
Is China (really) slowing down?

(American arguments against China's further rise)

Summary: Aware of the fact that China is a country whose rise points to the potential development of a sufficient level of ability to threaten American hegemony in the world, American authors are more and more frequently proposing a thesis that contemporary China is finally – slowly, but certainly – lagging behind in economic terms, which most likely leads to its return to the previous state – subordinacy on the global stage. The paper first presents the motive why the authors approach these considerations, while subsequently four groups of arguments of American authors against China's further rise are identified (demographic trends, economic stagnation, institutional problems and collapse of globalization). Finally, through the discussion about the presented arguments, the third chapter gives an answer to the question whether China is really slowing down.

Keywords: hegemony, power, emerging powers, China, United States of America

Introductory considerations

After the Cold War (1991), no matter whether it was ended due to the exhaustion and self-destruction of the Soviet Union or the “victory” of the United States of America, the world entered a stage of history called “a unipolar moment” by many authors, particularly those in the West (Krauthammer, 1990/1991; Mastanduno, 1997; Sheetz, Mastanduno, 1997/1998; Wohlforth, 1999; Smith, 2002; Layne,

2006; Shifrinson et al. 2023). Its main feature was the domination of the USA in practically all dimensions of international economy, politics and ideology. At the same time, a debate began about how long this “unipolar moment” would last. While some authors predicted its fast and spectacular end, others insisted on its stability and long term. In that spirit, some even spoke of the “end of history” achieved in value terms, from which the direction could be anticipated of the postmodern ideological

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alliance of Hegel and (neo)liberalism (Cvetković, 2023). Three decades later, it seems that neither the former nor the latter were right: the unipolar world has not disappeared, although it is (not) certain that it still exists as such. Moreover, it is not certain either whether the United States is the most powerful country in the world *in military terms* (Brooks, Wohlforth, 2023). Besides clear indicators that it is no longer the case (the ongoing conflicts in Ukraine and in the Middle East), the real reason for the radical change in the structure of the global order most probably lies in the unbelievable economic (and partly military) rise of China in the past decades.

As a reminder, at the beginning of the 1990s, China was little or almost not at all spoken about as a potential challenger to the predominance of the United States (Cvetković, 2018). However, today China is an inevitable topic of any debate about the present and the future of the international system, i.e., the “world order”. Together with other countries of the BRICS (primarily Russia and China, but also Brazil, Saudi Arabia etc.), it is a newly-emerging competitor to the former domination of the USA and the centuries-old global rule of the West. Furthermore, China is a sort of a flagship of that alliance, because exceeds all expectations in terms of its economic and military growth from year to year, rapidly approaching the United States.

That is why the question of the sustainability of China’s continued rise and its ability to threaten American hegemony are the main topics in geopolitical texts by American authors. They agree that the possibility of power transition is more likely than before, that the shadow of the security dilemma is already spreading in the practical-polit-

ical circles, and that the danger of falling into the Thucydides Trap is increasing on a daily basis. Of course, all the above-mentioned is still in the domain of assumptions having in mind that China has not yet reached the level of necessary capabilities for the “great shift”, whereas, to tell the truth, it does not even express any wish “play such a game (of power)”. At the same time, there is an impression that the American authors virtually compete in providing arguments for the thesis that “China is slowing down strength”, and that, therefore, the position of the actual hegemon will not be threatened.

The central aim of this paper is not to establish the validity and truthfulness of such claims (by American authors), but to systematically present key US arguments against China’s further rise. For that purpose, the paper is organized into three separate parts: in the first part, the authors’ motives are analyzed with the arguments towards the desired failure of China (the theses about the questions of power transition and the potential Thucydides Trap), while the second part contains the consideration of the key American arguments against China’s further rise. Finally, in the third part, we will look at the strength of the presented arguments, pointing to their problematic aspects, without delving into the examination of a deeper causality of those claims.

What do authors fear?

No matter how hegemons may seem untouchable at certain moments, they are not unchangeable. On the contrary. History shows us constant cycles of hegemons’ rise and fall (Kennedy, 1999).

The moment we have lived in so far was somewhat more specific in comparison to the rest of modern history because the United States used to be much more untouchable than earlier hegemon. However, that moment is not the end of the history of great powers' rise and fall either. The unipolar moment today has already lost one of its primary features – unambiguous unipolarity. When William Wohlforth presented his arguments for the stability of the unipolar moment, the first argument was that America is unambiguously the strongest country of the international system (Wohlforth, 1999). This argument is no longer valid, if nothing else, for the fact that an increasing number of authors point out that we live in the multipolar world. The relative power of the United States *vis-à-vis* other countries in the international system is no longer so great. We can identify two reasons for it. First, long and expensive wars waged by the United States in Iraq and Afghanistan have relatively degraded American power. Second, and more importantly, since the end of the Cold War China has experienced enormous and continued growth both in economic and in military terms.

Although researchers of the US foreign politics also pointed to the problem of the dissipation of American power, this reason was comparatively simple for resolution because it was still in the hands of Washington. However, the second reason was not, and Washington could not do much to rein China's growth. After three decades of being able to tailor the world's politics on its own, the United States is now in the situation that China's growth has questioned its ability to do so. That is why there is such a fear from China's growth. Nevertheless, we must admit that not all researchers are afraid of

China's growth. Seen in broader frameworks, some of them would even like it. However, this paper is focused on those who are afraid of it. In addition, there is another reason why the US authors fear China's rise, and that is the possible occurrence of a hegemonic war.

Joseph Grieco, John Ikenberry and Michel Mastranduno define a hegemonic war as "a war whose outcome determines the country which will have a predominant influence in the international system in the years or decades to come" (Grieco et al., 2015, p. 140). Those are the wars such as Napoleonic wars or the Second World War, in which a rising country and the former hegemon enter an open and extremely destructive conflict. The mechanism which is most often pointed out as the driver of a hegemonic war is power transition. The idea of power transition was presented by Abramo F. K. Organski in 1958. Essentially, power transition is the name of the process when a change occurs in the in the power relationship between the hegemon on one side and a rapidly growing country on the other side, which causes a hegemonic war (Organski, 1968). The belief that power transition between the USA and China is already underway has been present in academic literature for almost two decades. However, what these authors often fail to see is that the theory of power transition does not insist on the inevitable occurrence of a hegemonic war, but only on a (substantially) higher likelihood of its occurrence (Organski, Kugler, 1980, p. 19).

That is when the idea of the Thucydides Trap emerges, first presented by Graham Allison in 2012, and elaborated in further detail in his eponymous book from 2017. The very name of this idea

clearly points to the phenomenon of a hegemonic war since it is an allusion to the Peloponnesian War and the conflict between Sparta and Athens. In many aspects, the Thucydides Trap is actually a neologism for the theory of power transition, except for one key aspect – while the theory of power transition stresses a much higher probability of a war, the Thucydides Trap points to the (near) inevitability of a hegemonic war. According to Allison, in about 75% analyzed cases through history, whenever a rival country threatened to overtake the hegemon, it resulted in a hegemonic war (Allison, 2017).

92 |

This is exactly the scenario feared by researchers – that China's rise, which is evident, will cause a hegemonic war due to power transition and the Thucydides Trap. As we have pointed out, all of the above-mentioned is a view held mostly by researchers from the United States of America. That is why there is an implicit connotation in the majority of observations that accountability for a potential conflict inevitably lies in China's rise. However, such logic is wrong for two reasons. First, it happens, no matter how rarely, that the rise of one country does not necessarily produce a hegemonic war. Although Allison also identifies it in his research, a much more elegant explanation was provided by Joshua R. Itzkowitz Shiffrin. According to Itzkowitz Shiffrin, there is a difference between a predator power on the rise and an emerging and a rising country which supports the current hegemon (Itzkowitz Shiffrin, 2018). Regardless of whether the emerging power has limited or broad means at its disposal, if it is not predatory to the current hegemon, it will not strive for a hegemonic war (Itzkowitz Shiffrin, 2018).

Another reason is less theoretical and rather purely logical in its nature. The growth of a rising country proceeds in the context of the international order dominated under the other power. If such order is absolutely unsuitable to it, how is it possible that the rising country has developed at all? We may speak of the degree of satisfaction with the existing order, but we are far from concluding that the imperative of the emerging power is the change of the order. Because of that, we may rather say that the Thucydides Trap occurs in a power on the rise is predatory, but also if the dominant power fears losing its position. Hence, logically seen, the specific accountability for a potential hegemonic war may lie in both countries, depending on the context of power transition.

What the authors hope for: arguments against China's further rise

What researchers fear is based on the assumption that China will be a predatory power (this assumption is more than questionable and China's acting so far does not point to it). Back in 2005 China published the White Book about the Chinese peaceful development road, in which it explicitly expressed its intentions. There is also the "Belt and Road" project, including three global initiatives presented in the past ten years. Therefore, this is rather a "we-against-them" logic, with which American researchers insist on China's bad intentions. The theses about China's predation contain many elements founded on authors' subjective observations and not on clear and unambiguous data. Actually, the

Vladimir N. Cvetković

Mihajlo V. Kopanja

Is China (really) slowing down?

(American arguments against China's further rise)

only clear and unambiguous fact is exactly China's rise – the fact whose interpretation is questioned by American authors.

In fact, not all of them agree about this matter. For example, Michael Beckley and Hall Brands insist that an emerging power, as long as it continues its rise, will not constitute a predatory power (Brands, Beckley, 2022). Their logic is identical to ours because it derives from an answer to the question why a state which favours *status quo* would aspire to change it through war. This very *status quo* helped it be an emerging power. Although here there is no consent, Beckley and Brands go a step further in their conclusions, stating that a hegemonic war occurs exactly when the era of the emerging power's rise comes to an end. It is only then that the emerging power sees the only exit from stagnation in starting a hegemonic war. Their term "Peak China" emphasizes this very eventuality. However, the same logic can also be applied reversely. More precisely, a hegemon may decide that the stagnation moment of the emerging power may exactly be the one when a war can remove a potential challenger. In theoretical terms, there is nothing inherent in the predation theory so as to see it exclusively as an explanation for the emerging power's acting. The same logic can also be applied to a hegemonic country.

In the event of both eventualities, it is a fact that there are very few mechanisms, except for an open war, by which the United States could stop China's rise. Therefore, what the US hopes for is that the era of Chinese rise has come to an end. In that way, according to them, all fears mentioned in the previous chapter would be avoided. In any

case, we must not forget that the previous lines are founded on the already mentioned assumption about the end of China's growth. Is it really the case? On the grounds of which arguments do American researchers support their claims/hopes? In principle, American authors' arguments about China slowing down may be classified into four broader categories. According to the first category, China's slowing down is a product of demographic trends. According to the second, China's slowing down is a product of economic stagnation. According to the third, China's slowing down is a product of institutional problems, while according to the fourth, China's slowing down will be a product of the collapse of globalization. The first three categories of arguments derive from the well-known thesis that foreign politics starts at home, while the fourth category relies on the structural level.

| 93

a) Demographic trends

The first group of arguments used by American authors to support the thesis of the end of the era of Chinese growth are demographic trends. Throughout the 20th century, China was the most populous country in the world, whose demographic trends constantly indicated further growth. However, at the end of the 1970s, China introduced one-child policy as a method of slowing down its demographic growth and thus avoid the problem of too fast and too large population growth – this policy was observed until 2015. This policy enabled the stabilization of population growth, but at the same time caused potential problems in the future.

American authors note that one-child policy had significant implications which partly led to China's rise during the 1990s. In that period, generations with only one child emerged probably for the first time in history, while their parents were the last generations with several children. Therefore, the first generation of China's citizens with only one child faced a specific situation. First of all, they shared the costs of keeping up their parents with their siblings, while they had minimal costs of upbringing their own children. This made it possible for the share of the working-age population largely exceeded the share of the kept population. The implications and effects of such policy are evident, first of all, in the fiscal and economic spheres because they provided both individuals and the state with a significant surplus of funds which could be directed towards consumption and further development – which partly contributed to China's rise (Beckley, Brands, 2021; Brands, Beckley, 2022, pp. 32-33).

The argument about such demographic trends leading to China's slowing down is presented today, when there is a reversal in the demographic balance (Lynch, 2020; Chen, 2021; Eberstadt, Vardery, 2021; Beckley, Brands, 2021; Brands, Beckley, 2021; Brands, Beckley, 2022, pp. 34-36; Fuxian, 2023; O'Hanlon, 2023; Sharma, 2023; French, 2024; Fontaine, 2024). American authors point out that today's generation of Chinese citizens is in a completely reversed situation in comparison to their parents. Since today's generation of parents grew in the circumstances in which one-child policy was rejected, they often have more than one child. On the other hand, since they were mostly only

children in the family, they have no one to share the costs of keeping up their parents. Thus, the couples in today's generation do not bring up one child and do not share the costs of keeping up four parents (husband's and wife's parents). Namely, they independently keep up four parents and often more than one child. That is why American authors predict that the effects of demographic trends will be fully reversed in China. While they encouraged growth in the previous generation, in this generation they will encourage slowing down because there will be no surplus funds, but there will be more costs to be borne both by individuals and by the state.

b) Economic stagnation

It is evident that the second group of arguments regarding economic stagnation is often associated by American authors with the previous group of arguments. In the discussion about potential effects produced by demographic trends and demographic disbalance, we have pointed out that they affect the surplus funds both of Chinese citizens and China as a state. The economic stagnation argument most often relies exactly on the assumption that, due to increasing costs of the kept population and lower income because of the smaller share of the working-age population, China cannot afford the identical rate of investments in trade, and its citizens cannot keep up with the consumption pace which encourages domestic economy. That is why these arguments can be found in the majority of researchers, who also point to demographic trends as

a reason of China's slowing down (Beckley, Brands, 2021; Brands, Beckley, 2021; Brands, Beckley, 2022, pp. 36–38; Mueller, 2021; Fuxian, 2023; O'Hanlon, 2023; Sharma, 2023; Huang, 2023; French, 2024; Fontaine, 2024).

However, other aspects should also be taken into account. Brands and Beckley stress that, apart from the reduction in its population, China is also facing the reduction in resources, as pointed by other authors as well (Brands, Beckley, 2022, pp. 36-38; Mueller, 2021). Here, the question of economic stagnation is associated with the environmental degradation. According to these authors, the epoch of incredible rise has led to the pronounced consumption of natural resources, which consequently produces the need for importing food and energy products, as well as negative trends in air quality and food and drinking water safety (Mueller, 2021; Brands, Beckley, 2022, p. 37). In line with the above-mentioned, China's economic stagnation is a product not only of the disbalance in consumption and investment, but also of the fact that it faces additional external costs regarding the environment and imports of resources and energy products.

c) Institutional deficiencies

The third category of arguments against China's further rise is not as present as the first two, but it is still present. It relies on the theoretical observation of Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson that nations fail because of bad institutions (Acemoglu, Robinson, 2014). In fact, these American authors

argue that China is slowing down because its state institutions are becoming “worse and worse”, i.e., less functional. The most prominent advocate of these arguments is Minxin Pei, who in a series of publications ever since 1997 has emphasized that China is faced with a crisis of institutions, predicting that it will inevitably slow down due to it (Pei, 1997; 2002; 2016; 2017). However, it is not a lonely case (Mertha, 2012; Mueller, 2021; Brands, Beckley, 2022). In fact, the group of arguments regarding institutional problems may be divided into three segments.

The first segment refers to the accountability problem. The American authors' argumentation about China failing due to institutional problems is often reduced to the thesis that communist countries do not have a mechanism of controlling state institutions which would prevent their abuse and remove mistakes. Essentially, the Chinese institutional apparatus is not subject to citizens' control and, thus, it will inevitably lead to the failure of these institutions, and to China's slowing down. What is interesting to note here is that American authors list extremely few concrete cases to corroborate this argumentation. Most often, the situations taken as an example are those when the top leadership of the Communist party of China decides to remove from position individuals within administration. However, can this not be a control mechanism in the resolution of institutional problems?

The second segment refers to the corruption problem. Building on the previous segment, China has a corruption problem which is largely the product of the absence of accountability. To put it

simply, if there is a system without accountability towards the public, members of institutions tend more to become corrupted than in the situation when accountability towards the public exists. Although it is true that Chinese administration faces periodical corruption-related problems, it is still far from the endemic character ascribed to them by American authors. The third segment refers to the absence of inventiveness deriving from the centralization of administration. In fact, having in mind that China's politics and economy, just as in the case of other communist countries, are subject to central planning and governance, American authors point out that it limits the inventiveness of Chinese institutions, particularly at lower levels. Because of China's large size and numerous population, American authors suppose that planning and governance from one centre cannot correspond to the situation in the field throughout the country, which leads to the worse effect of the acting of institutions and thus to China's slowing down.

d) Collapse of globalization

The last group of arguments is also the rarest among the authors (See, e.g.: Brands, Beckley, 2022; Iglesias, Matthes, 2023; Martin, 2023; Schuman, 2023; Yuan, 2023). In their essence, these arguments rely on a simple observation that the era of Chinese rise began with globalization, primarily in economic terms. China's continued two-digit economic growth during the 1990s was a product of the fact that China was integrated in the

global market and operations, and thus managed to increase and strengthen its economy through larger imports. That is why the above generalization among American authors is often reduced to a thesis that China's rise (primarily economic) depends on its trade with the Western countries. Therefore, China's slowing down comes from the gradual collapse of the idea of the globalized world without "frontiers"; since such world limits China's ability of further growth.

The group of arguments regarding the collapse of globalization is actually two-fold. On the one hand, it relies on the consideration of economic flows of production and trade, which is in line with the above-mentioned observation about China's earlier rise. On the other hand, it also relies on the geopolitical trends which in China create an increasingly hostile geopolitical environment. Globalization is both an economic and a social and political phenomenon. Accordingly, the return of dividing lines on any grounds also brings along disturbances on other grounds. What we witness, particularly after the COVID-10 pandemic, is the fact that economic flows and supply chains were pronouncedly affected by the pandemic suppression policies in different countries. At the same time, and even before this process, there were evident negative trends in geopolitical terms as well, with the Western countries trying to suppress China as much as possible, creating a hostile geopolitical environment for it.

From the perspective of such trends, China faces larger restrictions in basing its economic and trade growth on the benefits of globalization, which it used to do successfully in the past. That is the core

Vladimir N. Cvetković

Mihajlo V. Kopanja

Is China (really) slowing down?

(American arguments against China's further rise)

of this group of arguments against China's further rise, having in mind that the collapse of globalization – determined by disruptions of global supply chains and an increasingly hostile geopolitical environment – limits their ability to base economic growth on a positive trade balance. What is more, this group of arguments also relies on the assumption that China's local market is insufficient to encourage further economic growth. However, according to American authors, it does not change the fact that China is slowing down because it will no longer be able to encourage its growth by a positive foreign trade balance with the Western countries.

Is China (really) slowing down?

The answer to this question is one of those moments where we can only say “yes” – yes, but! Looking from the perspective of everything China has done in the past three decades, China is really slowing down its pace. However, is it really possible to expect any country to grow as continuously as China in the past fifty years or so? Generally speaking, progress is much faster at the beginning of an enterprise than at its end. Sportsmen will be able to run faster at the beginning than at the end of the race; students will gain more knowledge than professors. A useful analogy is reaching the speed of light in astrophysics. The theory of relativity tells us that the closer the matter (which has mass) approaches the speed of light, the more energy is needed for continuing acceleration. Accordingly, it is not realistic to expect China to be able to continue the pace of its growth indefinitely.

The above lines are not an apology of the American authors' listed arguments against China's further growth. Namely, all the listed arguments by American authors are rather the rationalization of the evident trend of China's growth slowing down because isolated cases are raised to the level of causality. To put it more simply, the fact that China is no longer growing at the pace it was growing in recent past is not a product of the presented arguments but of the fact that it has reached the level of the Western countries. If we look at each of the above arguments outside the context, we could equally apply them to any highly-developed country in the world. Here we come to the paradox of the presented argumentation – if the same can refer to all the most developed countries of the world, how is it possible that only China, according to them, is slowing down? That is why it is necessary to look at each category of arguments once again, but taking into account the above-stated paradox.

The fact that one-child policy led to less favourable demographic trends in China. However, it does not by any means refer only to China. All the most developed countries of the world are at the same time the countries with the most unfavourable demographic picture. The European Union member states, Japan and South Korea have the oldest populations in the world. A possible exception is the United States of America, but only because its demographic trends rely on a high inflow of people from other countries – which may bring along a new number of problems. The situation in Canada is similar as well. The demographic disbalance is associated with the degree of a country's development, which corroborates our

claim that the slowing down of China's growth is due to the fact that it has become one of the most developed countries in the world. Nevertheless, what distinguishes China from other countries is that their demographic disbalance is a product of the politics that has changed. In China's case, demographic disbalance is rather a consequence of necessary consolidation than of a "natural" process. In the same way, just as the process has been reversed, it has been changed as well, and thus China may serve as an example of how the degree of a country's development is not necessarily accompanied with demographic disbalance. Having in mind the initiated mechanisms and the rejection of one-child policy, this "argument" may die down in the near future.

On the other hand, economic stagnation is a problem accompanying the majority of the most developed countries. When we say "stagnation", we do not refer to complete absence of economic growth, but to its slowing down. This argument is the closest to the analogy of reaching the speed of light since it is a rather demanding procedure to maintain any growth at the times when the degree of economic growth has reached the current global peak. That is why, even this argument corroborates the thesis that China's alleged slowing down is a consequence of the fact that it has taken its place among the most developed countries of the world. However, even in the conditions of economic stagnation, as we have put it, Chinese economy is still growing faster than other most developed countries of the world. This growth is not two-digit as before, but now it would almost be in the domain of science fiction. Clear, continued and sustainable economic growth is evident and it exceeds other

most developed countries of the world. Hence, this argument, if seen from a different perspective, is in favour of China and not against it.

The question of institutional problems is also something in common to all the most developed countries of the world. Whenever there is sufficient wealth in a country, there will be those who will abuse their position for the purpose of their personal gain. It refers equally to democratic and to communist countries. That is why it can refer both to China and to all other countries of the world. On the other hand, when speaking of this argument, it is a situation when isolated cases are raised to the level of regularities which are more noticeable in other most developed countries of the world. Furthermore, we must not forget one important thing. The challenge in establishing institutional problems is that their resolution leads to the larger visibility of this issue in public. If there is an active struggle against something, then such struggle makes the problem more visible. No country will ever remove institutional problems, but they are often more visible in those countries actively fighting against them.

Finally, it is important to emphasize that globalization is a two-way street. Therefore, its collapse affects equally China and other countries. To conceive the collapse of globalization as an argument for China's slowing down means that the whole world is slowing down. On the other hand, it is a wrong thesis that China's benefit from globalization lies solely in its exports of semi-products. In the past years, China has begun producing and exporting final products with a high added value, such as electronics and cars. Therefore, the claim that the rest of the world will easily transition to

Vladimir N. Cvetković

Mihajlo V. Kopanja

Is China (really) slowing down?

(American arguments against China's further rise)

the production of semi-products as a support to their own production of final products refers to China as well. Their line of argumentation relies on the obsolete logic of the 1990s. At that time China really produced semi-products and its growth really relied on the exports of those products. However, at that time China was not what it is today. That is why we need to ask who will be actually more affected by the collapse of globalization.

Summing up all the above-mentioned, it is evident that China is no longer growing at the same pace as in the past. However, it is not a sign of its weakness but, on the contrary, a consequence of its development. In other words. The arguments in favour of "China's fatal slowing down" are more a sign of its strength than of any essential weakness. It is a simple fact that it has become fully equal to the formerly much more developed countries. When we further elaborate the arguments and apply them to other countries of the world, we reach two important observations. Firstly, the argument of slowing down refers to all the most developed countries of the world, and, secondly and more importantly, China is coping with this challenge better than other most developed countries of the world. Hence the claims about the era of China's rise coming to an end are not only wrong, but they indicate that slower growth may faster take China to the top.

Conclusion

The American-Chinese rivalry will certainly "paint" international security in the years to come. This

claim has become almost an axiom. However, the nature of their rivalry is a much greater issue than simply pointing out who "good" or "bad guys" are. There is a strongly rooted opinion among Western researchers that China's growth will inevitably lead to the Thucydides Trap and, thus, to the outbreak of a hegemonic war between it and the United States. Pointing a finger to negative and positive ones does not serve any purpose except for clearly stating who would be responsible for something like that.

The only "exit" seen by American authors is China's slowing down. The reason for it is obvious. Even at this pace of growth, China will inevitably overtake the United States as the most powerful country in the world. Faced with the fact that the USA is limited in its own growth, as well as that it can do little to prevent China's further growth except in an open conflict, American authors see the only exit in China's slowing down. They base their arguments against its further rise on four key categories of arguments. The first category is of demographic nature which emphasizes that one-child policy has led to a decline in China's population and, more importantly, to demographic disbalance between the working-age and the kept population. The second category is of economic nature and it emphasizes that the fact that Chinese economy is no longer growing at a two-digit pace clearly points to its slowing down. The third category is of institutional nature and points out that problems in administration stop China's rise. The last, fourth category is of structural nature and relies on the thesis that the collapse of globalization will lead to China's slowing down.

Nevertheless, the paradoxical situation in which the above-listed arguments may refer to all

PROGRESS

Vol. V / No. 1

2024.

most developed countries of the world takes us towards two conclusions: that China's slower rise is only the reflection of the fact that it has reached the level of the most developed countries in the world and that, in such circumstances, China is better coping with the challenges of further rise

than other "great powers". Therefore, instead of focusing of the potential "failing", it is necessary to focus on its rivalry with the USA should remain only the rivalry, and not become an open conflict, i.e., war. However, as always, this will not be decided only by direct actors.

100 |



BOTH THE WORLD AND CHINA. Handmade tapestries by Qinghai Shengyan Carpet Group Co, Ltd, situated in the Central District of Xining City. The Jia'ya Tibetan carpet waving was included in the National List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2006.

Photo: Uroš Šuvaković

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