As it is well known, prior to the beginning of the 1960-s, France was the major colonial power. All Maghreb (Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, Mauritania) and also present Burkina Faso, Djibouti, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Niger, Senegal, the Union of the Comoros, the CAR and Chad were under its control in Africa. In fact, plunder of these countries has become a base of French prosperity in the twentieth century. Many nations, such as Algerians, who put over one million lives on the altar of freedom and independence remember too well the crimes of colonialists, and some, for example, in Rwanda, ask a question what was the role of France in the rampant genocide in these countries in the post-colonial period.

And, despite the horrors of colonialism and current formal independence of Africans, France has still keep political and economic positions in many of these states, even in those for which it wasn't the mother country; thus inducing the African political figures to speak openly about neocolonial oppression and maintaining dependence on Paris. Until now, gold and forex reserves of the former colonies of the France and also of some Portuguese and Spanish colonies are in the Central bank of France. Particularly, these are Benin, Burundi, Burkina Faso, Gabon, Guinea-Bissau, the Republic of Congo (Brazzaville), Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Togo, Cameroon, the CAR, Equatorial Guinea (REG), Chad. It is obvious, that no large deals of these countries may take place without approval of France that provides it with a huge leverage over policy and economy of these countries.
Of course, not all these countries are of the same interest to Paris. Some are important from the geopolitical point of view and fight against terrorism, which threaten political and financial interests of France, others are markets for French products, and the third presents the resource base for the French industry. The priority is given to Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso, the CAR and Côte d’Ivoire. The main resources France receives from there are uranium, gold and diamonds. Whereas uranium is of strategic importance for France for in 60-s - 70-s Paris placed stake on atomic energy and its industry for 75% is powered by the electricity coming from the NPPs. Therefore, it is no coincidence that the network of the French military bases expands. 7 thousand servicemen of France are accommodated in Africa.

President E. Macron who has come to power in 2016 turned to the African affairs not immediately, however, since fall of 2017 he pays considerable attention to them. In particular, he has used the French chairmanship in the UN Security Council and on October 30 in New York he has held a ministerial meeting on a situation in the Sahel zone, where most interests and concerns of Paris currently lay. Rampant terrorism and extremism, activities of the terrorist groups in many respects evoked by French actions, first of all at the President N. Sarkozy time when Libya has been crushed, and its leader M. Gaddafi knowing a lot about the French leader of that time has been killed, now hits France itself. Serious political and economic interests of Paris are under the question, thus forcing Paris to keep the three thousand people in the Sahara-Sahel zone since 2013. It has already carried out two large operations – Serval and Barkhane, but failed to overcome terrorism though Paris actively promotes the idea of creation of joint forces of ‘Sahel Five’ (Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania, Chad, Niger) after acceptance on June 21, 2017. The aim of these forces are to replace the French troops, but so far task is solved poorly as funds (420 million Euros) promised by sponsors haven't yet reached beneficiaries.

At the same time, Ministry of Defense of France suggest that the ‘blue helmets’ accommodated in the Sahara-Sahel region (MINUSMA) have no necessary means of protection from jihadists, and France has no means to play a role of gendarme for Africa. Ministry advocates for increase of EU and NATO contribution into security on the African continent and for authorising the Alliance on actions in the south of the Mediterranean. However, it is necessary to acknowledge, that there is no unanimity in France on this matter. Many don't support this opinion and oppose expansion of NATO responsibility zone, and support increase in efficiency of UN peacekeeping operations.

On October 2017 Paris has published the new military doctrine of France, which was also signed by E. Macron himself. The main emphasis in it was put on fight against radicalism, generally Islamic one, thus showing that Paris is, first of all, concerned with situation in North Africa and Sahara-Sahel zone. Issue with jihadism and jihadist terrorism is described there in details. The main thesis of this military doctrine is physical destruction of jihadist groups, but this doesn't lift terrorism threat in general as the ideology remains untouched. In reality, the integrity of the doctrine converts into the fact that terrorism rearranges and expands to new regions, using chaos, civil wars and weakness of the states. The main organizations don't disappear at all; and their ideology is not weakening. Al-Qaeda and ISIS (the banned terrorist organizations) are rearranging and adapting to new conditions. Their metastasis expand to new territories, including Africa. ISIS is still an organization with global opportunities. The doctrine admits that there are widespread sympathies and even active support to jihadism of the population in many countries. According to the new doctrine, a priority in this context is support of joint forces of ‘Sahel Five’.

Simultaneously, the doctrine admits that the jihadism in the Middle East is fueled by continuing Palestinian-Israeli conflict and Sunni and Shiite contradictions. Evolution of the French thought obviously goes in the right direction, however, as it was already noted above, they do not have the heart to say that their actions have considerably assisted expansion of that jihadist ideology in Libya, which they so furiously and essentially brand.

A little later E. Macron has enhanced his military doctrine with political and social and economic provisions in relation to Africa in his keynote speech in November 28 in Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso). In this speech he has put an emphasis that now in Paris they supposedly don’t look down at Africans any more, and consider them as equal partners. He has openly confessed for crimes of colonialism, asked not to fix on the past. He announced infringement of human dignity, illegal migration, Islamic terrorism, internal political conflicts, religious extremism and some other, including demography, as the current problems of the African continent. He has intentionally thanked Saudi Arabia that it has stopped feeding religious extremism with funds and has not said a word about the same Turkish funds. And, the French President decisively oath devoted investments, in which a very few people in Africa have believed (French business is too well known there) though pathos and positive message of this speech have provided some impression. The stake on educational programs (France accepts many African students), as well as in general on youth that doesn't remember the era of colonialism and, perhaps will be ready to believe in ‘disinterestedness’ of the French, has seemed real to Africans in the plans of Paris.
The new military doctrine and loud promises of the help to Africans haven't secured the French from terrorist attacks. On March 2, 2018 the Support Group for Islam and Muslims attacked Embassy of France in Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso) as the response to the Barkhane operation in the Sahel region, to the death of the leaders (prior on February 14 the French forces operation has taken place during which 20 jihadists have been killed and captured) and in attempt to interfere the expansion of SSSF. The terrorist attacks have been carefully prepared and committed, perhaps, not without participation of Burkina Faso military.

In many respects, it has turned out to be the consequence of the fact that Paris plays a doubly game in Sahara-Sahel region, first of all, in Mali. So, hiding behind the humanitarian reservations, the French evade from transfer the Kidal Region under control of central authorities of Mali. The Coordination of Azawad Movements actually controls the city. Paris patronizes separatist group the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad whose headquarters is located near Paris. The French also turn a blind eye on atrocities of one of the most odious extremists of Mali Iyad Ag Ghali acting from the South of Algeria. It is obvious, that 'double standards' sometimes hit against those who practice them.

However, this and other aspects of the French policy in Africa will be discussed in the next article.

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