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The scientific journal is published since 2011 at the "Publishing House "Science Today". Translated (eng.) version of the journal is published since 2016. Since its inception, the journal was guided by high scientific and ethical standards and today it is one of the leading political science journals in Russia.

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NORTHERN SEA ROUTE – BRIDGE BETWEEN THE EAST AND THE WEST: PROSPECTS AND REALITIES DEVELOPMENT OF THE TRANS-ARCTIC

The Northern Sea Route, running along the Russian coastline along the seas of the Arctic ocean, is becoming one of the factors that increase the importance of the Arctic region. The establishment of a year-round water transport flow along the Northern latitude would contribute to the development of the economic component of the region and have a favorable impact on the socio-social environment. The situation with the NSR development is of strategic importance not only for the Russian Federation, which has plans for the development of the sea highway as a transit route from East to West and provision of services in the form of escorting merchant ships by Russian icebreakers, but also for all countries involved in the maritime transport. In connection with the development of the Northern Sea Route, there is a number of issues representing a strategic challenge for the Russian Federation, including global warming, the sovereignty of the NSR, scientific expeditions of non-Arctic countries and the military security of the region. The policy of introducing non-Arctic states into international relations is double-sided: on the one hand, it is connected with the emergence of new sources of financing and technological support that is of tangible importance for the five Arctic countries, as well as opening of new markets for the Russian Federation oil, and gas, an unconditional victory of the Russian policy against increasing the influence of third countries in the region.

The adoption of official strategic documents by non-Arctic countries indicates their desire to be present in the region and to build a long-term policy, which is a signal for the Russian Federation.

The Northern sea route, which starts from Murmansk and actually ends at the port of Pevek, is a sea route from Europe to Asia, forming a wide waterway in the Arctic from anywhere in the world, changing the status of the Arctic waters to the Trans-Arctic.

Key words: *the Arctic region, the Northern Sea Route.*

Recently, the status of the Arctic region has changed and acquired a significant level, increasing on the scale of the entire planet. Of course, all this comes from challenges that threaten the entire world, for example, global warming, which for the time being will always be a hot topic, due to the low effectiveness and complexity of measures to counter this process. At the international conference “Arctic Frontiers,” held in the beginning of 2020, in the Norwegian city of Tromsø, officials, scientists, experts, international experts, diplomats came to the conclusion that there are no problems in the Arctic region that cannot be resolved, except the issue of global warming. The current situation shows that the fact of rising temperatures in the Arctic is recorded, and with the emerging rate of growth, the melting of glaciers in the Arctic seas and the Arctic ocean is a matter of time, which will invariably open access to the sea water routes along the Northern latitude. In addition, there is also an opinion that this process of raising the overall temperature in the Arctic is cyclical, and after a while, everything will return to normal, which will make it difficult to open a promising water route [3].

Goals of the research and relevance of the topic:

The article examines the implementation of the Russian policy on the development of water transport route “the Northern Sea Route” and studies it from the perspective of new threats connected with the probable risks of failure of the planned traffic volumes on the SMP highway due to the recently signed OPEC+ oil deals and their impact on the Arctic strategy of the Russian Federation.

Relevance of the research is to study international economic processes in oil transactions and their impact on the Arctic strategy of the Russian Federation.

Tasks:

- 1 Analysis of the state and possible scenarios for the development of the situation in the Arctic region.
2. Extrapolation of the OPEC+ oil deal on the SMP activities and development.
3. Assessment of the state and prospects for improving efficiency.

Research methods:

Research methods are a combination of a political and economic approach. It is planned to use system analysis as a key research method. In addition, it is planned to use a number of general scientific methods: the method of comparative analysis, the method of content and event analysis, the political-prognostic method and others.

Conclusions: The results of the study can be used by various departments and organizations to forecast the situation in the Arctic region.

Strategic planning in the SMP development. You can learn about the increasing status of the Arctic strategy in the international relations thanks to the increase of political ties and research conferences, the adoption of new strategic documents by an increasing number of countries, as well as their updating for the second or even third time by the Arctic five countries and non-Arctic states for the sake of systematic planning of their foreign policy in the region.

The Russian Federation has big plans for the Northern sea route, the implementation of which is planned in stages. First of all, in order to implement its projects, Russia needs to update its icebreaker fleet because of the wear and failure of some nuclear icebreakers created during the Soviet Union. By 2024, it is planned to put into operation new vessels of the project 22220 “Arctica,” “Siberia,” “Ural,” which will significantly strengthen the nuclear icebreaker fleet of the Russian Federation [4]. The nuclear icebreaker project 10510 “Leader” is also under construction. It will have a capacity of 120 MW and will be able to break four meters thick ice, opening year-round sea communication in the NSR. The establishment of the year-round sea traffic from Europe to Asia will allow the volume of cargo turnover to reach 80 million tons by 2024, followed by an increase to 120 million tons by 2030, and 160 million by 2035. According to KPMG experts, the contribution of the Northern Sea Route to Russia’s GDP will be up to 2% per year (by 2050), and the budget will benefit 4.4 trillion rubles from tax revenues and increased dividends. If in 2018, the total volume of trade turnover amounted to 20 million tons, and in November 2019, we fulfilled the task of achieving the turnover of 26 million tons. It should be noted that the set bar is high, but, according to experts, it is achievable due to the export of resources from the region, the transportation of which will make up the majority turnover, leaving a small share for transit transport. In the long term, it is planned to increase the number of international transit traffic, from which the Russian side will receive payment for passage and providing nuclear icebreakers as escorts [2]. In this connection, it is planned to create a year-round sea route from Europe to Asia along the NSR and position it as an alternative to the southern waterway through the Suez Canal. In reality, to achieve these goals is rather difficult, since in practice international transit through the Arctic is not in demand, in 2018 it amounted to only 0.49 million tons and in 2019 - 0.43 million tons. These figures constitute a negligible part of the entire volume of annual turnover. The situation is aggravated by the skeptical attitude of the Western companies and countries to the Russian Federation and its projects that affects the NSR program. In the fall of 2019, the company “Nike”, as well as one of the largest container shipping organizations SMA CMG refused to use the Northern Sea Route, arguing that their actions contribute to the non-pollution of the environment, which sounds very unconvincingly. Despite all the circumstances, the Russian Federation is actively developing the NSR, creating and improving an increasing number of ports, which, of course, affects both human capital and life in the Arctic. On March 5, 2020, the President signed a new strategy for the development of the Arctic territories of the Russian Federation until 2035, which lacks the promise of developing and increasing transit routes through the NSR, which puts the liquidity of the sea route at a standstill. The Russian economy is focused only on the extractive infrastructure, in which there will be no stability, and, accordingly, no long-term planning is reliable. The recent oil wars are proof of this, they directly affect the strategic planning of the Russian Federation. At risk

is the issue of achieving the planned 80 million tons of cargo transportation on the NSR. Transportation of oil constitutes a major part of the total number of tons of cargo, oil is transported from the Arctic Gate oil loading terminal and by the sea tankers. Every year, this terminal ships up to 8 million tons of oil transported along the NSR route, including amounts transported in 2018 and 2019. This amount will decrease or even stop after the signing of the OPEC+ agreement. The Russian side has made a bet on LNG in the Arctic, which in the future will make up the majority of traffic through the NSR [7]. According to the strategy, LNG production in the Arctic will grow to 46.7 million tons in 2024, 73.5 million in 2030 and 120 million in 2035. The remaining 15 percent of tons of cargo will be oil, which is already losing its importance due to the oversupply of oil in the world. OPEC+ countries have agreed to reduce their production by 10 million barrels per day, of which Russia accounts for 2 million barrel per day, 0.7 million less than the original figures. The OPEC+ deal, which limited the volume of oil produced in order to keep the oil prices at an acceptable level, has been in effect since 2017. In early March 2020, the OPEC+ agreement participants decided to reduce their oil production in the face of sagging demand, they did not agree to extend the deal, and it ceased to operate on April 1 [6].

Conclusion. The Northern Sea Route is the main sea communication in the Russian Arctic, the development of which would actually be an impetus to the development of the entire Arctic. Improving the standard of living directly depends on the establishment of logistics routes delivering the benefits of a civilized society to the remote areas of the Arctic region [1].

The visualization of the Northern sea route as a potential competitor to the Suez Canal may become a reality in the future. Modern realities demonstrate that competition between these two sea routes is not possible, even at the turn of 2035. It is noteworthy that the Suez Canal is a transit highway, and the NSR is only developing as an international transit direction and meets certain difficulties in implementing this project. The NSR will serve as a highway for the export of natural resources by Russian companies, and international transit traffic will account for a small share of the total volume of transported cargo [5]. As a result of Russia's dependence on the oil price policy, and the connection of all future projects in the Russian Arctic with the production infrastructure, the Russian Federation does not have a solid surface in view of the fluctuation in oil and gas prices. The goals of the established strategies may be changed due to the non-compliance with the established standards, which, in conjunction with the lack of transit cargo transportation along the NSR route, creates a real threat to the development of the NSR and the strategy of the Russian Federation. To resolve this issue the Russian Federation should not give up the goal of establishing a transit highway of the NSR and make concessions to Western logistics companies, in the form of granting free passage to cargo ships for up to 10 years in order to strengthen the reputation of this route, which will certainly attract attention for transit cargo transportation and increase their number.

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