УДК 33.339.94

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Some aspects of functioning of the international strategic alliances

The modern processes of internationalization of the economic systems became the reason of serious changes in a global management system. Growth of the interrelation and interdependence of economic structures has led to the new forms of organization of the world cooperation. According to the world analytical agencies, the greatest number of alliances is created in the oil and gas sphere. Alliances of this sector take key positions in the world ratings directly on several indicators. In the article some essential aspects of functioning of the international strategic alliances – a new form of the inter-company interaction are considered. The activities of multinational corporations as the most striking and successful examples of participants of the modern alliances are analysed. Prerequisites to formation of the international alliances are considered. The importance of activities of the alliances for national and regional economies is marked. Some directions of development of the modern strategic alliances are given.

Некоторые аспекты функционирования международных стратегических альянсов

Современные процессы интернационализации экономических систем стали причиной серьезных изменений в глобальной системе управления. Рост взаимосвязи и взаимозависимости экономических структур привел к новым формам организации мирового сотрудничества. По данным мировых аналитических агентств, наибольшее количество альянсов создано в нефтегазовой сфере. Альянсы этого сектора занимают ключевые позиции в мировых рейтингах сразу по нескольким показателям. В статье рассмотрены некоторые существенные аспекты функционирования международных стратегических альянсов – новой формы межфирменного взаимодействия. Проанализирована деятельность транснациональных корпораций как наиболее ярких и успешных примеров участников современных альянсов. Рассмотрены предпосылки к образованию международных альянсов. Отмечена значимость деятельности альянсов для национальной и региональной экономик. Представлены некоторые направления развития современных стратегических альянсов.

Keywords: *international strategic alliances, internationalization, development strategy, world cooperation, oil-and-gas sector.*

Ключевые слова: *международные стратегические альянсы, интернационализация, стратегия развития, мировое сотрудничество, нефтегазовый сектор.*

Strategic objective of any company are the growth and development of the enterprise, it creates the potential for an increase in the profit level and maintenance of the competitiveness. High dynamics of development of the world market forces the companies to look for the new organizational forms of interaction with the external environment, to develop new strategies of occupation of the market, preserving and strengthening of the competitive advantages.

Strategic alliances became a studying object of many theories: transactional expenses, market theory, theory of knowledge, resource theory and other. Such forms of cooperation as a merge, accession, absorption, were too tough and bulky and have ceased to meet requirements of the present. The listed forms required big costs for consolidation of the production capacities, restructuring of an organizational form of the enterprise, in the majority without achieving due the synergy result. Softer, flexible forms of integration – the international strategic alliances which have opened the new horizons of opportunities of getting of the competitive advantages, strengthenings of the core competencies have succeeded.

Strategic alliances strengthen centralization of the equity, influence the forming of demand and competition, creating at the same time illusion of the choice of the best goods, service. The researchers note prompt increase in a number of multinational corporations, international strategic alliances in the last 30 years. Heads of states, territorial country associations have been forced to recognize the force and possibilities of the alliances, their capability to make impact on the competition in the regions, to the successfully conduct policy on absorption of the domestic small enterprises, development of medium business, to create the monopolistic market, bypassing, and in some case and ignoring prohibitions of the state.

The USA classifies the activities of strategic alliances as "a gray zone" of trade. The famous American regulations, such as the Sherman act, Clayton, Sellera-Kefover and the other, have been urged to receive the power over strategic alliances, multinational corporations, to provide the rigidh control over them. In Russia (before creation of the Federal antimonopoly service in 2004) all attempts to forbid the market monopolization were leveled in connection with the huge legislative gaps. In 1947 the Agreement on the rates and trade (further – GATT) has been signed after which in 1995 there was a World Trade Organization as the attempt to determine the rules of conducting the world trade. Eventually the states from the drastic controlling measures have passed to the compromise, aiming to provide transparency of transactions, support of foreign business as a potential investor.

In the foreign literature the phenomenon of merging of the competing companies in the alliances was described by F. Kotler, M. Porter, P. Dyussozh, B. Garret, R. Kouz and others. Uniqueness of the phenomenon consists in a capability of successful merging of the companies competing among themselves, the companies complements on a condition of preserving their independence and autonomy. At the same time, the considered form of interaction is capable to be combined successfully both on a condition of availability of general pattern of the ownership, and without it. As the motives of creation of strategic alliance decrease, separation of risks between the participants, consolidation of the efforts, resources in the sphere of production, sale, research and development, as a rule, act.

Strategic alliances – an intermediate state between the contracts and agreements, on the one hand, both the merges and absorption, – with another. Analyzing the foreign and domestic approaches to the studying of international strategic alliances it is possible to allocate the variety of forms and determinations. Now there is no consensus, the term which would characterize the phenomenon is most fully. There are no complex theory, approach capable to distinguish the strategic alliance and to provide the options of management. The reasons of such variety is the relatively young age of the phenomenon and its uniqueness which is shown in an exclusiveness of each alliance seems. Complexity of the analysis is shown also in the closed nature of transactions between the companies: the they it is less, the it is more difficult to find complete reliable information. The public companies in connection with their liability to open information on the activities, and also availability of the statistical information collected by the news agencies are of the greatest interest.

In the annual reports of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (further – UNCTAD) direct foreign investments even more often connect with the activities of multinational corporations and strategic alliances. Now the foreign investments are considered as "… the instrument thanks to which the economies are integrated at the factory level into the global economy by the exchange of assets (including the enterprise, technologies, managerial skills), and also access to the foreign markets" [1]. At the same time, in the report the growth of a number of joint companies created as a general pattern of the ownership by the international alliances is noted. The global companies, their agreements, influence on the regional economy of the countries and the world society in general became a subject of researches of many international analytical agencies, organizations.

The squeezed analysis of activities of the largest world companies in comparison with the main socio-economic indexes of the countries is provided in the table 1.

Table 1

Rating of multinational companies, according to “the Fortune 500” journal

Country	Amount of TNC	Aggregate turnover of TNC,	Sum of net income of TNC,	Total amount of	GDP in current prices and

		mln. dollars.	**mln. dollars.**	**export to GDP, %**	**PPS (USA), mln. dollars.**
USA	124	8 271 473	17 432 301	13,4974	16 768 053
China	89	4 957 401	11 290 341	23,3209	16 554 708
Germany	29	2 071 834	3 048 395	45,4882	3 553 605
France	30	2 009 031	6 429 406	28,5009	2 478 251
Great Britain	26	1 591 879	3 514 177	30,0319	2 483 661
Japan	49	2 858 298	592 489	16,1514	4 612 630
Netherlands	11	979 986	1 357 288	82,6266	785 389
Russia	7	487 757	1 031 072	28,6219	3 592 401
…					
Total:	500	30 296 933	133 514 466	-	-

Source: is made by authors.

According to the World Trade Organization, the world commodity export in 2013 has made 18 800 000 mln. dollars of the USA [2]. According to the rating made by the famous business journal "Fortune 500", the greatest number of multinational corporation is located in the USA – 124 companies, at the same time, the net income of these companies exceed the GDP level of America for 104%. The leader in this indicator is France, the income from the activities of the global companies has exceeded the GDP level by two and a half times. In total in the rating of "The Fortune 500" journal about 40 countries are represented.

The greatest specific weight on the indicators of business volume, the net income is occupied with the companies of the oil and gas complex, including production of the oil equipment and its servicing. The first places among the Russian enterprises are held by the structures of the oil and gas complex: PJSC “Gazprom”, JSC “Rosneft”, PJSC “Lukoil”, JSC “Surguneftegaz”, besides, on the indicator of turnover of the companies on the 228th place is PJSC “Sberbank”, on 308 – JSC AFK Sistema and on 358 – "TNK-BP International". The analysis of the activities of the enterprise of the gas industry of PJSC “Gazprom” is submitted to the most interesting. The company has a wide experience in the direction of international interaction, owns a considerable packet of the alliance agreements of the important world projects.

As D.V. Shtykov notes, characteristics of forming of the strategic alliances with participation of the Russian companies have the differences [3]. Large-scale projects assume the complete equal strategic partnership. It is provided with the crossholding of share blocks of the Russian and foreign companies. In the gas and oil producing industry the strategic alliance is created at a stage of geological studying and a project development: “Rosneft” and the TNC-VR have postponed in 2012 the agreement signature for joint development of the offshore fields, to a closing date of the agreement negotiations were conducted more than three years, it was supposed to acquire 50% of shares of the TNC-VR. In 2012 JSC “Rosneft” has increased the assets, having signed the contract of cooperation on development

of the Russian shelf with the ExxonMobil companies (USA), "ENI" (Italy) and "Statoil" (Norway). In May, 2016 “Rosneft” has successfully closed the transaction on sale of 15% of shares of the affiliated JSC “Vankorneft” of the ONGC Videsh Limited company [4]. Such strategic partnership allows realize the prospects of growth and forms the higher cost of the company.

As a positive moment on use of such form of cooperation till 2014 for the Russian companies the access to financial and technological resources acted. And if the currency credit lines were attractive (the loans were granted by the foreign banks under 5% – 6% per annum, rates in the banks of Russia on the currency loans made 12% and above), then on the equipment procurement the price policy was not optimum. It is fair to note that the essential part of equipment which was bought abroad for the gas and oil producing companies or was brought by the foreign partners as the investment component was not made in Russia. The cost of such equipment was usually overstated and (or) included high cost on the maintenance of this equipment. At the same time, asymmetric distribution of a part of products for benefit of the foreign partner was observed.

Change of the political and economic (in particular, the prices of oil and gas) situations in Russia has put the industry in rather difficult situation. Under the sanctions restrictions Rosneft, Gazprom, Transneft, Rostec, Almaz-Antey, Sberbank, Vnesheconombank and other large industry enterprises have got [5]. Their foreign assets and property have blocked, having forbidden delivery of some types of products, provision of technologies for the oil exploration and production. To the Russian state banks have seriously limited the access to the capital markets and crediting. Right after entering of the sectoral sanctions many service companies have refused the conclusion of new contracts with the Russian gas and oil producing companies. For example, in July, 2014 the administration of Halliburton has suspended international treaties, among the customers of the American company there are all large oil and gas structures: Gazprom, Rosneft, Lukoil and others.

Though as the Bloomberg agency reports, today the VR, Chevron and ExxonMobil oil companies are forced to resort to a national lobby to minimize the own financial losses from the anti-Russian sanctions in the USA and the EU [6].

New conditions assume changes in the system of cooperation. Some western companies began to sign contracts for the affiliated structures by a share purchase of the Russian companies.

Considering the state policy, since 2014 the PJSC “Gazprom” company actively realizes the import substitution program. In the list for replacement nearly 400 foreign suppliers from 20 countries are specified. More than a quarter from them — the companies from the USA, Germany, France, Great Britain and Japan. Among them there is Siemens, Motorola, Schlumberger, Weatherford, Baker, Schneider Electric, MAN Turbo, Kenwood, Sumitomo, Kawasaki, Caterpillar and others [7]. It should be noted that the share of currency purchases of Gazprom occupies about 21% in capital costs that makes $2,5 billion or more than 150 billion rubles. At the end of 2015 Gazprom has signed with the Pipe Metallurgical Co. the contract till 2023 [8] for deliveries of the high-strength special pipes for the

difficult climatic conditions and hostile environment, the amount of deliveries to 50 billion rubles. The company reduces the level of the international policy risks and begins to develop the networks of Russian suppliers.

The international strategic alliances – the unique form of inter-company interaction capable not simple to react to the external conditions, but to change them often. Creation of strategic alliances, as a rule, positively influences the economic and social level of those states in which participants of the alliance are located. However, according to the researches, less than a half of all created long-term alliances could overcome a four-year boundary, 41% of the ended agreements have led to an improvement of the competitive positions of one partners at the expense of the others, and only in 1,5% of cases the competitive positions of all partners have improved [9]. It is in that case very important to determine accurately the limits of growth of the company, the perspective directions of its development, to provide the rigid control over the observance of common goals of the alliance. Certainly, strategic alliance is a not constant structure, but mutually advantageous partnership shall keep such institutions and create a base for the future investments.

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