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FRENCH FOREIGN POLICY IN THE MIDDLE AND FAR EAST (EARLY 1940s – EARLY 1980s)

Introduction. The research is devoted to French foreign policy in the Middle and Far East in the specific period. The relevance of the paper lies in the need to correctly assess the causes and consequences of the collapse of the Empire and the influence of the events of that time on the modern political line of France.

The objective of this piece of research is to study the processes of French policy formation in relation to the countries of the Middle and Far East and the analysis of French foreign policy in the early 1940s – the early 1980s [4].

Unlike the British colonial empire, which has been subjected a fairly serious structural and political transformation since the beginning of the XX century, the colonial empire of France did not know the profound reforms of this kind until the outbreak of World War II. The Third Republic lacked the British flexibility and determination to abandon the concepts of the "colonial pact", which did not justify itself for a long time. This most likely determined, along with other reasons, the severity and protracted nature of the further conflict between the metropolis and the colonies, the especially painful forms of the collapse of the French colonial empire.

The general picture of the French colonial empire before the Second World War was far from being cloudless. Assessing the situation in the French possessions on the eve of the war, M. Devev writes: "Both in the economic and political spheres the structural reforms were needed immediately in 1939. The century of pure colonial capitalism for the overseas countries has passed. The natives asked for more intensive development of land and mineral wealth, demanded the expansion of food crops export, gradual industrialization, greater flexibility of customs policy, a new inflow of capital and technical specialists from the metropolis." [2]. However, France did not react to the needs of its colonies.

The development of the national liberation movement of the peoples of the French colonies in the interwar period prepared the ground for the liquidation of the colonial empire of France.

Analysis of the French foreign policy after the Second World War showed that France had made maximum effort to maintain and expand its positions in the Middle and Far East. Nevertheless, the power of the French Empire was visible, but not real. The crisis of the colonial system, even before the end of the war and the existence of the national liberation movement, became the main reasons for undermining the rule of the Empire [1].

During the first half of 1940s – the first half of 1980s France begins to lose its power as the French Empire lost both colonies in the Far East, and in Africa. Countries one after another struggled for independence. The Indian and Algerian

wars finally undermined the power of the colonial empire. All these events confirmed the diminishing of the role of France in the world arena. The sun of the Empire was clouded. Although the French presence has not disappeared, the loss of most of the colonies has weakened the role of France in the Middle and Far East.

The rupture of France with the imperial past was marked by two events: the Suez crisis of 1956 and the decolonization of Algeria in 1962. The end of the Empire led to more massive immigration to France of the inhabitants of the Maghreb, Middle East and Black Africa. Natives from other shores of the Mediterranean created a powerful Muslim identity inside the French society, which turned into an important factor of internal political and social development, that is evidenced by the turbulent events of November 2005. These circumstances influenced the development of a policy towards the Muslim East and the Middle East conflict.

Unlike many countries, France is not burdened by a complex of blame for its colonial past, what gives it cause for claims for a global role in the world, which is expressed in the desire to play the role of an intermediary between leading Western countries and "third world" states. Traditionally, it is considered to ensure its security with the help of the balance of the great powers within the framework of a multipolar world order. Hence the traditional desire of France to conduct a flexible policy of balancing and the rejection of any bilateral alliances in favor of multilateral ones [3].

France also views military instruments as the basis for ensuring security policy, that finds its confirmation in isolation of national defense from NATO and other European states, and in pursuing its own nuclear policy.

Conclusion. As both economic and power capabilities of France in the world have significantly decreased, the main emphasis is on the humanitarian nature of the mission and, in connection with the Muslim factor inside French society, on the dialogue of civilizations. Currently, France is one of the leading countries in the world, one of the main movers of European integration [5].

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