

Russian International Relations Expert
Dr. Alexandr Bovdunov*

**“Türkiye and Russia can work together
to liberate Africa from Western
imperialism”**



**Alexander Bovdunov is a Russian international scholar and representative of the Eurasian geopolitical school. Born in 1986, he graduated from the Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO) in 2010. In 2013, he defended his thesis for the degree of PhD in Political Sciences. He has worked as a lecturer at Moscow State University, as a political analyst and international journalist for RT, and on a number of other analytical projects. Since 2022, he has been Deputy Director of the Ivan Ilyin Higher Political School Educational and Research Center at the Russian State University for the Humanities.*

“Moscow, unlike the United States and European colonial metropolises, aims at mutually beneficial and equal cooperation. We value our African partners and communicate with them on an equal footing. Russia does not impose any prescriptive political, economic, social or value model on African countries. Russia and Africa, the Eurasian and African regions complement each other seamlessly from an economic point of view. Additionally, when viewed from a broader worldview perspective, it becomes evident that share a common objective in resisting the neo-colonial ambitions of the West, making them natural allies in their pursuits. For example, Burkina Faso and Mali, after leaving the orbit of France, are developing partnerships with Russia, Türkiye and China. Türkiye’s engagement in Africa does not pose a competition to Russia in this region. Since our potentials complement each other, we can work not to compete but to delimit the spheres of our activity. Simultaneously, on the international stage, within international organizations and at the United Nations, we can offer mutual support to both each other and our African allies who are striving to break free from Western dominance. Only by standing together can we challenge the imperialist supremacy of the United States and its allies, thereby affording nations worldwide the opportunity for autonomous development within a multipolar framework of international relations.”

Russian International Relations Expert Alexandr Bovdunov answered Işıkgün Akfırat’s questions.

What is the overall framework of Russia’s strategy in Africa, and how does it distinguish itself from Western states?

Alexandr Bovdunov: Russian strategy in Africa is explicitly defined in Russia’s new Foreign Policy Concept (dated 2023): “Russia stands in solidarity with African states in their endeavour to establish a more equitable multipolar world and to eliminate the socio-economic inequalities that are increasing due to the sophisticated neo-colonial policies of a number of developed states towards Africa. The Russian Federation intends to contribute to the further emergence of Africa as a distin-

ctive and influential centre of global development”.

Russia’s primary goal in Africa is to safeguard the sovereignty and independence of interested African nations. This includes providing support in crucial areas such as security, food and energy security, as well as military and military-technical cooperation. Russian military experts have already made significant contributions to enhance the security situation in the Central African Republic, where both French military forces and UN peacekeeping forces (MINUSCA) have faced persistent challenges since the early 2010s. Moscow now aims to extend this successful security assistance model to other African nations.

Mali and Burkina Faso are the initial focus, where France's counter-terrorism efforts have encountered difficulties. This raises questions about whether the fight against terrorism was a genuine goal, or it served as a pretext for controlling these countries' economies and the illicit activities of gold, drug, and human trafficking across the Sahel region.

Western governments, often under the guise of providing assistance, particularly in the realm of security, have exploited the resources of African nations without restraint. A telling example is Niger, a country whose uranium reserves are vital for France's energy security. Paradoxically, Niger itself suffers from an electricity shortage despite its uranium wealth.

Moscow, unlike the United States and European colonial metropolises, aims at mutually beneficial and equal cooperation.

Moscow, unlike the United States and European colonial metropolises, aims at mutually beneficial and equal cooperation. We value our African partners and communicate with them on an equal footing. Russia does not impose any prescriptive political, economic, social or value model on African countries. We do not seek to reformat the societies and value systems of these countries along our lines. This, by the way, is the difference between modern Russia and the USSR, although the USSR also interpreted the notions of socialism quite broadly when it came to Africa. Russia needs strong allies, prosperous, with strong statehood, self-sufficient, defending their traditional values like us. And such allies we hope to find in Africa.

What were the significant results of the recent Russia-Africa Summit hosted by Russian President Vladimir Putin?

Alexandr Bovdunov: The main thing is that the summit took place despite unprecedented pressure from the West. The second summit of the Russia-Africa Economic and Humanitarian Forum saw the participation of official delegations from 48 countries, with 27 countries represented at the highest levels. Additionally, five major continental integration associations were present. This demonstrated that African nations are asserting their autonomy in shaping their own policies.

Numerous international agreements were signed during the summit, but what stood out most was the symbolic aspect. One notable moment was the speech delivered by the young leader of Burkina Faso, Ibrahim Traoré, who spoke as the third speaker after the summit's organizers, Vladimir Putin and the head of the African Union, Azali Assoumani. In his address, Traoré emphasized the importance of solidarity between Russians and Africans, the necessity to combat neo-colonialism, his commitment to the legacy of Tom Sankara, and his reference to Che Guevara. This speech clearly indicates Russia's orientation in Africa. It is aimed at inspiring young patriots who recognize that breaking the chains of neo-colonialism often requires assertive action against economic dominance, coercive military agreements, pseudo-civil society, and political elites controlled from abroad. Russia lends its support to figures like Captain Traoré and Colonel Assiim Goyta, often regarded as the African counterparts to "Che Guevaras."

Regarding the economic aspects, the key outcomes are as follows: between July 27th and 28th, summit participants finalized 92 agreements with a combined value of no less than RUB 1.004 trillion.

This surpasses the figures from four years ago. Among the most noteworthy agreements were declarations concerning the initiation of a Russian industrial zone dedicated to exports throughout Africa in the Suez Canal vicinity, a proposition to create collaborative commissions and trade missions with the Russian Federation, and a shift towards employing national currencies for transactions with African nations.

What role do you think the African continent will play in the construction of a multipolar world?

Alexandr Bovdunov: I believe that Africa has a pivotal role to fulfill. According to the UN, Africa is projected to account for over half of the global population growth until 2050. The future belongs to Africa, and it is imperative for Africa to assert its sovereignty. This sovereignty encompasses both civilizational sovereignty, a concept discussed by 20th-century Pan-Africanist thinkers and practitioners like Cheikh Anta Diop, Thomas Sankara, and Muammar Gaddafi, as well as contemporary Pan-Africanists such as Kemi Seba, Ibrahim Traoré, and Assimi Goyta.

From both a geopolitical and geo-economic perspective, the integration initiatives in Eurasia and Africa are mutually reinforcing. Friedrich List, a prominent 19th-century German economist who played a crucial role in economically unifying German principalities to create a strong and united Germany, underscored the significance of integrating the resources of both the tropical and temperate zones within one economic framework. This form of meridional integration holds immense importance in achieving self-sufficiency and economic autonomy for such a bloc.

In terms of economic dynamics, the Eurasian

and African regions complement each other seamlessly. Additionally, when viewed from a broader worldview perspective, it becomes evident that Eurasianists and Pan-Africanists share a common objective in resisting the neo-colonial ambitions of the West, making them natural allies in their pursuits.

How can Türkiye, Russia and other Eurasian countries cooperate on their relations with Africa?

Alexandr Bovdunov: I believe that such cooperation is indeed feasible, including in the realm of security. It is widely acknowledged that Russia's primary expertise lies in the realm of Private Military Companies (PMCs), which undertake a diverse array of missions, extending beyond those conducted by Western PMCs. Türkiye's engagement in Africa does not pose a competition to Russia in this region. Instead, Türkiye can supply these same nations with advanced weaponry. Countries like Burkina Faso and Mali, upon disengaging from French influence, are forging partnerships with Russia, Türkiye, and China. Our respective capabilities complement each other, allowing us to collaborate without rivalry and to define the boundaries of our activities.

Simultaneously, on the international stage, within international organizations and at the United Nations, we can offer mutual support to both each other and our African allies who are striving to break free from Western dominance. Only by standing together can we challenge the imperialist supremacy of the United States and its allies, thereby affording nations worldwide the opportunity for autonomous development within a multipolar framework of international relations. 🌸