



*Russian Academy of Sciences*

**Irina Abramova**

**THE NEW WORLD ORDER:  
FROM THE LEGACY OF COLONIALISM  
TO SOVEREIGNTY AND DEVELOPMENT**

**Report  
at the XVI International African Studies  
Conference**

*Moscow, May 21–23, 2024*



INSTITUTE FOR AFRICAN STUDIES  
RUSSIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

**Irina Abramova**

**THE NEW WORLD ORDER:  
FROM THE LEGACY OF COLONIALISM  
TO SOVEREIGNTY AND DEVELOPMENT**

**Report  
at the XVI International African Studies  
Conference**

*Moscow, May 21–23, 2024*



Moscow  
IAfr RAS  
2024



**Irina Abramova. The New World Order: From the Legacy of Colonialism to Sovereignty and Development.** Report at the 16th International African Studies Conference. – Moscow: Institute for African Studies, 2024. – 12 p.

ISBN 978-5-91298-304-7

ISBN 978-5-91298-304-7

© Institute for African Studies, RAS, 2024

© Abramova I.O., 2024

© Abisheva G.M., design, 2024

The modern world order is going through a stage of the deepest political, economic, humanitarian and not yet global, but very dangerous military crisis. The Russian special military operation in Ukraine has sharply accelerated the process of disintegration of the unipolar world led by the United States. The contours of the new emerging world order, although already being drawn, are not entirely defined. Multipolarity, as a possible model of a new maturing world order, urgently needs a system of bilateral and multilateral geostrategic checks and balances that eliminate or minimize the danger of a global armed conflict. At the same time, it seems to be the most acceptable option for reorganizing the world for the vast majority of countries and peoples, since it opens up opportunities for establishing a more just world order that takes into account the interests of the widest possible range of members of the world community.

Against this background, there is a reassessment of the comparative importance and role of regions of the world as zones of conflict of interests between participants in renewed rivalry. Today, as is known, there is a gradual shift in the global center of economic power from the West to the East or, depending on the coordinate system, from the so-called North to South. In the context of long-term global trends, the conditional West, perhaps for the first time in the last 500 (and certainly 300) years, faces the prospect of gradual transformation into a relative “Periphery.” This means that, even in the current market model, the time is not far off when the bulk of global production and the bulk of global consumption will shift from the northern Euro-Atlantic region south and east to Asia, Africa, and Latin America. And in the market model, this means that the manufacturer will adapt not to the tastes and needs of the so-called “Europeans” (including Americans, Canadians and even Australians), but to “Asians” and “Africans”. One reason for this is that the majority of the middle class, which makes the main demand for goods and services, lives in the Asian region. And from about 2040, according to UN estimates, the middle class will grow not at the expense of Asia, but at the expense of Africa. Meanwhile, the impoverishment of the middle class in Europe and the United States has already begun.

Of course, we are not talking about a one-time or instantaneous (in the historical sense) change. In real life, this is a slow and complex process,

progressing at different stages at different rates, often in zigzags. Today, no one doubts that the modern East and South (and this is not only China or India, but also many other countries, including African and Latin American ones) today are the producer of the bulk of resources and goods, especially *“basic”, that is, those without which large-scale real production in any part of the world, including developed countries, is impossible today.* Moreover, the real (and not virtual) process of expanded reproduction is also extremely difficult without such resources and goods.

But the economic role of the West, especially in advanced areas, is far from exhausted. However, it is not this role that determines the patterns of its behavior today. Currently, the meaning of Western efforts, including economic ones, is to prevent the loss of influence and control over the flows of world wealth. The West is trying to maintain its position and its usual way of life, using the levers of influence that remain in its hands – military, financial, administrative, managerial, informational, cultural and value-based.

The Euro-Atlantic bloc considers Africa, first of all, from three points of view: the projected prospects for global economic development, resource and military-geopolitical ones. All three aspects are viewed through the lens of rivalry with the main opponents and competitors – China and Russia. At the same time, the West is closely monitoring the growing activity and influence of “second-tier” rivals in this region – India, Brazil, Turkey, Iran, the Arab states of the Persian Gulf, South Korea and others, some of which it is trying to control, turning, at least, into situational allies, but strategically retaining as an exploited periphery.

Under these conditions, the main task of the policy of the “Collective West” in Africa is to maintain and strengthen its economic, political and military influence, using traditional and new methods of colonialism, as well as to avoid the challenges and threats associated with the African continent.

Of course, the Special Military Operation sharply accelerated the process of formation of a new world order, and these rapid changes were accompanied by an unprecedented increase in international tension, the exacerbation of serious regional conflicts, socio-economic imbalances and civilizational demarcation between the North and the South. Russia finds

itself in extremely difficult economic conditions. More than 10 thousand sanctions were imposed on Russia; traditional Western markets were practically closed to it; transport, financial and technological opportunities were blocked. And yet, Russia did not break, but, on the contrary, has achieved further success on the path of sovereign development. And, of course, all the countries of the “world majority”, including African states, have seen and noted this. For them, as for the countries of the Global South, the main value of the modern world is **sovereignty and desire to determine one’s own destiny**. And it was Russia that showed them an example of a successful struggle for a new, fairer and freer world, for sovereignty and their own choice of development path.

However, the West, while weakening economically, still has institutional, managerial, financial, military and information leverage over global politics and economics. Under these conditions, many countries of the Global South have to act “with an eye on” the countries of the “golden billion”. This primarily applies to African states, which are significantly dependent on Western aid, trade and investment.

Under these conditions, it will not be easy for Russia to compete in the geostrategic battle for Africa with other players, both old and new. Many may even wonder if we have any chance at all in this fight.

The second Russia – Africa Summit and Economic Forum, which was successfully held in July 2023 in St. Petersburg, gave a clear answer to this question. Despite the colossal pressure that was put on African countries in the run-up to the summit, delegations from 45 African states came to the forum, of which 27 states were represented at the level of first and second persons. It is obvious that, in the context of a sharp deterioration in relations between Russia and Western countries, a high level of presence of heads of official delegations demonstrated the high interest of African states in developing relations with Russia. African countries are well aware that the modern world has changed radically. And it was Russia that posed a real challenge to the “rules-based order,” offering Africans not a colonial, but a mutually beneficial formula of partnership between sovereign states without imposing its value system. That is why the majority of African states, despite pressure and direct threats from the “Western masters of the world,” decided to send their

high representatives to the second Russia –Africa Summit and did not join Western economic sanctions.

How was it possible to ensure the success of this large-scale and significant event in such difficult conditions? Why did the global South demonstrate solidarity with Russia? Why do Africans continue to trust our country and are ready to cooperate with it, despite threats from the United States and former metropolises against them?

There are several reasons.

**First and foremost** – African peoples do not want to live by the rules that the West imposes on them. African countries are no longer a disparate collection of fifty weak and poor political units, forced as a whole to follow the still decisive dominance of the former metropolises. Over the years of independence, modern national economic complexes have developed in them, albeit of varying degrees of complexity, efficiency and self-sufficiency, and human capital has undergone an unprecedented evolution towards qualitative and quantitative growth.

Both Russia and African states believe that the key asset of the modern world should be people who set themselves great goals for the development and improvement of the modern world on a humane and fair basis, where all nations and peoples have equal opportunities. That is why a humanitarian component was added to the agenda of the Russia – Africa Economic Forum. The West, on the contrary, removes a human being as such from the goals of modern development, reducing human desires to primitive instincts and destroying their spiritual and physical essence through the promotion of ideas of unbridled consumption and enrichment, transgender theories, primitivization of consciousness and the uncontrolled use of modern technologies, including the digital sphere and artificial intelligence. With accelerated technological progress, most residents of “non-Western” states are simply not needed, since they cannot compete in the sphere of the latest technologies in the process of servicing Western elites. It is obvious that a world order based on such rules does not inspire sympathy among the vast majority of the world’s population, including Africans, whose numbers are growing at the fastest rate in the world and, according to UN estimates, will reach 1.7 billion people by 2030. This is the most important reason for their sympathy for Russia, which considers

the humanitarian agenda as the most important component of the national development strategy and puts people at the center of socio-economic policy.

After Russia's open challenge to the United States and its allies in Syria and then in Ukraine, Africans realized that they had a unique opportunity to achieve real sovereignty and free themselves from the legacy of colonialism not in words, but in deeds. And today, the richest continent in terms of its resources continues to remain the poorest in terms of living standards, since the West, within the framework of a unipolar world, continues to shamelessly plunder its natural and human resources.

Colonialism has not gone away, it has simply moved from the political to the economic, informational and humanitarian spheres. The dominance of the dollar, the use of the sanctions mechanism, the preservation of technological dependence on the West, the destruction of national identity through the imposition of an anti-human perverted system of values on the people, absolute dominance in the information space, due to which false ideas are formed about the events that are taking place in the modern world, direct bribery and reformatting national elites – these are the tools of the new colonialism. These instruments are applied today not only to Africa, but also to Russia and to most countries of the world. In this sense, the words of the leader of Burkina Faso, Ibrahim Traoré, are very indicative: “Why does resource-rich Africa remain the poorest region in the world?..

African countries have been suffering for decades from a barbaric and brutal form of colonialism and imperialism, which could be called a modern form of slavery. However, a slave who does not fight is not worthy of any indulgence. The heads of African states should not behave like puppets in the hands of the imperialists. We must ensure that our countries are self-sufficient, including as regards food supplies, and can meet all of the needs of our peoples. Glory and respect to our peoples; victories to our peoples! Homeland or death!” Traore concluded his speech with the words of the leader of the Cuban revolution, Ernesto Che Guevara.

**The second reason** is the new “emancipation” of Africa – changing the economic balance of power in the world. Today, the bulk of real, rather



than virtual, production is located outside the West. The five BRICS countries already contribute more to global GDP than the industrialized G7 countries. According to the data published in late March 2023 by the British company Acorn Macro Consulting, the BRICS association currently accounts for 31.5% of global GDP, while the G7's share in the global economy has fallen to 30%. It is expected that BRICS will create more than 50% of global GDP by 2030, and taking into account the admission of new members, this figure can be reached much earlier. But Russia, like Africa, has its own undoubted advantages in the formation of a new world order. Both Russia and Africa together have at least 60% of the world's mineral resources. Africa accounts for about a third. Today, Africa possesses 90% of the world's platinum reserves; 80% of the world's gold, diamonds and chrome reserves; 61% of the world's manganese reserves; 60% of the world's cobalt reserves. To this should be added water, forest and agricultural resources. And if the world GDP were not calculated according to the IMF's methodology, but were based on the real material wealth of nations, then the share of both Russia and Africa in the world economy would be significantly higher. In these conditions, it is favorable for Russia and Africa to act in the raw materials and fuel markets not as competitors, but as partners, which will provide both of them with more advantageous positions. At the same time, both Russia and Africa do not want to be limited to the role of raw materials appendages of old and new industrial giants, and, therefore, are interested in deep processing of these raw materials and increased production of goods with high added value. On this path we complement each other. Russia has a wide range of required technologies, and Africa has a young active population and a rapidly growing consumer market, which doubles every 5 years and provides demand for both its own and Russian goods.

**The third reason** is ensuring security in the broad sense of the word. First of all, we are talking about preventing military conflicts and fighting terrorism, since these aspects are very relevant for Africa today. Africans understand perfectly well that the West is not only unable to resolve these issues, but, on the contrary, uses the tools of terrorism and military intervention in the internal affairs of sovereign states for its own selfish interests. This was the case in Libya, and this is the case in West and

Central Africa and other parts of the continent. The United States and Europe literally flooded the African continent with military bases and troops, and the conflicts have only increased, and terrorism has not gone away. Recent events in West Africa, where a series of anti-French military coups took place, confirm that Africans are increasingly counting on the West, in particular on France, which is pursuing its own selfish goals of maintaining its influence and access to cheap African resources. The Central African Republic, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Gabon, and now Chad and Senegal have turned their backs on France, and in its person, on the collective West. They see Russia as a country that, being the successor to the USSR, is capable of providing them with real security.

However, the concept of security is not limited to the military aspect. For Africans today, the anti-hunger issues are becoming more pressing than ever. The number of undernourished Africans stood at 276 million in 2022, up 89.1 million from 2014, according to the FAO.

At the Russia – Africa summit, Vladimir Putin stressed that Russia is ready to fulfill all its commitments on grain supplies to African states in full, despite the termination of the grain deal. Moreover, it is ready to supply its grain to the countries most in need free of charge.

It is quite remarkable that Russia is ready to offer an integrated approach to solving Africa's food problem, not only by supplying grain. Ending hunger in Africa is directly related to the effective use of mineral fertilizers, of which African agricultural producers are in acute shortage.

In addition to fertilizers, Russia is ready to share its advanced agricultural technologies, which would allow Africans to independently increase agricultural productivity and provide the population with food by intensifying their own agricultural production.

Here lies another reason for the interest of African countries in Russia. Unlike the West, which preserves the technological backwardness of not only Africa, but also other countries worldwide, Russia is ready to share its technologies in order to jointly build a modern economy for the benefit of people.

A block of issues related to cooperation in the scientific, technological and educational spheres was separately highlighted at the second Russia – Africa Economic and Humanitarian Forum. The very slogan of the forum

“Technology and security for the sake of sovereign development for the benefit of people,” speaks for itself. This agenda is relevant both for Russia where 2022–2031 was declared the decade of science and technology, and for African partners who have consistently emphasized that they primarily need technology from Russia. We are talking, first of all, about cooperation in the fields of security, energy, medicine, biodiversity, geology and mineral processing, construction, transport, environmental protection, agriculture and water resources, space, information technology and the humanities.

The transfer of Russian technologies, as well as cooperation in the scientific and educational sphere, are not only beneficial to Russia in terms of image, showing it as a country that perceives African states not as backward applicants for loans and food and humanitarian aid, but **as equal partners interested, together with Russia, in the transition to a high-tech economy, which underlies the strengthening of national sovereignty**. Cooperation in the technological sphere allows the Russian Federation forming an army of its supporters in the countries of the continent by solving the problem of overcoming technological backwardness and training qualified personnel to master and promote Russian technological solutions.

Any event, including such a large-scale as the Russia – Africa Summit and the Economic and Humanitarian Forum, is important not only in itself. Their main outcome should be the processes that will be launched after they are completed. It is very important that a specific Action Plan of the Russia – Africa Partnership Forum for 2023–2026 was adopted at the second Russia – Africa Summit. Only a few months have passed since the summit, but specific projects in the African direction have already begun to be implemented. The African agenda is more actively present in the Russian media. Domestic business, some deliberately, some under the pressure of sanctions, is also increasingly active in Africa. It is no coincidence that the number of Russian businessmen at the second summit was twice as large as African ones (the situation was opposite at the first summit). And most importantly, the realization has come at the highest level that Africa is our strategic partner, and in order to preserve it, we need to move from declarations and statements to concrete actions and projects.

This gives us hope that most of the interesting and promising ideas and proposals put forward at the summit will be implemented. Their implementation is in the interests of both Russia and African countries, as it lays the foundations for the formation of a new, fairer world order in the best interests of the global majority.

**Irina Abramova**

**THE NEW WORLD ORDER:  
FROM THE LEGACY OF COLON-IALISM  
TO SOVEREIGNTY AND DEVELOPMENT**

Report  
at the XVI International African Studies Conference

*Editor*

Ludmila Tenyakova

*Computer design*

Gulzhamal Abisheva

Подписано в печать 17.05.2024

Формат 60×90 1/16. Заказ № 231

Address: 30/1 Spiridonovka Str., Moscow, Russia

Site: [www.inafran.ru](http://www.inafran.ru)

ISBN 978-5-91298-304-7



9 785912 983047 >