

## **THE MODERNIZATION OF CHINA: ARMENIA-CHINA RELATIONS**

### **(International conference)**

On 12 November 2024, the Institute of Oriental Studies of NAS RA, with the support of the Bryusov State University (BSU), organized an international conference entitled “The Modernization of China: Armenia-China Relations.” The conference addressed China's modernization, Beijing's vision for current international relations, global security issues, universal human development, and welfare issues. Moreover, the conference aimed to examine the dynamics of Armenia-China relations, their weak and strong sides, and current tendencies. Researchers from the Institute of Russian, East European, and Central Asian Studies of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, a major partner of the Institute of Oriental Studies (IOS), Renmin University of China, and Beijing University of Aviation and Astronautics, participated in the conference. From the Armenian side, researchers from the Institute of Oriental Studies of the NAS RA, BSU, the Armenian State University of Economics, and representatives of institutions cooperating with China participated in the conference.

At the opening of the conference, Dr. Araks Pashayan, Head of the International Relations Department of the Institute of Oriental Studies, addressed the scientific and political importance of the issues discussed at the conference, the growing role of China as a superpower in modern geopolitical and geoeconomic processes, the internal and external aspects of Chinese modernization, and the importance of the Chinese experience for the international community, including Armenia. Dr. Gohar Iskandaryan, Director of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the NAS RA, delivered a welcome speech. She made an in-depth overview on the cooperation between the Institute of Oriental Studies and various scientific and educational institutions of China, notably the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, and its prospects. She mentioned that tangible steps have been taken toward bilateral cooperation in recent years: namely, the organization of numerous workshops and conferences and bilateral visits. In this sense, the Institute of Oriental Studies is already an accomplished center for Chinese studies. The conference was welcomed by Johnny Melikyan on behalf of the Orbeli Center for Public Relations and Information of the Prime Minister's Office of the Republic of Armenia. He emphasized the critical role of the studies of China's multilateral role in international relations and final results processing.

The Chargé d’Affaires of the People’s Republic of China in the Republic of Armenia, H.E. Chen Ming, and the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Armenia to the People’s Republic of China, H.E. Vahe Gevorgyan, also delivered welcome speeches. Mr. Chen Ming offered a detailed insight into the modernization of China in theory and practice, after which he referred to Armenia-China relations in a relatively positive light. He noted that over more than a hundred years, as a result of the strict and successful policy of the Communist Party of China, the Chinese people, having gone through many difficulties after long searches, have found their own unique and successful path to modernization, namely modernization in the Chinese style. China can offer its concept to the nations searching a development path. “Supporting the world’s equal and orderly multi-polarization and inclusive economic globalization, China is committed to forming common values for all mankind, contributes to constructing the so-called "community with a shared future for mankind," and constantly offers new opportunities to the world with its development. In the face of global changes, China has always been committed to maintaining world peace and international justice, considered it necessary to reform the global governance system, and has contributed to the peaceful settlement of major international and regional issues and conflicts. H.E. Chen Ming expressed hope that the Armenian and Chinese think tanks will strengthen exchanges and cooperation, enrich the content of bilateral relations, and strengthen the social foundation of friendship between the Armenian and Chinese peoples. The Chinese side considers it essential that both countries are part of ancient civilizations with a history of thousands of years and friendly traditions passed down from generation to generation. It is satisfying for the Chinese side that in recent years, interest in the Chinese language has developed in Armenia, especially among young people. Furthermore, the number of young people living in Armenia who want to study and work in China is also increasing. The number of Chinese tourists visiting Armenia, in its turn, continues to grow; the Chinese have begun to get to know the history and culture of Armenia better and the societies - each other. The Chinese diplomat expressed hope that the Armenian-Chinese friendship has prospects for further strengthening. As a good friend and partner, China is ready to share its experience of modernization with Armenia, deepen mutually beneficial cooperation, and support Armenia's national development and improvement of the people's living standards.

H.E. Vahe Gevorgyan highlighted the significance of the conference, noting that although it is not possible to discuss issues related to the phenomenon of Chinese modernization during one conference, it is possible to hold discussions on many topics. According to the Armenian diplomat, China’s modernization has

significantly influenced the process of forming a new world order, changing the structure of the world economy and globalization. On the other hand, it is impossible to understand the foreign political environment around Armenia and its reshaping tendencies without understanding China's growing influence on them. He noted that studying China's modernization can provide many good experiences for Armenian state institutions and society.

The conference touched upon the transformations of China-Armenia relations, the main directions of cooperation, the factors uniting the two states, issues related to Armenia's involvement in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), and the "Belt and Road Initiative" (BRI). The conference attempted to shed light on the peculiarities of China's domestic and foreign policy as a superpower and contemporary geopolitical competition, including issues related to China. Topics on China's modernization, its conceptual provisions, in particular, the impact of modernization on China's domestic and foreign policy, global security, and international relations, including on the Eurasian continent, the Middle East, the South Caucasus, Central Asia, the Chinese vision, international transport corridors, universal human well-being, and China's policy and approaches to the development of various regions of the globe were discussed. China's modernization also emphasized the BRI and the SCO perspective of sustainable development. Special attention was paid to the Chinese concepts of the SCO "Common Home" and "Community with a Shared Future for Mankind." The conference also discussed the main issues of China's modernization in the domestic field, in particular, Beijing's efforts to solve the problems of uneven development, the development of China's ethnic regions, China's policy on national and global economic growth, as well as issues related to the philosophical aspects of Chinese modernization. The participants of the conference managed to conceptualize Beijing's doctrine on modernization.

The discussions led to the following conclusion: China has formed its vision of current international relations, the global security system, universal human problems, in a word, the fate of the planet and humanity. According to this vision, humanity has faced serious challenges: polarization, conflicts, wars, displaced persons, refugees, starving people, difficulties in governance, etc. Non-traditional challenges, such as artificial intelligence (AI), climate change, biosecurity issues, etc., have also emerged. The future of human civilization is at stake. China has successfully done its homework, modernized the country, and is striving to export its experience of modernization. In the process, China has invested in international

development programs and high technologies, created infrastructures, and locally supported partners and friendly governments worldwide.

As a result, China has acquired a vast influence on global developments. The Chinese vision of the world is also a globalist program, an alternative to Western globalization. In any case, China offers mechanisms for peaceful coexistence, a community of shared destiny, based on Chinese philosophical theses. The extent to which China will succeed in creating an international consensus on its vision remains to be seen.

It should be noted that the conference had not only scientific but also political significance. The interaction of diplomats and the scientific community is essential, stressing the importance of “scientific diplomacy” adopted by the Institute of Oriental Studies in recent years. Currently, the IOS is trying to keep on its agenda studies related to the main trends in the development of China as a superpower and a state that impacts global power processes. Another important significance of the conference is that Armenian and Chinese specialists discussed joint topics of mutual interest. In a changing world, Armenian experts need to share their approaches and scientific results with foreign specialists, including Chinese ones.

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