

**Committee: Special Political and Decolonization Committee (GA4)**

**Issue: The Question of Neocolonialism**

**Student Officer: Konstantina Antoniadou**

**Position: Co-Chair**

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## PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

Dear Delegates,

My name is Konstantina Antoniadou and it is my honor to serve as a co-chair in this year's Special Political and Decolonization Committee. In the past years, MUN has been an important part of my life, having, thus far, attended conferences both as a delegate and as a student officer. For me, MUN conferences constitute an excellent opportunity to not only expand my knowledge, but also get out of my comfort zone and interact with students from all around the world. I'd, thus, like to both congratulate you for being selected to take part in the 2<sup>nd</sup> DSTMUN conference and to highly encourage all of you to actively participate and make the most out of this conference!

This study guide is dedicated to the first topic of the committee; the question of Neo-colonialism. It is a topic that to many delegates may seem old, very technical or that it only concerns a specific part of the world. However, I can assure you that it is not. Throughout time, neo-colonialism has succeeded colonialism and imperialism, in this way involving different countries from all over the world. The issue has yet to be resolved though. There are still seventeen remaining non-self-governing areas which live under colonial rule, and dozens of other countries which appear as self-governing but are considered to be under neo-colonial rule. This reports aim is to guide you through the topic, but it is also very crucial for you to conduct further research and be aware of your country's policy. Furthermore and in case any matter arises, please do not hesitate to contact me through my email address, [20141353@student.anatolia.edu.gr](mailto:20141353@student.anatolia.edu.gr) .

Lastly, I'd like to encourage you to visit the conference's website ([www.dstmun.com](http://www.dstmun.com)) and take a look over both the rules of procedure and conduct and the delegate's handbook. Being aware of the rules will benefit the flow of the debate and help you have a better overall conference experience.

I'm very much looking forward to meeting you all in November!

Sincerely,

Konstantina Antoniadou

## TOPIC INTRODUCTION

Neocolonialism is not a recently born topic but constitutes an evolution of colonialism. Historically, colonialism goes back in 1550 B.C. when empires such as Ancient Greece or Ancient Rome wanted to extend their borders both into the areas that surrounded the empire and into non-adjointing areas. Modern colonialism began during an era, called the Age of Discovery. Portugal was the first that conquered a region outside Europe, in 1415, during its search for new civilisations and opportunities for trading. Colonialism expanded quickly, empowering many countries such as Britain, Portugal, Spain, France and Russia. The conquerors benefited greatly by the existence of their colonial empires. However, the indigenous people, whom they had conquered, were highly oppressed as their rights were constantly being violated. When the 1<sup>st</sup> World War was over, and Germany along with Turkey were defeated, the League of Nations granted permission to the victorious Allied Powers, to gain control over former Central Powers' colonies. The process followed was called the Mandate System, and it allowed the Allied Powers to govern a former German or Turkish territory-a mandated territory-which was judged not ready to govern itself. To ensure fair governance, the League's Permanent Mandates Commission was supervising the practice of mandates but was later replaced by the United Nations Trusteeship System. After the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War and when the United Nations was founded, a decolonisation era began, drastically eradicating the numbers of territories under colonial rule. Between the years 1945 and 1960, a significant number of independence movements took place in Asia and Africa. There was no specific decolonisation process; in some regions it was peaceful and orderly, allowing for immediate acquisition of a stable government, while other regions, which were ruled by dictators or regimes, required an extended insurrection period or even a civil war.

Albeit the decolonization process, colonialism hasn't been eliminated, but rather, at current times, a new form of it has arisen, that is, neo-colonialism. More Economically Developed Countries (MEDCs) adopt specific policies and practice indirect means that in the long-term enable their control of other Less Economically Developed Countries (LEDCs). Thus, it is very common for imperialism to be linked with neo-colonialism. Neocolonialism allows for MEDCs to take indirect control over LEDCs, in order to gain any kind of benefit, that is usually financial. It usually operates through investments of transnational corporations or global institutions which adopt suitable economic, financial and trade policies for the "subject"

countries. Lastly, it is important to note that neo-colonialism does not only affect a country's economy, but it also has political and cultural effects.

## DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

### Neocolonialism

The control of less-developed countries by developed countries through indirect means. Such means can be certain policies, usually financial, economic or trade, often adopted by corporations and institutions, in order to benefit those represented in them.<sup>1</sup>

### Colonialism

The policy or practice of acquiring full or partial political control over another country, occupying it with settlers, and exploiting it economically<sup>2</sup>.

### Imperialism

The policy, practice, or advocacy of seeking, or acquiescing in, the extension of the control, dominion, or empire of a nation, as by the acquirement of new, esp. distant, territory or dependencies, or by the closer union of parts more or less independent of each other for operations of war, copyright, internal commerce, etc. The practice of building or extending an empire.<sup>3</sup>

A situation in which one country has a lot of power or influence over others, especially in political and economic matters<sup>4</sup>.

### Decolonisation

The process in which a country that was previously a colony becomes politically independent<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Halperin, Sandra. "Neocolonialism." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 23 Mar. 2016, [www.britannica.com/topic/neocolonialism](http://www.britannica.com/topic/neocolonialism).

<sup>2</sup> "Colonialism | Definition of Colonialism in English by Oxford Dictionaries." *Oxford Dictionaries | English*, Oxford Dictionaries, [en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/colonialism](http://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/colonialism).

<sup>3</sup> "Definitions for Imperialism." Definitions.net, [www.definitions.net/definition/imperialism](http://www.definitions.net/definition/imperialism).

<sup>4</sup> "IMPERIALISM | Meaning in the Cambridge English Dictionary." *Cambridge Dictionary*, Cambridge University Press, [dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/imperialism](http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/imperialism).

### **Self-Governing Areas**

The term can be used to describe a people or group being able to exercise all of the necessary functions of power without intervention from any authority which they cannot themselves alter. Self-rule is associated then in contexts where there is the end of colonial rule, absolute government or monarchy, as well as demands for autonomy by religious, ethnic or geographic regions which perceive themselves as being unrepresented or underrepresented in a national government<sup>6</sup>.

### **Non-Contiguous Areas**

Political or geographical land divisions that are defined by either varying ownership or natural physical barriers. It's also important to note that the term refers to a geopolitical division which is not interrupted by other divisions of land or water.<sup>7</sup>

### **The Silk Economic Belt**

An ambitious Chinese vision to promote infrastructure built/development and connectivity and to raise the levels of economic integration, across the Eurasian continent. This vision can also be seen as an important strategic implementation, aiming China's involvement in local economies and markets.

### **21st Century Maritime Silk Road**

Chinese strategic decision to increasingly invest in projects and collaborations in the historic Silk Road. Such projects and collaborations usually include the built or the management of ports.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

### **Colonialism**

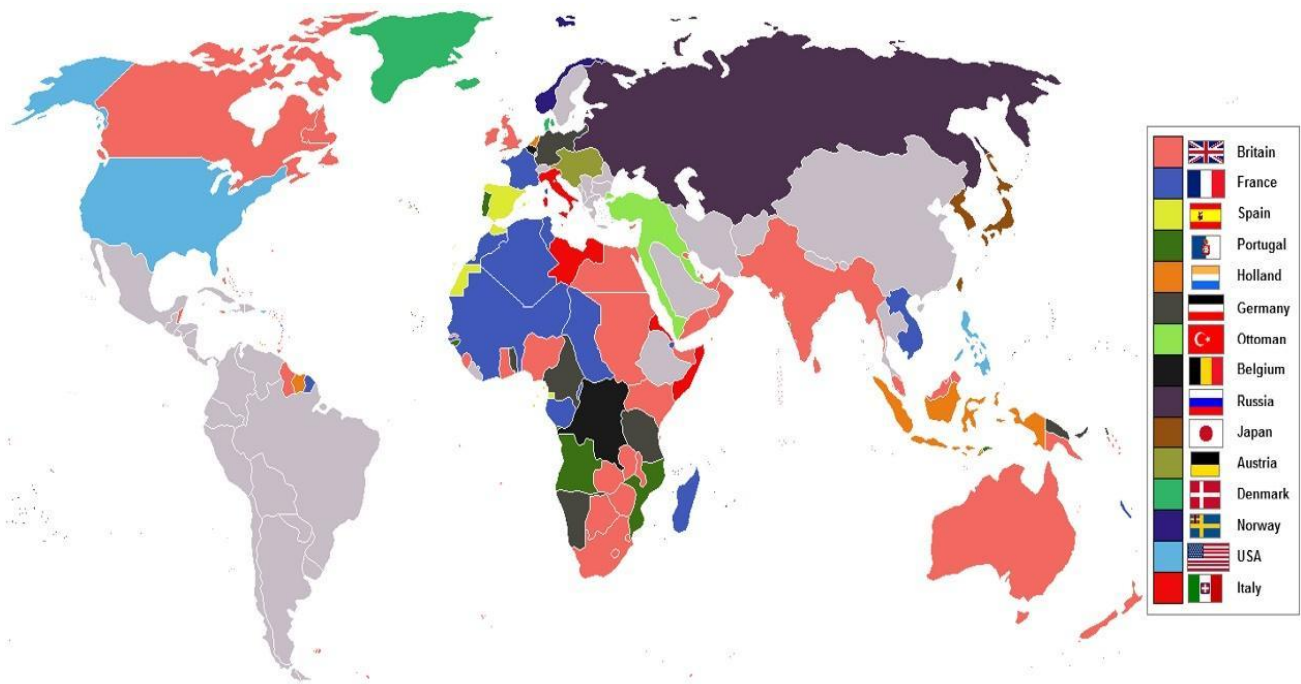
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<sup>5</sup>“DECOLONIZATION.” *Cambridge Dictionary*, Cambridge University Press, [dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/decolonization](http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/decolonization).

<sup>6</sup> “Definitions for Self-Governance.” *What Does Self-Governance Mean?*, [www.definitions.net/definition/self-governance](http://www.definitions.net/definition/self-governance).

<sup>7</sup> Ziavash. “What Does Contiguous Mean In Geography?” *WorldAtlas*, World Atlas, 23 June 2016, [www.worldatlas.com/articles/what-does-contiguous-mean-in-geography.html](http://www.worldatlas.com/articles/what-does-contiguous-mean-in-geography.html).

Colonialism is referring to the process of a country acquiring political control over another country, occupying it with settlers, and exploiting it economically, while the acquirer will also usually force its language and cultural values. Colonialism was first practised by empires such as Ancient Greece, Ancient Rome, Ancient Egypt and Phoenicia. Modern colonialism began during the Discovery Age (beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> century-middle of the 17<sup>th</sup> century), with Portugal being the first to acquire a colony, Ceuta a country in North Africa, in 1415. Gradually, Western European colonialism became “big”, as it was amplified by the industrial revolution and the rising influence of nationalism. Because of the industrial revolution (1760-1840), nations were establishing colonies to gain profit; they were dependent on their colonies for raw materials, while they used them as new markets for their manufactured goods. Despite the desire for economic profit European nations additionally wanted to increase their status as a world power. Nationalism and the strong national pride of Europeans led to the belief that gaining control over another country will prove the acquirer’s strength in culmination with empowering the country’s military. The four largest European colonial powers were Great Britain, Spain, France and Portugal, while other colonial empires were the Netherlands, Russia and Turkey.



**A map of the Colonial Empires in 1914**

Colonialism resulted in the expansion of European trade towards the Atlantic, Asia and Africa and the spreading of the European culture. After the 1<sup>st</sup> World War, education, press and political consciousness started growing in the colonies, making

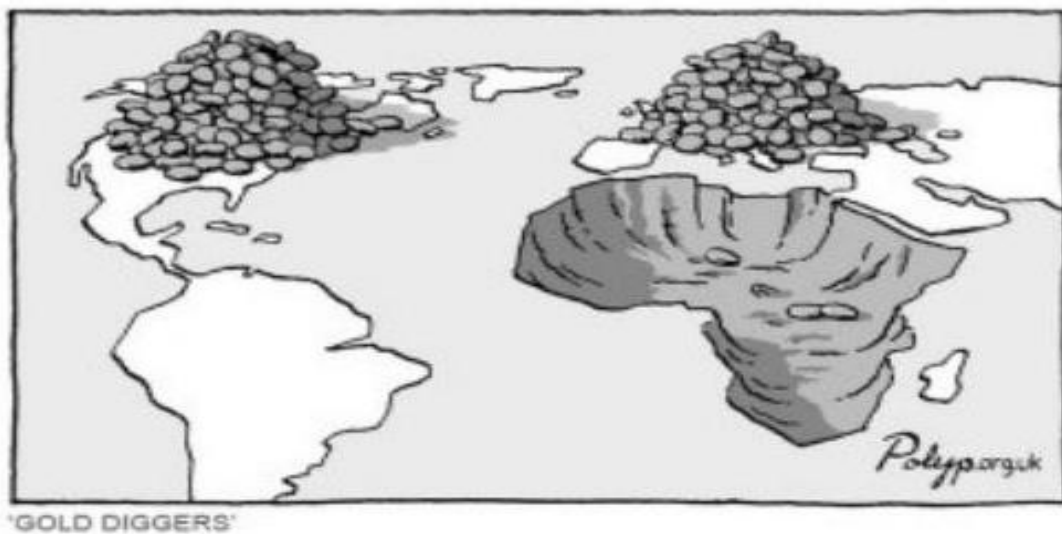
the citizens aware of their rights. As a result, the idea of decolonisation rose, expressing the wish of the colonies to gain independence. It is also important, to acknowledge the significance of the Mandate System and the Fourteen Points (issued in January 1918 by Woodrow Wilson, outlining a post-war peace settlement). Finally, after the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War, a decolonisation era officially began, with the United Nations playing an important role. In 1945, a third of the world’s population (750 million people) lived under colonial rule. Nowadays, only about two million people live under colonial rule, since seventeen territories are not yet self-governing. It is interesting to note which regions still remain colonies, thus being characterised as Non-Self-Governing Territories (NSGT), and who the acquirer is.

<b>Territory</b>	<b>Administrative Power</b>
Western Sahara	Spain
Anguilla	United Kingdom
Bermuda	United Kingdom
British Virgin Islands	United Kingdom
Cayman Islands	United Kingdom
Falklands Islands (Malvinas)	United Kingdom
Montserrat	United Kingdom
Saint Helena	United Kingdom
Turks and Caicos Islands	United Kingdom
United States Virgin Islands	United States
Gibraltar	United Kingdom
American Samoa	United States
French Polynesia	France
Guam	United States
New Caledonia	France
Pitcairn	United Kingdom
Tokelau	New Zealand

### Neo-colonialism

The term neo-colonialism was first used by Kwame Nkrumah, the first post-independence (6/03/1957) prime minister and president of Ghana, but has then been furtherly discussed by many politicians, philosophers and scholars of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Kwame Nkrumah was an anti-colonial and revolutionary politician who used the term to refer to “modern attempts to perpetuate colonialism while at the same

time talking about ‘freedom’<sup>8</sup>. Usually, MEDCs aim to take advantage of former dependency relations they had with LEDCs in order to gain profit by their involvement in the economics and politics of the said nations. The most common practice of neo-colonialism is companies representing MEDCs’ interests exploiting the resources of post-colonial regions. In general, neo-colonialism is practised by transnational corporations and global institutions that through indirect means, such as economic, financial and trade policies, wish to take control over a region. This is to usually benefit those represented in the corporations and organisations. It is important to, furthermore, note the impact that neo-colonialism has on the subject country. Economically and financially speaking, foreign factors penetrate into national economies exploiting their resources only to benefit or favour former colonizers and without taking into account the interests of the subject nation. In addition, it is worth mentioning the effects of neo-colonialism on the culture of the subject nations, as it usually results in some kind of alteration of the existent culture by introducing foreign elements (e.g. educational systems, food companies etc.), which in the long-run will enable the MEDCs to not only penetrate the economies of LEDCs but also their politics and social affairs.



**Caricature on neo-colonialism that illustrates the gold-digger like behaviour of former colonizers that exploited the resources of former colonies exclusively for their own benefit**

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<sup>8</sup> Kitchin Rob, and Nigel Thrift. “Neocolonialism.” *ScienceDirect*, Elsevier, 8 July 2009, [www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/B9780080449104001097](http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/B9780080449104001097).

## **Imperialism, colonialism and neocolonialism**

On the one hand, colonialism and neocolonialism may indeed appear as the two sides of a coin, but there are significant differences. Colonialism refers to a parent state that claims sovereignty; controlling an area, the colony, and its population. The acquisition of a colony was to be succeeded by physical or territorial occupation of the subject state by the colonizers. On the other hand, it is very common to find neocolonialism and imperialism in the same sentence, as many tend to believe that neocolonialism is the last stage of imperialism since it refers to countries having high political and economic influence over former colonies. However, neocolonialism refers to the power of MEDCs to influence and take indirect political and financial control of LEDCs, and especially former colonies. Finally, it is important to note, that neocolonialism does not include any physical or territorial occupation and it is practised through indirect means, which usually do not include military actions.

### **Examples of Neocolonialism**

#### **One Belt One Road Initiative (China)**

The People's Republic of China is one of the most densely populated countries. Thus, in the last few years, China's government has adopted a 21<sup>st</sup> century world development strategy, officially known as Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). The government first introduced BRI as a development cooperation framework in 2013, seeking economic cooperation and connectivity across Eurasia and beyond. The strategy focuses on the country's aim to invest in projects and take part in infrastructure built in over 152 countries and organizations all around the world. "Belt" refers to the railway transportation and overland roads (Silk Road Economic Belt), while "road" refers to ports and sea routes (21<sup>st</sup> century Maritime Silk Road). The Chinese defend their strategy by affirming the opportunity BRI entails for world connectivity and development. However, the global community views it as a practice of neocolonialism and a chance for China to get involved in global affairs and trade. Because of the size of the investments of the Chinese across the Eurasia, China has the chance to penetrate into national economies and affairs. There are also several examples in which public projects all over the Eurasia, are assigned to Chinese multinational companies or institutions, rather than national ones. Therefore, due to their great power, they are able to have influence over national political or financial matters only to empower the Chinese economy.

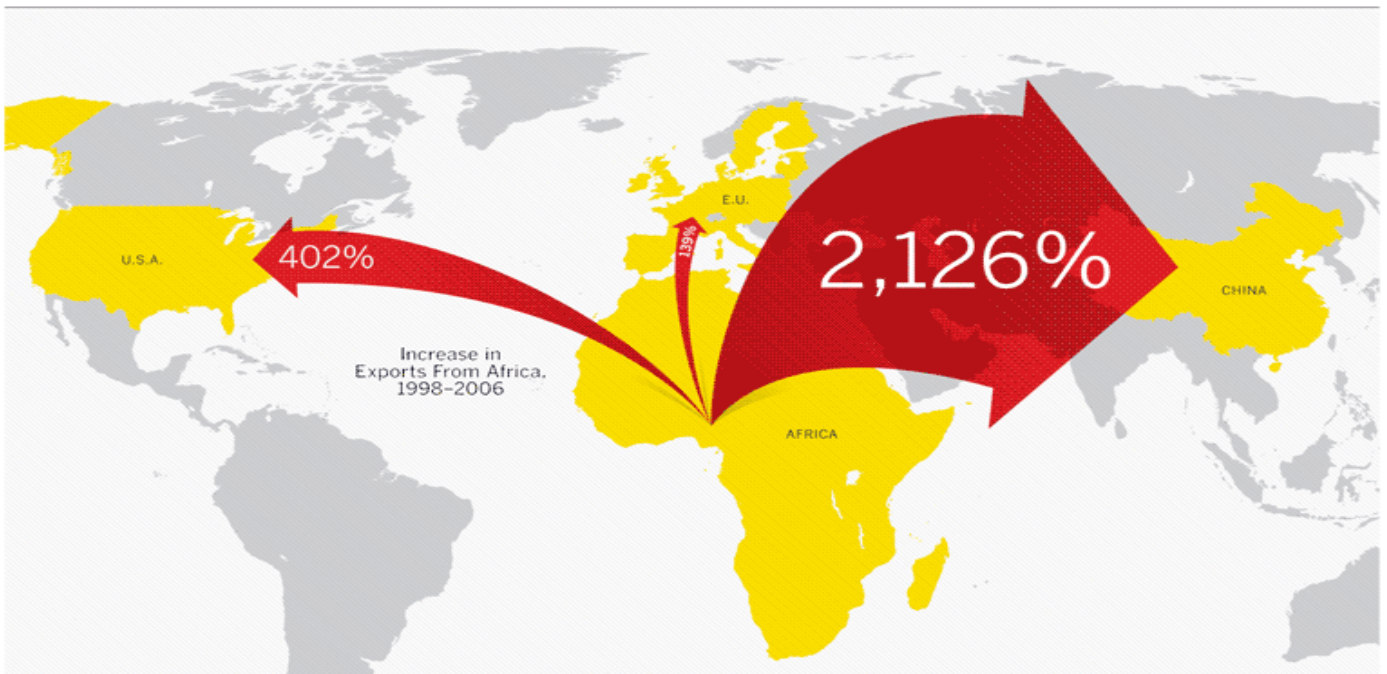
#### **Neocolonialism in Africa**



Many countries are accused of practising neo-colonialism in Africa, but China seems to be the one benefited the most. In 2014, the Chinese government published the White Paper on Foreign Aid, which declared that the provision of foreign aid from China will be happening under the principles of mutual respect, equality, keeping promises, mutual benefits and generally providing a win-win situation for all. On one hand, by providing foreign aid to Africa, China gains access to both raw materials and new markets. On the other hand, the built of African infrastructures are increased by the Chinese, who also provide access to cheap imports and invest in projects (e.g. railways, hydroelectric power). In exchange, 70% of the African exports to China compose of crude oil. This does help fuel Africa's emerging economy but seriously affects both the primary and secondary sector. Consequently, because of the dependency relation among the two countries, in the case that crude oil will no longer be valuable or available to China, Africa is going to be seriously damaged. It's important to note that in 2008, African exports to China were worth 52\$ billion, while imports were worth 62\$ billion. Furthermore, it is clear that if this special dependency bond between the two countries is disrupted or even broken, serious damage can be done. For example, a budget deficit can be caused, especially for Africa.

### The Race for Raw Materials

Thanks to aggressive deal making in the sub-Sahara. China has dramatically boosted its economic footprint in Africa.



The impact of neo-colonialism on African exports

### Neocolonialism in Nigeria

In 1472, Portuguese navigators were the first to reach the coasts of what today is called Nigeria. However, there seemed to be no formal colonial rule, except for the slave trade, which saw Nigerians forcibly sent to America. Later on, around the 1850s, Britain conquered Nigeria, marking a long British colonial period that ended in 1960. After the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War, the mandate system and various constitutions though, small steps towards autonomy were taken, with the 1<sup>st</sup> of October 1960 being marked as the national Independence Day. Nowadays, traces of the British colonial rule can still be found, especially in politics, the economy and in the nation's evolving culture. Thus, the international community tends to see Nigeria a neo-colonial state.

Before granting Nigeria official autonomy, the British took several steps to prepare the State. For instance, they were the ones that introduced Nigeria's first official constitution, The Richards Constitution of 1945, which established the balkanization<sup>9</sup> of the country. This administrative act was highly criticized as it seemed to benefit the British, rather than Nigeria itself. It was also a clear continuance of the British imperialistic governance and an attempt of practising neo-colonialism. Lastly, it is important to note, that a respected part of the global community tends to believe that neo-colonialism was an essential step towards autonomy and that all dependency bonds which today exist, are beneficial for Nigeria.

## MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED

### The United States of America (USA)

Nowadays, the United States of America, along with China, are the two countries accused to be the major neo-colonial powers. Either directly (governments) or indirectly (representatives of the economy or anyone with American or Chinese interests) they exercise neo-colonialism, influencing third world countries or former dependencies, for their own benefit. An example of American indirect practice of neo-colonialism is the American fast-food chain McDonald's, which is the second largest fast-food chain with over 36000 restaurant locations all over the world. The profits of the food chain boost the American economy, but the existence of the restaurant brunches all around the world also spreads the American food culture, altering any existing national culture.

## United Nations (UN)

Since its foundation, in 1945, the United Nations has supported all countries' autonomy and national sovereignty. The United Nations has five principal organs: The Secretariat, the General Assembly, the Security Council, the International Court of Justice, the Social and Economic Council and the Trusteeship Council, which has been dismantled, two of which are concerned with decolonization. The fourth committee of the General Assembly, the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (GA4), "considers a broad range of issues covering a cluster of five decolonization-related agenda items, the effects of atomic radiation [...], a comprehensive review of the question of peacekeeping operations as well as a review of special political missions"<sup>10</sup>. The Trusteeship Council's role was to meet annually and monitor the Trust Territories which were placed under the Trusteeship System (the main goal of the system was the most beneficial process towards the autonomy of the Trust Territories, which were colonies seeking independence). However, since 1994, when the last Trust Territory, Palau, gained independence, the Council amended its rules of procedure and agreed to meet as occasion required. United Nations role in decolonisation was significant, while the organisation has an active role in neo-colonialism too, with the Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, repeatedly emphasizing the value of national sovereignty and the need of a uniform global policy against any violations of it.

## The World Bank (WB)

The World Bank has often been accused of practicing neo-colonialism, as they are thought to be granting loans or other forms of economic aid that damage and are conditional on the recipient country but benefit those represented in the organizations. The World Bank, whose director is directly appointed by the US government, is annually providing 25\$ billion dollars to developing countries for financial development and economic reform. This may seem promising towards the third world, but it is important to note how the voting procedures in the World Bank works. The US is represented by a single executive director, but holds the 20% of the voting power, while the 47 sub-Saharan African countries, that are represented by two executive directors, hold only 7% of the voting power. This serves to illustrate which countries really hold power over the board decisions in such organisations.

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<sup>10</sup> "United Nations, Main Body, Main Organs, General Assembly." *United Nations*, United Nations, [www.un.org/en/ga/fourth/](http://www.un.org/en/ga/fourth/).

### Organization of Solidarity with the People of Asia, Africa and Latin America (OSPAAL)

OSPAAL is a Cuban political movement, officially founded as a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO), recognised by the UN, with the purpose of fighting imperialism and defending the human rights. It was founded in 1966 in Havana, Cuba, as a follow up to the Tricontinental Conference. Besides fighting imperialism, OSPAAL's aim is to also promote socialism and communism in the Third World. Through reinforced graphic propaganda and the publication of the Tricontinental Magazine, OSPAAL has been able to transmit its ideas and requests all over the world. Especially through their posters, there are trying to boldly state their will to fight globalisation and imperialism, as well as defend the Human Rights.

### BLOCS EXPECTED

For this topic, two blogs are expected. On one hand, former colonial dependencies, like Africa, that still suffer from the influence and control of others, are going to be against neo-colonialism seeking ways to protect their national sovereignty and citizens. On the other hand, MEDCs that benefit from neo-colonialism, as going to be supporting its existence trying to convince other member states that practising it is a win-win situation essential for world development. Please note that there may be countries, whose policy is strongly against neo-colonialism, but benefits from it or were former dependencies but current neo-colonial powers (e.g. USA) that may form a third blog having a passive policy, or incorporate in one of the other two blogs based on which is closer to its national policy!

### TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Date	Description of event
1945	The United Nations and of the fourth committee of the General Assembly, The Special Political and Decolonization Committee, are founded
1945	The United Nations Trusteeship Council is established
1961	The All African People's Conference expresses critique against neocolonialism

1966	The 1966 Solidarity Conference of the Peoples of Africa, Asia and Latin America takes place
1994	Autonomy is granted to the last Trust Territory, Palau
2013	The Chinese government introduces the One Belt One Road Initiative
2015	The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals are published

## RELEVANT RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES AND EVENTS

### Chapters xi, xii and xiii of the Charter of the United Nations

Throughout these three chapters of the United Nations, the Trusteeship Council was established, monitoring 11 different regions as Trust Territories. The chapters also described the process towards the decolonization and specified the conditions under which it would be achieved.

### EU's Guidelines on the Human Rights Defenders

The European Union has issued a document, which contains the Guidelines on Human Right Defenders. In this document, it is stated that the union wishes for the “effective elimination of all violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms of peoples and individuals, including in relation to mass, flagrant or systematic violations such as those resulting from apartheid, all forms of racial discrimination, colonialism, foreign domination or occupation”<sup>11</sup>. Despite its clear policy to protect the rights of those under colonial rule, nowadays EU is highly benefited from neo-colonialism. For example, over one-third of Africa’s exports are imported in the European Union.

## PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

In resolution 70/1, the United Nations introduced 17 global goals for sustainable development in the years 2015 to 2030. Goal 8 and 9 highlight the cruciality of strengthening national economies; allowing economic growth, creating

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<sup>11</sup> “Ensuring Protection – European Union Guidelines on Human Rights Defenders .” European Union.

decent and fair job opportunities for all, encouraging innovation and having the proper infrastructure. By strengthening the national economy, the country is less valuable to any foreign sector who would take the opportunity and “help” them, when in reality they would just be practising neo-colonialism.

## POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

It is crucial for all to understand the sphericity of the topic. Neocolonialism existed and will continue to exist. However, it is in the countries’ hands to eliminate dependency bonds, in this way protecting their national sovereignty and aiding the global community. Although many countries benefit from neo-colonialism, it is important to note that when dependency bindings exist and for some reason one of the two countries stop aiding the other, both of them are going to be damaged.

In order to eliminate neo-colonialism, strong national sovereignty is needed. Without a strong central government, or with an increased export dependency, a country is very vulnerable. Member States’ governments should invest in infrastructure development, health and education, while giving more opportunities to national companies, rather than multinational corporations or institutions. Countries should also adopt legislation or vote upon laws, ensuring that their national economy and both the first and secondary sector are not exploited for the benefit of other MEDCs. Moreover, it is very important for a nation to make its own decisions, not letting foreign factors interfere and to seek for rapid economic growth, while making sure that the state on its own plays a large role on the country’s economy. The key to solving the issue is balance. Foreign investments are indeed beneficial for a country’s economy, but they should never be in the extent of which the international community has so much penetrated into national matters, that is more benefitted than the country its self.

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