



AtidMUN 2023



Special Political & Decolonization Committee Study Guide



SPECPOL

Topic A: China-Taiwan Conflict

**Topic B: The Dangers of Modern-Day
Neocolonialism**



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CHAIR LETTER

Dear Delegates,

We are very excited and looking forward to welcoming you all to our SPECPOL Committee in ATIDMUN 2023!

Our committee, The United Nations Special Political and Decolonization Committee (SPECPOL), holds an important role in addressing some of the world's most pressing issues. As one of the six main committees of the UN General Assembly, SPECPOL focuses on matters related to decolonization, self-determination, peacekeeping, and the promotion of political and territorial stability. Our committee's significance lies in its efforts to facilitate dialogues, generate resolutions, and offer diplomatic solutions to conflicts that often involve complex historical, political, and cultural dimensions. By tackling subjects ranging from the eradication of colonialism to the peaceful settlement of territorial disputes, SPECPOL plays a vital role in promoting global harmony, social justice, and the right of all nations to determine their own destinies.

Our first topic is "The China-Taiwan Conflict" and our second topic is "The Dangers of Modern-Day Neocolonialism". Both are topics that carry long and complex backgrounds, pose significant challenges in our modern world and require creative and innovative resolutions.

We cannot wait to hear the ideas and solutions you will bring to the table. If you have any questions regarding the committee or the topics, feel free to contact us, we would more than happy to help.

Good Luck,

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INTRODUCTION TO THE COMMITTEE

The United Nations Special Political and Decolonization Committee, commonly known as SPECPOL, is one of the six main committees of the United Nations General Assembly. As the name suggests, SPECPOL deals with various pressing political, and decolonization issues the international community faces. The committee operates through discussions and negotiations among its member states. Its primary objectives include addressing decolonization, self-determination, disarmament, peacekeeping, and regional conflicts. Through its multilateral approach, SPECPOL seeks to find cooperative solutions, draft resolutions, and make policy recommendations to promote peace, security, and stability on a global scale. By using dialogue and cooperation, SPECPOL plays an essential role in shaping the UN's response to some of the world's most pressing issues and pursuing a more peaceful world order.

SPECPOL was created in 1993 per the General Assembly Resolution 47/233, with the primary objective of addressing significant political matters that the First Committee (DISEC) could not handle, such as self-determination, decolonization, and other international security concerns. It considers a broad range of issues covering a cluster of five decolonization-related agenda items, such as the effects of atomic radiation, questions relating to information, a comprehensive review of the question of peacekeeping operations as well as a review of special political missions, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), and international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space.



TOPIC A: CHINA-TAIWAN CONFLICT

INTRODUCTION TO THE TOPIC

One of the most consequential modern-day conflicts is the China-Taiwan conflict. The conflict involves world powers and threatens to disrupt the world economy. If escalated, it could potentially stir up a war between two of the world's most powerful economies on a scale not seen in Asia since the Second World War. In addition to the immense devastation it would bring, this hypothetical armed conflict would politically destabilize the region of Asia and cost the world trade trillions of dollars, severely damaging a central part of the modern world economy. The conflict between China and Taiwan is a significant hurdle in the relations between the West and the East, specifically between China and the United States, as China openly proclaims its will to “reunify” with the island. At the same time, the US heavily arms Taiwan and says it will defend the island militarily if attacked by China. The world's electronic equipment heavily relies on the computer chips produced in Taiwan, with the Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company, or TSMC, controlling over 50% of the world's computer chip market. With all that on the line, there is no doubt that this issue is one of the most urgent to resolve in the 21st century. In addition to openly sharing its aspirations to reclaim the country, with multiple statements about the situation, China also conducts military activity near the island, deepening the existing tensions in the area. In September of 2022, President Biden was asked by a journalist if the US would defend Taiwan (in case of a Chinese invasion) and replied affirmatively: “Yes, if there were an unprecedented attack.” These recent events have elevated the nature of the conflict, with its roots tracing back to the 17th century.

BACKGROUND TO THE ISSUE

1684-1895

The China-Taiwan conflict began in May 1684, when the Qing Dynasty took over the province. They quickly enforced strict laws on the islanders, monitoring and restricting immigration to the island and sending most of the island's natives back to mainland China. These policies were the Qing dynasty's innate fear that too many island citizens would cause conflict. In the 200 years that the Qing dynasty ruled, the aboriginal villages located on the island paid taxes to the monarchy but rarely revolted as they were mostly left alone. The last 20 years of Qing rule on the island saw constant changes, and an extensive policy of colonization was adopted by China, partially motivated by the looming threat of Japan on Taiwan. During this time, Liu Mingchuan was elected



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governor of Taiwan and further progressed the efforts of colonization by further taxing the aboriginal villages and even mounting a campaign to subjugate them. He even planned to turn Taiwan into a province of China, but his efforts were to little avail, as his projects and plans were costly and didn't yield results. The restrictions on entering the country were lifted in 1875, after Liu's resignation, when the Qing adopted a more pro-immigration stance on citizens wishing to enter and exit the country, which didn't last long, with the island lost to Japan during the first Sino-Japanese war.

1895-1945

After defeating China, Japan quickly took over Taiwan and its surrounding islands. The government of Japan allowed all people on the island who wanted to remain Chinese citizens a two-year grace period to leave. The Chinese on the island became third-class citizens, with multiple prominent locations restricted to them. The island's people met these conditions as infeasible. In 1895, the angry Chinese formed the "Republic of Formosa- a group loyal to the Qing Dynasty. The republic's goal was to reclaim the island of Taiwan and banish the Japanese "invaders." This republic gained support from mainland China but was crushed six months later, in October, when Japanese forces rushed the capital and murdered the rebels. After these rebellions, the Japanese imposed their culture and religion into Taiwan, forcing the native people to adopt Japanese surnames. The treatment of native Taiwanese hardened during WW2. Taiwan turned into a massive military base, with air and naval operations departing from the island, the most prominent being the assault on the Philippines. The Taiwanese people also enlisted in the Japanese army both willingly and unwillingly. When Japan lost the war in 1945, the island was returned to China, and the Japanese settlers retreated from its territories.

1945-PRESENT

In the wake of WW2, China was a different country entirely. Before the war, China was a proper monarchy, but it emerged from the war in shambles, with short breaks between civil wars. Two main parties fought the civil wars- a communist party led by Mao Zedong, and a nationalist party led by Chiang Kai-Shek. The final civil war was fought between 1945 and 1949, after which the communist party defeated the nationalists, and the People's Republic of China, known today, was formed. The losing party fled, relocating to the island of Taiwan and making Taipei the temporary capital of the ROC (Republic of China). This move was the start of what would make Taiwan somewhat of an independent province of China. Under the rule of martial law, the ROC later suppressed the opposition, killing pro-communist citizens. One infamous instance was the



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'February 28 Massacre', when the ROC killed at least 18,000 citizens in response to an anti-government uprising. During the next few decades, Taiwan saw the political repression of its civilians under what was named "White Terror." The ROC remained in Taiwan as an Authoritarian government until the 1980s, when Taiwan finally transitioned into a democracy. In July 1987, Chiang Ching-Kuo abolished martial law on the island and allowed other political parties in the country. In 1996, the country held its first democratic elections, and under President Lee Teng Hui, the country saw significant changes. Lee made several changes in the country, such as promoting local Taiwanese cultures and traditions over Chinese ones and removing elections on the provincial level. In 2000, a different party won the elections (DPP), and for the first time, a party other than the KMT (Kuomintang) was in charge of the country. The president of the party, Chen Shui-Ban, announced that he would not declare Taiwan's independence unless the PRC would use force. He also called for a national referendum on the island that asked voters what they thought about the relationship between Taiwan and China and what they thought it should be like. Chen also shut down the National Unification Council in 2006, a council dedicated to reunifying China and Taiwan. This decision symbolized the distancing of Taiwan from China and the growing cry of the Taiwanese to be independent. Taiwan's citizens changed a lot, with companies and businesses referring to themselves as Taiwanese instead of the former Chinese. This change stopped in 2008 when the KMT won the presidential elections in the country. The KMT President Ma Ying-jeou strengthened relations with China, and flights began to take place between mainland China and Taiwan, in addition to the cargo shipment. After several years, the citizens of Taiwan wanted more independence. In 2016, the DPP won the presidential elections by a large margin, which kicked off the current situation being dealt with today and what we will be addressing in the next chapter.

CURRENT SITUATION

INTRODUCTION:

From a controversial phone call to military activity, the last few years have seen several developments that have placed the China-Taiwan conflict foregrounding global politics. Let's begin by discussing the One China Policy and how the latest United States presidents have somewhat strayed from it.

THE ONE CHINA POLICY:

The One China Policy, simply put, is the United States' way of maintaining relations with China. The policy acknowledges China's claim that only one Chinese government (the PRC). Under this



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policy, the United States promises only to have formal ties with the PRC and not the ROC. Other countries follow this policy. Following the pledge made by the United States in 1972, Australia, the UK, Canada, and Japan agreed to acknowledge the PRC's claims of Taiwan, though they do not support it per se. Some countries, however, support the claim, with countries such as Panama, Israel, and South Africa all agreeing that the island of Taiwan belongs to the PRC. Although not supporting China's claim of Taiwan, most, if not all, countries involved in global affairs have no official ties with Taiwan because China is a modern economic superpower, which means that if any country wants to maintain official trade and diplomatic ties with China, they must cut off their official relationships with Taiwan. Until 2016, countries respected the One China Policy and followed its rules, but after Donald Trump's presidency, the United States took a much more pro-Taiwan stance.

THE UNITED STATES' CURRENT RELATIONSHIP WITH TAIWAN:

After Donald Trump was elected president in 2016, the US's policies regarding China drastically changed. Trump tested the limits of the One China Policy by reinitiating contact between senior US government officials and their Taiwanese counterparts and having the US Navy constantly patrol the Taiwan Strait. This military and diplomatic support caused the PRC to increase military activity around Taiwan. Since the end of Trump's term, the PRC has encouraged how they address Taiwan, threatening to "smash plots for Taiwan independence." Surprisingly enough, when President Biden entered the White House, he didn't go back on Trump's Taiwan policies but expanded upon them. Biden started talks with the ROC government about creating a free trade tie between the two nations, something the Trump administration was scared to do, as a similar agreement was made with the PRC around the same time. Biden also continued Trump's tradition of sending military aid to Taiwan. Both presidents hope the increased military power in Taiwan will avert China's military and diplomatic aggression. We have been discussing how the United States affects and is affected by the conflict. Let's now discuss how other countries are affected by this conflict and why the tiny island of Taiwan is so important to the world.

CHINA-TAIWAN ON A GLOBAL SCALE:

If an armed conflict between China and Taiwan were to break out, the global effects would be catastrophic. The United States has already declared that it will use direct military power to defend the island, something Biden has refused to do in the case of Ukraine but seems quite willing to do in Taiwan. The United States has military bases on almost all of its allied island nations in the Asian Pacific and will no doubt deploy forces from them if needed. Unfortunately, this makes said nations



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a target for China to attack, and countries such as Japan, Australia, The Philippines, New Zealand, and South Korea will probably join the conflict themselves if attacked by China (all named countries have US military bases on them). In the past couple of years, the possibility of an armed conflict has become much more probable, and China's recent military incursions have only further exacerbated tensions.

THE CHINESE THREAT

We can easily see a worrying trend if we examine the rising number of incursions China has carried into Taiwan's air defense zone in the past few years. While in 2020, a reported several hundred Chinese planes entered Taiwan's air defense zone, in 2021, that number rose to nearly 1,000. Then, in 2022, the same year that American House Speaker Nancy Pelosi made a highly controversial visit to Taiwan, China sent over 1,700 planes to breach Taiwan's air defense zone. Furthermore, China frequently parades its warships around Taiwan, and after Pelosi's visit, the first reported drone incursions occurred. These drills are not expected to stop in the coming years and are even expected to rise in frequency and size, with Chinese officials getting more aggressive in their rhetoric regarding Taiwan. These military incursions set out, among other things, to instill fear into the heart of the Taiwanese people and government and to get them to relinquish their Western allies and join the mainland.

WHY IS TAIWAN SO IMPORTANT?

It is easy for the uninformed to underestimate the importance of Taiwan. One might presume that a small island country just about 130 kilometers off the shore of mainland China shouldn't have any significance. One might even ponder why China is so adamant about taking it back. After all, why should one of the most powerful nations in the world waste its time and energy on this island? The answer lies in economic and strategic/geopolitical spheres.

ECONOMIC ASPECT

Although it only makes up 15% of its GDP, computer chip manufacturing is the biggest reason Taiwan is so important globally. Taiwan alone produces over 60% of the world's semiconductors and over 90% of the most advanced ones. Anyone can find this crucial technology in almost any computer on the planet. Without it, our electronics would not be able to function. Taiwan is also home to leading high-tech companies, with ASUS and Acer both being Taiwanese in origin. In addition, Taiwanese manufacturing companies have long-term deals with global names, the most prominent being Apple, HP, and Dell. The country's biggest manufacturer of semiconductors,



TSMC, is hailed as one of the most important companies in the world and is dominating the semiconductor market on a global scale. Taiwan has massive trade deals with companies from around the world vying for its exports. Taiwan's biggest trade partners include Singapore, Japan, the US, and China, with the latter having the largest trading volume (120.7 billion USD). Taiwan is highly valued in the current global economy, enough to make China want to claim it urgently.

STRATEGIC/GEOPOLITICAL INTERESTS

Part of the reason that the United States is so interested in the China-Taiwan conflict is strategic. The island of Taiwan is located in one of the busiest shipping lanes in the world. Cargo from all over the world passes through the waters on all sides of the island, and all the countries in the area heavily rely on these waters to import and export resources; this means that if a country were to attack Taiwan, the shipping routes around the island would cease to work, and governments would have to find other ways to trade, something that would vastly affect the global economy. Apart from trade, the island of Taiwan holds a position that could either hurt or benefit China. For example, in the current situation, Taiwan's allied countries, the US being the most prominent, can quickly launch incursions into mainland China from across the strait. In a possible conflict, the United States military could use the island as a makeshift base before continuing into China. Conversely, if China controlled the island, US military bases in the nearby countries (Japan, the Philippines, etc.) would be under a more significant threat from China. The PRC would also have considerable control of the Taiwan Strait and could restrict trade in the area, which, as mentioned earlier, would cause problems for multiple countries. With Taiwan under the PRC, an aggressive China could even launch attacks on Hawaii from the island. If you open up a map of the area, you will see how China's access to the Pacific Ocean 'is blocked' by a chain of islands (Japan, Taiwan, and the Philippines) aligned in security with the US. This geographical security concept is known as the "island chain strategy." By taking Taiwan, China could breach through this chain of defense and, as mentioned before, advance onto neighboring countries and into the Pacific. It is also worth noting that China could gain a lot strategically by taking Taiwan since, if done successfully and at a minimal military expense, it would show the world that China is not a country to be taken lightly and would significantly deter its rivals as well as exert its dominance and thus easily submit other weaker states to its will.

In summary, the China-Taiwan conflict is one of great world influence. Nobody knows where this conflict could go, so SPECPOL committee member states must work together to decide on possible solutions.



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QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Is your country more geopolitically aligned with the United States or China? Since the China-Taiwan conflict is, at its essence, a clash between these two world powers, is your country's stance on this issue dictated by its overall geopolitical alignment?
2. Does your country have official or unofficial relations with Taiwan, and what do these relations entail?
3. To what extent is your country affected by or affecting this conflict? Has it had any known policy in dealing with it?
4. Has your country publicly spoken about the China-Taiwan conflict, or has it chosen to abstain from involving itself in this controversial issue?
5. Has your country ever been involved in any similar conflicts? If so, what were their policies in the case of said conflict?

FURTHER READING:

<https://www.csis.org/analysis/why-taiwan-matters-economic-perspective>

<https://www.cnbc.com/2021/02/01/taiwan-economy-outgrows-china-first-time-in-decades-as-chips-demand-rises.html>

<https://verfassungsblog.de/taiwan-and-the-myth-of-un-general-assembly-resolution-2758/>



TOPIC B: THE DANGERS OF MODERN-DAY NEOCOLONIALISM

INTRODUCTION:

COLONIALISM

Colonialism refers to the historical practice of a country establishing and maintaining control over another region or territory, often distant from its borders, intending to exploit its resources and exert political, economic, and cultural dominance over the colonized population. Colonialism typically involved direct governance by the colonizing power, suppressing local cultures and traditions.

NEOCOLONIALISM

Conversely, neocolonialism refers to a more subtle form of control and dominance exercised by powerful nations or corporations over weaker nations, often achieved through economic and financial means. Neocolonialism operates by maintaining economic dependence, unequal trade relations, and exploitation of resources, with the illusion of independence of the previously colonized states.

IMPERIALISM

Imperialism extends a nation's power and influence by acquiring territories, usually through military force or political coercion. It involves establishing colonies or controlling other regions, exploiting their resources, expanding markets, or enhancing geopolitical dominance. It is closely related to colonialism, as imperialism often laid the foundation for colonization by establishing political control over later colonized regions. However, imperialism can also occur without colonization, encompassing various forms of dominance, including economic power, cultural influence, and military presence.

We have provided you with general definitions of these terms, for the concepts of colonialism, neocolonialism, and imperialism can be complex and have evolved. Different historical contexts have shaped how colonialism, neocolonialism, and imperialism are interpreted and defined.



BACKGROUND TO THE ISSUE:

BACKGROUND OF THE SPECPOL COMMITTEE ON THE TOPIC:

As the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (SPECPOL) is tasked with addressing a wide range of political and decolonization issues, neocolonialism is a topic of significant concern to the committee. In response to the ongoing struggles of previously colonized nations, the SPECPOL Committee has recognized the importance of addressing neo-colonialism. It has been actively working towards promoting self-determination, economic independence, and the protection of human rights for previously colonized nations. Through its resolutions, decisions, and ongoing discussions, SPECPOL seeks to confront neocolonial practices and create a fair and equitable global order that upholds the principles of sovereignty and equal rights for all nations.

THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF COLONIALISM AND ITS IMPACT ON FORMER COLONIES

The historical context of colonialism is intertwined with the global expansion of European powers from the 15th to the 20th centuries. During this era, European nations sought to establish colonies in various parts of the world, motivated by economic, political, and ideological reasons. Colonialism resulted in lasting impacts on the former colonies: Economically, colonial powers exploited the resources and labor of the colonies, often leaving them impoverished and dependent on the colonial masters. Socially, colonial rule often disrupted traditional social structures, imposed cultural assimilation, and disintegrated local identities and practices. Politically, colonialism introduced new forms of governance, often with limited representation and control of the indigenous population.

IMPERIALISM AND COLONIALISM IN WW1

In Europe, the major powers engaged in fierce competition for colonial territories, resources, and strategic advantages, which contributed to the tensions and rivalries that eventually led to the outbreak of World War One. The war saw European imperial powers, such as Britain, France, and Germany, mobilizing their colonial forces from Africa and other regions to support their military campaigns. African colonies became theaters of war, witnessing battles and forced drafts to the colonizing military. The war exposed the inconsistency of imperialist narratives, as colonized soldiers and laborers fought alongside European troops, leading to shifts in consciousness and increased demands for self-determination and independence in the aftermath of the conflict.



THE SHIFT FROM COLONIALISM TO NEOCOLONIALISM

The shift from colonialism to neocolonialism marks a continuation of power dynamics between former colonial powers and their former colonies, albeit in a different form. While former colonies gained political independence, they often found themselves trapped in economic and political systems that perpetuated dependency on their former colonizers. Neocolonialism allowed powerful nations to maintain economic leverage and extract resources from the post-colonial world while shaping policies and decisions to their advantage. As a result, many newly independent countries struggled to achieve true sovereignty and faced challenges in pursuing independent development.

THE IMPACT OF WW2 ON NEOCOLONIALISM

World War Two significantly weakened the colonial powers, both economically and politically, paving the way for a shift in the global balance of power. The devastation caused by the war forced European powers to focus on rebuilding their nations, diminishing their ability to maintain direct control over their colonies. The war also led to a surge in anti-colonial sentiments and movements, as many colonized peoples actively participated in the war effort and questioned the legitimacy of colonial rule. The emerging superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union, also reshaped the global order. The U.S., in particular, emerged as a dominant player, offering financial assistance and promoting its own economic and political interests in the post-war world. This new geopolitical landscape contributed to the rise of neocolonialism, as powerful nations found alternative ways to maintain influence over former colonies, such as through economic aid, military alliances, and covert interventions.

THE AMERICAN AND SOVIET INVASIONS OF VIETNAM AND AFGHANISTAN

The United States' intervention during the Vietnam War, starting in 1955 with the deployment of military advisors and culminating in the deployment of over half a million American troops in the late 1960s, was viewed by many as a form of neocolonialism. The U.S. aimed to prevent the spread of Soviet-backed communism and supported a puppet government regime. This intervention intensified the nationalist sentiment and resistance in Vietnam, fueling a protracted war that resulted in the withdrawal of American forces in 1973 and the unification of Vietnam by the communists in 1975. The war exposed the limits of U.S. power and its credibility as a champion of self-determination. It also spurred anti-imperialist movements and influenced the perception of neocolonialism globally.



Similarly, in Afghanistan, the Soviet Union's invasion in 1979 was seen as an act of neocolonialism by many. The Soviet Union aimed to prop up a communist government, triggering a decade-long conflict against the Mujahideen resistance. This invasion, coupled with the U.S. support for the Mujahideen, further complicated the dynamics of neocolonialism. The conflict in Afghanistan became a battleground for Cold War secondary struggles, where powerful nations exerted their influence and pursued their geopolitical interests. The Soviet Union's withdrawal in 1989 left Afghanistan devastated, with ongoing political troubles and the rise of extremist groups contributing to the region's instability.

These invasions highlighted the continued struggles against neocolonialism and foreign interference. The invasions exhibited the persistence of powerful nations seeking to assert control and influence over other nations, often at the expense of local sovereignty and self-determination.

CURRENT SITUATION

THE UNITED STATES' ECONOMIC AND MILITARY DOMINANCE OF LATIN AMERICA

Throughout history, the US has employed various tactics to exert control and influence over Latin America, perpetuating a form of economic and political subjugation. Economic domination is evident through policies such as the Monroe Doctrine and the subsequent establishment of banana republics, where American corporations exploited Latin American resources and labor to fuel their economic growth. This pattern of exploitation has contributed to the region's economic dependence on the US, stifling local industries and perpetuating socioeconomic inequality. Furthermore, the US has often intervened militarily in Latin American affairs, directly or indirectly, supporting dictators and suppressing movements threatening American interests. This interference has undermined democratic processes and contributed to political instability, further consolidating the US's grip on the region. Together, these actions reflect a neocolonial approach, where the US utilizes its economic and military power to assert dominance over Latin America and maintain control over its resources and geopolitical influence.

THE EUROPEAN UNION'S ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL INFLUENCE OVER FORMER COLONIES IN AFRICA AND ASIA

The European Union's economic and political influence over former colonies in Africa and Asia can be seen as a manifestation of neo-colonialism. Despite the formal end of colonial rule, the EU has maintained significant control and leverage over these regions through economic and political



means. Economic dominance is evident in the exploitative trade practices and unequal partnerships imposed by the EU. Many former colonies are locked into unequal trade agreements that favor European interests, perpetuating a dependency cycle and hindering the development of local industries. Politically, the EU exercises its influence through conditional aid and economic partnerships that impose European norms and policies, often causing harm to local governance and self-determination. This neocolonial approach preserves European economic and political interests, ensuring continued access to resources and markets while limiting the agency and autonomy of former colonies.

CHINA'S ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL INFLUENCE OVER AFRICA

China's economic and political influence over Africa has been a subject of debate and scrutiny, with some arguing that it exhibits characteristics of neocolonialism. Resource extraction, infrastructure development projects, and investment in key sectors characterize China's approach in Africa. While these initiatives have contributed to economic growth and development in some African countries, concerns arise over the terms of these agreements. Chinese investments often come with conditions, such as favored access to natural resources and using Chinese labor and materials, which can undermine local industries and perpetuate dependency. Moreover, some argue that China's engagement in Africa lacks transparency, accountability, and respect for human rights, reminiscent of colonial-era practices. China's political influence in Africa is also noteworthy, as it often supports authoritarian regimes and disregards democratic processes in exchange for access to resources. While the dynamics between China and Africa are complex, neocolonial elements can be discerned through China's economic and political leverage, potentially perpetuating a relationship that favors Chinese interests over African sovereignty and self-determination.

FRANCE'S CONTROL OF THE FRANC CURRENCY

France's control of the Franc currency exemplifies neocolonialism, particularly in its former African colonies. Despite gaining independence, many of these countries continued to use the Franc as their national currency by creating the Central African CFA franc and the West African CFA franc. The Franc zone is managed by the French Treasury and subject to a fixed exchange rate with the Euro, effectively giving France significant control over the monetary policies of these countries. This arrangement allowed France to maintain economic dominance and influence its former colonies, tied to a currency controlled and influenced by the French government. The CFA Franc has been criticized for hindering economic sovereignty and development in the region, as the countries within the Franc zone have limited control over their monetary policies and cannot



revalue their currency to boost their exports. This control over the Franc currency is seen as a neocolonial practice that perpetuates economic dependency and limits the economic agency of these African nations.

KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF MODERN-DAY NEOCOLONIALISM

ECONOMIC EXPLOITATION

Economic exploitation is a crucial characteristic of modern-day neocolonialism, perpetuating power imbalances between former colonizers and colonized nations. Neocolonialism encompasses the economic domination and control exerted by powerful nations over weaker states, often indirectly. Exploitation takes various forms, such as unequal trade relationships, resource extraction, and financial manipulation. Developed countries, through multinational corporations and international financial institutions, continue to exploit the resources and labor of post-colonial nations, ensuring their economic growth at the expense of the vulnerable. This economic subjugation further establishes the dependence of colonized countries on the dominant powers, perpetuating a cycle of poverty, underdevelopment, and limited autonomy. Ultimately, economic exploitation within neocolonialism reinforces systemic inequalities and restricts formerly colonized countries' sustainable development and sovereignty of formerly colonized countries.

POLITICAL SUBJUGATION

Political subjugation is a crucial characteristic of modern-day neocolonialism, representing former colonial powers' continued control and manipulation of political systems. Neocolonialism operates through subtle mechanisms that allow dominant nations to exert influence over state governance and the decision-making processes of post-colonial states. This control often manifests through neocolonial proxies, such as puppet regimes or client governments, which serve the interests of the dominant powers while disregarding the aspirations and welfare of the local population. These proxies may be supported financially, militarily, or diplomatically, ensuring the neocolonial agenda is implemented and maintained. Furthermore, the former colonizers may intervene in the internal affairs of post-colonial nations, shaping policies and ensuring compliance with their interests. This political subjugation undermines the sovereignty and independence of formerly colonized countries, denying them the ability to determine their futures and stifling their democratic processes. It perpetuates a neocolonial order that favors external powers while subverting the aspirations of the local population for self-governance and genuine independence.



CULTURAL TAKEOVER

Another underlying characteristic of modern neocolonialism is Western culture's pervasive influence and dominance over other societies. This influence is evident in various aspects of life, from media and entertainment to fashion, technology, and consumer goods. Through globalization and the spread of multinational corporations, Western cultural values, norms, and lifestyle choices have become universal, often overshadowing and wrecking indigenous cultures' unique identities and traditions of indigenous cultures. All of this perpetuates a power dynamic in which Western countries hold significant economic, political, and social influence over developing nations, controlling and shaping the trajectory of their societies. Though not as monumental as the financial exploitation and political subjugation caused by modern neocolonialism, Western culture takeover raises concerns about cultural homogenization, loss of diversity, and the perpetuation of historical inequalities in the global arena.

IMPLICATION OF MODERN-DAY NEOCOLONIALISM IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

DEBT AND ECONOMIC DEPENDENCY

Debt and economic dependency are grave consequences of modern-day neocolonialism in developing countries, perpetuating a cycle of exploitation and hindering sustainable growth. One Prime example is the phenomenon of "debt trap diplomacy," wherein powerful nations and international financial institutions extend significant loans to developing countries, often for large infrastructure projects. These loans, however, come with excessive interest rates and ironclad conditions, leading to mounting debts that the recipient nations need help to repay. For instance, China's Belt and Road Initiative has been criticized for burdening several African and Asian countries with substantial debts, leaving them heavily dependent on Chinese investments and influence. Additionally, international trade agreements heavily favor developed nations, enabling the dumping of cheap products into developing markets, undermining local industries, and perpetuating reliance on imports. This economic subjugation maintains a neocolonial relationship wherein developing countries cannot assert true economic sovereignty and are trapped in perpetual dependency.

SOCIAL INEQUALITY

The legacy of colonial rule continues to shape power structures and resource distribution within developing nations, leading to marginalized communities being further marginalized and



discriminated against. For example, in many African countries, the legacy of colonial land ownership systems persists, with large tracts of fertile land owned by foreign corporations or elites. At the same time, local communities need more access to the resources and opportunities provided in their land. Additionally, multinational companies often exploit cheap labor in developing countries, leading to poor working conditions and low wages for vulnerable populations. Such a situation perpetuates a cycle of poverty and social exclusion, where specific communities are denied equal access to education, healthcare, and essential services while a privileged few benefit from the extraction of natural resources and economic prosperity. The resulting social inequality fuels social unrest and hinders the overall development of these nations, keeping them in a state of perpetual disadvantage due to the neocolonial power dynamics at play.

POLITICAL INSTABILITY

Political instability in developing countries is a significant implication of modern-day neocolonialism, as external interference and manipulation of domestic affairs often disrupt governance and undermine democratic processes. Neocolonial powers may support and prop up authoritarian regimes that serve their interests, stifling dissent and preventing the emergence of genuine democratic institutions. All of the above fosters a culture of corruption and lack of accountability, as ruling elites prioritize external benefactors' needs over the well-being of their citizens. Additionally, covert interventions and proxy wars orchestrated by powerful nations can fuel internal conflicts, leading to prolonged civil strife and humanitarian crises. For example, in certain regions of Africa and the Middle East, neocolonial interests have exacerbated ethnic and religious tensions, leading to protracted conflicts that destabilize entire nations. Examples are the war in Iraq, the conflict in Yemen, and the war in Syria. Moreover, neocolonial powers may exploit internal divisions to maintain control and secure access to valuable resources, further impeding political progress and withholding the establishment of stable and representative governments. The resulting political fragility not only blocks social and economic development but also perpetuates the neocolonial influence over the political landscape of these developing countries.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. Has your country historically been involved in colonialism? Has your country been colonized or been colonized? How might this history influence your country's current stance on issues regarding neocolonialism?



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2. Does your country currently engage in practices or policies viewed as neocolonial?
3. How does your country engage with other countries regarding trade and investment, and what steps has your country taken to ensure that these interactions do not perpetuate neocolonial dynamics?
4. How can your country collaborate with other nations to address the dangers of modern-day neocolonialism and promote a more equitable and just global order?
5. How can SPECPOL and the UN fight the dangers of modern-day neocolonialism?

FURTHER READING

[Neocolonialism | Definition, Examples, & Facts | Britannica](#)

[About | The United Nations and Decolonization.](#)

[China's Massive Belt and Road Initiative | Council on Foreign Relations](#)

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