dark side of the Moon and, recently, the desire to landing on Mars. It is this, symbolic in its dimension, competition that gave the Americans a lot to think about. On this occasion, there is talk and one should talk about China, the strongest and most dynamic of the emerging markets. For a country that can successfully carry out such a complicated operation as successfully bringing back a space probe with soil taken from the moon is simply strong. It has great potential and must be reckoned with. The more that in this particular case it uses its own engineers, researchers and solutions.

The new armed forces were launched on the occasion of the signing of the Pentagon budget for 2020 by the head of state. As emphasized in official communications, the purpose of creating the USSF is not to militarize space and send weapons into orbit, but to effectively protect America's critical satellite infrastructure – already made up of hundreds of instruments of various strategic importance. Interestingly, they also include private owner satellites that already perform critical tasks for government users. From the point of view of the range of applications, these are mainly satellites used for communication, navigation and Earth observation.

Trump explained that the creation of an autonomous structure, but integrated into the air force system – in a similar way as the US marines are integrated with the navy – is a key element of the new security architecture (SDI, 1983). Emphasized that the establishment of space forces is a priority for his government when it comes to national security. These forces would, *inter alia*, guarantee the effective protection of the US satellite system against attacks and collisions as well as interference from third countries and ensure the proper functioning of the GPS system and the missile guidance system. In his speech, he emphasized that the establishment of space forces is a priority for his government when it comes to national security. These forces would, *inter alia*, guarantee the effective protection of the US satellite system against attacks and collisions as well as interference from third countries and ensure the proper functioning of the GPS system and the missile guidance system. It is at the same time a definitive and official entry of the superpower on the path of cosmic armaments. As President Donald Trump said signing of the National Defense Authorization Act, space has become a field of competition for many countries. America is leading the race, but only a little. We will have a big advantage in the future, said Trump.

In conclusion, we should point out that the U.S. Space Force is still under construction and there is no clear and widely vision of its future. The deep changes may also come with a J. Biden The new president may have the other vision for organization of space effort what could bring the swift collapse of the novel army.

CORONAVIRUS ESCALATES TENSION

The spread of the coronavirus was another bone of contention after the trade between the US and China, which accused each other of causing the pandemic. A single competition for world leadership seemed to be the real cause of the tensions.

Initially emboldened by the progress made in talks with China over the great new trade deal, President Trump in January and February 2020, just days before the announcement of the first COVID-19 deaths in the US, praised President Xi Jinping for his clear policy on the virus and his hard work on to defeat him. There were tweets like the one on Jan 24: „China has been working very hard to contain the Coronavirus. The United States greatly appreciates their efforts and transparency. It will all work out well. In particular, on behalf of the American People, I want to thank President Xi! „ (Trump, 2020). Last time Trump said something positive about China at a press conference on February 29: „China seems to be making tremendous progress (...) I think our relationship with China is very good. We have just agreed on a big trade deal and we work very closely together” (Idem, 2020). Meanwhile, in January, when the epidemic was beginning, Beijing refused US experts to assess the situation in Wuhan, where the first cases of SARS-CoV-2 infection were registered in December. The reason for this was that the White House banned travelers from China from entering the US.

Over time, however, Trump and his associates eventually changed course and attacked China heavily. These accusations fell on fertile ground, because, according to a study by the Pew Research Center, about two-thirds of US citizens had an unfavorable opinion about China, the most in 15 years. That number has increased by nearly 20 percentage points since Trump’s inauguration in 2017 (Pew Research Center, 2020). Trump stopped calling SARS-CoV-2 as „foreign virus” inevitably nearing America’s borders and began using the phrase „Chinese virus”. He emphasized that there was no trace of xenophobia in it. Trump took advantage of mounting hostility by calling SARS Cov 2 the „Chinese virus”, accusing Beijing of lying about the number of cases, and boasting that he had stopped the outbreak by restricting travel from China in January. It did

not help much, because it was not possible to completely stop the arrivals from China, and the virus was already spreading freely in the United States.

This event could indicate that the conflict between the US and the PRC has entered a new phase, with both countries using the coronavirus pandemic to achieve short-term political goals.

Over time, there was mutual exchange of accusations, alleging the origin and use of the virus. Trump's top official, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced in a TV interview: „We can confirm that the Chinese Communist Party did everything it could to prevent the world from knowing what was happening in time. There is considerable evidence that the virus originated in a Wuhan lab” (Pompeo, 2020).

Oddly enough, he said it a few days later, as US Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Gen. Mark Milley said that „Covid-19 did not originate in a chinese lab. the weight of evidence seems to indicate natural. But we don't know for certain.” (Milley, 2020). As the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus began to spread around the world, Chinese diplomacy took a series of steps to challenge the increasingly common use of calling it the „Wuhan virus”. Efforts were made to prove that the fact that the epidemic broke out in the capital of the Chinese province of Hubei does not mean that the pathogen comes from there. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian suggested on his Twitter on March 12 that „it was the US military that could have brought the virus to Wuhan” (Lijian, 2020).

In the background of the coronavirus events on February 18, President Donald Trump accused some of the Chinese media of being in fact intelligence agents (Trump, 2020). The US State Department then said that correspondents of certain media outlets, including the state news agency Xinhua, would be treated as if they were a delegation from a foreign government. In response to this move, Beijing decided to expel three correspondents of the New York Wall Street Journal from China, who in one of their texts called China „the sick man of Asia”. It was important because the order to leave China also covered the territory of Hong Kong, which had so far enjoyed full freedom of speech and where journalistic independence was respected. Washington responded to Beijing's move by reducing the number of Chinese correspondents in the US. Beijing has

decided to expel all correspondents of the New York Times, Washington Post and Wall Street Journal from China. American journalists were given 10 days to leave China. This was the largest mass expulsion of Western journalists from China since Mao Zedong's rise to power in 1949, the Economist noted.

The United States ordered China to close its consulate in Houston, Texas, claiming it was a hub for espionage and intellectual property theft. China condemned the order and retaliated by closing the US consulate in Chengdu.

Summing up, it can be assessed that the tensions between the US and China were dictated primarily by the deepening dispute over international leadership. As the coronavirus could change the global order, both countries were late in responding to the SARS-CoV-2 outbreak and then attempted to blame the other side for allowing the dangerous virus to spread spontaneously.

It is worth adding that during the pandemic, conspiracy theories were a particularly pronounced form of misinformation under Trump's tenure, in many cases reinforced by the president himself. All the more so as it is shown by numerous studies in which almost two-thirds of American adults (64%) said in April 2020 that they had seen at least some fabricated news and information about the pandemic, and about half (49%) said that this kind of disinformation caused much confusion as to the basic facts of the outbreak (Pew Research Center). This clearly shows where Trump was steering the minds of American citizens towards Chinese discourse.

CONCLUSION

Has Trump brought new distinctive and previously absent elements that significantly changed US-Chinese relations? Many questions about Trump's heritage and his role in the USA- China relations will take time to answer. But some conclusions from his presidency are already known from Pew Research Center's studies in latest years (Pew..., 2020).

Following several decades of hegemony, lasting from II World War , the ability of the U.S. to tolerate and cooperate with a similarly economic power is a crucial factor to look in future years.

Rather, the Trump administration was the party that escalated tensions in US-Chinese relations. The Chinese clearly tried to moderate the situation, expressed their readiness to compromise, but faced with Washington's decisive anti-Chinese decisions, they could not help but retaliate, even though they were constantly calling for dialogue and compromise. China was somewhat consoled by the fact that it is not the only country having problems in relations with the United States. The European Union, Canada and other countries have also complained about disputes not only economic with the administration of President Donald Trump. In this situation, positions may be polarized and a model of international relations may be created in the system: the United States versus the rest of the world. I believe that this has greatly weakened the position of the United States in the world. Trump's confrontational policy towards China has attracted international attention to the country. Starting from the trade war caused by customs duties, through pressure on other countries to exclude the Chinese company Huawei from expanding the 5G network. Many liked Trump's tough stance on Beijing. Presumably, the president rightly challenged China because of its commercial activities. Tensions between the US and China existed before Trump, but during his reign they have become clearer and more articulated.

Despite the differences, there are of course also areas where the two powers should cooperate with each other, for example on issues related to climate protection. However, Donald Trump rightly pointed out China as the most dangerous rival of the US now, but he has completely failed to create an effective policy against Beijing. The outgoing team deserves credit for strongly drawing attention to the threats posed by China led by Xi Jinping, but has failed to address this challenge effectively. The US-China trade deficit at the end of the Trump administration is about the same as it was over \$ 300 billion at the end of the Obama administration. Under the weight of the trade war, US exports to China stagnated or fell in many categories even before the pandemic

The first statements of future members of the administration of the new US president confirm that China will continue to be treated as the main rival of the US. Only the forms of rivalry with Beijing will change. Joe Biden and Donald Trump have many different views. But when it comes to China, they think very much the same – the Middle Kingdom is a dangerous, aggressive and most dangerous rival of the United States, with whom confrontation is inevitable. This is a serious threat to the security of the United States

Joe Biden's victory in the US presidential election marks the continuation of Washington's confrontational policy towards Beijing, while clearly changing tactics and trying to mobilize the US network of alliances to contain China.

The expected change in the US administration is widely commented on in the Chinese press. Initial reactions are dominated by the conviction that competition will continue in almost all key areas, although Beijing hopes to unblock some channels of diplomatic contacts with Washington. The Biden administration's policy towards China will largely mean the continuation of the multidimensional rivalry that the presidency of Donald Trump has permanently inscribed in the US strategy. This direction is the subject of cross-party consensus, and in recent years both the presidential administration and Congress have become involved in activities aimed at the PRC. China itself operates in the logic of the structural conflict, as it does not have any hopes for a strategic easing of relations with the US with Biden, perceiving the confrontation as a permanent phenomenon resulting from a fundamental divergence of interests.

On balance, we can expect a rhetorically more civil U.S.-China relationship under Biden, including a willingness to engage on key international issues such as climate change, and less emphasis on punitive tariffs. However, the U.S. will maintain pressure over perceived intellectual property theft, and there will be no winding back the clock to the Obama era, as China is now seen as a direct competitor in the emerging technologies which will define the economy of the future. There are also protectionist tinges to some of Biden's proposals, such as his \$400 billion "Buy American" plan to promote public-sector demand for U.S. products, and plans to encourage firms to bring supply chains back to the U.S. A potential

rollback of tariffs and tech restrictions would boost China's growth in the years ahead. However, even in this scenario the legacy of the Trump era could linger: Many firms may continue to diversify their supply chains away from the Asian giant, chipping away at China's export dominance. The Covid-19 pandemic could potentially accelerate this process, by bringing into focus the importance of supply chain diversification. In any case, Biden will not alter Beijing's view that China must strengthen domestic activity and reduce economic pressure

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