

China's High-Speed Railway and the Strategic Interest in Southeast Asia

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this research is to elaborate the strategic advance that will be gained by China both in economic and political sector. China's transforming as new global power, entered in five main destinations for foreign investment, become the consumer of 20%-25% of the world's iron, steel, aluminum and third consumer of world oil production. China ability in operating high technology attracts the world to admit China's role in world politics. High speed railway (HSR) technology started to investigate in 2004 and entered to production process in 2008; HSR become strategic tool for China when it promotes to Southeast Asia. By initiating HSR, China will be able to control the mobility China product in the region; catalyst of the China's southwestern growth; improving trade and industrial sector. Supporting one belt one road policy and transforming the bad image of China will be strategic way in political sector. The elaboration of the soft power concept by Joseph Nye, Joshua Kurlantzick and the Chinese conception is the guideline in this study. Qualitative analysis in library research is the main method. Data is taken from books, journals, reports, and websites.

Keywords: High Speed Railway, OBOR, Trade, Growth, Soft Power.

INTRODUCTION

Railway is one of the alternative modes of transportation that are quite effective and efficient in supporting the mobilization of people, goods and services. Railway is also a big capital to drive the development of the economic sector quickly and significantly, the railway project basically provides many benefits for the community and the country. The development of railroad technology cannot be separated from research and the ability of the state to support financial research activities. China's transformation into one of the world's economic strengths is undoubted; market domination, rapid industry, economic growth and increased military budget are one indicator of China moving into a calculated global player. China's transformation in the economic field has encouraged the movement of other sectors, for example in the field of railroad science and technology. China technology in the field of railway transportation mode is one of the forces that move and attract the world; China cooperation with several countries in the field of railroad is a strong indicator of consumer's confidence to China.

As one concrete example of the acceptance of China train technology; railroad projects handled by China in several Southeast Asian countries such as the Philippines, Thailand, Myanmar, Malaysia and Indonesia. While the Middle East region includes Saudi Arabia and Central Asian countries, Africa and Australia. Mastering technology and economic stability become a driving factor for China in developing cooperation in the development of train transportation modes to outside the region. China's expansion in the field of land transportation development, especially railways,

has received mixed responses in various countries, installing train installations in various parts of the world giving China an indirect recognition of China's existence and control of technology.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study utilizes a qualitative research method. The data is gained from a focused review of relevant theories, literature, and previous research findings of the discussed topic. Then it converts both primary and secondary sources in addressing the issue of the topic will be discussed. Similarly, the data gained from both sources serves to validate the findings of this study.

THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

SOFT POWER

Power is one of the vital objects in the study of international relations. Conception of power has become a topic of long debate, especially in determining or measuring power itself. As a dominant instrument in international politics, power continues to transform in different forms and ways. Military strength and threats are one example of the use of power in international politics. The previous power conception was dominated by classical views that saw power as an economic or military capability, even narrower power was better known in the context of command and coercion (Nye., 2004). However, today power cannot be understood only as limited as the ability to govern and oppress. Power can also be interpreted as a positive influence from an actor who can influence other actors to do something without asking the actor to do it. This phenomenon is mentioned by Joseph Nye as "the second face of power (Nye., 2004)". In this context, power is understood as the ability to influence the attitude of others to get results from the spread of the ability itself. Spread of influence can be done in various ways, such as forcing by giving threats, persuading by lending, or luring and making other parties interested and making it follow what we want. Power is understood narrowly with the term "force and rule" known as hard power, with indicators used in the form of economic ability and military power.

Hard power is understood as the ability of the state as measured by the economic and military levels that are able to change the actions of the state based on persuasion (carrot) and threats (stick). It is often used in international politics, where powerful countries utilize their economic and military capabilities to gain national interests. In terms of "the second face of power," Nye introduced the concept of "soft power," which he defined as "the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments (Nye., 2004)". Soft power emphasizes the ability to shape the desires of others with attracting ability and seduction (Nye., 2004). According to Nye (2004), soft power cannot be understood as the same as influence. Although influence is an important part of soft power, soft power is more than that. Soft power is more than the ability of persuasion or influence; it also refers to the ability to move people's perceptions with arguments. Soft power is also closely related to captivating

abilities, because attractiveness often then refers to an agreement. Simply stated, soft power can be termed as an "enchanted" or attractive power, where soft power sources themselves are things that produce the attraction. This attraction can be derived from various aspects.

The fundamental difference between hard power and soft power lies in how to get the desired outcomes or reciprocal results. A country can invite other countries to do what they want with military threats or economic sanctions. In fact, a country can persuade other countries to do what they want in return for economic assistance. The forcing and coaxing scheme above is not a soft power approach instrument, but rather a hard power implementation. Soft power works in a different way. When a country can be persuaded to join other countries' goals without any real threat or an economic agreement, it shows a soft power scheme (Nye., 2004). Although there are these differences, basically hard power and soft power are interrelated because they influence the behavior and or actions of others.

Hard power and soft power have different work schemes, but these two types of power have the same goal, which affects the actions of other actors. Nye wrote that there were three soft power sources. The first source is culture, especially culture that has an attraction for others. Nye describes culture as a set of values and habits or actions that give meaning to society. When a country's culture has universal values and its policies prioritize values, it is very possible that the country gets the desired results because of the attractiveness of other parties. The second source of soft power is a country's domestic and foreign policy. Domestic and foreign policies can influence quickly and even for a long time. In other words, a policy can have an impact in a short and long period of time. The third source of soft power is the value of a policy related to its nature in the country, in international institutions, and in foreign policy that strongly influences the choices of others. The nature of domestic policy refers to the values applied, in international institutions it is closely related to how a country deal with other countries, and in foreign policy refers to the values put forward in its implementation. For example, China shows friendly foreign policy in accordance with good neighboring principles. These three soft power sources are closely related to how a country acts and shows itself in international politics (Nye., 2004).

In the framework of the concept of soft power, China is able to show itself as a country that has considerable appeal. China as a country with a significant pace of development has considerable soft power, which is inseparable from the values of Confucian culture and policies that promote regional cooperation and development. This is a positive note for China's soft power development, especially in the context of China policies in the Southeast Asia region. Furthermore, it is necessary to know how China understands or translates the soft power concept itself. Nye's conception can be put on the China effort to identify the concept of soft power that is in accordance with his development. Mingjiang Li (2009) gave several basic questions related to the concept of soft power that was presented by Nye. According to Li, hard power and soft power relationships require further explanation and understanding. Li questioned the clear boundary between the two characteristics of power: does a country's economic assistance to other countries without the intention of explicitly or implicitly asking for

return rewards can be said to be soft power? Is not soft power a matter of non-material matters such as community morale, national image, domestic political stability, leadership and innovation? How do you measure soft power? How do you know that the existing policy is the result of applying soft power? This debate identified that China did not fully accept the concept of soft power that Nye presented.

Zhu Feng believes that soft power is all that relates to whether the international community accepts national policies and the strategic choices of a country and the extent to which these policy choices are in line with the interests of many countries. Other China researchers also gave different opinions related to soft power, such as defining soft power as highly dependent on the context, some power sources can come from both hard and soft, and that China soft power is illustrated as a "China model" of multilateralism, economic diplomacy and good neighboring policies (Li, 2009). Other thoughts that oppose or criticize Nye describe different soft power sources. Ji Ling and Chen Shiping explained that there are three dimensions of soft power: institution power, identifying power and assimilating power (Li, 2009). Institution power refers to the ability of the state to propose, build, or change the composition of international institutions. Identifying power is related to the country's ability to influence other countries through recognition of its leadership role, and assimilating power refers to the allure of cultural values, ideology and social systems. From the explanation above it can be seen that there is no clear form of soft power. It is seen that China combines hard and soft power in pursuit of its national interests.

The view of China related to the concept of soft power is also described by Joshua Kurlantzick with the term "charm offensive." According to Kurlantzick (2007), China views soft power as all elements that are not military or security which include economic power, public diplomacy and multilateral cooperation. From this it can be understood that China views soft power as a "stick and carrot" approach, which is close to the general application of hard power (Yuliantoro, 2020). Referring to Li and Kurlantzick's arguments, it can be drawn a common thread that China does not fully accept the soft power conception described by Joseph Nye. China defines soft power according to its identity and interests; the combination of soft and hard power is a characteristic of soft power applied by China.

China inspirational values are very inspiring by teaching exemplary and strategies in building the country and dealing with other countries. China cultural values such as "liking peace (*chongsang heping*), emphasizing defense (*Zhongshi Fangsyu*), and creating unity (*Tuanjie Tongyi*)" are able to influence and strengthen China's soft power (Yuliantoro, 2020). Furthermore, China's development policies provide learning for other regional countries. The very rapid development in the economic and military sector, supported by domestic policies as a development strategy and foreign policy, shows that China is a country that promotes cooperation and development. In the framework of foreign policy "peaceful awakening" (*heping jueqi*) and "harmonious world" (*hexie shijie*) China shows friendly and non-threatening foreign policy. The "harmonious world" strategy is shown by China with a more active role in global politics with four main objectives, namely multilateralism, mutually beneficial cooperation for

global welfare, all nations coexist peacefully, and the need for United Nations (UN) reform (Yuliantoro, 2020).

Foreign policy that describes global friendship, cooperation and development is also related to China's strategic interests. Stability and peace, especially fourteen countries that directly border China, are of great interest to China (Joshua Kurlantzick, 2007). The character of China's foreign policy and politics which shows good intentions and the desire to build profits together, it's closely and relevant to the soft power source according to Nye. China's role in global politics shows a positive attitude, in which China seeks to convince international actors that it is not a threat, but as an opportunity for the growth of the global economy. Referring to soft power as one of the tools to realize national interests by emphasizing the ability to attract, not to pressure, China showed that he used a combination of soft power conceptions from Nye and his own conception of looking at soft power, or better known as the "China model." The description of these two conceptions provides an illustration of how China views soft power and its application. If Nye considers that soft power is the ability to gain or obtain national interests with compelling ability, China views soft power as a combination of that ability and pressure. This is what Kurlantzick calls as charm offensive.

EXTERNALITY

Infrastructure investments are expected to improve mobility, generate greater employment opportunities, enhance accessibility and facilitate trade, and boost overall economic productivity. One of the sectors that are highly relied upon to generate the multiplier effect of infrastructure investment is public transportation. The belief that transports infrastructure projects make significant impacts to the development of regional economies has often been used to justify allocating resources to transport infrastructure investment, which is later will be discussed in this research. The direct effect of transport infrastructure investment is to improve the quality and quantity mobility of its users. This mobility could lead to further impacts, including accessibility, level and location of employment and increased efficiency, that will contribute to the regeneration of a region (OECD, 2002). But the externalities generated by the investment in transportation infrastructure also need to be recognised. This is needed especially when transport infrastructure investment is lent by cross border entities that may have certain interests other than economic affairs.

The multiplier mechanism believes that heavy spending by government, business or consumers would have a salutary impact on national income (John Maynard Keynes, 2018). This way, the concept of the multiplier effect is the domino effect that occurs on economic activity which is very quantitative in nature. Meanwhile, other effects outside the economic impact are more accurately explained by the concept of externality. This is because externalities can describe other dimensions besides the economic dimension, such as political, social and environment. Externality can highlight the ways in which politics distorts transportation spending. Each of interdependence creates an externality and the policy issue is who creates externalities for whom. Where interdependent interests exist, choice of whose interests are to count is a power issue (Schmid, 2004).

There is still no universally accepted definition for the term externality currently, but Harvey Rosen adequately conveys the principle and writes that an externality occurs when the activity of one entity directly affects the welfare of another in a way that is outside the market mechanism (Hamowy, 2008). Whether an externality even exists depends on prevailing institutions and externalities are ubiquitous. Externalities are also defined as the costs and benefits which accrue to people who are not party to the economic decisions which bring them into being. Externalities show that markets are not necessarily the maximisers of collective well-being. Many of the most important externalities are public (Brown et al., 2018). Because of externalities are unexpected consequences of an activity that affect people external to an economic activity, then externalities can be positive or negative. These costs can also be seen as internal costs and external costs. With some economic transactions, some of the costs are external to the transaction and borne by a third party. These costs are external to the transaction; thus, they are referred to as an externality. Being a cost external to the transaction denotes a negative externality. While there are costs to every economic transaction, there are also benefits. Applying the similar correlation to benefits, when the benefits of a transaction are received by a third party external to the transaction, there is a positive externality from the transaction (David A. Dieterle and Kathleen C. Simmons, 2014)

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

CHINA'S RAILWAY SECTOR

Railway is one sector that has a long history in the development of land transportation in China. It's familiar mode of transportation in supporting mobility and interaction between China communities in their various activities. China has known the mode of rail transportation since 1876. In 1898 China revived the railway which was destroyed in 1878 (Barry, 1908). The existence of this route had a positive impact on China's development and became a mode of transportation connecting the vast territory of China. Railway line becomes China's development priority; Ministry of Railways (MOR) was founded for managing and controls it. The establishment of a special ministry in charge of railroad issues is proof that this sector has special meaning in China's development. The construction of the railroad became one of the major national agendas, seen from several ambitious projects in China in connecting the region with regions such as Central Asia, South Asia, East Asia and Russia.

China's initiative in building links between countries is indeed quite ambitious because it requires large investments and high technology applications. Indirectly, China shows its ability in the field of economics and the application of high technology. China's role in regional politics is also important in providing ideas in regional development. One of them is by starting the construction of several regional cross-border routes, including Trans Siberia, which connects China with Russia and Europe, as well as the longest railway line in the world (Christopher Franks, n.d.).

The railway sector in China belongs to the government and is controlled and operated by MOR. Railway is produced by MOR as the highest authority responsible

for the operation of it. Historically, there are two fundamental reasons why MOR has monopolized railway operations in China. First, in 1949, China trains were built with a segment less or divisional division model that surrounded other areas. This model is considered not to provide a solution to transportation problems because of its nature which only operates in several regions, so that after the liberalization of the central government modernized the railway line following the model made by the Soviet Union. For this reason, it must be ensured that there is a central institution that regulates all railroad operations. Second, before 1986, MOR received orders and budget allocations from the central government to build and operate trains. However, after 1986 various reforms were carried out leading to an increase in MOR authority in almost all sectors related to the railways, such as investment, railroad construction and operating services (Jiang Xu & Yanyan Chen, 2014).

Railroad construction has long been a political issue, starting with the Qing dynasty when Britain first brought and introduced railroad technology to China. The first railway line was built in China in 1876 which connected tourists from Shanghai to the port at Wusong. This line operated less than a year when the local government dismantled the connecting line because it was built without the approval of the Qing dynasty. Construction of the railroad began to become a serious China project in the 20th century. At that time China only had a 370-mile train line, far less than the railroad tracks owned by Britain and the United States which reached 21,000 miles and 182,000 miles (*China's Railways*, 2012). Along with the rapid development in China, the high-speed railway (HSR) technology sector is one of the development priorities. Generally, HSR is a railroad technology capable of traveling 200 to 300 kilometers per hour. At present, China's rapid rail technology has become an international concern. This cannot be separated from the mastery of fast HSR's technology in a relatively short time. China officially announced the development of HSR technology in 2004. Today China is a country that operates HSR with the longest track in the world with a total track length of more than 12,000 km (Wall, 2015).

China began its high-speed rail adventure by buying trains and technology from foreign firms such as Japan's Kawasaki, Germany's Siemens, the French company Alstom and Bombardier in Canada. China engineers then adapted the technology; a process known in China as "digestion and re-innovation" to come up with locally produced systems (Ford, 2015). This process stage gives China considerable opportunities in developing and strengthening the innovations available in the high-speed rail system. China's ability to develop high-speed railways proved successful after several railroad projects were quickly realized and expanded the scope of the use of HSR technology to countries near China. China government views the construction of connecting lines, both roads and railroads, as a symbol of economic independence and the driving force of community integration. Since 2004 China developed HSR technology and in 2008 China has been able to implement HSR technology by operating the Beijing-Tianjing line (Wade, 2013). Mastering of high-speed railway technology gives China the confidence to develop the construction of a trans-border high-speed railroad or cross-national borders. The cross-border railroad has broad meaning for China as a tool to realize national interests and diplomacy.

The development of the railway sector in China has significant results. Research and development of human resources has also become one of the aspects that contributed to the rapid advancement of high-speed rail technology in China. In 2008 China was able to make its first fast train that could travel 350 km/h. One of the China railway companies, China South Locomotive and Rolling Stock Corporation Limited (CSR), received an award in terms of speed, where the production train can travel speeds of 600 km/h. The development of railroad transportation mode is the right policy given that the number of transportation mode users reaches 100 million passengers only on the Beijing-Shanghai line. China only takes five years to build and develop high-speed trains classified as high technology. Since its development was announced in 2004, China has been able to make this technology as one of the class's modes of transportation. Development up to the time of use of the technology can be said to be in accordance with the targets that have been announced. China fast trains can be categorized in two types according to speed; trains with speeds of 200 km/h and 350 km/h. HSR with a speed of 200 km/h has a track of 4900 km in fourteen sectors, while the HSR with a speed of 350 km/h has covered five sectors and become the fastest train in the world. China's HSR has 62 lines, covering all regional corridors consisting of north-south line, four main corridors, and south line with one main corridor. The vast area of China is directly proportional to the length of the train line. By 2020 China aims to have a 20,795 km high-speed railroad, which will be the longest route in the world (T Katagi, 2011). This is in accordance with national policies to make their own products.

HSR technology that is the reference is locomotive or concentrated traction system from Germany and France and the *shinkansen* system from Japan. China finally chose to develop the *Shinkansen* system as a fast train operational standard considering that *Shinkansen* technology emphasizes on distributed-traction systems more widely used in the development of fast train technology. Technological innovations from various countries such as Regina, produced by Bombardier Canada, Germany's Swiss and Siemens railroad commuter models, have become a reference for China in modifying products. China is able to absorb local potential by 80% under license and imports only by 20%. Emphasizing modification and innovation, China was able to modify the local train so that it was 380 km/h, which was tested on the Shanghai-Hangzhou line on October 26, 2010. In the same year China opened the Beijing connecting train with Shanghai (T Katagi, 2011).

CHINA RAILWAY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

The rapid railway mode development project in the Southeast Asia region as a whole can be said to be in China. Several major projects for the development of high-speed railway modes in several ASEAN countries such as Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia and the Philippines as a whole were won by China. As one example of a 350-kilometer Singapore-Malaysia fast train that can save up to 9 hours of travel time agreed by both countries. The estimated project cost of up to 20 million dollars is certainly a large nominal value and is worth fighting for (T Katagi, 2011). In addition to the Singapore-Malaysia high-speed railroad project, China is also able to

win fast train projects in Indonesia. Infrastructure development is long formulated agendas by United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP). Asia's Regional Infrastructure Initiative is an umbrella of development plans in the Asian region. One of the concern development agendas in the Asian region is The Asian Transport Infrastructure Development (ALTID), which was formed by UNESCAP in 1992. The developments contained in the ALTID frame include the Asian Highway (AH), The Trans-Asian Railway (TAR) and dry and inland transport (ADB and ADBI, 2009). These three projects are included in a large infrastructure development agenda to connect Asia as a whole.

China plays a pretty good instrument in responding to an integrated Asian development plan. China's economic and political interests encouraged him to initiate several new development plans and revive or initiate plans that had stopped. As mentioned, there are several regional infrastructure development agendas formulated in ALTID. One of the agenda is Trans-Asian Railway (TAR). The TAR project was proclaimed by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) which involved at least 28 countries which would be connected to the pan-European rail system, namely the EU railroad and port system. TAR becomes an embryo of China ambitions in building and developing a more sophisticated railway system. One of China's agendas to demonstrate its capabilities in the railway sector is to develop HSR and initiate the construction of a cross-border high-speed railroad known as the Pan Asian Railway Network (PARN) or Kunming Singapore Rail Link (KSRL) project. This pathway will connect China with countries in Southeast Asia such as Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, Laos, Malaysia and Singapore. China's ability to initiate the construction of this pathway shows that China is not only capable economically or financially, but also in mastering technology.

ECONOMIC INTEREST

China is developing as a world manufacturing center; it also entered in five the main destination for foreign investment in the world. China is a user country of 20% - 25% of the world's iron, steel, aluminum and copper and is a third consumer from world oil production (Lotta, 2009). As a new global power, China is also expanding the strength of the industrial sector through its transnational companies. Multinational company plays a big role in supporting China's economic stability. In the global economy, the emergence of China multinationals is able to shift the position of several other multinational companies quickly. Refer to Fortune Global's list, three China multinational companies entered the 10th the world's best multinational companies, competing with US companies and Japan (Panos Mourdoukoutas, 2013). This fact helps China expand its influence in the region as well globally.

The Southeast Asia is the fastest economic growth in the world (William T. Wilson, 2014). Southeast Asia through ASEAN has grown to become the world's manufacturing and trade center and become the fastest growing consumer market in the world (H.V et al., 2014). China's presence and resurgence has strengthened trade cooperation between Southeast Asian countries and China. China's Open-Door Policy has a significant impact in reshaping a more harmonious relationship with the region.

Through ASEAN, the region's country has grown to become one of China's important trade partners. Ten countries in the region are home to 600 million people (9% of the world's total population), twice as large as the United States. Southeast Asia becomes important region because of its role as supplier of raw materials supporting China industry, such as oil, gas and oil palm. Through trade cooperation with the region, ASEAN has become a major partner of China's trade, with total trade increasing from \$ 231 billion to \$ 500 billion in 2010 (*China Invests in South-East Asia for Trade, Food, Energy and Resources*, 2012). ASEAN which has grown to become an important partner of China is also indicated by the increase of China investment to regional countries, such as Indonesia, Vietnam, Philippines, Malaysia, Thailand and Singapore.

The emergence of China as one of the world powers cannot be separated from the reforms carried out since 1978. This reform has given significant changes in the development of China as one of the influential actors in international politics today. China's emerging as world power in global politic cannot be separated from the reforms carried out since 1978. This reform has significant impact for China's transformation in the world. China is able to improve economic and defense performance and launching various strategies to increase its economic and political influence. In this context, the closest region of China is one of the priorities in every policy carried out by Beijing. Yuliantoro explained that good neighboring policies and the "Asian first" strategy implemented by China were driven by the interests of maintaining regional stability to maintain its economic growth rate (Yuliantoro, 2020). China's stable economic growth is able to increase GDP 17 times in the period of thirty years.

Asia is the most important region for China both economically, politically and security. East Asia is specifically the location of 29% of the world's population and produces 19% of world GDP (Saunders, 2008). Asia is also the most important region for China's export and investment destinations. Asia provides industrial raw materials, component suppliers, technology, and operational management experts for the global production chain in China as well as the final process market for China products. According to Samuel Ku, there are at least three policies implemented by China to open up and change its image to regional countries, namely Open-Door Policy, Good Neighbor Policy and Global Go Strategy. China relations with the region began to change in the 1970s; it's seen by diplomatic exchanges with three Southeast Asian countries, Malaysia in May 1974 and with Thailand and the Philippines in mid-1975, while building interaction with members of ASEAN countries. China's maneuvers were clearly seen since the Open-Door Policy was launched in 1979. This was driven by increased relations with the capitalist world, the weakening of the economy and the need for China to encourage foreign aid (Ku, 2006).

POLITICAL INTEREST

Joshua Kurlantzick shares the China strategy to show itself in the global era; the cultural scheme and diplomacy then the business scheme. China maneuvers in showing themselves described by Joshua Kurlantzick as "charm offensive," the charming China which is accompanied by an attitude of attack or control in the era of his awakening (Joshua Kurlantzick, 2007). The ability to attract and attack in the same

time; being a pattern of China relations in building foreign cooperation. In general, the China strategy can be seen from several policy choices that are specifically aimed at building the basis for its influence globally. The development of China's influence globally has increased significantly, both in the nearest region and other regions.

Kurlantzick shares China's strategy in spreading its influence globally in two categories. First, using culture and diplomacy as a tool; able to spreading China influence globally. Culture and diplomacy are closely related to culture, art, language, and ethnicity. High and stable economic growth allows China to use cultural schemes and diplomacy for political purposes. Second, using business schemes spread across various regions. Cultural and diplomacy schemes are quite effective ways for China to spread influence, while showing a positive image at the same time. This scheme is closely related to public diplomacy which emphasizes the role of government in managing issues in the international community. Public Diplomacy can be defined as the management of public opinion or society in other countries so that the state can more effectively obtain its national interests (Joshua Kurlantzick, 2007).

SUPPORTING ONE BELT ONE ROAD

One belt one road (OBOR) policy was introduced in 2013 in two different places. President Xi Jinping introduced one belt during his visit to Nazarbayev University, Kazakhstan. In his speech Xi stressed that China and Central Asia must work together in building the Silk Road Economic Belt. Then, during a visit to Indonesia in October 2013, Xi encouraged the development of cooperation in the maritime field. Xi addressed the Indonesian parliament by explaining the development of the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road as a medium to strengthen cooperation in the maritime field (Shaohui, 2015). The Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road - also known as OBOR - became China's latest strategy in promoting regional economic integration.

The main core of OBOR is to improve connectivity between regions by increasing infrastructure development, roads, railways and sea lanes. OBOR is China's strategic tool in encouraging European and Asian integration. It aims to improve diplomatic coordination, standardization related to trade facilities, free trade areas and other trade facility policies; encourage financial integration; and encourage cultural exchanges between countries in Asia, Europe, Africa and the Middle East (Jacob Stokes, 2015). OBOR includes the construction of highways, railroads, energy pipelines and telecommunications cooperation, which will link China with Central Asia, the Middle East, Europe and Russia. While the maritime road will connect China with the South China Sea, Indian Ocean, Red Sea and Mediterranean Sea (Jacob Stokes, 2015). China has a geopolitical interest in the OBOR initiative, where China's desire to play a strategic role in Asia is an important element (Kennedy & Parker, 2015). OBOR is arguably one of China's strategies that emphasize connectivity as a driver of economic growth and the spread of influence.

CHANGING THE NEGATIVE IMAGE OF CHINA

HSR technology helps China promote its international image and soft power. The magnitude of China's economic growth in the last three decades has not been enough to change the perception of the world, especially Western countries, in terms of China's achievements in which the image of him as a producer of cheap goods is still strongly attached. Implementing of the railway line with HSR technology; plays a vital role in attracting the development of the economic sector, is expected to change the image. HSR also became a China scheme in shaping the image as "tech power" like Germany and Japan. As China grows as an economic power and high technology development, the world will see China as an influential and cooperative country (Chen, 2015).

CONCLUSION

China's economic rising strengthens capabilities domestic to boost China confidence in the framework of international cooperation. China's maneuver in global and regional politics is increasing along with various agendas launched by China to various regions in world. The strengthening of the China economy directly impacts the ability of China to develop technology of high-speed railway. HSR is alternative mode transportation that offers speeds of more than 300 kilometers/hour; encourage more people, goods and services effectively. Development of HSR technology by the Ministry of Railways proof that China has been able to be independent in technology. Emphasizing on innovation, China can develop HSR as one of its national products in 2008.

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