



International competitors and Chinese ports

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Abstract

The aim of the paper is to inquire on how and why large liner shipping companies and international terminal operators have achieved power over Chinese ports.

Liner shipping companies and large terminal operators are fighting for control over the extensive web of commercial relations that China has set up within a short span of time in Asia, acquiring space in the terminals. The increase of throughput in the Chinese ports also underlines the need for the development of ports infrastructures, services and high level of management.

Firstly we describe the network of trade through which China is engaged in commercial relations with the rest of the world, and in particular with the other Asian countries. Secondly we underline the structural and management peculiarities of most important ports of the three main Chinese zones and the presence of large lines companies and terminal operators. Thirdly we outline in short the cooperative action shown by the Chinese and by the great liner shipping companies to jointly manage the Chinese ports.

Keywords: Ports; Shipping companies; Sea transport; Joint ventures.

1. The extensive web of commercial China relations

The intensification of the international division of labour is taking place at a worldwide level but also within the three areas of worldwide economic influence, namely Asia, Europe, the Americas as a result of multilateral trade agreements (Nafta, Mercosud, Afta-Asean, UE etc.¹).

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¹ *Nafta* includes Usa, Canada, Messico; *Caricom* includes Caribbean islands excepted Cuba; *Andean Pact* includes Bolivia, Colombia, Equador, Peru, Venezuela; *Mercosur* includes Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay; UE + Messico; *Efta* includes Norway, Island, CH, Liechtenstein; *UE* includes 15 new countries; *Gulf Cooperation Council* includes Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, South Arabia, Emirates; *Sacu* includes South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, Swaziland; *Saarc* includes India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Maldives; *Afta-Asean* includes Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippine, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam. We can note that China wants achieve an agreement with Saarc e Afta-Asean to strengthening intra-Asiatic trade. Japan has an agreement only with Singapore. Some experts consider that 'regionalism' shelves WTO 'multilateral' efforts, others that