

Russia's economic interests and the development of transport and transit systems in Afghanistan and other Central Asian countries

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Abstract

The research is aimed at identifying and analyzing Russia's economic interests in the process of developing transport and transit systems (TTS) in Afghanistan and other Central Asian (CA) countries. **Goal.** To prove that it is in Russia's economic interests to stabilize the military-political situation in Afghanistan and ensure inclusive growth and sustainable development of the Central Asian countries through the implementation of large-scale infrastructure and integration projects in the region, the formation of high-tech TTS, and the construction of trans-Afghan railways. **Tasks.** To identify the historical and economic prerequisites for the transport and communication interaction between Russia and Afghanistan; to determine the prospects for the implementation and directions for increasing the transport and transit potential of Afghanistan, as well as Afghanistan's accession to the Initiative of the PRC «Belt and Road»; to describe and analyze the positions of India and Iran on the development of the transport direction «North – South» through the territory of Afghanistan; to reveal the problems and prospects for the functioning of the Lapis Lazuli (Jade) corridor; to identify the strengths and weaknesses of current Trans-Afghan railways projects; to give a description of the most important features of the construction of transport infrastructure facilities in Afghanistan. **Methodology.** The research uses the methods of evolutionary and institutional theory, the theory of industrial and technological balance and technical and economic structures, world-system and political-economic analysis, historical approach, analytical and expert assessments. **Results.** It is shown that for Afghanistan, participation in the development of transnational (international) transport corridors will, in addition to obtaining economic benefits from the realization of transport and transit potential, contribute to the stabilization of the situation inside the country. It is proved that the formation of the Lapis Lazuli Corridor for the Central Asian states can be considered as an addition to the Chinese Initiative «Belt and Road», in the process of increasing traffic along its routes, Afghanistan can turn into a transit hub of Euro-Asian transport and trade communications, while the functioning of the corridor cannot cardinaly affect the socio-economic development and ensuring inclusive growth of Afghanistan; It is determined that the most feasible project in modern conditions is the construction of the Trans-Afghan Railway along the Mazar-I-Sharif-Kabul- Peshawar route through the Khyber Passage. **Conclusions.** The development of the TTS of Afghanistan and other Central Asian countries will become an innovative and infrastructural basis for establishing partnership relations between states with different levels of socio-economic development,

the spread of central government to remote territories of underdeveloped countries, and the creation of new jobs, which meets Russia's economic interests. This requires the organization of multilateral cooperation in the transport and transit sphere on the principles of interstate-corporate partnership.

Keywords: *world economy, evolutionary and institutional theory, transport and transit systems, international transport corridors, Chinese Initiative «Belt and Road», interstate-corporate partnership, railway transport, road transport, Central Asia, Afghanistan, economic and mathematical modeling, high-tech transformation.*

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