Committee: Special Political and Decolonization Committee (GA4)

Issue: Preventing the imposition of policies on former colonized states

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INTRODUCTION

Ever since the emergence of imperialistic concepts, colonies and relevant territories have constituted areas of particular interest and importance to all powers in the world. Over the last centuries, social ideals have undergone significant change and have thereby altered the mindset of many. An illustration of this point may very well be found in the numerous revolutions that called for self-government and independence; revolutions ignited by newly established rights and the human desire to freely choose one's fate. In the past, this notion became increasingly popular amongst minorities when 13 of Great Britain's North American colonies declared independence in 1775 and resulted into the recognition of the United States sovereignty over the territory through the Treaty of Paris in 1783.

Even though such political ideas have existed for numerous centuries, rulers and powers who were/are determined to undermine people with said ideas have existed for far longer. As many former colonized states are structurally and economically weak, superpowers attempt to impose policies upon these states, often to their own benefit. Additionally, it is also likely that superpowers imprint their own culture onto their (former) colonial subjects.

As a result, various major countries and organizations have become involved in this issue. Nevertheless such powers have failed to this day to solve the problem entirely, signaling that a massive group effort may be expected for us to overcome this world-wide matter.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Policies

A policy is a statement of intent, and is implemented as a procedure or protocol. Policies are generally adopted by the Board of or senior governance body within an organization, whereas procedures or protocols would be developed and adopted by senior executive officers.

A policy cycle, a theory developed by Harold Lasswell, is used in order to analyse the development of a policy. One version has the following stages:

1. <u>Problem identification</u> - The recognition that a certain subject/problem requires further government attention.

2. <u>Policy Formulation</u> - this involves going through a variety of options/courses of action available

for addressing the problem (such as dialogue, consolidation, appraisal, dialogue)

3. <u>Decision-making</u> - here the government decides a final course of action; whether to continue the policy status quo or alter it - decisions may be positive, negative, or 'no-action'.

4. <u>Implementation</u> - the ultimate decision will be put into practice.

5. <u>Evaluation</u> - the public policy's effectiveness is assessed in relation to its intentions and results. Policy actors direct whether the policy is a success or failure through evaluating its impact and outcomes.

A different, eight-step policy cycle:

1. Issue identification

2. Policy analysis

3. Policy instrument development

4. Consultation

5. Coordination

6. Decision

7. Implementation

8. Evaluation

Colonialism

According to Concise Oxford English Dictionary, colonialism is the "policy or practice of acquiring full or partial political control over another country, occupying it with settlers, and exploiting it economically." Potentially also a policy, colonialism is the practice of a power/nation expanding control over economically, socially and politically weaker areas. Thus the stronger power has control and governing influence over such dependent countries, territories or people.
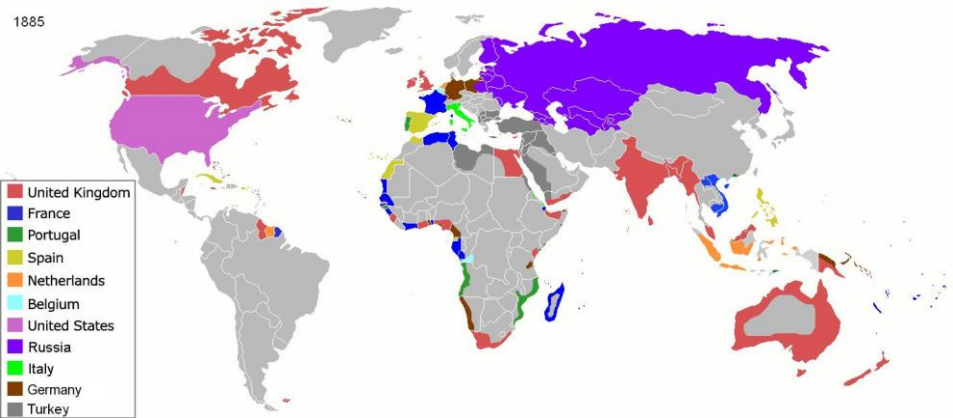
Different forms of colonialism exist, where historians usually distinguish between two over-lapping types:

1. <u>Settler colonialism</u> - this involves extensive immigration, often motivated by religious, political, or economic reasons.

2. <u>Exploitation colonialism</u> - this requires fewer colonists, who focus on access to resources for export, usually to the metropole. Plantation colonies are considered to be an illustration of exploitation colonialism.

Further types of colonialism may also include surrogate and internal colonialism. Surrogate colonialism involves a settlement plan supported by a colonial power, where the majority of the settlers do not derive from the mainstream of the ruling power. On the other hand, internal colonialism is the belief of an irregular structural power between areas of a nation state. The source of exploitation comes from within the state.
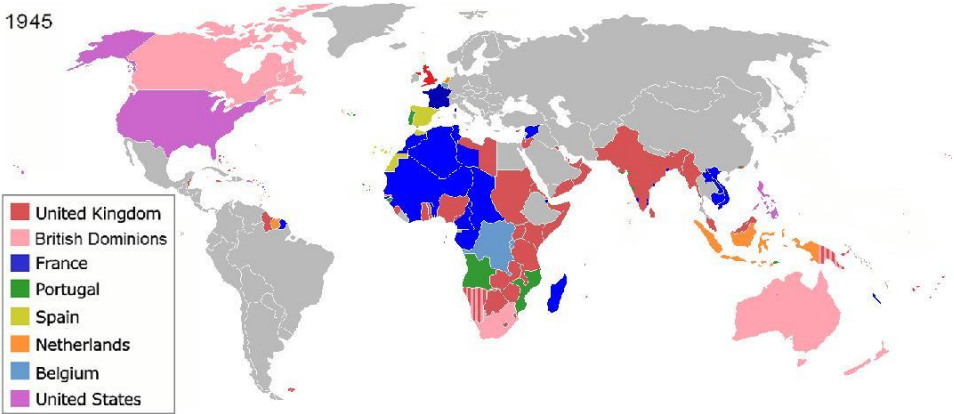
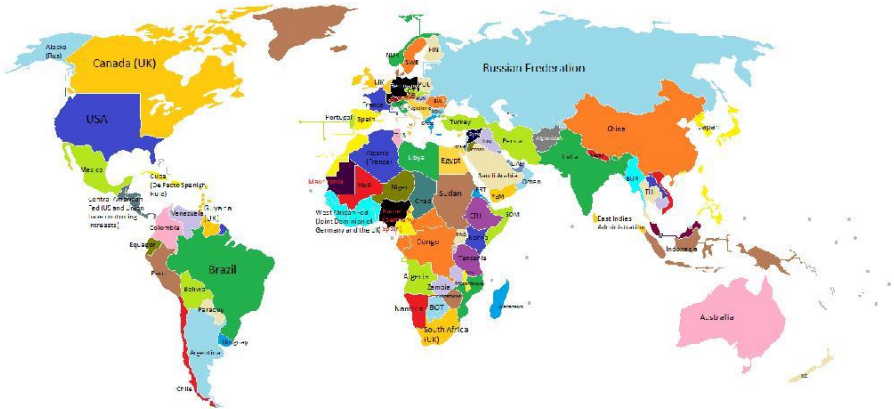Colonial empires throughout the three last centuries

1885

1945

2015

Independence

According to the Cambridge Dictionary, independence refers to the state, at which a country enjoys freedom from being governed or ruled by another country. In other words, independence is the condition of a nation, where the population exercises self-government, and enjoys sovereignty, over the territory. A dependent territory displays the opposite of independence, and it should be noted that independence does not necessarily correspond to freedom.

Historically, there have been three major periods of declaring independence:

1.   from 1776 to the Revolutions of 1848 in Europe
2.   the immediate consequences of the First World War following the independence of the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian empires
3.   1945 to 1979, 70 new independent states were formed from European colonial empires.

Self- determination

While self-determination daily refers to the determination of one's own fate and course of action at free will, without having to consult others; in this case it is linked to its political meaning; it is the freedom and right of a nation/people to determine their political status and the way, in which they shall be governed (or self-governed) without any influence from outside. More specifically, the UN Charter clarifies that self- determination may be taken on two meanings

i.   "the right of a state to freely choose its political, economic, social and cultural systems",
ii.   "the right to of a people to constitute itself in a state or otherwise freely determine the form if its association with an existing state";

It is interesting to note at this stage, that in regards to dependent territories, the UN Charter highlights the importance of administrative authorities ensuring political advancement and development of self- government for the former.

Autonomy

Coming from the greek αὐτο - "self" and νόμος "law", 'autonomy' means "one who gives oneself one's own law" and is a concept found in political philosophy, amongst others. The word is often used as the basis for determining moral responsibility and accountability for one's actions. In this case, 'autonomy' is used to refer to the self-government of the people.

Over the past decades, there has been a large movement of autonomism that has emerged in the form of anarchism.

Neo-colonialism

Neocolonialism altogether serves to describe the practice of developed countries to control less developed countries through indirect capitalistic means, such as transnational corporations and previous economic arrangements. The emergence of this term can be traced back to European policies in the 20th

centuries, which allowed for European powers to maintain their control over African and other dependencies. Neo-colonialism is the key in understanding this issue and will be addressed in more detail in further sections of the paper.

Picture: Kwame Nkrumah was the Ghanaian politician who coined the term "Neo-colonialism**.**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

When the United Nations was founded in 1945, almost a third of the world's population (~ 750 million), lived in dependent territories belonging to colonial empires. Today, less than 2 million people live under colonial rule in the 17 remaining UN non-self-governing territories. The huge impact of decolonisation, which changed the face of the planet, was born with the UN and represents for many the organization's first huge success.

More specifically, as decolonisation and its practice continued to advance in the 20th century , the UN General Assembly responded by adopting the 'Declaration on the Granting of Independence' to colonial countries and its residents. The declaration stated that everyone has the right to self-determination and declared that colonialism should be brought to an immediate and unquestioning end.

"What we need now are creative solutions for the remaining Non-Self-Governing Territories. If the United Nations is to fulfil its obligations in supporting the legitimate aspirations of the peoples of these Territories, a pragmatic and realistic approach -- taking into account the specific circum-stances of each -- is most likely to lead to concrete results."

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon Message

to the 2010 Session of the Special

Committee on Decolonisation 25

February 2010

Varying colonial policies until the early 20th century

Great Britain

With the exception of the United States, whose colonial empire was far more minute, Great Britain could adapt itself more easily to the new distribution than any of the other colonial powers. The British policy of regarding colonies not as attributes to the ruler's nation but as countries with their own unique ways of life eased autonomous development. The colonial residents were given an increasing portion in the governing councils and public service, thus were started on what came to be a standard cycle building up to self-government and then independence. This was a cycle which was tested again in India, Ceylon, and elsewhere in the years between wars. World War II brought both a popularity of the concept that colonial rule forced responsibility for the well-being of dependent peoples and an acceptance of the necessity to move rapidly to end colonialism. India's independence, in 1947, started a practice of decolonisation that tore down the British empire in Asia, most of Africa and the West Indies. To this day, the British have been able to reshape most colonies into independent states within the structure of old policies that were already in operation.

British Colonial Policies

Navigation Acts 1763
Sugar Act 1764
Stamp Act 1765
Writs of Assistance 1767
Townshend Acts 1767
Tea Act 1773
Intolerable Acts 1774
1775

Source: Stephen Bronz et al., *Challenge of America*, Holt, Rinehart and Winston (adapted)

France

France, on the other hand, was forced to halt its development and take many steps backwards. In contrast to the British, the French celebrated the policy of cultural, economic, and political assimilation. France's aid for her colonies increased by a considerate amount after the Second World War, and many reforms were produced by the government, but the links between the colonies and France were not destroyed until the independence of the former.

Belgium

The Belgians focused on Brussels, as the French did in Paris. However, they did not act as France when it came to associating Africans with them in the imperial centre, nor as Britain did in drawing the Congolese into the local administration and governing councils. The Belgian government, the giant corporations, and the church made colossal strides in economic development, and to a lesser extent in welfare and education. The Belgian philosophy of colonialism explicitly excluded the creation of a privileged class until mass education would have spread widely and a middle class come into being.

Portugal

The Portuguese are a fourth variant of colonialism, ruling over an empire which reached from Goa to Macao, Mozambique and Angola. Being the oldest of the Western colonial powers, Portugal continues to protest that she has no non-self-governing peoples but only equal states of a single, indivisible kingdom.

Indirect colonialism in the 20th and 21st century

Having presented the ways in each some of the greatest powers exerted influence on their colonies, this paper will now turn to the 20th and 21st century. This will be done in order to shed light on the ways in which powerful countries have been able to exert influence on their former colonies in the last 65 years. Altogether, it is worth noting that developed countries' influence on former colonies can best be explained through the notion of neo-colonialism.

More specifically, neo-colonialism theory argues that developed states exert influence on less developed ones through the apparatus of economic, financial and trade policies of transnational corporations and global institutions. With regard to transnational corporations, it is a widely held belief that the investment in LEDCs coming from developed countries often keeps the LEDCs in a state of constant dependency, whilst the developed countries ensure themselves cheap labour and raw materials. At the same time, international financial institutions also play a big part in making LEDCs dependant on developed countries. More precisely, financial institutions, such as the IMF and World Bank, have over the last 40 years contributed financial and other aid to LEDCs under the condition that they will carry through changes of a neoliberal nature that will embrace the relevant economic and political ideals. What becomes obvious at this stage, is that nowadays former colonies are experiencing different forms of pressure on their policy development. As colonies these states had little say in the decision taken by their rulers. Today, on the other hand, former colonies are forced into opting for specific policies that will allow them to survive in the market-oriented environment they have been placed in by developed states and the institutions they have created. In other words, developed countries' influence over their former colonies has transformed from a form of territorial colonization to a form of economic colonization.

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED

What becomes obvious from the above, is that this particular issue is rather complex to break down. In modern literature, economic colonization appears to be an inherent part of capitalism and policies, where the market arbitrates. Consequently, it is hard to elaborate on other organizations, besides the abovementioned IMF, World Bank and the relevant financial institutions and corporations.

United Nations

The United Nations set up a Special Committee in 1962 on Decolonisation, which was established to monitor its implementation. Through the UN and its different organs, principally the Economic and Social Council, former colonies have undergone impressive change on areas, such as political structure and economy. However, the fact remains that most of the former colonies are still very much dependant on Western developed countries and their institutions, whilst the UN has been unable to effectively interfere with the market's effect on LEDCs.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

This paper will provide readers with an overview of the decolonization and will then go on to include important dates with regard to development of former colonies.

Year	Coloniser	Event
1776	Great Britain	Thirteen colonies of British America declare their independence.
1852	Ottoman Empire	Montenegro declares independence. Voluntarily united with Serbia as Yugoslavia in 1918.
1867	Great Britain	The United Kingdom grants autonomy (self-government) to Canada.
1869	Ottoman Empire	Serbia declares its full independence. Renamed Yugoslavia in 1918.
1877 - 1912	Ottoman Empire	The United Principalities of Romania, Bulgaria and Albania declare their independence.
1916 -	Russian	The independence of Russian Poland as a new kingdom is

1918	Empire	proclaimed. Finland, Azerbaijan Democratic Republic, Republic of Georgia, Republic of Armenia, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania declare independence, although still occupied by the Soviet Union until 1991.
1918	Austria - Hungary	Bohemia, Moravia, and sections of Silesia, Galicia, and Hungary declare their independence as Czechoslovakia.
1948	Soviet Union	Democratic People's Republic of Korea is established in the northern part of the peninsula.
1991	Soviet Union	Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Turkmenistan become independent from the Soviet Union.
1993	Ethiopia	Eritrea, a former Italian colony declares independence.
2011	Sudan	South Sudan formally achieves independence.

And here is a Timeline with all important resolutions adopted related to this matter:

Date	Description of Event
December 14th 1960	Resolution 1514 calling for prompt and unconditional end to colonialism in all its forms and manifestations
December 21st 1965	Resolution 2106 reaffirming the condemning of colonialism and all segregationist and discriminatory practices
November 24th 1981	Resolution 36/51 – Read section on previous attempts
November 22nd 1988	Resolution 43/47 declaring 1990/2000 the international decade for the eradication of colonialism
December 8th 1997	Resolution 55/146 declaring 2001-2010 second international decade for eradication of colonialism in all forms

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

As mentioned above, the complexity of this issue makes it very hard to address. Whereas the UN has made a lot of progress on the actual decolonization of territories, setting former colonies free of the burden economic dependence has presented the UN with a challenge that the organization has failed to effectively address. Nevertheless, a document of particular interest is Resolution 36/51, which adopted by the General Assembly on the 24th of November 1981. This particular resolution called for an end to and/ or control of activities of foreign economic and other interests, which are impending the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Finding solutions on this issue also presents the International Community with a challenge, as the different members have different interests to pursue. What becomes obvious, however is that former colonies have to be encouraged to grow in such a way that will make them able to effectively manage their resources and advantages, in order to gradually gain more power in the international market and thereby become less dependent on other countries. At the same time, it is important that the International Community establish an environment, within which former colonies will receive support and thereby be protected by foreign involvement that is accompanied by too high of a cost.

Taking resolution 36/51 as a starting point, possible solutions may include:

i. The establishment of Special Committee that monitors is foreign financial activities in former colonies id of benefit to the latter

ii. Assistance of the former colonies in developing more solid laws regarding foreign corporations in the respective countries

iii. A call to the International Community to respect the former colonies' permanent sovereignty over certain resources.

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