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TITLE	AFRICA BETWEEN EAST AND WEST: SEARCHING FOR ITS OWN PATH <i>Book Review of ‘La Russie face aux Occidentaux en Afrique centrale: Pour un arrimage des Africains aux enjeux de puissance post-bipolarité’ by F.X.N. Edzimbi</i>
SUMMARY	<p>The book under review is a new research by Cameroonian scholar François Xavier Noah Edzimbi ‘Russia and the West in Central Africa: How African countries can adapt to the challenges of the post-bipolar era’ (<i>La Russie face aux Occidentaux en Afrique centrale: Pour un arrimage des Africains aux enjeux de puissance post-bipolarité</i>), published in France in 2022. The reviewer emphasizes that in the context of a new exacerbation of great power rivalry on the African continent this research is particularly relevant since it shows how the situation is perceived directly in Africa, which in turn can help Russia better understand the worldviews of Central African partners and develop a more balanced policy in the region. The book under review synthesizes the elements of realist and constructivist approaches in order to provide a comprehensive view of interactions between African states and extra-regional powers, their respective interests and values. The research focuses on the reasons for Russia’s growing presence in Central Africa. It is in this context, and in order to illuminate the specifics of Russia’s foreign policy in the region that the author addresses the approaches of other actors (namely, the United States and France) towards the relations with African states in the post-bipolar era. According to N. Edzimbi, Russian foreign policy in Central Africa is rather ambiguous: on the one hand, Russia counterbalances the influence of the United States and France, but, on the other hand, it pursues its own pragmatic goals and in this sense differs little from other leading powers. The author argues that despite seemingly friendly rhetoric, all global actors regard Central Africa as yet another arena of interstate rivalry, and suggests that the African countries should develop an independent foreign policy strategy, including, among other things, a force component. At the same time, the Cameroonian researcher emphasizes that this issue can be addressed if African states overcome the ‘learned helplessness syndrome’ and abandon the subordinate role in favor of developing their own power policy. The reviewer concludes that this work may be of interest to a wide range of readers, but it will be especially useful for specialists in African studies and international relations experts who specialize on the challenges faced by Africa and on the Russian-African relations.</p>
KEY WORDS	Africa, Central Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, Russia, France, USA, great power rivalry, neo-colonialism, neo-imperialism
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	<hr style="width: 20%; margin: auto;"/>
FOR CITATION	Nefedov A.V. 2023. Africa between East and West: Searching for its own path. Book review of ‘La Russie face aux occidentaux en Afrique centrale: Pour un arrimage des Africains aux enjeux de puissance post-bipolarité’ by F.X.N. Edzimbi. <i>Lomonosov World Politics Journal</i> , vol. 15, no. 2, pp. 184–200. DOI: 10.48015/2076-7404-2023-15-2-184-200. (In Russ.)