On November 9, Reuters reported that the Office of the US President’s National Security Advisor organized in October - early November exploratory trips of expert delegations to several countries in Africa and Latin America. A similar tour to Asia is planned for December. The purpose of these visits was to agree with the leadership of the visited countries on the launch of specific projects referred to in the summary document adopted at the last G7 summit, held in the county of Cornwall in the United Kingdom from June 11-13.

It is also reported that funding for the “first five to ten” projects could begin as early as January, to be approved at a G7 meeting scheduled for December this year. However, preliminary discussions about them have probably already been held by US President Joe Biden and his colleagues on the margins the COP26 UN climate change conference in Glasgow.

Recall what this is about. The mentioned G7 summit was one of several events organized by Joe Biden during his first trip to Europe after being elected President, held under the slogans “America returns” and “Restore transatlantic
cooperation.” Both slogans have served the overall goal of US foreign policy in recent years to engage allies as much as possible in a comprehensive response to China, which is now seen as the primary source of threats to US interests.

Once again, we should point out that not all of the US elite view modern China in this way. Some of them believe that there should be constructive interaction with the PRC, primarily in the sphere of trade and economic cooperation, which is quite possible. Among the latest facts confirming the very presence of such sentiments in the American establishment, we would like to point out the largest (once again) representation of American business at the regular, the fourth in a row, annual China International Import Expo (CIIE) held in Shanghai in early November.

However, in the summer 2021 the swing of the US general political course in the Chinese area swung in the direction that says “mostly confrontational.” It resulted in the adoption of the extensive communiqué following the June G7 summit under the generalized meme Build Back Better World, B3W. The above-mentioned ‘build back better’ mainly in infrastructure and developing countries, is expected to cost $40 trillion.

Some experts referred to this document as the Cornwall Consensus on the prospects of the global economy, which is supposed to replace the Washington Consensus. The latter has caused a lot of trouble in those same developing countries, but perhaps especially in Russia in the 1990s.

However, the central focus of the B3W project is different. The authors view it as a counterproject to the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative, which, we note, began to be implemented long before it was designated in 2013 by this phrase. Its successes, primarily in the developing countries, explain the sharp increase in China’s political influence in the world as a whole. In Africa today, China is the number one player. The PRC’s credibility is rapidly spreading in Latin America, i.e. in the strategic underbelly of the United States.

We emphasize that this happened without a single shot being fired and with full approval of “Chinese expansion” objects. For from the beginning, it was based on the thesis (generally speaking, quite obvious) that the struggle for influence in certain territories should not be about crippling (with Maxim machine guns and other weapons of the colonial wars period) the people living there, but about gaining their generalized heart. The path to which, as we know, essentially runs through the no less generalized belly.

Without making any claims to the political order of the countries involved in the BRI project, China has gone to the hearts of their peoples, investing resources in the development of industrial, transport and communications infrastructure, agriculture, education, and health systems. In other words, all of which is necessary so that people stay in the places of traditional residence. And the lack of which is forcing them today to embark on long and risky journeys.

BRI participants (there are about 140 participants today) can already show tangible results of joint, let’s stress it, activities. One cannot help but be impressed, for example, by pictures of a high-speed passenger train seemingly cutting through the impenetrable jungle of Kenya.

The BRI project is by no means an act of charity on the part of the PRC concerning its partners. It is a collaborative effort in which the latter often find themselves in the role of borrowers vis-à-vis the leading participant. This has led to criticism of the project and its leader from geopolitical opponents who accuse China of deliberately dragging BRI partners into “debt traps” to make political demands.

This has never been observed and, one can confidently predict, will not happen in the future. Let us repeat, the PRC’s strategy and policy goals in developing countries have nothing in common with what was typical of their then metropolises 150 years ago.

Nevertheless, the PRC’s geopolitical opponents, who seem to have come to their senses too late, initiated the B3W project as a “democratic (or counter-) BRI.” Its main difference and “advantage” is that there is no prospect of developing countries getting into the very debt trap.

The topic of China and the challenges posed by the BRI project emerged back in late March during one of the public statements by Joe Biden when the very idea of what would soon receive the B3W designation was just being outlined. The thesis on the need for a similar initiative on the part of democratic countries was also voiced at that time.

Note that skeptical assessments from relatively credential sources about the prospects of the B3W project were expressed almost immediately with its appearance. First, it was pointed out that the source of the hard-to-imagine amount cited above was unclear.
Secondly, even if it exists, projects of this scale require a high degree of consolidation of what is commonly called “the West,” and there have been serious problems with it for a long time. The situation has been challenging to overcome, despite the efforts made, in particular during the above-mentioned visit of Joe Biden to Europe. The Chinese Global Times portrayed the situation in the Western world in general and at the Cornwall meeting in particular as a variation on The Last Supper by Leonardo da Vinci.

The disappearance of B3W from the media space for several months seemed to confirm the opinion of skeptics that it was nothing more than another noisy PR stunt, with which the modern political space is overflowing. Where truth and lies, real life and the artificial world of simulacra are closely intertwined.

But the Reuters report mentioned above shows that the patient is showing signs of life. Generally speaking, one could only welcome the intention of the B3W participants to at least partially repay the (alleged) objects of this project the historical debt they once accumulated while bearing the “White Man’s Burden.”

The bad thing is that this project’s mission statement is deterministically confrontational to another project that has long been (not without cost) implemented in the same developing countries. Although it would seem, coordination of efforts is desirable on the part of the participants involved in both of these projects. Meanwhile, the same Global Times again accurately reflected the developing situation which is far from being optimistic.

Throughout human history, the culprit of discords in relations between the currently leading world players has been “politics,” i.e., the rubber category, which includes, among other things, factors stemming from flaws in human nature, such as suspicion and mistrust.

“Politics” prevents the initiators of the Cornwall Consensus from attempting to reconcile the supposed grandiose efforts of their B3W project with those of a geopolitical opponent in a similar BRI project.

However, there seem to be some positive developments in relations between the current major players, the USA and China, which deserve separate consideration.

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