

Session B: Transportation and Distribution

Summary

In this session a total of four experts from the ROK, China, Mongolia, and Russia undertook current situation reports and proposals on the direction for international cooperation in the area of distribution, based on the international strategies of each nation. Afterwards we undertook a question-and-answer session, taking questions from the audience.

Ahn Byung-Min, Chief Research Director, Center of Eurasian Infrastructure, Korea Transport Institute (KOTI), introduced the direction of ROK policy under the title “The ROK’s Northeast Asian Transportation Policy and the Eurasia Initiative”. Based on the “National Territorial Plan” and the “National Logistics Master Plan” which are top-level plans covering international distribution, the current Park Geun-hye administration has determined the promotional task of “promoting the Northeast Asia Peace and Cooperation Initiative and expanding Eurasian cooperation”. The two keynotes in the administration’s Northeast Asian transportation policy are the “SRX (Silk Road Express) Project” and the “Eurasia Initiative”. The former has the meaning of “with a basis in the Trans-Korean Railway and the transcontinental railway lines, expanding the cheap, safe and fast international multimodal transportation network connected to Eurasia”. The latter proposes the direction for developing Eurasia into “a Continent that is truly One”, “a Continent of Creativity”, and “a Continent of Peace”. In the background to this initiative are the Korean Peninsula trust-building process concept and the vision for Northeast Asian economic cooperation. According to Mr. Ahn, the “Rajin–Khasan Logistics Project” to bring into the ROK Russian-produced coal via a DPRK port is one representative example of the Eurasia Initiative.

Wang Yanqing, Researcher, Institute of Comprehensive Transportation, National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC), China, discussed “The Construction of a Northeast Asian International Distribution System based on the One Belt, One Road Strategy and an International Industrial Network”. Mr. Wang, based on the “Vision and Actions on Jointly Building the Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st-Century Maritime Silk Road” which the Chinese government officially announced, pointed out the necessity for a “Northeast Asian international industrial network” and the “creation of cross-border industrial aggregations”. As Northeast Asian international distribution routes he noted: the Trans-

Siberian Railway distribution route, the first Eurasian land bridge; the Suifenhe–Manzhouli integrated distribution route, which is the first branch line thereof; the second branch line of the Ulaanbaatar–Tianjin Port railway distribution route; and the China–Russia–DPRK cross-border integrated distribution route of the Tumen River region and the China–DPRK cross-border integrated distribution route of the Dandong region. In order to advance the construction of a Northeast Asian international industrial network, they must nurture cross-border distribution aggregations centered on the areas that are to form the core of cross-border cooperation, such as the kouan [ports of entry] on the land borders, the opening of ports, and central cities. In addition he proposed collective action in all directions, such as the construction of an international coordination mechanism, the establishment of a cross-border distribution investment group, the nurturing of international distribution transportation entities, the improvement of cross-border distribution routes, the signing of agreements for rendering transportation smooth, and the construction of international multimodal transportation systems.

B. Otgonsuren, Researcher, Center for China and East Asian Studies, Institute for Strategic Studies, Mongolia, made a report entitled “Mongolia–China–Russia Economic Corridor Infrastructure Cooperation”. Although for the three countries of Mongolia, China, and Russia there are difficulties in certain areas including the investment capacity for infrastructure upgrading, and differences in the gauge of railway tracks and railway transportation capacity, they are advancing work toward the formation of an economic corridor connecting the three countries. In order for this economic corridor to bring results, the cooperation of all three countries under the same course, a series of strategic links, and some practical actions are necessary. For example, the integrated coordination of the activities of the three countries, and the creation of a legal environment and institutional structures are necessary. In addition, there are also the problems of the railway gauge and rail transportation capacities differing, and that the introduction of new technologies is slow. It is necessary to connect the newly discovered natural resource deposits with the existing mainline railway networks. The three countries need to examine the resolution of railway tariffs and other related issues. Via the proposed economic corridor, the opportunity will emerge for constructing an intergovernmental

multilateral policy and communication mechanism. At the same time, in order for this economic corridor to function effectively, it is necessary to establish a unified institution which carries out work jointly.

Mikhail Kholosha, Director, Transport Development Department, Far Eastern Marine Research, Design and Technology Institute (in Russia), introduced the transportation infrastructure development situation for the Russian Far East and new concepts in Primorsky Krai. He spoke on the Russian Far East, and placed particular emphasis on the southern part of Primorsky Krai. His awareness of the issues lies in how to align the concepts which the various nations have offered in Northeast Asia and Eurasia. The promotion of these development concepts based on their compatibility and complementarity will be a constructive policy. Then it will be possible for Primorsky Krai to play a special role in logistics and transportation

routes. Furthermore, with the transformation of the GTI into a more effective cooperation structure, the GTI will also play an important role. He proposed a new international transportation corridor model integrating the transportation network of Primorsky Krai, and he emphasized that this was attractive to a broad group of Russian and overseas potential partners. In addition, he called for international cooperation for this model.

In the question-and-answer session there were questions from the audience on the impact of low energy prices, the role of international financial institutions, the significance of new border crossing points in Russia, the current situation for cooperation between the ROK and the DPRK, the transportation corridors whose development should be prioritized, and the timespan for the realization of the concepts.

ARAI, Hirofumi
Director and Senior Research Fellow, Research
Division, ERINA

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