

РОЗДІЛ 4. ПОЛІТИЧНІ ПРОБЛЕМИ МІЖНАРОДНИХ СИСТЕМ ТА ГЛОБАЛЬНОГО РОЗВИТКУ

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Contemporary green diplomacy of China

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With the continuous deepening of the global green transition, climate governance has become a core issue in the contemporary international relations system. Its impact goes beyond the environmental sphere, profoundly reshaping the global economic structure, energy policies, and the evolution of the international order. In this process, China is not only an active participant in climate governance but also a key force that proactively shapes its international image and enhances its discourse power in global climate governance through the concept and practice of green diplomacy. Existing studies often remain at the level of policy description, overlooking the role of green diplomacy in national identity construction, institutional competition, and the rebalancing of the global governance system.

Taking "green diplomacy" as the core of analysis, this paper systematically examines China's role transformation and strategic approach in global climate governance, exploring how the concept of green development is embodied and promoted through multilateral mechanisms, regional cooperation, and the Belt and Road Initiative. The study argues that by integrating the concept of ecological civilization into diplomatic practice, China has gradually formed a model of green diplomacy that combines the responsibility of a developing country with the commitment of a major power, thereby promoting global cooperation for sustainable development and offering Chinese approaches and institutional experiences for the green transformation of international relations.

At the same time, China's green diplomacy has also played a bridging role in promoting South-South cooperation, strengthening climate financing, and facilitating green technology transfer. Looking ahead, the deepening of China's green diplomacy is expected to contribute more actively to the fairness of the global climate governance system, enhance the collective bargaining power of developing countries, and advance the building of a community with a shared future for mankind.

Key words: climate, green diplomacy, globalization, environment, nature, ecology, development, community, national identity.

Introduction. Since the beginning of the 21st century, climate change has gradually transcended national borders, becoming an important factor influencing the global system. The "green transition" concerns not only environmental protection but also deeply affects the process of rethinking international political and economic structures. For China, "green diplomacy" serves both as a continuation of its domestic development strategy and as a logical extension of its great power diplomacy.

For a long time, research on China's foreign policy has mainly focused on geopolitics and economic cooperation, while the study of "green diplomacy" has remained secondary. Academic discussions have generally viewed China merely as a "participant" in climate governance, overlooking its efforts to shape national identity and international discourse through the environmental agenda. However, with the introduction of the "carbon peak–carbon neutrality" strategies and the concept of a "community with a shared future for mankind," China has gradually integrated ecological and developmental issues, using green diplomacy as a tool to expand its international influence.

The article considers "green diplomacy" as a starting point for analyzing the transformation of China's role in global climate governance. Special attention is given to how the environmental agenda becomes an important tool for shaping China's national image and strengthening its international discursive influence. From this perspective, the article aims to enrich the research dimensions of Chinese foreign policy and provide a new analytical framework for understanding the transformation of the global governance system.

The purpose and goals. This study aims to systematically analyze China's role and strategic practices in global climate governance and sustainable development, with a focus on green diplomacy, the Green Belt and Road Initiative, and key industries such as new energy vehicles in enhancing national image and promoting international cooperation. The research objectives are to reveal how China implements sustainable development principles through policy, technology, and industrial practice; to analyze the mechanisms and experiences of the Green Belt and Road Initiative in regional cooperation and capacity building; and to assess

the impact of China's green diplomacy and industrial practices on global climate governance. Through these objectives, the study seeks to illustrate China's transformation from a proponent of sustainable development concepts to an active practitioner, while providing reference experiences for other countries addressing climate change.

Research Methods. This paper employs a combined approach, including literature analysis, case study, and comprehensive analysis. By systematically reviewing domestic and international research on green diplomacy, climate governance, and sustainable development, a theoretical foundation is established; representative practical cases, such as green cooperation under the Belt and Road Initiative and the carbon neutrality initiative, are selected to analyze the policy logic of China's green diplomacy and its international impact. Ultimately, by integrating theory and practice, a comprehensive assessment is conducted on the general characteristics, strategic significance, and future prospects of China's green diplomacy, providing support for understanding its role in the global governance system.

Main Part. In the 21st century, modern society faces a range of global environmental challenges, which are the result of long-term accumulation throughout human development.

Since the beginning of the 21st century, the problem of climate change has become increasingly acute. Under the influence of climate change, the world has witnessed a rise in extreme weather events and natural disasters, causing significant damage to the economies of many countries and threatening the lives and property of their citizens. Climate change leads to a continuous rise in ocean and sea levels, creating a direct threat to the existence and development of many coastal countries, especially small island states. In addition to this, climate change will affect the supply and redistribution of strategic resources such as food and water, which in turn may cause social instability, including international conflicts [10].

Globalization has accelerated the movement of capital, technology, and the economy; however, it has also led to increased energy consumption and higher carbon dioxide emissions. The transfer of industrial production from developed to developing countries has intensified the environmental burden on the latter, giving the problem of climate change a distinctly transnational character.

It was precisely the processes of globalization and the formation of international legal policy in the environmental sphere that made possible the emergence of such a phenomenon as environmental or green diplomacy [1, p. 165].

"Greendiplomacy" is a continuation of environmental diplomacy and refers to diplomatic activities based on the idea of environmental protection. It implies

that states and other international actors, through bilateral and multilateral cooperation, seek to limit the negative impact of human activity, address global environmental challenges, and create effective mechanisms for the protection and improvement of the environment, as well as for achieving the goals of global sustainable development [11, p. 38].

At present, China's "green diplomacy" represents a continuous process of shaping its identity as a developing power within the system of global climate governance. China is not a passive recipient of external definitions of its role but actively constructs it through the promotion of the concept of ecological civilization, the development of the "Green Belt and Road" initiative, and active participation in international climate actions. These efforts contribute to the formation of Chinese green diplomacy based on the principles of cooperation and mutual benefit.

As early as 2005, Xi Jinping put forward the idea that "lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets," emphasizing that a favorable ecological environment is itself the greatest wealth [7]. By advancing the concept of "green development," China has overcome the stereotype that developing countries focus solely on economic growth and has proposed a new model of development that integrates economic and environmental goals.

At the same time, China's green foreign policy, grounded in the idea of a "community with a shared future for mankind," has allowed the country to closely link environmental issues with global responsibility, forming the image of a responsible great power. This identity not only strengthens China's legitimacy in the field of climate cooperation but also creates a foundation for gaining broader support from the international community.

Based on deep and long-term reflection on humanity's perennial theme-the relationship between humans and nature-President Xi Jinping, drawing from historical perspective and contemporary demands, identified the main direction for a world undergoing the "greatest changes in a century" in addressing global challenges and strengthening global governance. The systematic introduction of the concept of a "community of life for humans and nature" reflects the urgent need to respond to climate change and harmonize human-nature relations, while aligning with current trends in building a global ecological civilization [6].

The concept of "humans and nature as one" reveals the inseparable, interdependent relationship between humanity and nature, reflecting a profound shift from anthropocentrism to ecocentrism. It emphasizes that in the process of development, humanity must respect the laws of nature and maintain ecological balance, as the destruction of nature ultimately turns against humans themselves. This idea originates in traditional Chinese philosophy, particularly the notion of the "unity of heaven and humanity" (tian ren he yi),

while simultaneously resonating with contemporary values of global sustainable development.

President Xi Jinping underscores that: “Lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets.” Economic development and ecological protection are interdependent and mutually reinforcing, forming an organic unity. Pursuing one at the expense of the other is unacceptable. Economic development must be carried out on the basis of environmental protection: safeguarding the environment is equivalent to protecting productive forces, and improving the ecological environment promotes the development of productive forces [2, p. 5].

In a context where globalization creates challenges, many countries face issues of development imbalance and insufficient cooperation mechanisms. In response to these contemporary challenges, China proposed the “Belt and Road Initiative,” aimed at promoting development through mutually beneficial integration and cooperation. The significance of this initiative lies in advancing global interconnectedness and shared development. It fosters regional prosperity through infrastructure construction and economic collaboration, promoting more equitable and rational interactions. At the same time, by following the principle of “joint consultation, joint construction, and shared benefits,” the Belt and Road Initiative facilitates the exchange of civilizations and strengthens international connections, providing vital support for building a community with a shared future for mankind.

The “Green Belt and Road” is an important component of the “Belt and Road Initiative.” For the sustainable and long-term development of the Green Belt and Road, not only consensus and cooperation among governments are necessary, but also the trust, support, and participation of the people, civil society organizations, and subnational actors along the initiative’s route. Green development represents a systemic project that requires effective interaction, coordination, and joint governance at all levels and among all elements. In some countries along the Belt and Road route, issues of uneven and unsustainable development have persisted for a long time; advancing the joint construction of the Green Belt and Road in these countries requires coordination based on the concept of green development and mutual development interests, to ensure inclusive, ecologically sustainable, and high-quality development [12, pp.1–2].

In the practical implementation of the Green Belt and Road Initiative, cooperation in the transport and energy sectors is regarded as a key area for achieving sustainable development, with the rapid rise of the new energy vehicle (NEV) industry being particularly prominent. As the global energy structure transforms and the demand for emission reductions grows, NEVs have become not only a crucial component of China’s domestic green transition but also a new

hallmark of its international cooperation. In recent years, Chinese companies have actively participated in the electrification of transport and the construction of charging infrastructure in countries along the initiative’s routes, promoting the greening of local transportation systems through technology transfer, industrial investment, and standardization. According to data from the China Association of Automobile Manufacturers, from January to October 2024, China exported 1.058 million NEVs, showing significant year-on-year growth. In 2023, China exported 1.203 million NEVs, representing a 77.2% increase compared to the previous year [5].

On September 22, 2022, President Xi Jinping stated at the 75th session of the United Nations General Assembly that China intends to reach peak carbon emissions by 2030 and achieve carbon neutrality by 2060 [4]. These two targets provide a clear strategic direction for China’s green diplomacy. These domestic emission reduction commitments influence not only the country’s industrial and energy structure but also serve as an important lever for China in international negotiations. In diplomatic practice, the goals of peak emissions and carbon neutrality become a shared agenda for China’s cooperation with other countries and regions, making climate governance not merely a form of political interaction but also an important instrument for projecting the image of a responsible major power.

Zhou Tianjun, Deputy Director of the Institute of Atmospheric Physics at the Chinese Academy of Sciences, stated that the global warming trend has become increasingly evident: the summer of 2023 was the hottest in the past 2,000 years, the concentration of carbon dioxide has exceeded pre-industrial levels by 1.5 times, and fossil fuels account for 86% of total anthropogenic CO₂ emissions. Achieving carbon neutrality requires deep emission reductions, increasing global renewable energy production, and realizing net-zero emissions in a just, orderly, and equitable manner [13, p. 1].

The diplomatic advancement of carbon peaking and carbon neutrality is not limited to policy-level cooperation but also reflects China’s global contribution in terms of ideas, technology, and development models. By exporting renewable energy technologies, participating in green infrastructure construction, and supporting developing countries in enhancing their emission reduction capacity, China promotes the formation of a green cooperation network centered on mutual benefit and shared development. This model breaks the traditional dichotomy between “development” and “emission reduction,” offering Global South countries a new approach that balances economic growth with environmental protection.

Simon Stiell, Executive Secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change Secretariat, noted that China has a long-standing outstanding

record in achieving and surpassing climate goals and developing clean energy. The British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) characterized China's emission reduction targets as a "milestone commitment," while The Economist observed that "China's moderate climate targets often lead to overachievement." Public opinion in developing countries has also generally viewed these targets positively [4, p. 1].

On the multilateral stage of climate governance, China has gradually moved from the early fulfillment of obligations to the role of an agenda-setter. By consistently proposing initiatives of universal significance, China strengthens its influence in the international arena and within discursive systems. For example, at UN climate change conferences in Baku and through relevant multilateral mechanisms, China has repeatedly promoted the principles of fair, cooperative, and mutually beneficial governance, bringing the ideas of "green development" and the principle of "common but differentiated responsibilities" to the global level. This not only enhances China's influence in international climate negotiations but also enables more active participation in the shaping of institutions and the formulation of rules.

At the regional level, China actively deepens cooperation in the fields of climate and environmental protection through platforms such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), the East Asia Cooperation Mechanism, and the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC). These mechanisms provide essential support for China and its partners to carry out practical collaboration in clean energy, ecological conservation, and green infrastructure development. Unlike traditional one-way aid models, China places greater emphasis on policy dialogue, technological exchange, and capacity building, fostering endogenous momentum for sustainable development among its partners.

At the Leaders' Summit on Climate and Just Transition, President Xi Jinping emphasized that "we should transcend differences and conflicts through openness and inclusiveness, promote technological innovation and industrial transformation through cooperation, and ensure the free circulation of high-quality green technologies and products so that all countries, especially developing ones, can have access to them, afford them, and make good use of them." This important statement highlights China's sense of responsibility in promoting global green development [14, p. 78].

Through the promotion of the "Green Belt and Road," participation in climate negotiations, and fulfillment of emission reduction commitments, China demonstrates the responsibility of a major power while simultaneously integrating sustainable development into its diplomatic strategy, ensuring the coordinated advancement of economic

cooperation, environmental protection, and social progress.

Sustainable development can be intuitively understood as a form capable of achieving long-term, profound growth. The attainment of this goal is directly related to the relationship between the environment and society, particularly the vulnerability of society in the ecological sphere, which determines the principles and strategies for its realization. The field of sustainable development research encompasses both the foundational and resource environments of industrialized and non-industrialized societies, as well as more specific topics, including climate change, biodiversity, and terrestrial ecosystems.

The concept of sustainable development is not only a broad, overarching goal but also an important standard for countries to assess the quality of economic growth and social progress. China's efforts in this field demonstrate its determination and capacity to translate concepts into concrete actions. By improving policy frameworks, increasing investment in scientific and technological innovation, and promoting green transformation, China continuously integrates the principles of sustainable development into all aspects of economic construction and social governance. It is through this systematic approach that China has achieved significant results in key areas such as renewable energy development, public transportation, and disaster risk management, providing a practical example and a Chinese model for achieving the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

China has achieved significant progress in reaching sustainable development goals. The country holds leading positions in areas such as the development of renewable energy and public transportation. As of 2024, China ranks first in the world in the number of installed wind power units, accounting for 39% of the global total. The share of newly commissioned capacity for the year amounts to 68.21% of the global increase. More than 90% of the urban population have convenient access to public transport, and 100% of provincial governments have implemented disaster risk reduction strategies, representing the early achievement of the targets set for 2030 [9, p. 1].

In key sectors, the development of a "green" economy continues to advance actively. In 2024, the area of new green buildings in urban areas reached 1.69 billion square meters, accounting for 97.9% of the total newly constructed urban building area for the year. A clean and low-carbon transportation system is taking shape: the share of environmentally friendly freight transport in key industries has reached approximately 70%, and the results of the green transformation in civil aviation have become particularly notable [8].

The concept of green development is deeply integrated into China's foreign policy system. In its

foreign economic policy, China actively promotes the “Green Belt and Road,” encouraging countries along the initiative’s route to use renewable energy, develop green finance, and build low-carbon infrastructure. In multilateral negotiations, China participates in shaping global rules, promoting the principles of “fair, rational, and mutually beneficial” green cooperation.

In the realm of shaping its international image, the concept of green development has become an important component of national soft power. This integration reflects not only the expansion of China’s foreign policy strategy but also its strategic ambition to strengthen its influence in global governance through the environmental agenda, making green diplomacy a key distinguishing feature of great power diplomacy with Chinese characteristics.

Conclusion. Domestically, the concept of green development promotes the coordination of economic, social, and environmental development, shaping policies of resource conservation, low-carbon growth, and sustainable development. This concept not only defines the internal development pathways of the state but also provides practical experience and an institutional basis for international actions. When a country successfully pursues a path of green transformation within its own development, it gains the ability to export the concept of green development to the international arena and promote environmental cooperation.

Thus, the concept of green development naturally transforms into green diplomacy: domestic achievements in environmental policy become a foundation for international cooperation and foreign policy initiatives, enabling the country to demonstrate responsibility while simultaneously enhancing its international influence and soft power in global climate governance, sustainable development, and environmental protection.

The evolution of China’s green diplomacy and the country’s increasing role in global climate governance are closely interconnected. On one hand, the improvement of domestic green strategies provides a political foundation and discursive resources for diplomacy; on the other hand, active participation in international climate governance promotes the institutionalization and normalization of China’s green diplomacy. This interconnection demonstrates an innovative path of great power foreign policy with Chinese characteristics while simultaneously injecting new momentum into global climate governance.

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Сучасна зелена дипломатія Китаю

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Зі зростанням глобального зеленого переходу кліматичне врядування стало ключовим питанням у сучасній системі міжнародних відносин. Його вплив виходить далеко за межі екологічної сфери, глибоко трансформуючи світову економічну структуру, енергетичну політику та еволюцію міжнародного порядку. У цьому процесі Китай є не лише активним учасником кліматичного врядування, але й важливою силою, яка через концепцію та практику «зеленої дипломатії» активно формує свій міжнародний імідж і посилює свій дискурсивний вплив у глобальній кліматичній політиці. Наявні дослідження часто обмежуються описом політики, ігноруючи роль зеленої дипломатії у формуванні національної ідентичності, інституційної конкуренції та перебалансуванні системи глобального врядування. Зосереджуючи увагу на «зеленій дипломатії», у цій статті системно аналізується трансформація ролі Китаю та його стратегічний підхід у сфері глобального кліматичного врядування, досліджується, як концепція зеленого розвитку втілюється та просувається через багатосторонні механізми, регіональну співпрацю та ініціативу «Один пояс, один шлях». У дослідженні стверджується, що, інтегруючи концепцію екологічної цивілізації в дипломатичну практику, Китай поступово сформував модель зеленої дипломатії, яка поєднує відповідальність країни, що розвивається, із зобов'язаннями великої держави. Це сприяє глобальній співпраці задля сталого розвитку та пропонує китайські підходи й інституційний досвід для зеленої трансформації міжнародних відносин. Водночас зелена дипломатія Китаю відіграє роль мосту у просуванні співпраці Південь-Південь, зміцненні кліматичного фінансування та сприянні передачі зелених технологій. У майбутньому подальший розвиток китайської зеленої дипломатії, ймовірно, зробить більш активний внесок у забезпечення справедливості глобальної системи кліматичного врядування, посилить колективну переговорну силу країн, що розвиваються, та сприятиме побудові спільноти єдиної долі людства.

Ключові слова: клімат, зелена дипломатія, глобалізація, довкілля, природа, екологія, розвиток, спільнота, національна ідентичність.

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