

CONTEMPORARY BRITISH POLICY IN AFRICA¹

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Introduction

Great Britain, along with France, is a post-colonial power that has retained some of its influence on the African continent. However, comparing the positions of these two countries, it should be noted that the current position of Great Britain in Africa is weaker and not as complex as that of France. So, for example, Great Britain does not have such a financial instrument as the CFA franc, which circulates in 15 African states and is tied to the financial system of France. Also, in recent decades, Great Britain has not changed the governments of African states to please its economic interests and practically did not participate in military interventions.

At the same time, one cannot identify a certain risk associated with the international status of the English language. This leads to the fact that the English-speaking states of Africa in the late 20th - early 21st centuries turned out to be much more open to external influence than, for example, the countries of Francafrigue. In many respects, this cultural and linguistic factor determines the deep penetration of the influence of the United States and India on the continent, which also represents the English-speaking cultural

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tradition, but has completely alternative geoeconomic and geopolitical goals.

Thus, the relevance of the issue under analysis is associated with the processes of a wide geopolitical confrontation on the African continent, and the opponents in this confrontation are not always the objective geopolitical counterparties of Great Britain - China and Russia. In many cases, the interests of Great Britain clash with the policies of the United Kingdom's allies and partners, both within NATO and in general within the framework of the global political game.

In such conditions, Great Britain is forced to constantly maneuver in the system of global goals and interests in order to maintain and strengthen its position on the African continent, which is reflected in the political rhetoric of the leaders of this country.

A wide range of research material determines a high degree of scientific elaboration of the topic from various angles, including British, Russian, and global [Miller 2011; Cook 2003; Gallagher 2009; Taylor 2010, etc.]. In this regard, Kulkova's approach seems relevant [Kulkova 2014]. It aims to map the problems of the UK's implementation of the policy of "soft power" and cultural diplomacy. Kulkova states that although Great Britain sees itself as a "cultural superpower" and seeks to expand its cultural presence in the world despite financial constraints, it faces the difficult task of building a consistent image of a country that is at the same time the core of the Euro-Atlantic world, a center of gravity and a melting pot for non-Western cultures, including in their own territory, subject to British cultural influences from a long period of colonialism.

Another approach is presented by Taylor (Taylor 2010) who criticizes the classic neo-colonial approach, according to which Africa appears as a "passive" continent and object of international relations, without its own identity. In contrast to this concept, Taylor states that Africa has always been an active participant in the international process and its activity only intensifies as the intensity of globalization processes increases. In many ways, Taylor's approach explains why British leaders over the short period from 1997 to 2020 so dramatically transformed their approaches to interaction with African countries and, in fact, moved away from the model of continental dominance in favor of bilateral equal dialogue with individual, at least "key" countries. Taylor believes that only the study of the internal mechanisms of power in African states can help to understand how foreign policy decisions are actually made and to see the real image of the country and the whole continent, viewed through the prism of British national interests.

Exploring this issue in our paper, we proceed from the continuity of British policy towards Africa and its determination not only by the political ambitions of individual national leaders but also by the long-term structure of

dialogue, which is rooted in the concept of neo-colonialism.

Our research methodology is based on the principles of the theory of “path dependence”. This social phenomenon was described by Pearson (2000) and then received many interpretations, for example, in the works of Mahoney (Mahoney 2000) and Boas (Boas 2007). It refers to either the results at a given point in time or the long-term equilibrium of the process, and two theses are indicative here: first, “history matters.” Second, the predictable increase in small differences is a disproportionate cause of later circumstances.

Within the framework of the study, a problem-historical research method was also used to analyze the evolution of African politics under different cabinets of ministers in the period from 1997 to 2021 in a single complex of historical, political, and economic conditions and in the context of general changes in the international situation.

Britain's turn towards Africa

Of course, language is a platform for the use of London's soft power towards African states. Nevertheless, the determining factor of influence during the entire post-colonial period was the political will of the British establishment, aimed at keeping the former African colonies in the orbit of their political and economic influence. During the entire period of its implementation, this policy changed, which was due to the transformation of Britain's foreign policy goals in the context of a government in power.

From the late 1940s, a practice began to take shape in which territories gaining independence joined the Commonwealth. Since 1960, the political issues that have engaged the attention of Commonwealth leaders have been mostly African ones (Akinrinade 1989). As Power (2009) states, the Commonwealth's focus on democratic process, state capacity and ‘good governance’ is shallow, derivative and in many ways undistinguishable from the agendas of countless other international development organizations and the international financial institutions in particular. For most of the participants in the association, the Commonwealth was seen mainly as a tool to stimulate their bilateral relations with the UK.

To date, the population of the Commonwealth countries is more than two billion people, and the African states are the largest contingent of countries in the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth for the UK primarily plays the role of “soft power”, and it has also become a potential new partner that can replace the European Union. At the same time, the Commonwealth plays a quite significant role in the UK's adaptation to the new international environment,

reinforcing its position in the main international organizations. Despite the fact that the economic benefits from membership in the Commonwealth are small, it is worth noting that the Commonwealth is a fairly well-functioning economic space in which a number of countries benefit from membership. In fact, the UK has managed to create a mechanism that does not require huge financial investments from it, but brings certain benefits to almost all of its participants - first of all, of course, to Britain.

With the end of the Soviet era, an intensive revision of priorities begins in the world. The countries of the "Third World", including those on the African continent, found themselves in a situation of instability due to the partial loss of geopolitical priorities and influence from the countries of Europe and the United States. In some cases, this led to civilian wars, such as the 1994 conflict in Rwanda.

As a result, Western countries, including the former colonial powers, including Great Britain, found themselves forced to re-actualize the African vector of foreign policy towards the end of the 1990s. For Great Britain, the actualization of the African political vector turned out to be associated with the policy of the Labor government headed by A. Blair, who was in power from 1997 to 2007 (Kulkova 2013).

During this period, British policy turned out to be focused on numerous external challenges, including integration into the EU and NATO military companies in Afghanistan and Iraq and strengthening ties with the former colonies. This was largely due to the personality of A. Blair, as he considered the use of military force as one of the determining factors in the restoration of the country's power.

In this regard, Kulkova identifies four factors that influenced the intensification of cooperation between Britain and African countries, including those outside the boundaries of traditional colonial influence [Kulkova 2014]. Among them is the struggle for African mineral resources, practical interests, ideological motives, and personal characteristics of A. Blair.

In our opinion, the fifth factor that was actualized closer to the mid-2000s is the arrival of new external political players on the African continent, who gradually began to transform the system of geopolitical influence that has developed on the continent. Among them, China should be noted first, followed by India and Brazil.

Interestingly, Britain's turn to Africa turned out to be connected with the thesis that Britain needs to atone for the sins of colonialism and start relations from a "clean slate," but at the same time, in 1997 A. Blair already declared: "I value and honour our history enormously, but Britain's empire should be the cause of "neither apology nor hand-wringing"; it should be used to further the country's global influence".

Blair's government steps in relations with African countries

It is relevant to recall the international project "Make Poverty History", which the UK led in 2005. The G8 meeting was held the same year, which was chaired by Great Britain with its agenda. Undoubtedly, such great attention to Africa under the leadership of Great Britain should have brought this country big political points as a country-leader and a country-peacemaker. It is characteristic that after the G8 summit, the activities of the "Make Poverty History" project weakened greatly. It was completely discontinued in 2006 (January 31), although the organizations participating in the project clearly did not achieve their formal goals.

Despite the fact that the "Make Poverty History" movement was compromised and actually ceased to exist in 2006, in 2013, it was resurrected under the new name "Enough Food for Everyone". In the context of this movement, Great Britain again assumed the chairmanship of the G8. The fight against hunger was also a central theme of the campaign.

In 2002, A. Blair visited Nigeria, where he participated in the discussion of issues of environmental restoration, economic management, agricultural development, etc. This has become part of the Prime Minister's policy of supporting large British businesses operating in African countries.

However, going back to the period 1997-2005, it should be noted that the Blair's government implemented a number of profound administrative reforms, including, for example, the creation of the Commission for Africa, which indicates its political engagement, despite the transnational nature.

The Commission published a report in 2005 that generated a broad public debate, which was interpreted within the G8 in 2005. The G8 countries stated they were taking on obligations to fulfill the requirements of the report. As such, this was the failure of their political position since the G8 countries were able to meet the requirements of the Trade Commission, including ending subsidies for agricultural exports by rich countries and ending "reciprocity" in world trade negotiations.

Great Britain's policy towards the continent from 1997 to 2005 was implemented very actively in the context of political populism. An example of this is the speech from Prime Minister Blair at a party conference in October 2001, in which he directly says that the situation in Africa is problematic, the UK and Western countries are ready to help solve this problem, but in return, they want to see political changes in Africa, aimed at adapting specifically to European values.

Based on the statements of A. Blair in 2001, it becomes obvious that a new complex political concept was developed during this period, the

essence of which was reduced to the hegemonic position of Britain, including in relation to African states, which, first of all, was shared with the partner - the United States - and boiled down to the thesis that Britain needs loyal “democratic” partners who will nominally be considered equal.

The factor that made such a statement on the part of Great Britain possible, without a doubt, is the actualized terrorist threat, which has become a shadow over the entire system of international law and the principles of the UN (Kulkova 2013).

In this regard, we can say that Africa has become a very convenient object for extrapolating British interests. Since the 1960s, former colonial countries only moved away from the metropolis, losing ties with it and establishing ties with other agents, such as the USSR and then with China or India in 2000. In such conditions, the need for revenge on the part of Great Britain became obvious, which, being primarily economic, had to be supported by various kinds of sanctions, including the possibility of military operations.

To implement Blair’s concept, a number of administrative decisions have been introduced in the UK since 1997. So, for example, the first among the innovations was the creation of the Department for International Development (now FCDO) in 1997. This Department, included in the government, had the goal of implementing a targeted policy of assistance to developing countries and systematic cooperation with charitable societies and international organizations to eradicate poverty. A convenient context for the development of the ministry’s activities was the adoption at the UN level in 2000 of the Concept of the Millennium Development Goals, which coincided with the goals set by the ministry.

Nevertheless, at the Department for International Development level, practically no attention was paid to the deep processes of the evolution of developing societies related to culture, historical memory, and politics (Vines and Cargill 2006, 53-56). However, since its inception, the Department has become a leader in analyzing African issues, and to a large extent, this has been facilitated by dialogue and agreements with external counterparties (Porteous 2005, 281-297).

Thus, the UK at that time was just acquiring a new African strategy, including through dialogue with other stakeholders. Along with the Ushtein Group created in 1999, the 1997 P3 initiative became an important milestone in UK international cooperation on African issues. France, the UK, and the USA joined it at the first stage.

The intensification of cooperation with France became possible as a result of the French-British summit in Saint-Malo, where the discussion was about the organizational foundations and goals of a common European

policy in the field of security and defence. Despite the nominal complexity of the approach to the problem on the part of the three states, each of them extrapolated its influence on African countries in accordance with its own interests (Walpole 1998). Later, the project was also expanded to include Germany, Canada, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and some other countries, cooperation with which was implemented, including through the Africa Conflict Prevention Fund created in 2001 in Great Britain.

In fact, Britain has increasingly militarized its humanitarian work, integrating it with the creation of sub-regional training teams and supporting the national military forces of countries such as Ghana, Mozambique, and Nigeria. In parallel, other British initiatives were being implemented, including, for example, the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, which primarily affected Ghana and Nigeria.

Brown's, Cameron's and May's cabinets

After 2007, in connection with the coming to power of the new government headed by Gordon Brown (2007–2010), Great Britain's policy towards the African continent is somewhat transformed. We can talk, for example, about the continuation of interaction with Nigeria, which began under A. Blair. So, in 2007, U. Yar'Adua came to power in this country. In 2008, he visited London, and during this visit, the parties agreed to form a group to train security forces to eliminate lawlessness in the oil-producing region of the Niger Delta.

It is impossible to speak unequivocally about a change in foreign policy priorities since African countries had remained the focus of attention. However, the toolkit of influence is being adjusted, in which financial mechanisms begin to prevail.

This is largely due to two factors. The first is the global financial crisis of 2008-2012, which hit both Britain and Africa at the same time. And the second is the personality of Gordon Brown himself, who previously, as the Minister of Finance, placed more emphasis on the effectiveness of financial rather than military mechanisms of influence.

In 2008, the British Minister for International Development declared that Britain would not abandon its financial obligations on Africa. Until 2011 it would provide developing countries (not only African ones) with assistance worth more than two billion pounds.

It should be noted that this investment seems to be extremely successful since construction prices during this period were declining

while the potential of integration projects on the continent, on the contrary, increased. At the same time, the military aspect of interaction with Africa during Brown's term noticeably sagged, as indicated by the rejection of the Defense Strategy until 2010, which was expected back in 2007.

During the term of Brown, there was also an administrative transformation associated with the merger of the Africa Conflict Prevention Fund and the World Conflict Prevention Fund in 2008. In 2009, another consolidation took place in connection with the merger with the Fund for Stabilization Assistance. The new structure was named the Conflict Fund. In our opinion, this demonstrates a tendency to create a more comprehensive approach to regional conflicts.

With the departure of Brown and the arrival of Prime Minister David Cameron, the attitude towards African countries was once again somewhat transformed. The first factor has to do with the structure of the government, which became a coalition and was represented by an alliance of conservatives and liberal democrats, i.e., more gravitated towards the need for internal political compromises. The second factor that became actual in 2015 was the Brexit referendum, which forced Cameron to pay much more attention to British-European relations.

In this context, the African vector of British politics, in a sense, became hostage to allied relations between Britain, the United States, and the EU. However, during 2010-2016, there were several events that characterized British policy in Africa. First of all, it should be noted that in 2010 the National Security Strategy and the Strategic Review "Securing the UK in an Age of Uncertainty" were finally adopted. Both of these documents can be considered significant, as they transformed the general approach of the British government to foreign policy for years to come.

Another landmark document of this period was the "Strategy for Strengthening Stability Abroad", adopted in 2011, which determined the updated structure of the UK's actions in other countries. The strategy has been supported in practice by the increased funding of the Conflict Fund, which has maintained an African dimension.

Compared to Blair and Brown's policies, Cameron's Africa policy seems more contextual. So, with the arrival of Cameron, the stake in Africa, as in the period before Blair, was shifted to the Foreign Office, and much less attention was paid to the activities of the Department for International Development and the wishes of the Ministry of Defence. In part, this can be attributed to the prime minister's desire to stake on long-term projects, including in the field of trade (Kulkova 2013).

At the same time, if we look at the trade statistics of this period, we would have found that the position of Great Britain in Africa was gradually weakening. For example, statistics show an increase in the trade deficit. If from 2009 to 2011 the trade balance was a surplus due to the increase in UK exports and the fall in imports, then in 2014, the deficit was 4.3%, which was associated with an increase in imports.

The structure of trade with African countries is also uneven, which to a certain extent contradicts the ideas of Brown, who relied on the development of trade relations and the search for new partners.

There is a pronounced asymmetry in favor of the UK on foreign direct investment between the two sides. In 2014, UK foreign direct investment in Africa totaled £42.5 billion. African countries in the same period invested only 3.0 billion pounds sterling.

In terms of industry, mining, and quarrying, as well as financial services, were the main industrial groups receiving UK FDI, accounting for 54.4% and 34.3% of the total in 2014. To a certain extent, this suggests that African countries have acted and are the bearer of a raw material resource for Britain, which, to a large extent, contradicts the idea of the development of the African continent, which was expressed at the UN level in 2000 and was actively supported by all British prime ministers before 2016.

A larger increase in UK investment in Africa compared to African investment in the UK resulted in the UK's net FDI position in the continent growing from £19.2 billion to £39.5 billion between 2005 and 2014.

UK investors' earnings from their FDI in Africa (outward FDI) fell from £5.8bn in 2005 to £3.8bn in 2014. Despite the fact that more than half of British investments in Africa are in mining, the largest income (£1.7 billion) comes from financial services. In contrast, the UK's FDI revenues from mining and quarrying were £1.3 billion. In many respects, it was the success of the economic policy of Great Britain in South Africa and Nigeria that dictated Cameron's visit to these countries in 2011. When visiting these two countries, Cameron represented a new model of regional centers of economic power, capable of enclosing surrounding countries, including those not belonging to the British zone of influence, and forming a system of transit of goods and services through logistics centers that would be beneficial to Great Britain.

As a result, by 2016, the end of Cameron's term and the time of Brexit, the position of Great Britain in Africa turned out to be extremely ambiguous. On the one hand, since 1997, the country has achieved great success in trade and investment, has clearly identified two main economic partners, South Africa, and Nigeria, and has also strengthened its position among a number

of former colonies, including Kenya, Tanzania, Gabon, DRC, etc. In addition, Britain actively participated in the fight against the outbreak of the Ebola virus in 2014 and developed its relations with countries of the continent that do not fall directly under the zone of its neo-colonial influence, such as Rwanda or Mali.

On the other hand, the results of Britain's activities in Africa turned out to be rather dubious in terms of global achievements. Most of the conflicts in which Britain participated in different years have been frozen or not resolved, and the results of its activities are only temporary. This is largely why, in Prime Minister Cameron's speech on the strength and security of Great Britain in the EU on May 9, 2016, i.e., on the eve of the Brexit referendum, Africa as a complex area of cooperation between Britain and the EU, was practically absent.

Otherwise, the British-African dialogue remained virtually beyond the political battle of 2016 and passed in transit to the next government under the leadership of the already new politician Theresa May.

Theresa May was given a great responsibility to lead British society through the crisis period associated with the country's exit from the EU. In any case, this exit was fraught with high costs for the national economy due to the rupture of established economic ties, the emergence of new customs barriers, and the withdrawal of a part of European business. Alternative non-European areas of economic cooperation were receiving additional actualization. In this regard, the African direction of British policy becomes particularly attractive, especially in the context of the development of new economic ties and attracting new investments.

The very same premiership of T. May in the aspect of British-African relations was primarily characterized by a tour of three African countries - South Africa, Nigeria, and Kenya. This tour is significant in many ways. First of all, it is symbolic for the partners of Great Britain since major British politicians have not visited the continent for five years. The second point is related to Britain's exit from the EU and the need to update alternative economic ties. The third is the intensification of China's policy in Africa. May's arrival on the continent actually coincided with another event, the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, which took over from Xi Jinping's tour, who also visited South Africa and Mauritius, Rwanda, and Senegal.

In this regard, South Africa has become a country for which a geopolitical struggle unfolded, which brought quite unexpected results. For example, May supported the land reform carried out in South Africa and associated with the seizure of land from the white population, including the heirs of the British colonists.

During May's visits to Nigeria and Kenya not only trade but also military and social issues were raised. In our opinion, the issue of countering terrorism that can threaten oil production, should be considered as a priority.

During May's term, several other significant events characterized the general approach of Great Britain to African problems in addition to the African tour. For example, the diplomatic presence in Mali was expanded, and embassies were opened in Niger and Chad.

Despite the growth of cooperation between Britain and African countries during the rule of Theresa May, it is impossible to unequivocally declare the formation of a certain turn in relations during this period. The policy of Britain of this period was in the outline of the principles set forth by Gordon Brown, the essence of which was to minimize military participation and maximize positive, primarily mutually beneficial trade interaction. Nevertheless, with a high degree of certainty, this path can be called extensive since it did not imply the solution of issues important for the continent, a profound change in the structure of trade, or the initiation of any innovative and unique projects.

At the same time, the need for these changes was felt both in business and in political spheres. In many ways, their initiation required a certain solution to the Brexit issue, which could stabilize British policy both concerning the EU and in relation to others, in that number of African counterparties.

It is now clear that such changes have come to British politics with the new Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who has been actively playing the African card in 2020.

Here, first of all, we are talking about the first UK-Africa Investment Summit 2020, which was opened by Johnson on January 20, 2020, in London. The summit was supposed to mark a change in the mechanism of relations with African countries and establish a new model of bilateral and multilateral cooperation.

Nonetheless, despite controversy in some of the claims, the summit was a big economic success, with a total of more than £ 6.5 billion in commercial transactions, accounting for 43% of the UK's total trade with Africa. In addition, trade agreements were signed with 11 countries, and trade preferences were declared for 35 countries.

The background idea of the forum was the prospective creation of the African Continental Free Trade Area, within which an agreement is planned to reduce tariffs by 90% for all types of goods (each country is allowed to exclude 3% of goods from this agreement). To date, only 22 out of 49 African

countries have ratified the treaty. In this issue, the partnership between Great Britain and Africa is being actualized, since some African countries are key partners of Britain in Africa, and at the same time some of them, for example Nigeria, are not interested in launching a free trade zone, as this will affect the price of exported oil and, accordingly, the state's profits.

When describing the achieved results in general, it should be noted that they are very contradictory. On the one hand, deals were concluded, the equality of positions of the parties was demonstrated, plans for the development of cooperation were outlined. But on the other hand, despite the results achieved, the scale of the agreements reached, and the volume of contracts concluded make up only a few percent of the total revenue of Britain and its trade agreements with global partners.

It is worth noting here that, back to history, with the entry of the UK into the EU in 1973, the British benefited from the trade agreements implemented by the Europeans. In this way, the former British colonial territories in Africa were incorporated into these agreements. At the present time, the break with the EU gives the country the opportunity to renew trade agreements with African countries, expanding them and increasing opportunities for African exporters. Thus, one of the key strategies in this case is the signing of new bilateral trade agreements, replacing the previous ones signed by the EU. For 46 countries in Africa, Britain guarantees the preservation of preferential customs and tariff regimes after Brexit. Bilateral trade agreements have been signed with eleven African countries, and a law on a system of trade preferences has been adopted with another 35 states of the continent.

It can be said that Britain is going through a period of transformation in the system of its international relations. New approaches and measures are being developed in the field of interaction with foreign partners, and, to a greater extent, with African countries. The formation of a new agenda - "Global Britain" - was declared. In a narrow sense, the goals of the "Global Britain" doctrine, voiced back in the premiership of T. May and subsequently developed under B. Johnson, are to maintain key global positions, primarily economic ones, after the loss of advantages and opportunities associated with membership in the EU. The existence of diverse historical and human ties between Britain and Africa, as well as the powerful influence of British "soft power" on the continent, was stated (Fituni and Abramova 2020).

In addition, an approach was proclaimed to deepen cooperation with individual countries and regional organizations in the field of economic development, peace and security, human rights, democracy, and public administration. To achieve these goals on the continent, which has become a direction of increased importance, it was decided to use the Fusion doctrine

(synthesis, fusion of resources). The implementation of the objectives of the strategy is supervised by two special structures: The *Sub-Saharan Africa National Security Strategy Implementation Group* (NSIG) which oversees the development of strategic government policy priorities in Sub-Saharan Africa, and *The Whitehall Africa Group* (WAG) which is responsible for the implementation of the developed strategic approach, in particular, for a specific strategy in certain regions and individual countries of the continent. (Ibid.).

Conclusions

Despite the ambiguity of the event held in 2020, the summit became an occasion or symbol for the British government's political turn in matters of political and economic cooperation with African countries, to which Britain has been moving towards since 1997. The main essence of this turn was concentrated in a special government statement and boiled down to 4 theses, including "increasing trade, supporting African countries in transforming their economies, mobilizing sustainable financing for Africa and building clean energy capacity".

Nevertheless, Britain's turn towards Africa cannot be regarded as unambiguous and complete, as indicated by the content of the report of the Committee of the House of Lords on Foreign Relations and Defence of Great Britain. Following the Summit, it states the strategic nature of cooperation with African countries and notes the need to lay the foundations for a new medium-term economic partnership after Brexit, to diversify UK investments in Africa and increase trade, leveraging the promising benefits of African integration. These processes indicate that in the context of reformatting the system of world politics and the challenges associated with leaving the EU, the United Kingdom is striving for new political and economic alliances. Expanding ties with the countries of the Asia-Pacific region, the Persian Gulf and evaluating the prospects for markets in Latin America, Britain has significantly stepped up the African direction (Godovanyuk 2018).

Thus, despite some positive moments, including creating a trademark for East Africa and assisting in supporting industrialization in Ethiopia, the change in strategy becomes fundamental and expected. In this regard, the Committee of the House of Lords ascertained the need for a "second throw", apparently considering the policy of Blair in the early 2000s as a "first throw". The new throw should be comprehensive and include trade, investment, migration, and humanitarian components at the same time.

The investment aspect of British policy is criticized, which, back in the

period of Brown, declared its intention to become the main investor of the G7 (G8 at that time) in Africa. Now Britain has changed its approach (apparently trying to reduce the feeling of neo-colonial influence) and, in the words of Johnson at the summit, seeks to become a “partner of choice”. Critics point out that this goal is difficult to measure. In addition, following this strategy may not be effective if other external counterparties in Africa begin to impose their influence.

On one more issue, namely the assistance to African countries, which comes from Great Britain, the authors of the report entered a confrontation with the position of Johnson. As we wrote earlier, Britain has spent up to 0.7% of its GDP on this type of aid in recent years, but at the 2020 summit, the Prime Minister declared that this kind of interaction is not very effective and should be abandoned in favor of trade. His words have a strong enough reasoning. Indeed, British aid, as well as aid from other states and organizations, in most cases acts as an inappropriate transfer, which is often directed simply to finance a particular regime and has no visible social or economic effect.

Despite these arguments, the committee insists on preserving and considering the strategic planning system as its main goal. The caveat, in this case, is the thesis of additional reporting, which can increase transparency.

As a result, summarizing all of the above and relying on the support of James Duddridge, Minister for African Affairs at the Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office (FCDO), the commission stated the need to intensify work on creating a strategy for cooperation between Great Britain and African countries, which, in its turn, could become the first of its kind comprehensive document capable of streamlining intercountry interaction for a long period, especially in the context of the weakening of British-European trade and economic relations.

Nevertheless, despite the exponential increase in UK political institutions towards African issues and following the 2020 Summit, it should be noted that the UK has not yet achieved a clear approach to interaction with the continent’s countries. As a result, the unstable course of cooperation laid down by Blair continues to maintain its relevance and determines bilateral policy in a rapidly changing global space.

After Brexit, London seems to keep Africa in the field of its attention, but its actions in the framework of global international politics clearly do not benefit the strengthening of interaction between the parties. To equalize the shaken positions of the United Kingdom in Africa, long-term purposeful work is clearly required without breakthroughs and distractions to other regions.

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RESUMO

O objeto de estudo neste artigo é a política do Reino Unido na África no último período histórico. O ponto de partida do estudo é 1997, quando Anthony Blair se torna o novo primeiro-ministro do Reino Unido, que, após um longo intervalo, propõe uma nova abordagem para a interação política com os Estados africanos. Foi a partir deste momento que as questões africanas se transformaram em um dos vetores estáveis da política de Estado e surgiram como uma esfera complexa das atividades da Grã-Bretanha na arena internacional. No âmbito do estudo, foi também utilizado um método de investigação problema-histórico para analisar a evolução da política africana sob diferentes gabinetes de ministros no período de 1997 a 2021 em um único complexo de condições históricas, políticas e econômicas e no contexto de mudanças gerais na situação internacional. Os principais eventos pelos quais se pode acompanhar a dinâmica das mudanças na política do Reino Unido em relação aos países africanos foram considerados neste artigo. Os autores chegaram à conclusão de que o Reino Unido ainda não conseguiu uma abordagem clara para a interação com os países africanos. Como resultado, o curso instável de cooperação estabelecido por Blair continua a manter a sua relevância e determina a política bilateral em um espaço global em rápida mudança.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Grã-Bretanha, África, interação política, cooperação, colonização.

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