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ПЕРСПЕКТИВЫ РАЗВИТИЯ ЕВРАЗИЙСКОГО ТРАНСПОРТНОГО ПРОСТРАНСТВА В УСЛОВИЯХ АКТУАЛЬНЫХ ГЕОПОЛИТИЧЕСКИХ ПАРАДИГМ

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Аннотация: Статья рассматривает перспективы развития евразийского транспортного пространства под влиянием китайской стратегии «Один пояс – один путь». После официального анонсирования инициативы ОПОП в 2013 году и последовавшего вслед за ним ряда визитов, которые лидер КНР Си Цзиньпин нанес в республики Центральной Азии, дипломатический статус отношений Китая и республик региона повысился до уровня стратегического партнерства. Формат этого партнерства продолжает развиваться, подписываются новые соглашения и договора, влекущие еще большую связанность с китайской экономикой и дальнейшее углубление взаимоотношений. Для Китая весьма типичны программы субсидирования различных видов экономической деятельности, которые на определенных этапах считаются приоритетными для государства. В полной мере это относится и к модернизации перевозок, повышению их эффективности и экологичности. И самые масштабные программы субсидирования были реализованы Китаем именно для модернизации морских перевозок. Планы Китая по укреплению своих позиций в зоне Суэцкого канала, а также объем инвестиций в развитие морских перевозок свидетельствуют о том, что сухопутные грузоперевозки пока еще не стали приоритетом для КНР. Между тем, география Евразийского экономического союза и Соглашение о сопряжении с китайским проектом позволяют ему рассчитывать на статус территории сухопутного транзита грузов, направляемых по маршруту Китай-ЕС-Китай.
Ключевые слова: ЕАЭС, Один пояс – один путь, транспортное пространство, грузоперевозки, Китай, Европа

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PROSPECTS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE EURASIAN TRANSPORT SPACE IN THE CONTEXT OF CURRENT GEOPOLITICAL PARADIGM

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Annotation: The article examines the prospects for the development of the Eurasian transport space under the influence of the Chinese strategy “One Belt One Road”. After officially announcing the initiative of the OBOR in 2013 and the subsequent series of visits that Chinese leader Xi Jinping made to the Central Asian republics, the diplomatic status of relations between China and the republics of the region has increased to the level of strategic partnership. The format of this partnership continues to evolve, new agreements and contracts are signed, which further connects with the Chinese economy and further deepens the relationship. Programs of subsidizing various types of economic activity, which are considered a priority for the state at certain stages, are very typical for China. This fully applies to the modernization of transport, increasing its efficiency and environmental friendliness. The most extensive subsidy programs were implemented by China specifically for the modernization of sea freight. China’s plans to strengthen its positions in the Suez Canal zone, as well as the volume of investments in the development of sea transportation, indicate that land freight has not yet become a priority for the PRC. Meanwhile, the geography of the Eurasian Economic Union and the Agreement on the interface with the Chinese project allow it to count on the status of the land transit territory for goods sent by the China-EU-China route.
Keywords: EAEU, “One Belt One Road”, transport space, cargo transportation, China, Europe

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Introduction

Modern Eurasian space, especially the post-Soviet part of it, is now dominated by two conceptual models that very soon can acquire the status of the main Eurasian political paradigms. On the one hand, it is the unifying idea of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), the development of which is accompanied by colossal work on political harmonization and bureaucratic (legal) support for the processes of integration between participating countries. Additional ideological support of the EAEU is the geopolitical doctrine of the "Big Eurasia" formulated by the Russian side, claiming the status of a civilizational doctrine. On the other hand, this is a powerful advancement of the Chinese project of the One Belt One Road Initiative (OBOR), which has become today the main agenda for the development of infrastructures and digital technologies of countries lying within the declared Silk Road. At the same time, the Chinese side consciously denies the association of its project with geopolitical contours, and in rhetoric, connotations are avoided, according to which it would be possible to read out the possibilities of political influence on the countries that supported OBOR. Meanwhile, not mentioning political meanings does not mean their absence.

"One Belt One Road Initiative" and EAEU relations

It should be noted that in the English literature, the name "One Belt One Road Initiative[1]" (OBOR) has recently been replaced by the *official abbreviation* BRI (The Belt and Road Initiative), but many official documents of the EAEU states include the "Silk Road Economic Belt" (SREB). Often, the Russian-speaking part of researchers, experts, journalists use EAEU, referring to the initiative of the OBOR in general (and not just the land portion of it). Therefore, within the framework of this work, the abbreviation OBOR (the Chinese name closest in meaning) is used, and SREB, because this abbreviation is widely used.

After officially announcing the initiative of the OBOR in 2013 and the subsequent series of visits that Chinese leader Xi Jinping made to the Central Asian republics (CA), the diplomatic status of relations between China and the republics of the region has increased to the level of *strategic partnership*. The format of this partnership continues to evolve, new agreements and contracts are signed, which further connects with the Chinese economy and further deepens the relationship. So, in Kazakhstan, the standard strategic partnership, laid down for diplomatic use, in 2016 moved to a new level – the interface of the national development strategy (Nurly Zhol) with SREB. In Kyrgyzstan in 2014, a bilateral agreement on further deepening of the strategic partnership was signed.

As for Russia, in 2001 the Treaty on Good-Neighborliness, Friendship and Cooperation was signed with China, which, it is believed, laid the main directions for further bilateral cooperation between the countries. *"...Modern Russian-Chinese relations are officially defined by the parties as a comprehensive, equitable, trusting partnership and strategic interaction..."*[2] To date, several dozens of bilateral documents on cooperation have been signed, including large-scale (in fuel and nuclear energy, aircraft building, rocket engine building, navigation systems, construction of infrastructure facilities).[3]

Similar episodes occurred over time in the rest of the EAEU countries. A declaration was signed with Armenia in 2015, the text of which defined the attitude to the projects of SREB: "*...The parties noted that the initiative of joint creation of the economic belt of the Silk Road provides new historical opportunities for the all-around cooperation of the two countries. The parties will work actively to implement the agreements already concluded, jointly promote the creation of the economic belt of the Silk Road, thereby opening up new broad prospects for bilateral cooperation ...*"[4] And although trade with China in Armenia is rather small, (about 400-450 million dollars), the leadership of the republic counts on attracting Chinese investments in infrastructure projects, including the construction of railway "Iran-Armenia".[5]

Based on the results of the visit to the PRC, the President of Belarus (2013) signed a joint declaration on the establishment of a comprehensive strategic partnership between the countries. In 2015, a joint declaration was signed on further development and deepening of the relations of a comprehensive strategic partnership, as well as over 50 documents on a wide range of bilateral cooperation. At the same time, Belarus and China formally confirmed the agreement on the joint implementation of the SREB initiative.[6] Belarus became the first country to sign a memorandum with the China Silk Road Fund.[7] In 2016, the Chinese-Belarusian relations received a new status – "*a trustful all-round strategic partnership and mutually beneficial cooperation*", and also joint in so-called *"All-weather friendship"* [Glinkina, Turaeva, Yakovlev, 2016. P.37-38].

Traditionally, the determining factor in the development of transport routes throughout the Eurasian space is trade between China and Europe. The trade turnover between the EU and China has been maintained at 600 billion dollars in recent years. Most of the Chinese trade in Europe falls on Germany (38%), the Netherlands (more than 16%) and France (12%), the Baltic countries and Southern Europe.[8] About 98% of

1 带一路 is literally translated from Chinese as "one belt on one road".

2 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russian Federation. On the Russian-Chinese strategic partnership relations // http://www.mid.ru/strategiceskoe-partnerstvo-s-kitaem.

3 Interstate relations between Russia and China. September 3, 2017 // http://ria.ru/spravka/20170903/1501384302.html.

4 Armenia and China signed the declaration on development and deepening of relations. March 25, 2015 // https://regnum.ru/news/1908815.html.

5 The PRC and Armenia celebrated the 25th anniversary of establishing diplomatic relations. April 6, 2017 // http://regnum.ru/news/2259438.html.

6 The Embassy of the Republic of Belarus in the PRC. On the political relations of Belarus and China // http://china.mfa.gov.by/ru/bilateral_relations.

7 China remains the key strategic and trading partner of Belarus. March 24, 2016 // http://www.belta.by/economics/view/kitaj-ostaetsja-kljuchevym-strategicheskim-i-torgovym-partnerom-belarusi-jaroshenko-186750-2016.

8 Silk Road: "In short term, Russia will benefit the most". November 12, 2016 // http://regnum.ru/news/economy/2204420.html.

the volume of mutual deliveries between the EU and China is served by sea transport, 1.5-2% falls on aviation transport and 0.5-1% - on rail transportation. In 2017, the freight turnover of China's largest ports grew by 6.4% - to 8.62 billion tons.[9] For comparison: the total cargo turnover of Russian seaports in 2017 was 787 million tons (almost 11 times less than Chinese).[10]

State subsidizing programs in China

Little is written about this in the Russian-speaking research segment, but for China, programs of subsidizing various types of economic activity are very typical, which are considered a priority for the state at certain stages. This fully applies to the modernization of transport, increasing its efficiency and environmental friendliness. The most extensive subsidy programs were implemented by China specifically for the modernization of *sea freight*.

In 2009, China started subsidizing efforts to reduce the environmental burden of sea freight by replacing old cargo ships and tankers with new ones, which the Chinese Ministry of Finance reported only in June 2010. [Analysis..., 2017. P.21-22]. More broadly, this topic was covered in 2013, when, as part of an extensive government program for subsidizing the utilization (Chinese government's scrapping subsidy program), the subsidizing program of shipping companies was officially launched to modernize the fleet, dispose of old ships early and get rid of excess capacity. For each gross ton of dismantling of old ships, companies were allocated 1,500 yuan (about 240 US dollars).

At the end of two years, the program was recognized effective, and in 2015 it was decided to extend it for another 2 years[11] (until the end of 2017). In 2017, Chinese industry experts predicted an end to government subsidies for shipping companies due to their declining efficiency[12], but this is only the part of the program that affects the modernization of the fleet. In a broad sense, the state program of subsidizing recycling in China continues. According to the priorities chosen in 2018, the PRC leadership is increasingly concerned about ecology. For example, within the framework of this state program, starting from January 1, 2018, imports of a number of materials (solid waste) that do not meet government recycling requirements are limited.[13]

To estimate, how many grants have been received by Chinese sea carriers starting from 2013 till 2017 and not reading sources in Chinese, is not easy. However, some data on the amount of this subsidy can be found in English-speaking media. So, in 2014, four large shipping companies in China received government subsidies worth 293.3 million dollars.[14] Only two companies – China Shipping Development Company (CSDC) and China Shipping Container Lines (CSCL) in 2015 received targeted subsidies for amounts of about 169 million dollars.[15] And for the first half of 2016, Beijing spent about 190 million dollars[16] to subsidize transport companies. Even with these fragmentary data, it can be assumed that only 800,000 - 1 billion dollars have been allocated to subsidize the commercial fleet from 2013 alone.

By investing such a large amount of money in modernizing Chinese ships and tankers, one of the pursued aims was, of course, to increase the capacity of delivering cargo by sea. Moreover, with significant investments by China in 2015, the Suez Canal double (the New Suez Canal) was launched. As a result of ensuring the passage of vessels in two directions, the throughput of the entire canal has almost doubled, from 49 to 97 ships per day [Chizhkov, 2015. P.9-15].

The Suez Canal operations

The Suez Canal is the reference point of the so-called Sea Silk Road (part of the OBOR). The Chinese side has embarked on an unprecedented investment in the naval forces to ensure the security of this trade corridor, both on the way to the Suez Canal and in its immediate vicinity.[17] In June 2017, the first Chinese foreign military base was opened in Djibouti, which according to the data of the Chinese Ministry of Defense will be "used to protect ships, rescue and anti-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden and off the coast of Somalia".[18] Djibouti is a country where several foreign military bases are represented; however, it will be fair to note that China has the greatest motivation to protect the trade gateway to Europe.

Cargo transportation by land part of the OBOR is also one of the priority development directions for China. Despite the fact that the volumes of cargo transportation are still incomparable with transportation by sea, the data for 2017

9 Cargo turnover in China's ports for 2017 grew by 6.4% - to 8.62 billion tons. January 25, 2018 // http://portnews.ru/news/252451/.

10 Overview of cargo turnover of Russian seaports. Results of 2017. January 26, 2018 // http://www.rzd-partner.ru/wate-transport/reviews/obzor-gruzooborota-morskikh-portov-rossii-itogi-2017-goda/.

11 China to subsidize ship scrapping for two more years. June 24, 2015 // http://worldmaritimenews.com/archives/164495/china-to-subsidize-ship-scrapping-for-two-more-years/.

12 China's scrap-and-build policy may be discontinued. September 03, 2017 // http://www.seatrade-maritime.com/news/asia/china-s-scrap-and-build-policy-may-be-discontinued.html.

13 China continues scrap scrutiny in 2018. March 9, 2018 // http://www.recyclingtoday.com/article/china-scrap-imports-blue-skies-2018/.

14 China awards subsidies for scrapping old ships. October 1, 2014 // http://worldmaritimenews.com/archives/138395/china-awards-subsidies-for-scrapping-old-ships/.

15 CSDC and CSCL receive $169,000,000 in scrap-and-build subsidies. July 29, 2015 // http://worldmaritimenews.com/archives/167871/csdc-and-cscl-receive-usd-169m-in-scrap-and-build-subsidies/.

16 Beijing pays China carriers $189,000,000 in scrapping subsidies. July 21, 2016 // http://fairplay.ihs.com/commerce/article/4272061/beijing-pays-china-carriers-usd189-million-in-scrapping-subsidies.

17 Chinese guard: destroyer ship Type 055 will guard the gate to the Suez Canal. June 28, 2017 // http://rueconomics.ru/257131-kitaiskii-strazhnik-esminec-type-055-budet-ohranyat-vorota-v-suetskii-kanal).

18 China opened its first foreign military base in Djibouti. August 1, 2017 // https://iz.ru/626920/2017-08-01/kitai-otkryl-v-dzhibuti-svoiu-pervuiu-zarubezhnuiu-voennuiu-bazu.

on transport enterprises of China, meanwhile, show that the freight turnover of railway transport grew by 13.3%, motor transport – by 8.9%, air transport – by 10%, with an increase in total freight turnover by 5.9%.[19] The increase in the share of land routes in the transit of goods from China to Europe has grown to 2%, with 70% of this traffic falling on trans-Kazakhstan routes.[20] In 2018, China does not intend to reduce the expenses of transport infrastructure development. The planned projects include the construction of 5,000 km of new high-speed roads, the modernization of 216,000 km of roads and the increase in container turnover in seaports by more than 15%.[21]

The EAEU countries and the Union supranational regulatory body – the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC) conduct a massive, complex work on coordinating transport policies aimed at ensuring economic integration, the consistent and phased formation of the Single Transport Space [Transport..., 2015. P.23]. Despite this, and the seeming willingness of the EAEU to respond to external, including transport, challenges, as well as some positive trends of recent times, in the process of developing the transport space between the EAEU countries there are objective difficulties and contradictions.

Conclusion

At the official level, in the supranational body of the EAEU – EEC – the threat of such competition, in particular, for the ITC routes, is denied. Meanwhile, together with the Chinese side already at the stage of selection and actualization of the infrastructure projects portfolio of the EAEU, which is currently taking place within the framework of the interfacing implementation[22], competition between the states related to transit has been laid. And if this competition in short term does not affect the common Eurasian vector of integration, then in the future the financing of the ITC may very strongly affect the economic interaction of the allied countries. In addition, the issue of priorities for the participating countries and the selection of promising partners for them are important. What is more important – the geopolitical contours that are set by the leader of the region in the person of Russia or the private (national in this case) interests pursued by each of the countries?

We are witnessing the situation in which Russia has a significant geopolitical weight in the region and the potential to formulate civilizational doctrines of involving the Eurasian states under the roof of the idea of a broader integration path [Latukhina, 2016], but there is no economic power, to keep up the proposed superstructure with a strong base. At the same time, China, while not openly exporting ideologies and doctrines, is gradually buying up large companies in the countries of the region, lending to their governments, gaining access to natural resources, financing large-scale infrastructure projects, and building strong bilateral relations with countries of the Eurasian space.

It should be noted that the scale of bilateral cooperation and the level of China's penetration into the republics of Central Asia (and even Belarus) is difficult to compare with its beginning movements in Armenia or a much more cautious economic rapprochement with Russia. Moreover, the role of the guarantor of security in the region and Russia's historical leadership position up to 2015, created uncertainty for the rest of the post-Soviet countries in choosing the vectors of their foreign economic policy. After signing the Agreement on conjugation of the EAEU and SREB in 2015 between the leaders of Russia and the PRC, the deepening of the mutual relations of the allied countries with China on a bilateral basis not only ceased to contradict their involvement in the EAEU, but also completely fell into the idea of conjugation. Obviously, this work will continue to be conducted parallel to the work on interfacing at the level of supranational structures. Therefore, the contradictions between the countries of the EAEU and the trends in the further development of the Eurasian space are laid in the format itself, when the countries independently develop relations with China and open projects for the construction of national transport infrastructures for it.

19 The freight turnover of China's transport for 2017 grew by 5.9%. January 24, 2018 // http://infranews.ru/novosti/statistic/50642-gruzooborot-transporta-kitaya-za-2017-god-vyros-na-59/.

20 Press Service of JSC "NC "Kazakhstan Temir Zholy". The investment opportunities of transport and logistics facilities in Kazakhstan are presented in Shanghai. April 12, 2018 // http://www.railways.kz/en/news/azastanny-kliktiklogistikaly-nysandaryn-investitsiya-lau-mmkindigi-shankhayda-tanystyryldy.

21 China does not intend to reduce investment in the development of transport infrastructure in 2018. December 25, 2017 // http://www.rzd-partner.ru/logistics/news/kitay-ne-nameren-sokrashchat-investitsii-v-razvitie-transportnoy-infrastruktury-v-2018-godu/.

22 Nurakhmetov E. We have to form a common transport area (an interview with the Director of the Department of transport and infrastructure of EEC). February 26, 2018 // http://www.rzd-partner.ru/logistics/interview/nam-predstoit-sformirovat-edinoe-transportnoe-prostranstvo/.

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