



FOREIGN POLICY AND MILITARY INVOLVEMENT

Case Study: Russia-Sudan Relationship

(KEBIJAKAN LUAR NEGERI DAN KETERLIBATAN MILITER

Studi Kasus: Hubungan Rusia-Sudan)

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Abstract

It would not be justified to say that Sudan is important to many great powers only because of its resource-rich lands. Sudan also stands unique because of its geopolitical importance and of its geographic location. A country located on the shores of the Red Sea, with connection to both the Arabian and Mediterranean Seas proposing a very base land to all superpowers. Despite all the resources available and perfectly located, geostrategically Sudan has not been able to exploit these advantages in true letter and spirit. There may be many reasons for it but the biggest can be a lack of sincere leadership and a fair political system acting in the best nation's interest. Therefore, any strategic decisions made and foreign policies implemented have shown zero sum towards its sovereignty and prosperity; allowing foreign military interference directly or indirectly.

Keywords: *African Continent, Sudanese, Natural Resources, Economy*

Abstrak

Tidak dibenarkan untuk mengatakan bahwa Sudan penting bagi banyak kekuatan besar hanya karena tanahnya yang kaya sumber daya. Sudan juga unik karena kepentingan geopolitiknya dan lokasi geografisnya. Sebuah negara yang terletak di tepi Laut Merah, yang terhubung dengan Laut Arab dan Mediterania, mengusulkan tanah yang sangat mendasar bagi semua negara adidaya. Terlepas dari semua sumber daya yang tersedia dan terletak dengan sempurna, secara geostrategis Sudan belum dapat memanfaatkan keunggulan ini dengan benar. Mungkin ada banyak alasan untuk itu, tetapi yang terbesar adalah kurangnya kepemimpinan yang tulus dan sistem politik yang adil yang bertindak demi kepentingan terbaik bangsa. Oleh karena itu, setiap keputusan strategis yang diambil dan kebijakan luar negeri yang diterapkan telah menunjukkan zero sum terhadap kedaulatan dan kemakmurannya; memungkinkan campur tangan militer asing secara langsung atau tidak langsung.

Kata Kunci: *Benua Afrika, Sudan, Sumber Daya Alam, Ekonomi*



1. Introduction

Countries in the African continent possess the major chunk of natural resources in the world. These natural resources include, “oil, gas, timber, diamonds, gold, coltan and bauxite”; which have made them vulnerable to foreign invasions. Principally extraction of these resources must generate revenue supporting direly needed development funds. On the contrary, they have resulted in enormous state corruption and environmental degradation leading to extreme poverty and excessive violence. **As it is said, “Rather than being a blessing, Africa's natural resources have largely been a curse”.** To date, major industrial powers are in competition on preying and extracting the continent's natural resources for their own appetite. This is taking its toll, not only in the shape of environmental degradation, but corruption has also seeped down into society at all levels. Moreover, human rights abuses have become a normal phenomenon (Turner, 2007).

Despite all the parasites draining the continent out, some of the fastest-growing economies in the world are from Africa. Africa is rich in culture, home to billions of innovative and vibrant people, speaking thousands of languages, and incomparable eco-diversity. The root of African problems is significantly apparent in the daily lives of every developed or developing nation. Without the knowledge of it, we become part of the system which has led to the availability and **consumption of African products at our doorsteps through exports and by utilizing their natural resources, bearing harsh consequences for people and the environment** (*Why Study Africa_ _ African Studies Program*, n.d.).

Economic reforms paired with the political changes are making it a lucrative market for the foreign investors. Foreign Direct investment (FDI) has tremendously increased throughout the continent. (*Economic Reform Is Making Africa an Attractive Market for FDI*, n.d.). As per the economist, **“Africa is attracting ever more interest from powers elsewhere”** (Economist, 2019)



On the contrary, reasons for lack of advancement, poverty and economic instability in many African countries can be linked to internal and external unrest and conflicts absence of technology to extract the natural resources, , educational disparities, poor economic and political systems and many more. These causes have resulted in further pushing them back to worst conditions. Many great powers in the history have exploited their circumstances; and many countries who have not improved in their attitude towards development and prosperity either became victim to parasites or battleground for their proxies.

Sudan is the third largest country in the African Continent. A country blessed with plenty of natural resources. However, since its independence the country has only seen peace for about 10 years in its history. Sudan because of resource abundance and geographical placement has been seen as world powers as a great opportunity for their interests. Political instability, authoritarian rule, corruption, exploitation of personal greed and needs resulting in foreign interference has kept the country at verge of collapse.

2. Research Methodology

A flexible-qualitative research methodology was adopted while taking the case study and doing an in-depth analysis of the available sources of the information. Many books, scholarly articles, media interviews, news, and internet sources were rereferred to, deduce the analysis and results.

3. Limitation of the Discussion

This paper would discuss and analyze possible foreign/external/international and domestic sources of the foreign policy of Sudan which have led to invite the involvement of Russian military in Sudan. **Discussion would limit to only those domestic and external deterrents which have impact on this case study i.e., the involvement of Russian military in Sudan.**

3.1. Conceptual Framework

This paper would start with the importance of Sudan and then discussing in detail about the domestic factors building the domestic environment for FP development and its



implementation. Subsequently it would discuss the International Environment. And how these two have resulted in Russian Military involvement in Sudan. Here USA and regional players would be briefly discussed; however main focus would be Russia as International Actor. **Russian Interests would be discussed in detail along with its Military involvement in Sudan. International/External factors would be discussed within the role of International Actors.** After briefly analyzing the Sudan’s FP action again, the article would conclude the study.

ACTORS	PROCESSES	ISSUES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State Actors – Sudan – Russia – USA • Middle East as region • Non-State Actors – Interest Groups – Wagner Group – Political 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competition – US-Russia • Cooperation – Russia-Sudan – Military – Economic • FP Instruments • Diplomacy • Military • Economic – 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Security • Welfare • Justice

Table 1: Actors, Processes, Issues (Author)

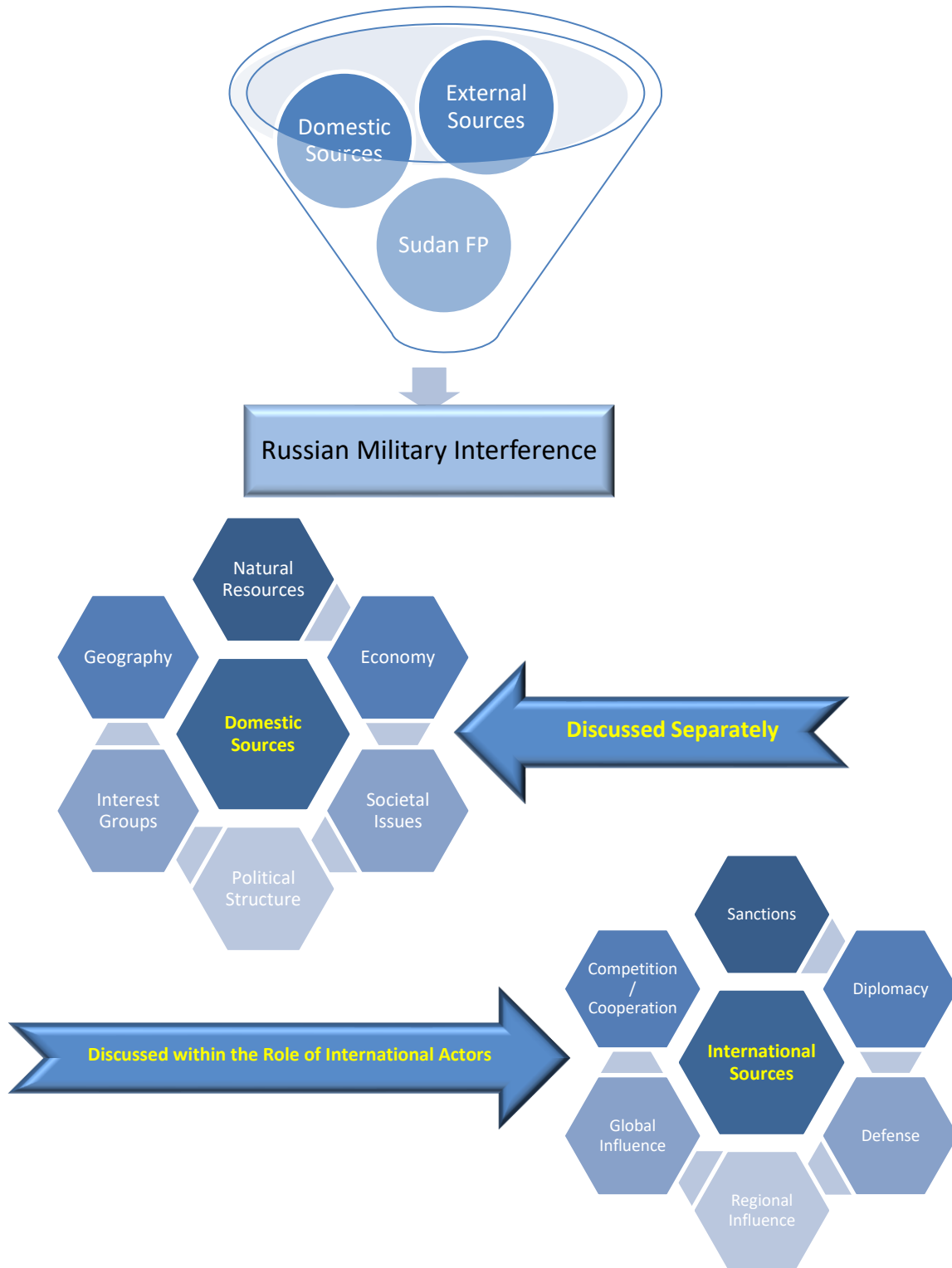


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



4. Research Result and Discussion

4.1. Importance of Sudan. It would not be justified to say that Sudan is important for many great powers only because of its resource rich lands. Sudan also stands unique because its geopolitical importance because of its geographic location. **A country located on the shores of Red Sea, with connection to both Arabian and Mediterranean Seas proposing a very base land to all super powers** (*W I e V R e Y L i c O P T N E T m S E V I n*, n.d.: 1).

4.2. Irony for Sudan. Despite all the resources available and perfectly located geostrategically Sudan has not been able to exploit these advantages in true letter and spirit. There may be many reasons to it but the biggest can be **lack of sincere leadership and fair political system acting in the best nation's interest**. Therefore, any strategic decisions made and foreign policies implemented have shown zero sum towards its sovereignty and prosperity; allowing foreign military interference directly or indirectly.

4.3. Operational Environment and Foreign Policy resulting in Foreign Military Intervention. Understanding the Foreign Policy of Sudan necessitates a good understanding of the Domestic as well as the Foreign Operational Environment. This in turn entails study of internal as well as external sources of Foreign Policy which have resulted in involvement of the Foreign Military Forces in Sudan directly or indirectly.

4.4. Domestic Sources of Foreign Policy. Domestic sources of foreign policy include many factors. However, we would restrict our discussion to mainly those factors which have close connection to Sudan's domestic environment leading to the foreign military invitation interfering domestically.

4.4.1. Sudan's Geographic Importance. Sudan is located in north-eastern Africa, between Egypt to the north and Eritrea to the east, bordering the Red Sea. **The Red Sea is one of the busiest waterways in international shipping lanes because it is connected to the Suez Canal.** It links the Mediterranean region to the Asia. **The Mediterranean, at the crossroads of three continents, is a tense region with significant geopolitical issues:**

- Antagonism between Arabs and Europeans,
- Competition between powers, colonialism, **control of the straits and the Suez Canal.**
- It remains a **zone of conflict for big countries**, and distant powers (the United States and Russia) always remain interested as investors (Klomegh, 2021); (Nations Online, n.d.)

All these factors contribute to the importance of Sudan in this region.

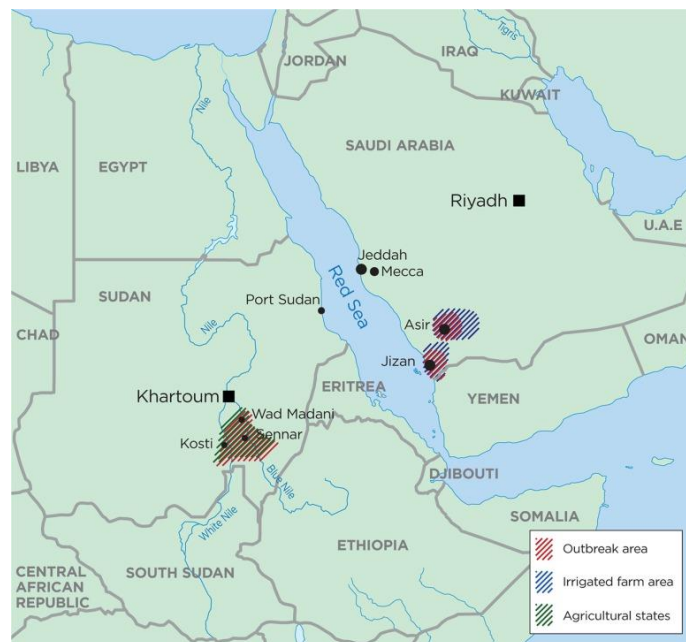


Figure 2: Map of Sudan Source: (Hassan et al., 2014)

4.4.2. Natural Resources and Resource Management. As Sudan's main source of wealth, its **natural resources are a focal point for competition and conflict.** Resource conflicts are often the result of a growing population, climate



change, and poor management of the environment, but the constantly shifting power struggles of national politics also have intervened at a local level, turning groups that coexisted peacefully into rivals (Sullivan et al., 2011: 2). These **resources where form the domestic economy at the same time result in great attraction to foreign powers**. Some of the primary natural resources which contribute to Sudan's GDP (gross domestic product) include:

- **Petroleum.** Petroleum export is one of their important industries which accounts for up to 80% of their total exports. The primary Sudanese oil importers include India, Indonesia, South Korea, China, and Japan (Sawe, 2019).
- **Gold.** Sudan is reportedly the second-largest producer of gold in Africa and the ninth in the world. (*Sudan's Gold Production Increases by 9*, n.d.). Out of total annual export of \$2.53 billion, **the largest export was gold**, worth about \$1 billion. **Problem is that most of the gold produced in Sudan is smuggled.**
- **Nile River.** The major source of Water for Sudan is its North-flowing Nile River which is the longest river on the globe. This river is also linked to the economic bindings as it supports the fishing and agriculture of the country (Rizky & Hidayati, 2020).
- **Other Natural Resources.** Sudan's mining industry has boosted because of the abundance of natural resources. These include Chromium Ore, Iron Ore, copper, Kaolin, Gypsum, Graphite, asbestos fiber and ore and Manganese. Moreover, Uranium and numerous other rare elements are also mined (Sullivan et al., 2011: 8).

4.4.3. Trembling Economy. Despite being rich in all the resources in hand, the oil-rich Southern part of the country parting its ways in 2011 resulted in a declining economic trend (Dibie, 2017: 162). As per IMF indicators between 2011-19 country's GDP dropped to about half. This separation led to the reduction of about 75% of the



country's income. This had an adverse effect on trade and fiscal deficit resulting in devaluation of the currency and growing inflation (Welfare et al., 2013: 11).

Sudan's economy has been in recession since 2018, with a decline experienced across all the components of GDP due to the combined impact of COVID-19, natural disasters including floods, and intermittent shortages of key commodities like fuel. Poverty has risen as a result and, worsened by COVID-19.

To recover out of the economic crisis, in September 2020 the Transitional Government agreed to an IMF-managed program that foresees, "the removal of fuel subsidies, the unification and liberalization of the foreign exchange rate, and increased revenue mobilization efforts to reduce the fiscal deficit and create conditions for the increased allocation of funds to priority sectors, including a joint Transitional Government/World Bank/WFP social protection program".

4.4.4. Social and Economic Disputes Leading to Violence. Despite the government's push to recover, Sudan is facing grave economic crisis. Decades of negligence and poor policies of Sudan's government have pushed many Sudanese communities on the sideline without access to land and water. They are also deprived of any economic and progressive benefits out of natural resources, oil and agriculture (Foster et al., 2010: VIII).

Like many other underdeveloped countries, where corruption is there at every level, there is no transparency in resource management. Human Development and sustainability of the resources at hand are also not give the due importance. For example:

- The central government's contracts to deal with the oil companies are classified and not known to public.
- Ambiguous Policies are followed regarding the management of oil, land, and water resources.
- The evaluation of environmental impact mainly because of the oil industry, are missing. That's why the environmental degradation and its



impact, has caused hostility between the oil industry and the local communities.

The following discussion analyzes the probability of violence breaking out over Sudan's oil, land, and water resources (Sullivan et al., 2011: 3).

4.4.5. Political and Government Structure. Sudan has a decentralized governance structure with three levels: Federal Government, State Governments, and Localities. Since gaining independence on 1 January 1956, Sudan has alternated between democratic and authoritarian leadership. During this time, Sudan experienced only 11 years of relative peace, between 1972 and 1983.

From 1989 to 2019, former President Omar al-Bashir ruled as President, a period which included the secession of the Republic of South Sudan in July 2011, after a lengthy internal conflict, until his removal during the 2019 revolution (Collins, 2021). Bashir was the first sitting president to be wanted by the ICC, and the first person to be charged by the ICC (International Criminal Court) for the crime of genocide during Darfur's crisis (Elbagir et al., 2021)

Abdel Fattah al-Burhan (2019-now) was sworn in as Sudan's temporary leader on April 11, 2019, following Bashir's removal. Later that year, in August, Burhan was appointed to lead a Sovereign Council comprised of military and civilian elites that guided the transition to full democracy (France 24, 2021).

Following the revolution, Sudan has embarked on a transition to peace and democracy under a civilian-led Transitional Government and Cabinet, headed by a civilian Prime Minister, and a collective civilian/military Head of State, the Sovereignty Council.

Sudan's modern history is also marked by the 2003 eruption of conflict in Darfur. Several agreements made inroads to peace, alongside the 2007 **deployment of the joint African Union and United Nations Hybrid Operation in Darfur (UNAMID)**. Working to end this conflict, and other tensions across Sudan, the new Government is progressing towards what is hoped will be lasting peace.



A milestone in this transition was the Juba Peace Agreement, signed in October 2020 by the Transitional Government and the leaders of a number of armed groups (Welfare et al., 2013: 4). As part of the Agreement, commitments were made on power and wealth sharing, the integration of forces into official ranks, political representation, economic rights and investment, and support for the return of displaced peoples. Towards this end, the Transitional Government is continuing its efforts to secure comprehensive peace throughout Sudan.

After almost 13 years, 2021 witnessed the departure of UNAMID and the arrival of the United Nations Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS). Headquartered in Khartoum, UNITAMS worked closely with the Transitional Government (UNDP, 2021)

4.4.6. Political Parties and Interest Groups. Certain political and Interest Groups in play in Sudan are discussed here for their role in Operational Environment affecting Foreign Policy effectiveness.

- **Transitional Military Council (TMC), Forces of Freedom and Change (FFC), The Sudanese Professionals' Association (SPA).** The opposition, led by the Forces of the Declaration of Freedom and Change, which includes the SPA, has demanded a speedy transfer of power to citizens. They have **proposed the formation of a civilian transitional council with military representation to govern Sudan during a transition period** that may last up to two years, according to the TMC.

The SPA has also called for broad reforms to cease a brutal crackdown on opposition, root out corruption and favoritism, and improve an economic crisis that aggravated during Bashir's 30-year leadership (Nations Online, n.d.).

- **Private Military Contractor (PMC).** The deployment of the **Russian "private military contractor" Wagner Group (PMC)** in Khartoum intended to help local security forces prop up Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir's administration. In the midst of countrywide protests against his leadership, the



leader of this northeastern African country clinged to power. Russia has long understood the importance of establishing a presence in Sudan, where mercenaries employed by the Wagner Group, a private Russian military contractor, have been stationed since 2017. **Wagner, which was formed by Dmitri Utkin, a Putin confidant, has also aided Russia's political agenda in Syria and Libya** (The Economist, 2017).

Since 2003, Russia has continuously provided over 80% of Sudan's armaments. Similarly, since 2018, private military contractors were deployed in the country by Wagner Group to guard M-Sudanese Invest's gold mines (which is tied to Wagner Group owner Yevgeny Prigozhin), but they are still unlawful under Russian law.

- **Sudan's Military Involvement.** Several coup plots or failed coups occurred during the transition period, including one on September 21, 2021, launched by Bashir loyalists. The military suppressed the coup attempt while simultaneously blaming the civilian authorities, whom they believed ineffectual and advocated for their replacement. Civilian politicians accused the military of using the failed coup to gain more authority in the transitional administration. They also emphasized the need to reform the military, evaluate its financial holdings, and put them under civilian control; propositions that are unpopular among many in the military. As a result, the already dangerously high level of animosity between military and civilian authorities was exacerbated in the aftermath of the coup attempt (Al Jazeera, 2021).

4.5. International Environment. The overthrow of Bashir signified the start of a new era for Sudan.

4.5.1. New Friends. The United States, Israel, and Russia were among the country's new international and regional friends. They joined the United Arab Emirates, who, along with Saudi Arabia, supported Sudan's Sovereignty Council, which ruled Sudan as of August 2019, by giving \$3 billion in 2019 (Reuters, 2019). Meanwhile,



Sudan's longtime friends Qatar and Turkey, which were adversaries of most Gulf Cooperation Council states and Sudan's northern neighbor Egypt at the time, were **forced to watch from the sidelines** (Abdin, 2019: 16).

4.5.2. Relationship with Israel. Following the overthrow of Bashir's dictatorship, a number of countries began to formulate their own plans for Sudan. **Since May 2020, the UAE has hosted key Sudanese leaders and connected them with Israelis on a regular basis.** Sudan and Israel agreed to normalize relations in 2020 and plan to do so later this year.

4.5.3. Removal from Terrorist List. Sudanese officials also began negotiating the removal of their country from the US terrorist list in Abu Dhabi (Reuters, 2020). Despite the presence of American representatives at these high-profile conferences, American participation in Sudan has remained limited to diplomacy.

4.6. International Actors. There are many actors involved as mentioned above. However, main international actor involved are the United State and Russia. However, this paper **focuses mainly on Russian involvement specially in Defense Domaine and militarily.**

4.6.1. United States and Allied Regional Actors. According to Joe Biden, the present administration tries to separate its foreign policy toward Russia from that of the previous administration. Simultaneously, the **White House is working to entice Khartoum closer to Washington by capitalizing on the new dynamics in US-Sudan ties as a result of the removal of the terrorist designation last year.** These two facts indicate that Biden's team saw Sudan as a battleground in the bigger war against Moscow's geopolitical rise. What remains unclear is how successful the US will be in pushing post-revolutionary Sudan to reduce its ties with Russia (Cafiero, 2021).



- **Involving Regional Actors.** With the Russian growing influence in Sudan, the U.S. is trying to have their influence back in Sudan. In this kind of environment, it is apparent that Sudanese military leaders are in close communication with regional actors, particularly those who are familiar with US foreign policy. While Abdel-Fattah al-Burhan spoke with UAE and Egyptian leaders on Oct 25, 2021, Gen. Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo's travel to Israel in early October was crucial. On November 1, 2021, it was also reported that an Israeli group traveled to Sudan to speak with Dagalo (Middle East Monitor, 2021).

- **US Covert Support to Military.** When these dynamics are viewed on a global scale, one could argue that the US attempted to send positive messages to the military actors in Sudan, particularly through its regional allies, and that it is attempting to prevent Khartoum from becoming more reliant on Moscow and Beijing, both of whose influence in the country is growing.

- **US Interests.** The United States' principal motivation in this regard was growing concern about Russia and China's growing influence in Sudan. Indeed, it was alleged that the United States was deeply upset by Moscow's agreement with Sudan's military leadership, and that it promised Khartoum large-scale financial and military aid in exchange for the accord's cancellation. However, it is clear that these concerns remain; in a recent interview with a Russian news outlet, Al Burhan stated that the Russian naval base plans would be approved by the military command.

- Another aspect of the United States' engagement in the Sudanese process could be linked to China (Barber, 2020). In this regard, it was **critical for Washington to make Port Sudan unusable**, as it was considered by China to be a key position on its **Belt and Road Initiative as one of Africa's entry ports**.



- **Concerns of Regional Actors.** Regional actors like Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates would be disturbed by such a developed port in Sudan. Despite its connections with China, the UAE would not support another strategic port in the region since it could have **a negative impact on Dubai's Jebel Ali Port**, a key transit point for trade from China to Africa.

- **Russia and China Response to Military Coup.** It is clear that the developments in Sudan have deeply concerned Russia and China. While implicitly criticizing the United States, Beijing and Moscow opted to make statements that would not cause Khartoum any concern. **To demonstrate their balanced stance, Russia and China rejected a draft resolution at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC)** condemning the military coup in Sudan and demanded that the statement be written in more generic terms. **Both countries clearly do not want to put their political, military, and economic investments in Sudan and the Red Sea region at danger.** Such actions indicate that the two countries will endeavor to stay relevant in the Sudanese power struggle.

4.6.2. Relationship with Russia. Russia has maintained "friendly ties" with Sudan since Omar al-Bashir governed the nation for 30 years. Omar al-Bashir made last trip to Russia before his downfall in November 2017, and agreements were struck on Russia's support in upgrading Sudan's military forces (Klomegah, 2021). Khartoum also stated at the time that it was open to negotiating the use of Red Sea bases with Moscow citing concerns about US intervention in Sudan's domestic affairs (Wahed, 2017).

- **Military Cooperation Agreement.** This followed the signing of a military cooperation pact between Moscow and Khartoum in 2019 (Xinhua, 2019). The seven-year cooperation agreement allows:



- Russian warships and aircraft to visit Sudan
- Exchange of military-political information and expertise
- Establishment of a “Russian Defense Ministry representative office” in Sudan to communicate with Sudanese Defense Ministry.

Russia has strengthened its participation in the Middle East, especially Sudan, as the US has retreated from the region and become absorbed by its own political divisions. President Vladimir Putin authorized the Russian MoD to sign into a 25-year deal with the Sudanese government for the construction of a new Russian naval base at Port Sudan, which would house roughly 300 Russian personnel, in November 2020 (Mackinnon, 2020).

- **Support for Transitional Military Council (TMC).** Russia's steadfast support for Sudan's TMC in the UN Security Council demonstrates the rising relevance of its inclination with Khartoum for its economic and geopolitical objectives in Sub-Saharan Africa. Owing to the enormous importance of this corporation, Russia has endeavored to disempower the Sudanese opposition through a variety of means, including an massive disinformation movement, training of Sudanese military officers by a group of private military contractors (PMCs), and utilizing a corporation with the TMC's neighboring regional partners to overpower demonstrations (Ramani, 2019). In the long term, Russia seeks to strengthen the TMC's grip on Sudan's transition process while denying charges that it has aided the TMC's repression (Harding & Burke, 2019).

4.6.3. Russian Interest. There is no doubt that Russia is back in Africa. Yet Moscow's approach is based less on a grand strategic design aimed at domination than on an opportunistic and pragmatic search for influence that that is dictated, in essence, by economic imperatives. Yet, Power projection and military involvement has been observed at its core (Kalika, 2019: 14).



Russia, which was once a minor player in the Horn of Africa, has recently established contacts with the region's governments and is now indicating a desire to establish a foothold on the Red Sea.

- **Russian Naval Port.** Although Russia's backing for the TMC is motivated by a variety of geopolitical factors, its unsettled agreements with the Sudan and **intentions to build a base on the Red Sea are particularly relevant.** Furthermore, because in Sub-Saharan Africa, Russia is a major arms supplier, such a naval facility would be greatly beneficial not only as strong military base but geopolitically, and economically as well. It is more so in case of Sudan, because of its strategic location, resources, and inference to its neighbors' stability.

- **Economic Gains.** The TMC is willing to maintain Russia's significant agreements all of which have grown dramatically in recent years. These include:
 - A Russian mining company called M Invest was granted privileged access to **Sudan's gold assets** (Johnston, 2019).
 - Russia wants to build an **oil refinery in Sudan** to boost the profitability of its oil exploration projects in South Sudan, citing the importance of Sudanese infrastructure in transferring South Sudan's oil to global markets (Plichta, 2019).
 - Furthermore, it will **enhance Russia's approach to goods transferred through the Suez Canal**, which links the Red Sea and the Mediterranean Sea (Sidorkova, 2020).



- **Arms Supply.** Sudan is Africa's second-largest buyer of Russian weaponry, after Algeria, with Russia accounting for half of Sudan's arms sales in 2017 (Connolly & Sendstad, 2017).

- **Military Involvement and Power Projection.** Russia Military involvement and setting a naval base can bring many advantages to it's interest:
 - Russia might utilize its station in Sudan as a launch pad for increased power projection across the Mediterranean Sea.
 - The establishment of the facility should be viewed primarily as a political statement that the Russian fleet's strike units have increased their operational capability.
 - The installation should be viewed as a reloading point for a variety of goods and materials (including military supplies) that are under Russian control.
 - Due to the inclusion of the FSB and intelligence services among the 'competent branches' responsible with the base's security, the agreement allows Russian secret services to operate freely.
 - The full flexibility allowed to Russia to utilize its own planes and land transport suggests that the station will be used primarily to conduct special operations in Sudan's neighboring nations and to move people from private Russian military organizations.
 - The facility (and the unmonitored land and air transport opportunities it provides) can also be utilized as a transportation corridor for Russian enterprises working in the Central African Republic, which borders Sudan.



- Utilizing its Port Sudan infrastructure, Russia will boost its credibility as a defense against maritime security threat both in the Indian Ocean as well as in Red Sea.
- Similarly, Port Sudan can be used by The Kremlin to take a proactive approach to piracy in Red Sea.
- This new Russian Logistic center can be utilized to safeguard Russian assets in Sudan and strengthen their bilateral ties.
- According to Anton Mardasov, a Middle East specialist, Port Sudan facility will 'legalize' Russia's military presence in Sudan. This will support Russia in securing its gold mining assets and transitioning from an arms-sale-based transactional engagement with Sudan to a more comprehensive security alliance.

4.6.4. Analysis of Sudan's Foreign Policy to Russia. Foreign Policy and International Relations of any country are based on its National Interests. However, if we analyze the foreign policy of Sudan towards Russia it can be seen that domestic environment is characterized by:

- Poor Economic policies leading to trembling economic conditions
- Unsettled External Debts (Berry, 2015: 156)
- Weak Political System, lacking public support
- Unworthy Leadership
- Corrupt Government structure with organizational priorities
- Poor resource management
- Social Disparities and violence
- **Disloyal Interest Groups**

It can be seen that Leaders or **Military Organization** for their own interests and in order to grab power have taken steps which have put the state's sovereignty at stake. Circumstances leading to secession of South Sudan was big example of putting **self above state's interest**.



Internationally, **the sanctions on Sudan by the US on the name of terrorism** played negatively on the overall situation.

Bashir's fear on the US interference on domestic front further lured it away from the West.

Sudan's Military has a large backing from Russia and also trained by Russians.

All these factors combined to make Sudan fall in the lap of Russia for their survival, sovereignty, economic support, defense equipment and political stability. However, it was played poorly at expense of Sudan's national interest.

Although at present Sudanese Government is trying to renegotiate the deals, especially Port Deal with Russia; still Russia would not back off easily. Sudan's look east FP might result in its isolation and result in further sanctions (Large, 2008: 158). At the same time the US has to be careful as it may further push Sudan towards Russia and China.

These external and internal factors have developed an operational environment for Sudan which has invited Russia to involve Militarily in Sudan.

5. Conclusion.

Although Political and Ethnic issues can be considered as reasons for the existing violence in Sudan, but presence of natural resources and their misuse are also substantial contributors. The Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) suggests conciliations and ways of settling number of these root issues, but putting them into action has been slow and inadequate to mitigate the complicated difficulties faced by the Sudanese. Corruption, lack of transparency in capital distribution and unsustainability in management of natural resource, might cause another civil war between north and south leading to brutal killing like in 1983, which ended in 2005 with the signing of the CPA.

Sudan's rich endowment of natural resources including "natural gas, gold, silver, chromite, manganese, gypsum, mica, zinc, iron, lead, uranium, copper, kaolin, cobalt, granite, nickel, tin, and aluminum" offer significant economic potential. **However, these resources have yet to be fully realized.**



The past of the international presence in Sudan has a clear bearing on the present day. British, US, Former USSR and Chinese have intervened over the history and left their idiosyncratic marks. The streets of Khartoum still carry the marks of British influence in regards to carving modern Sudan. With the change of geopolitics of the Middle East and Cold War, the US changed its stance against Sudan as well, which is evident from the ruins of Al Shifa factory bombed by the US. Chinese economic approach to influence through mutual benefit is represented by Khartoum's Chinese-built oil refinery (Leonardi & Jalil, 2011: 291).

Finally, **presence of Russian Interest Group, backing of the Military and finally building a Port in Sudan will have a dynamic impact** not only in Sudan but in the region. Russia's reiteration as a naval force on the Red Sea has enormous geopolitical ramifications in light of these advantages. **The United States, the European Union, and Turkey are likely to see Russia's presence at Port Sudan as a threat to their interests.** Following Vladimir Putin's formal approval of the Port Sudan facility's development, Vladimir Komoedov, the former commander of Russia's Black Sea force, said that the naval base planned to challenge the US's dominance in the Indian Ocean. Due to the expiration of the EU Naval Force Atalanta (EU NAVFOR) anti-piracy operation shortly, **Russia's Sudan-based warships may be used to replace European anti-piracy efforts.**

It is to be understood that a **weak footing domestically results in a weaker Foreign Policy decision Making and its implementation.** It can be further reiterated that the domestic determinants along with variable International Actors having their interests have resulted in the building up of a situation where Sudan has not acted very wisely. This has not only led to losing their national interest in the short term but also in the long term. Russian Military involvement as a result of such FP may result in jeopardizing Sudan's sovereignty. Sudan may also find itself in the middle of big powers fight ending up losing instead of gaining.



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