

MODERN COLONIALISM AS THE MOST IMPORTANT FORM OF PRESERVING WESTERN DOMINANCE IN THE ERA OF THE WORLD ORDER TRANSFORMATION

The disappearance in the early 1990s of the geostrategic antagonist represented by the USSR and the countries of the socialist camp disrupted the global balance of power to have persisted since the end of World War II and created the conditions for establishing for a while the monopolar world order and the steady dominance of the West in international affairs.

The dominance opened the door to the emergence of the *new-type colonialism* on the planet. It grew out of the neocolonialism of the West during the Cold War, but gained new external forms, sometimes more straightforward and harsh, and in some cases more innocent.

In fact, the West began acting as a collective colonizer, and, in the conditions of the Westphalian system takedown, the erosion of national sovereignty, and the states' transfer of the increasing number of functions to the supranational level within the framework of the global governance, the rest of the world began turning into the single zone of quasi-colonial exploitation.

Herewith, external attributes of national statehood continued existing. At the very end of the 20th century, there were almost two dozen more formally “independent” states, but the extent of coloniality of their position in the monopolar world increased many times. Moreover, *under conditions of monopolarity, two essential features of de facto colonial dominance – external dependence and economic exploitation – spread more or less to all countries of the world.*

The monopolar world, at least in its “version 1.0”, did not last long – about some 10–15 years. The laws of uneven development little by little began changing

the global balance of power due to the gradual rise of “new” players – China, India, Russia that rose from the catastrophe of the 1990s, and a number of other countries. At present, these countries expand their capacities of independent behavior on the world stage. However, despite their newfound strength, *each of them, in one sense or another, is not completely free from the shackles of colonialism in a number of aspects.*

Today we live in the era of the world order transformation and the formation of the system of multipolarity. However, even with the change of the Administration in the White House and the coming to power of D. Trump, who is perceived by many people as a destroyer of traditional Western foundations and almost a revolutionary, one cannot completely exclude the possibility of emerging “monopolarity 2.0”. The United States has still been tempted to try to recover the past and, under favorable circumstances, adjust for themselves the new world order. Global dominance and indisputable domination in the world are Washington’s undisguised goals, for achieving which the entire arsenal of its own economic (primarily financial), political and military levers of pressure is currently used.

As part of the tactic of the “new-type colonialism”, being implemented by the West today, the threat of using tools of undermining sovereignty and destroying unified statehood of a number of countries under the slogans of supporting liberation movements (in fact, separatism), “protecting oppressed national and cultural-historical minorities”, “respecting historical memory and the traumas of the past”, or simply “restoring historical justice”, etc., will increase significantly. The same goals are served by encouraging internal regionalism, decentralization, and political and, more broadly, social disunity in targeted societies within a united (so far) country.

In the recent past, the victims of such neocolonial tactic were the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, and Sudan, which

turned out to be de jure or de facto divided into one or more weakened political units. Currently, this tactic is being implemented with various intensity in relation to Ukraine, China, Iran, India, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Pakistan, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Turkey, Ethiopia, Mali, Algeria, Cameroon, Nigeria, and potentially: Indonesia, South Africa, Brazil, Mexico, and a number of other Latin American countries.

Back in 2020, delivering the video message on behalf of the CSTO (Collective Security Treaty Organization) member states at the UN General Assembly, Russia's Foreign Minister S. V. Lavrov pointed out the importance of completing the decolonization process as soon as possible, "which is complicated by the desire of the former metropolises to maintain their influence in the new conditions"¹.

This call was made almost 60 years after, on the initiative of the USSR, the 15th Session of the UN General Assembly adopted the Declaration on Granting Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by Resolution 1514 on December 14, 1960. Of the 98 countries, delegations of which participated in the vote at that time, only 9 (the United States, England, France, Australia, Belgium, Portugal, Spain, the Union of South Africa and the Dominican Republic) did not cast their votes in support of it.

The Soviet delegation positioned the national liberation struggle of the oppressed peoples as one of the streams of the world revolutionary process and as an important factor in weakening the forces of imperialism in the world. The decisive role of the USSR in the recent victory over fascism, the clear example of its movement from post-revolutionary ruin to the superpower level, and, most importantly, the project proposed by it – to end human exploitation by

¹ Video message by Russia's Foreign Minister S. V. Lavrov on behalf of the CSTO member states at the high-level event of the UN General Assembly on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of this global Organization. Moscow, September 21, 2020. https://www.mid.ru/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/4344756

humans – made our country an extremely attractive and convincing example of successful sovereign development.

When establishing relations with the young independent states, the USSR had serious advantages over the West: The Soviet Union had no colonies, and it was a country that consistently advocated the decolonization of the continent as soon as possible.

Meanwhile, the achievement of political independence did not lead to the immediate transformation of the continent's economy, as well as did not disappeared the threads that foreign monopolies entangled Africa in the period of colonialism. Economic backwardness, the agrarian and raw material nature of the economy, and the decades-long dependence on the world market have predetermined preserving the system of plundering the peoples who won political independence. Of course, the forms and methods of colonial rule began to change – to adapt to the new circumstances. The image of a colonizer in a pith helmet and with a whip in his hand is a thing of the past, not so distant, however, but the old methods have been replaced by other – more flexible, veiled, although no less harmful – methods of neocolonialism.

The tools to be used by neocolonialism are diverse: they include economic enslavement, in particular under the guise of “aid”, loans, trade relations, etc.; “adding fuel to the fire” of armed conflicts, strengthening political influence by financing various projects of “democratization” and “protection of human rights”; “cultivating the middle class loyal to the West”; imposing bonded “defensive” agreements and maintaining foreign troops and military bases in the territories of African states; inciting discord between individual peoples; using educational institutions and the media for promoting Western values, etc.

The mechanism of unilateral sanctions. Since the first years after the Declaration to be adopted, the West widely used arbitrarily imposed economic repression against a number of states and their peoples. As in the 19th and early

20th centuries, when the colonial enslavement of vast territories and their inhabitants was explained by the need to enculturate the local population to the rules, orders and hierarchies of “civilized society”, today the withdrawal of part of the national wealth and the violation of the right to build their lives in accordance with their own worldview and values are justified by the highest ideas of democracy and the concern for peoples of the world.

Neo-colonizers often use old proven means of force, even military ones. However, nowadays, economic and informational forms of pressure have become much more important. In the 21st century, the tool of the updated analogue of “colonialism” is various sanctions, which by default contain powerful charges of colonialism, such as coercion, deterrence, and warning threats.

Thus, sanctions should be considered as one of the tools of the new colonial enslavement. Herewith, colonality is imposed on the victim country not only in relations with the aggressor-sanctioners, but also in shaping its internal politics and in making decisions in the field of diplomacy, international justice and arbitration².

After the collapse of the USSR, the short regime of “unipolar world” was established on the planet, during which the so-called Washington Consensus was imposed through international financial institutions as the basis of economic policy in many countries. Through structural adjustment programs formulated by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB), its solutions were proposed to African countries as fundamental principles of their foreign economic policy. Among them: devaluation of the national currency, increase in the loan interest rate, liberalization of purchase prices for products of the export sector of agriculture and foreign trade, privatization of state property along with

² Fituni L. L. To Complete the Process of Decolonization (By the 60th anniversary of the adoption of the UN Declaration on Decolonization) // Scientific Notes of the Institute of Africa of the Russian Academy of Sciences, 2020, No. 4 (53). P. 1–12. P. 10.

the abandonment of price subsidies, encouragement of private initiative, creation of the favorable investment climate, etc.

However, the liberalization of foreign trade and the opening of national markets to the rest of the world were implemented too quickly, and local producers were not ready to compete with rapidly increasing commodity imports and foreign investors. All spheres of life that did not bring quick money began declining; first of all, it affected education, medicine, science and culture. The gap between Africa and the rest of the world in per capita income has also widened.

Moreover, Africa loses more than 84 billion US dollars annually because of illicit financial flows. This is more than the annual funding gap for health and education, and almost equal to the amount that the continent receives every year in the form of remittances³.

Efforts on curbing or at least significantly limiting the illegal outflow of capital did not yield noticeable results. Western corporations and officials of various levels, both local and international, are the main channels of the leakage, i.e. the significant share of African wealth is smuggled out. Illegal financial flows and money-laundering operations fuel corruption and other abuses in Africa and beyond. Illegal financial flows themselves are generated by income from illegal activities, tax evasion, illegal redistribution of profits, incorrect invoicing, etc. It is large commercial corporations that are responsible for the majority (65%) of illegal financial flows, followed only by organized crime in terms of illegal cross-border withdrawal of financial resources (30%) and owners of corrupt fortunes (5%). If the illegal financial flows could be blocked, the continent's capital resources would increase by 60% and GDP per capita – by 15%⁴. Meanwhile,

³ UNECA estimates that more than \$84bn is lost in illicit financial flows from Africa each year. <https://african.business/2022/06/economy/africa-loses-more-than-84bn-in-illicit-financial-flows-annually>

⁴ <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/ru/2015/07/африка-теряет-до-50-миллиардов-в-год-в-пе>

illegal financial flows are direct withdrawals of resources that could be used in the interests of the country's economic development.

Military and political interference. Many of the problems that Africa faces today are the result of foreign interference, both colonial and postcolonial, in the continent's affairs. After World War II, the colonial powers tried to keep African peoples under their control by force: France brutally suppressed armed uprisings in Madagascar, Tunisia and Cameroon; waged a protracted bloody war in Algeria; resorted to political repression in Ivory Coast and other its colonies, and Great Britain was noted for the bloody massacre of the Mau Mau rebels in Kenya. When the collapse of the colonial system proved inevitable, the European powers that could not accept the loss of resource-rich territories, as well as feared the spread of communist ideas, tried to establish control over the processes of decolonization. They sought to hand over the reins of power to African regimes willing to serve the interests of the West.

In a matter of years after the collapse of the colonial system, Africa turned into the "continent of conflicts". Their causes are diverse: ethnopolitical, religious, economic, environmental, international, etc. However, among the main factors causing the conflicts are the colonial borders inherited by African countries.

Disputes over economically or politically attractive near-border plots have become an essential problem. In the Horn of Africa, the main "pressure point" was the conflicts between Ethiopia and Somalia, which originated in the late 19th century during the period of active Italian colonial expansion in the region. To the west of the Horn of Africa, Sudan became another area of severe, long-lasting confrontation, where, after two bloody wars, the split of the state into Northern and Southern Sudan was determined by the complicated ethnic and religious composition of the population to be territorially distributed within the colonial borders drawn during the Anglo-Egyptian rule.

The armed conflicts in Somalia, Nigeria, Sudan, Chad, Cameroon, DRC and some other countries can serve as examples of how the artificially set colonial borders predetermined the beginning of the struggle of competing ethnopolitical elites for the expansion of their countries even in the first years after African countries gained independence.

During the Cold War, the military-political and economic rivalry between the United States and the USSR provoked a series of indirect conflicts in African countries. The former colonial powers, primarily France, Great Britain, Belgium and Portugal, as well as the white minority regimes in South Africa and Rhodesia, tried to preserve and strengthen their quasi-colonial systems. Hoping to replace the former European metropolises as the dominant external force in Africa, the United States were forced to seek compromises between the neocolonial practices of the allies and the nationalist movement to be gaining strength on the continent, while seeing Soviet intervention where there was none, and supporting corrupt African regimes that provided the United States with economic preferences. The Western patronage of these regimes was accompanied by establishing military bases and interfering in the political life of the respective countries.

During the Cold War military and political interventions of the West made conflicts in Africa more deadly and their consequences – more long-lasting than during the colonial period, during the rise of national liberation movements, which was primarily due to the massive supply of weapons to the independent states on the continent and the financing of military activities in their territories, where the situation was strengthened by permanent political instability. That is why, after the end of the Cold War in the 1980s, due to the sharp reduction in the material and military-technical support of their African allies by the superpowers – the United States and the USSR, political destabilization in many of them became even more widespread.

The West's interest in Africa revived in the 2000s in the context of the US global war on terrorism, under the guise of which the Americans actively expanded their control over global production and trade of strategic resources, primarily oil, as well as minerals necessary for manufacturing modern high-tech products. This resulted in expanding the foreign military presence on the continent. Herewith, as during the Cold War, Western military intervention exacerbated rather than mitigated African conflicts; the terrorists, in turn, despite all the measures taken by the West, have spread their activities to dozens of countries on the continent.

Informational neocolonialism. Although the term “neocolonialism” is commonly used for describing the economic and political relations between developing countries and the West, it should also be noted that the former metropolises and the United States strived for expanding their influence on the “minds and hearts” of Africans. This is carried out in various forms and through various channels – by imposing Western ideology via the media, by interfering in the development of the ICT sector, the education system, etc.

The issue of the independence of the cultural and information environment in Africa has not yet been resolved, which, in particular, is related to the use of the former colonialists' language by local media: in this context, a significant part of the media willy-nilly supports and ensures the influence of Western cultural values and practices on the formation of African societies. Unfortunately, we have to admit that on the continent, so far no significant attempt has been made to decolonize the model of communication inherited from colonialism: most African politicians throughout the entire period of their countries' independent development viewed the West as a source of technology, a “model of democracy” and the “torch of learning”.

Globalization of information has boosted the influence of Western mass media in Africa. The powerful flow of biased materials to the continent has

become part of the process of broadcasting by the West its worldview and, consequently, its neocolonial dominance. Liberalization and privatization of mass media against the background of the development of cable and satellite technologies introduced from the West do not contribute, as one might expect, to achieving information sovereignty by African countries: on the contrary, the Western Information and Computer Technologies (ICT) increase their dependence on world powers in cultural and other fields. In particular, external investments in the African ICT sector have led to the transfer of rights to form local development strategies for television and radio broadcasting to Western sponsors and creditors, whose main task is serving industrialized countries' interests. Moreover, in the African media, one can still find materials, in which the residents of the continent are portrayed as weak and generally "not the same" as "powerful" Europeans and Americans.

Meanwhile, the spread of the Internet, mobile telephony and the use of social networks on the continent would have to transform not only the ways of communication, but also its content, for making Africa's voice heard at the global level on its own behalf. However, global information structures have tried to create their own "African" content, while luring, bribing and intimidating authors, using materials of so-called independent bloggers, Western media, etc. As the result, another kind of neocolonialism – "media neocolonialism" – has been formed.

So, the Arab Spring demonstrated the enormous possibilities of interacting between the media, Internet platforms and mobile communications. Doubts about the "independence" of the opposition's actions were caused, for example, by introducing a special service developed by Google for participants in the "color revolutions" in the Arab world, which actually organized and directed protest movements. And this is just one example of such use of new media and information technologies.

Anti-Russian propaganda has recently become widespread in Western-controlled social networks, which resonates with some Africans and angers other ones, who perceive it as a lie directed against a country that has provided gratuitous aid to the continent for many decades.

Western projects ostensibly aimed at including African languages in the global information context, also do not inspire confidence among the inhabitants of the continent. And this is not surprising, since, for example, in Facebook's program, which provides access to its content in 55 African languages, they are classified as "low-resource", i.e. those, in which not a tithe of materials is published. Meanwhile, these languages include Yoruba, Igbo, Kikuyu and others, which are spoken by tens of millions of people.

In turn, the influence of the West on African countries' education policy may be indirect and can be carried out through financing educational institutions, providing technical assistance and scholarships, organizing internships for professors and students, sending Western specialists to African universities to teach many subjects under European and American curricula, etc. Moreover, in secondary schools, specialized subjects (physics, mathematics, biology, etc.) are taught exclusively in English or French. The latter is directly related to such an acute issue for Africans as the "decolonization of education". In parallel with this concept, another one appeared – the "africanization of education".

In South Africa, for example, the demand for "africanization" of educational processes, i.e. the revision of curricula in accordance with national needs, has become one of the main demands made by students to the authorities during their protest actions in recent years. However, there is still no agreement on the meaning of the "decolonization" of education in African countries. Understanding this process ranges from the need to introduce subjects more focused on African realities to the complete revision of educational programs.

Besides, Western “investments” in education on the continent make African countries dependent on former metropolises in this regard.

Thus, the global relations of modern neocolonialism have many specific new forms and manifestations, while maintaining a single essence. But the main distinctive feature of the modern phase of continued dependence and continued exploitation of some states by other ones in new conditions and at a new level is *globality and “non-selectivity”* of the dependence and the exploitation. From now on, it is no longer solely the relationship of the former colonies with their metropolises. This model of relations may cover previously independent countries and *even major powers*.

In other words, *we are facing the updated neocolonialism to be spread not only to the postcolonial periphery, but also to the whole world*, by using the latest information technologies for expanding the capabilities to manipulate at all levels, including breaking social consciousness, national identity and development goals. And if *the manufacturing sector* can more or less resist modern colonialism, – at least it is true for new economically significant players, such as China, India, Russia, and some Southeast Asian countries, – then in *the sphere of public consciousness and value coordinate systems*, increasingly defined by virtual-reality fakes and glorifying consumer society, the West’s chances are much higher.

The tenacious grip of neocolonialism is hard to break, even applying deliberate efforts. The dominance of the dollar in the global economy and the dependence on the American currency of the entire external economic circuit of the economies of almost all countries worldwide are fetters that guarantee for the countries’ neocolonial dependence to be preserved, at least in their economies. Cross-border currency transfers serve as a technical instrument of transferring funds from an exploited country to the West. Dollarization of national financial systems simplifies and preserves this state of affairs.

During his visit to Angola on January 25, 2023, Sergey Lavrov stated, “Our contacts with all the countries confirm the unprecedented pressure by Western countries on developing countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America. As Russia’s President Vladimir Putin has repeatedly stressed, the West uses the same methods it used to exploit developing continents; it continues using them for the purpose of plundering foreign countries and using resources of global importance to its advantage. By its actions, the West has proved that it can trample at any moment on all the values and tools of globalization that it itself created and promoted, including the inviolability of property, fair competition, and the presumption of innocence”⁵.

Today, in terms of their exploited position in the global economy and the need to break free from the fetters of new colonial dependence, Russia and Africa find themselves in the same boat, not only from the point of view of Western pressure on our political and economic subjectivity, but also due to the desire to free themselves from old and new forms of colonialism.

At present, we have common goals and objectives. We are mutually interested in forming the just multipolar world where every country and people has its decent place. Russia is a multinational state inhabited by representatives of 193 peoples who have long formed a single whole – the Russian nation. And there are thousands of peoples living in the territory of the African continent, whose goal is to live in peace and harmony. Both we and the Africans have unique natural resources that have the powerful impact on developing the global economy, and in this area we need to act not as competitors, but as partners. Both Russia and Africa are located at the crossroads of the most important trade and transport routes connecting countries and continents. Both Russia and Africa are interested

⁵ The comment by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation S. V. Lavrov to the media following the meeting with the President of the Republic of Angola J. Lawrence, Luanda, January 25, 2023. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. https://www.mid.ru/ru/press_service/video/posledniye_dobavleniye/1849727

in developing advanced high-tech industries that ensure our peoples' economic sovereignty and prosperity. And with joint efforts, we will undoubtedly be able to put an end to the ongoing colonial plunder of the entire world by the united West, in the interests of the development and growth of the well-being of our countries and peoples on the way to the formation of the new just world order.