

The Conflict over Resources in Sudan between Major Powers - Economic Impacts and Geopolitical Consequences

الصراع على الموارد في السودان بين القوى الكبرى - التأثيرات الاقتصادية والعواقب الجيوسياسية

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Abstract:

Energy sources are not only crucial for economic development but also significant in shaping the policies of both producing and consuming countries. These strategic resources have the power to influence the decision-making processes, in cases of cooperation, competition, and even conflict. Sudan, in particular, has recognition as a region of contentions, with major powers engaging in fierce competition over its resources. thus, the country's lands have become battlegrounds of varying intensity, as different stakeholders strive to secure their access to and control over these valuable energy sources.

By focusing on Sudan as a case study, where there are numerous vital resources and a multitude of competitors, it can gain insights into the nature of geoeconomic competition and the factors contributing to the stagnation of development in the country, as it can uncover the underlying dynamics and potential strategies for promoting growth and maximizing Sudan's potential.

Keywords: energy and security, Sudan & conflict, geo-economics, great powers and competition, geopolitics.

ملخص:

إن مصادر الطاقة ليست ضرورية للتنمية الاقتصادية فحسب، بل إنها مهمة أيضًا في تشكيل سياسات البلدان المنتجة والمستهلكة على حد سواء. ولهذه الموارد الاستراتيجية القدرة على التأثير على عمليات صنع القرار في حالات التعاون والمنافسة وحتى الصراع. ويحظى السودان، على وجه الخصوص، بالاعتراف به كمنطقة خلافات، حيث تخوض القوى الكبرى منافسة شرسة على موارده. وبالتالي أصبحت أراضي البلاد ساحات معارك متفاوتة الشدة، حيث يسعى مختلف أصحاب المصلحة إلى تأمين وصولهم إلى مصادر الطاقة القيمة هذه والسيطرة عليها.

من خلال التركيز على السودان كدراسة حالة، حيث يوجد العديد من الموارد الحيوية والعديد من المنافسين، يمكن الحصول على نظرة ثاقبة لطبيعة المنافسة الجيواقتصادية والعوامل التي تساهم في ركود التنمية في البلاد، كما يمكن أن تكشف الأسباب الكامنة وراء ذلك. الديناميكيات والاستراتيجيات المحتملة لتعزيز النمو وتعظيم إمكانات السودان.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الطاقة والامن، السودان والصراع، الجغرافيا الاقتصادية، القوى العظمى والمنافسة، الجيوسياسية.

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1. INTRODUCTION:

Strategic natural resources are considered one of the most important factors that help build the economic strength of a country and are an important element for building a social and political system as well. It is also considered one of the most sensitive reasons that drives to clashes, conflicts, and wars in the post-Cold War period, but they are not the only reason, as other reasons are no less important, such as political and social reasons, especially hidden military motives (such as the case of the United States, which sees the Sahel region - Including Sudan - as an important area par excellence and requires the imposition of the American military presence on the one hand and the other hand the attempt to control the largest possible amount of areas of economic influence, side by side in its strategic vision of the necessity of defeating the forces that oppose American interests there, such as Russia, China and India), but this did not change the areas of The basic conflict is the imposition of economic hegemony, all of which depend for their existence on strategic and vital natural resources.

It is known that the volume of energy produced in the advanced industrial world is much less than the proportion of its consumption, which has led to an increase in its dependence on foreign markets to cover its need for domestic consumption and ensure the continuity of its development, which guarantees the stability of its internal social conditions.

This clearly shows the seriousness of the energy factor, which has become the basis of national and international security. The major powers are aware of the extreme importance of energy resources and the existing imbalance in the balance of power between countries. Most of them suffer from dependency and a lack of energy resources on the one hand, and on the other hand, the state's feeling that continuity or... The stability of their economic and social development is threatened by the security of their energy supplies. These countries increase their motivation to move from a position of strength.

Considering that Sudan is endowed with a distinct geostrategic location within its borders, with its vast fertile lands and the Nile River, it has been and continues to be for many decades the subject of attention and conspiracy by colonial powers greedy for its wealth, to control its many vital resources, especially energy, and more specifically oil and gas, and this is evident. When reviewing its political archive as a result of the conflicts between the colonial powers that always aspire to compete and struggle over that imposes its hegemony over the strategic components of Sudan that carry it and whose lands hoard important wealth and resources.

1.1. Importance and objectives of the study:

The importance of this paper appears in its attempt to understand the major transformations and developments that have changed the centers of energy resources, especially oil, and gas as strategic resources, coupled in their degree of complexity with international security and stability - for producers and consumers alike - which have become laden with political, security and economic challenges, as the paper stands for the chapter is devoted to uncovering the roots of strategic thinking related to energy security and its supplies in the major economic countries, and looking at

Sudan as

an alternative source for those vital resources, at a time when the Russian-Ukrainian war threatened the future of its energy security, and Sudan, which was and still is the focus of international competition for energy. Like other countries, Sudan remains in a state of suffering that has continued for decades now.

1.2. Problematic:

In light of what historical experience confirms, Sudan is faced with many dangers that threaten its national security, the most important of which is the competition of major powers and their competition over its energy and vital resources, as well as the desire and tendency to impose complete control over it, which for them is considered a national interest par excellence, which requires its protection by all means.

Therefore, the problematic question is as follows:

- What are the limits and dimensions of the strategic thinking of the major countries competing for vital resources in Sudan, and what are their economic and geopolitical implications?

In this context, the study seeks to answer the following questions:

1.3. Sub-questions:

- 1- What is Sudan's position from the geostrategic perspective of the major economic countries?
- 2- What are the geopolitical implications of the major powers competing with each other over energy in Sudan?
- 3- What is Sudan's political and economic future in light of the increasing internal conflict supported by external forces?

To answer these questions, the following hypotheses were made:

1.4. Study hypotheses:

- 1- The interests of the major powers reflect the tendencies of the driving forces behind inciting conflicts and wars outside the economic framework and the international actors' framework.
- 2- The greater the competition between international actors over resources in Sudan, the more severe the threats from non-state actors, such as terrorism, organized crime groups, and maritime piracy, to the energy sector's infrastructure chain.
- 4- The percentage of threats and risks to Sudan's security has doubled with the growing presence of multinational companies operating in the energy field - especially with the entry of Gazprom and the Chinese National Company - competing and conflicting with other global companies affiliated with the major powers.

2. The strategic importance of Sudan :

Given the location of Sudan on the world map, specialists will notice before others the extent of its strategic importance compared to many other countries, as the geographical topography is diverse, including desert lands, hills, mountains and valleys, in addition to the most important asset it possesses, which is the vast fertile lands, and the most important is the Nile River, and this geographical diversity. It has produced a variety of natural resources, as it overlooks the Red Sea, the sea region, with copper, gold, iron ore, and silver, whose reserves are estimated at about 1,500 tons, and zinc, as well as gold and iron, whose reserves are estimated at about 5 million tons, in addition to about 1.5 million tons of uranium. And oil and gas. (FAO, 2015)

Despite this huge amount of wealth, it has hardly any impact on Sudan's economy and has no pulse in development. Over the years, wars and conflicts have drained a large portion of Sudan's wealth, as they have prevented the optimal use of the proceeds of those natural resources and their conversion into public investments in the Sudanese economy, developing human and social capital, structuring infrastructure, building wealth, and creating new job opportunities on a large scale, this is a matter that Sudan and is still suffering from to this day. (NSDS, 2016)

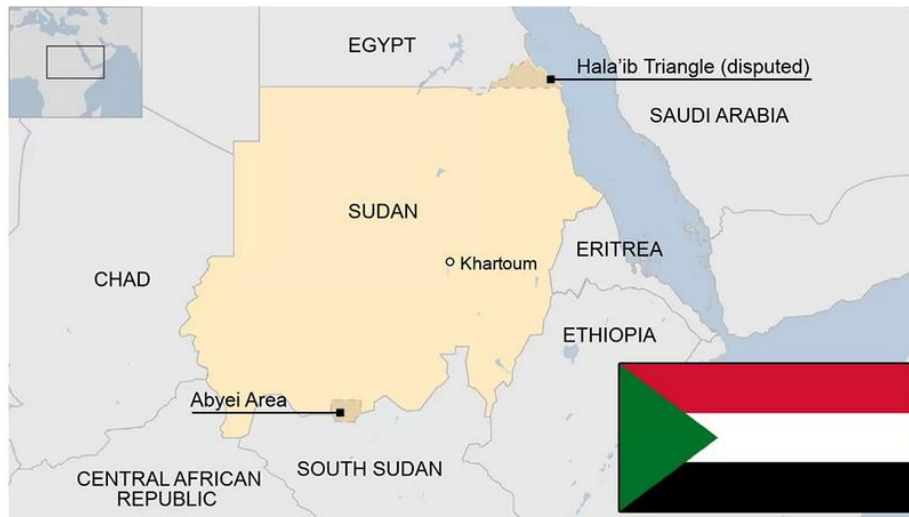
3. The Great Powers' Struggle for Energy in Sudan:

Sudan seems to be one of the richest African countries in terms of natural resources, vast fertile lands, and diverse livestock. It harnesses a large number of minerals, in addition to holding significant reserves of oil, gas, and especially water, which has granted it a highly sensitive geo-economic and geostrategic status.

The international competition over Sudan began a long time ago by some European powers, and during the first decades of the twenty-first century, Sudan has not been immune to this competition among the world's superpowers, especially the United States and China, in order to obtain oil and gas. Consequently, Sudan has become a center of international polarization, a stage for confrontation and competition with other major economic powers. (Musso, 2011, p. 20).

Several reports issued by research centers in the United States have highlighted the risks of continuing to depend on Middle Eastern oil, proposing African oil as a closer alternative to the oil of the MENA states. The transportation costs for African oil are estimated to be 40% lower, with maritime shipping routes considered safer than other shipping methods. Additionally, the African continent possesses a massive oil reserve that exceeded 144.4 billion barrels in 2022 (Africa Oil, 2023), constituting approximately 11% of the global reserves.

Fig.1. Map of Sudan after the Secession



Source: <https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Sudan-and-South-Sudan-map-split-in-2011>

3.1. Partition of Sudan according to the map of energy sources:

Sudan has suffered two civil wars since its independence in 1956. The second civil war ended in 2005 and led to a comprehensive peace agreement between the Sudanese government and rebel factions in the southern region. (El-Sadany, 2012) This followed decades of Pushing to incite provoking sedition and spreading hatred between the Christians and pagans South against the North ruled by Arab Muslims. With the intervention of major powers, which have a direct interest in the conflict on the one hand, and in trying to control oil sources on the other hand, a peace agreement was drawn up, and a set of principles was drawn up for sharing oil revenues, and an agreement was made to hold a referendum for the independence of the southern region. The vote was overwhelmingly in favor of secession, and in July 2011, South Sudan became a separate country from Sudan.

The secession of South Sudan had a significant negative impact on the economic balance of Sudan. Sudan lost about 75% of its oil fields to the newly created state of the South. (A.Moneim, 2023) So the oil sector in Sudan and South Sudan plays a pivotal role for both parties. Most oil-producing assets are located near or extend across the common border (Abyei Area). Since the separation, overall oil production has been affected due to continued internal political instability on both sides.

In such a way Northern Sudan produces approximately 105,000 barrels per day, and Southern Sudan produces 176.4 thousand barrels per day according to the statistics for 2023. Importing oil, especially from West Africa, spares it the risks of transportation through passages and maritime straits on the eastern side of Africa, such as the Suez Canal, the Arabian Gulf, the Red Sea, and the Bab-el-Mandeb, which has intensified competition among major international powers, the United States, France, Britain, Russia, and the People's Republic of China.

Table 1. Oil reserve shares of Sudan and South Sudan

TOTAL PROVED RESERVES	At end 2000	At end 2010	At end 2019	At end 2020		Share of total	R/P ratio
	Thousand million tonnes						
South Sudan	n/a	n/a	3,5	3,5	0,5	0,2%	56,4
Sudan	0,3	5,0	1,5	1,5	0,2	0,1%	47,9

Source: <https://www.bp.com/en/global/corporate/energy-economics/statistical-review-of-world-energy.html>

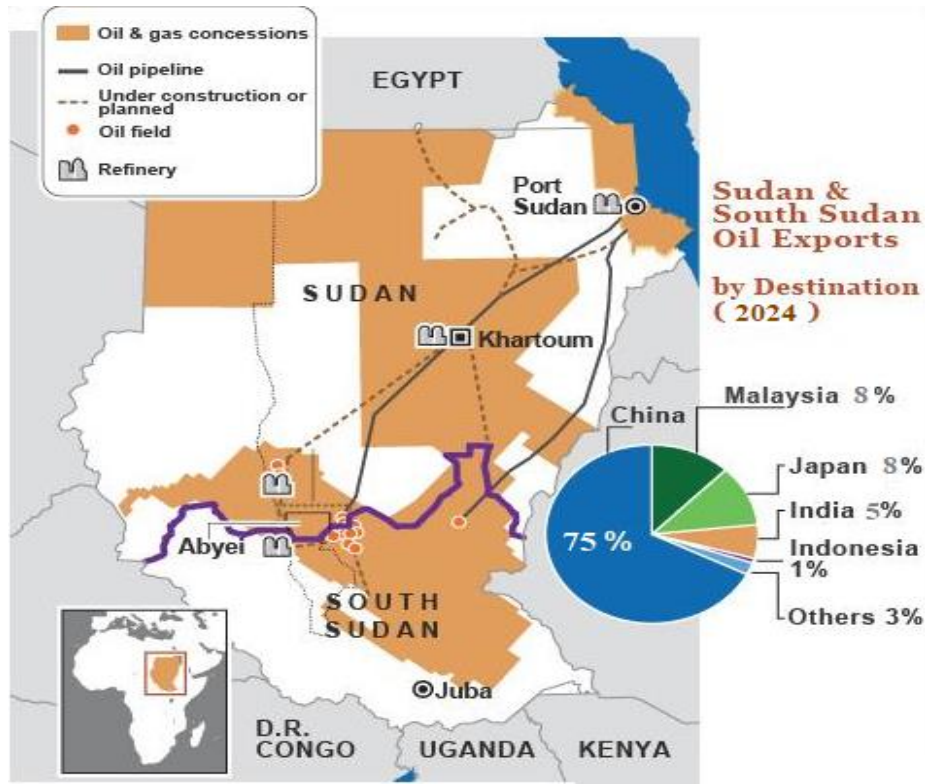
In addition, India is also seeking a position in the region for the same purpose, namely to obtain oil privileges there, or to attempt to prevent the activation of the dependency strategy that the United States is working to activate (as is the case with Russia and China), resulting in conflicts, wars, and ethnic and regional tensions therein.

After the events of September 11, 2001, and the United States' choice of a military force approach for its global foreign and security policy, the American role has emerged in Africa in general, and in Sudan specifically, following the decline of traditional colonial powers such as France and Britain. The emergence of China, India, and some active Asian powers on the Sudanese scene has added a new dimension to the international conflict there. For example, China has significant economic interests in Sudan and Africa, justifying its provision of military and logistical support to many African regimes.

Discussing the existence of a strategic partnership between China and Sudan is naturally not devoid of aspirations and political dimensions; however, it undoubtedly relies on interests that inevitably serve the stronger party's benefit at the expense of the weaker party, (China dominates about 75% of oil investment in Sudan), (Sudan Tribune, 2024) which finds itself with no choice but submission and compliance. This relationship has had a significant impact on various fields between the two parties, especially in the economic and strategic realms. The existing economic relations between the parties, in addition to their longstanding diplomatic relations, can be traced back to the first stage of bilateral political, economic, and trade relations in 1955 through the Bandung Conference, which was anti-colonial and pro-alignment.

As for the second stage of modern economic and trade relations, it was in 1997 when China first entered as a major partner and investor in the Sudanese oil project, taking advantage of the United States' withdrawal from the country in 1995 to gain significant oil investments.

Fig.2. Sudan and South Sudan oil Exports by Destination 2023



Source: World Energy Atlas, ECOS, APEC

Fig.3. Sudan’s Crude Oil production from 2000-2022



RANG	FREQUENCY	UNIT	MAX	MIN	PREVIOUS	LAST
2000-2022	yearly	Barrel/Day	483.132 2007	154.23 2000	↓ 221.236 2021	↓ 205.490 2022

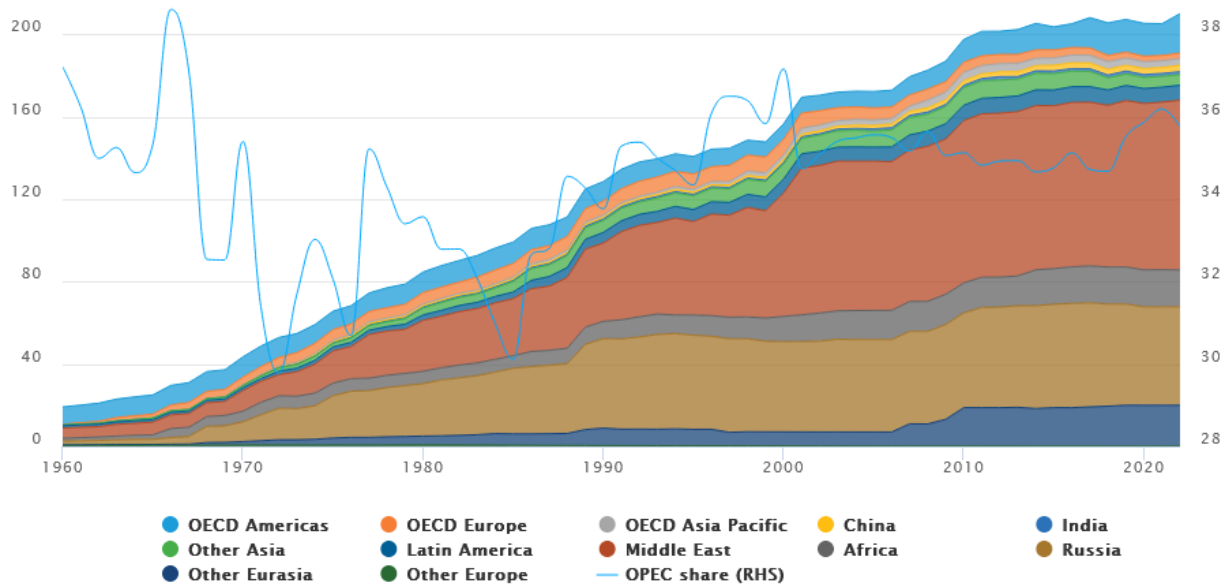
Source: <https://www.ceicdata.com/en/indicator/sudan/crude-oil-production>

4-Russian-Western competition and conflict over the Sudan's wealth :

By analyzing the development of events, it appears that Sudan is now in a position of proxy war between Russia the United States, and its allies, as Russia expanding its influence towards the west, while NATO expands its influence towards the east (Kurth, 2022), as it appears clear recently that both parties are seeking to acquire new spheres of influence in Africa, including, of course, Sudan, which has been visibly strengthened since the start of the Russian-Ukrainian war. The Russian-Ukrainian war was one of the catalysts of the Russian-Western competition for Africa's resources, as Russia seeks to escape international sanctions imposed on it by strengthening its foreign relations network with important African countries to build new strategic alliances. (Ferragamo, 2023)

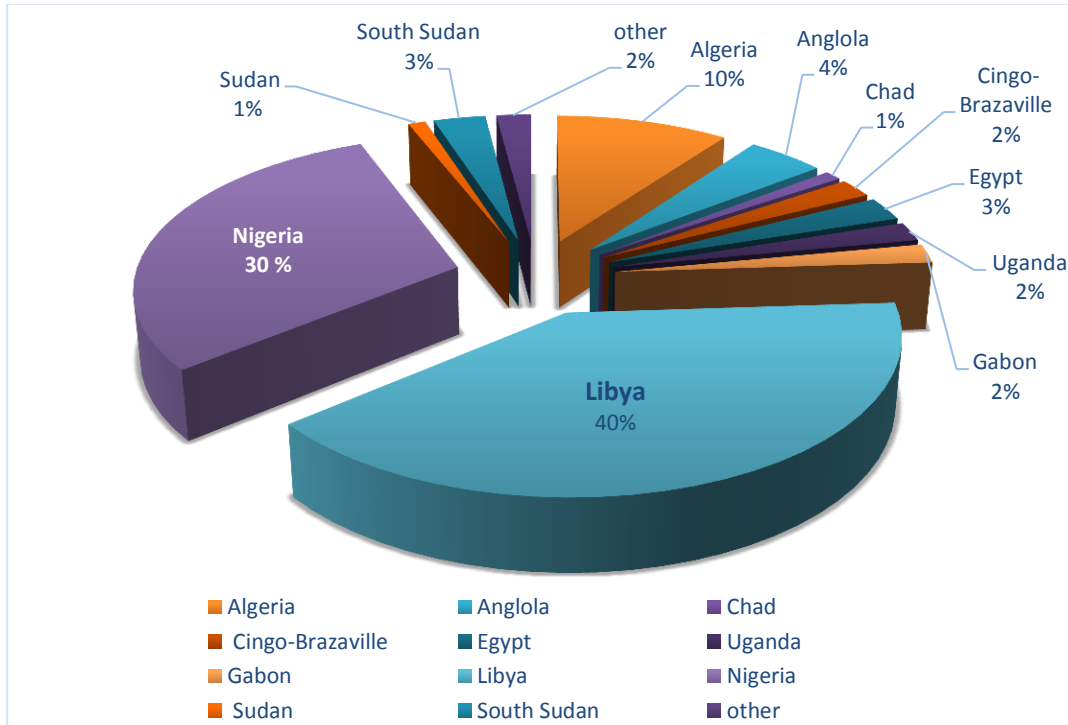
In contrast, the West - led by the United States - seeks to compensate for the severe shortfall in the Russian energy supply (Col Shawn M. Willis, 2023), by strengthening relations with African countries, which saves about (17.93 %) of the world 's natural gas reserves. In 2021, the volume of natural gas reserves in Africa will reach more than (620) trillion cubic feet, or (12%) of the world's gas reserves . also Africa 's crude oil reserves were estimated at 144.4 billion barrels in 2022.(11%) of the world's oil reserves.

Fig.4. Gas reserves in Africa (percentage)



Source : https://asb.opec.org/ASB_Charts.html?chapter=1572

Fig.5. Proved crude oil reserves in Africa in 2021, by country (Percentage)



Source: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1178147/crude-oil-reserves-in-africa-by-country/>

The United States seeks to strengthen relations with Africa to oppose the Russian-Chinese alliance, which has grown sharply in recent decades (Hamilton, 2023). Perhaps this is what led the Biden administration to launch a new strategy towards Africa, a plan announced by Secretary of State Blinken on his African tour in August 2022, The United States sought to enhance its ties with some important African countries by holding the second "US-Africa Summit" hosted in Washington, in December 2022. (U S Department of State, 2022)

On the other hand, Russia seeks to fix its influence in Africa by focusing on the status of the appropriate strategic alternative to Western influence, specifically the French, (Caulcutt, 2023) which has visibly declining in many traditional areas of influence (Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Central Africa, Chad, and others), which relies on several mechanisms, especially in Sudan therefore, Russia seeks to hold the "Russian-African Summit" in its second edition in African capitals (Debates, 2023), after the first edition was held in "Sochi Resort" in Russia in October 2019, which was the first regulatory framework of its kind at the multilateral level that links Russia to Africa.

4.1-The geoeconomic and geopolitical importance of Sudan from the Russian-American perspective :

Understanding the deeper nature of the conflict in Sudan requires studying the major powers activities in the region, especially the Russian-Chinese in one hand, and the western alliance on the other. Russia and other major Western powers alike have significant political, economic, and security interests in Sudan. For example, Russia fears that the current conflict will affect the ratification of the agreement between Moscow and Khartoum on the establishment of a Russian naval logistics center in Sudan, which it plans to become an important base or logistics center for the Russian Navy (Magdy, 2023), as it provides direct access to the landlocked Central African Republic and the Sahara-Sahel region where Russian mining companies invest.

In addition, Sudan owns the buried treasure in contrast to the natural resources available to other African countries (Worldatlas, 2019). It means (200) million acres of fertile agricultural land, (11) flowing rivers, (102) million livestock, (400) billion cubic meters of annual rain, (1.4) million tons of uranium, (6.8) billion barrels of oil, and (85) billion cubic meters of gas by 2022.

Also, Sudan ranks second in terms of gold production, with a production of more than (90) tons annually (ECP, 2023), with a value of five billion dollars, while the preliminary results of the map of minerals in Sudan, which was delivered by a Russian company to Khartoum last month, revealed a confirmed reserve of gold amounting to 523 thousand tons, and a reserve under evaluation amounting to 1.117 million tons.

As well as it is also known as the food basket of the world. In addition to other strategic resources like silver, copper, etc. it is also numerous in parallel with its geostrategic location, as it is the gateway to the Horn of Africa, Thus, there is a hidden war between the eastern alliances (Russia and China) and the western alliances (America and its European allies) over hegemony and influence in the countries of Africa, including Sudan.

The British Daily Telegraph reported that Russia had prepared for the Western sanctions with the stock of gold imported from Sudan estimated in tons, which represents (23%) of Russian reserves, worth (144) billion dollars, after it was revealed in its report that Russia is the first beneficiary of Sudanese gold exported from Sudan by (30) tons annually through small aircraft to Russia after military relations granted privileges to Russians through licensing Russian companies to invest in gold (Tessa Knight, 2023).

Table 2. Gold production in Sudan: 2010-2022 (Tons)

2010	2012	2014	2016	2017	2018	2020	2022
35	34.5	75	95	105	96	37	40

Source : Mohamed Salah Abdel Rahman, *The Other Sudan War: The Place of Gold in the Economics of War, Economic Impact of War Series, Paper No. 2, 2023, P.6*

4.2- China is the largest beneficiary of Sudan's wealth:

Oil is considered one of the essential elements that have a prominent presence and significant weight on China's foreign policy objectives due to its importance in supporting its economic nerve. This is reflected in the expectations of oil experts that Chinese demand for foreign oil will exceed fifty million tons of oil and fifty billion cubic meters of gas by the year 2020.

It may have been logical for China to choose Sudan as a destination to achieve this short-term strategy, given that Sudan is a promising oil country by all standards (Daniel, 2016, p. 36) . This is evidenced by the presence of its massive company operating in this sector within Sudan, alongside three other foreign companies operating in the oil sector to invest in it starting since 1998 (CNPC, 2001), namely: Chinese National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC) followed by the French company Total and then the Malaysian company Petronas, and the Indian company ONGC, in addition to some local Sudanese companies that have modest production due to competition, as for the Chinese investments share in Sudan, most of them are allocated to the oil industry and its accessories such as petrochemicals and oil pipelines. The investments in this field amounted to around six billion dollars according to statistics, and began in the year 2007, which strengthened the presence of mutual reliance in Sino-Sudanese relations.

Since 2004, China has become the top importer of Sudanese oil and the primary supplier of arms to Khartoum (Goodman, 2004), as well as the main supporter of the Sudanese regime in the United Nations Security Council. However, in reality, 80% of the estimated Sudanese oil reserves, which exceed six billion barrels, are located in the region of the Southern territories. This has led China to position itself as an ally to Khartoum in the eyes of South Sudan, in Juba, the capital of South Sudan, which separated from the North. Therefore, China opened a consulate there in 2008 and the Chinese oil company "CNPC" has also invested in oil fields there.

On the other hand, the government of South Sudan received a delegation representing the ruling Communist Party of the People's Republic of China, through which the South Sudanese authorities made commitments to respect the oil investment contracts with Chinese companies that were previously concluded with Khartoum during the civil war period. The origin of this conflict dates back to the 1970s when the United States ceased its exploration and research activities in South Sudan due to insecure conditions for investment. At that time, the rebel movement in the South intensified its military operations, leading American companies to withdraw. American oil companies did not anticipate that the Sudanese territory would become a field for Chinese companies to operate in under the precarious security conditions prevailing in the south at that time.

However, the Chinese positioned themselves and thereby gained a strategic advantage over the United States, operating under those security conditions and achieving significant successes and accomplishments that were unexpected by the American administration. This led to pressure on Chinese companies and an escalation of security threats in the region (Crisis Group, 2017). Nevertheless, despite this, Chinese companies continued their operations, a move not favored by the American administration as its companies had invested substantial amounts and believed they were entitled to that oil.

Conflicts that were ignited in Sudan in secret have already emerged. The United States did not welcome the agreements concluded between the two parties to invest in the oil field, as well as the entry of the Russian company Gazprom to invest gas in it as well. It prompted the summons of Sudanese President Omar Al-Bashir to the International Criminal Court to try him for crimes committed - according to them - in Sudan, but China changed its strategy in maneuvering and was able to launch pre-emptive strikes to preserve Chinese national security. He achieved some success at the expense of the United States. The United States also began to restrict China's supplies from Sudan, but it did not succeed in hitting Sudan, so it decided to hit the supply line, and piracy began in the Red Sea. Russian and Chinese forces intervened in territorial waters to fight piracy operations. Washington did not succeed in impeding Chinese oil supplies from Sudan, and the conflict continued over the oil-rich region of Abyei (El-Sadany M. , 2012, p. 6). The United States was looking for a way to expel China from the region.

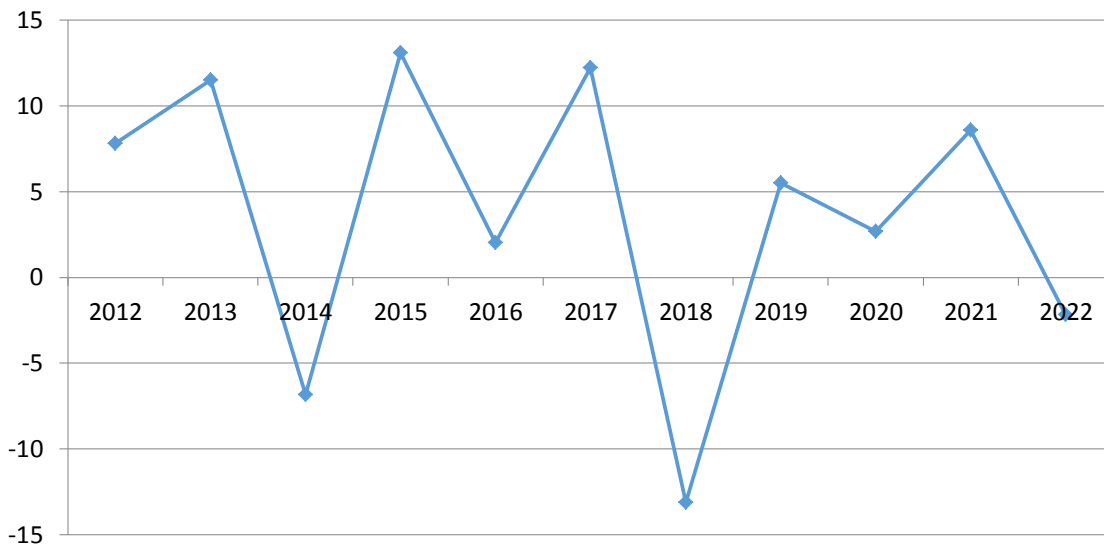
Table 3: Major oil companies investing in Sudan and South Sudan 2022

Country	Consortium or subsidiary	Company	Company country of origin	Share (percentage)
	Greater Pioneer Operating Company (GPOC)	CNPC	China	40.0%
		Petronas	Malaysia	30.0%
		ONGC	India	25.0%
		Nilepet	South Sudan	5.0%
South Sudan	Dar Petroleum Operating Company (DPOC)	CNPC	China	41.0%
		Petronas	Malaysia	40.0%
		Nilepet	South Sudan	8.0%
		Sinopec	China	6.0%
		Tri-ocean Energy	Egypt	5.0%
	Sudd Petroleum Operating Company (SPOC)	Petronas	Malaysia	67.8%
		ONGC	India	24.2%
		Nilepet	South Sudan	8.0%
Sudan	Greater Nile Petroleum Operating Company (GNPOC)	CNPC	China	40.0%
		Petronas	Malaysia	30.0%
		ONGC	India	25.0%
		Sudapet	Sudan	5.0%
	Petro Energy	CNPC	China	95.0%
		Sudapet	Sudan	5.0%
	Star Oil	Ansan Wikfs	Yemen	66.0%
Sudapet		Sudan	34.0%	

Source : <https://www.eia.gov/international/analysis/country/SDN>

With China entering the African oil market, competing on the sharing of strategic benefits and placing its hand on Sudanese oil, the United States remains the most penetrating and politically influential in the region, prompting the two parties to compete to seek greater benefits at the expense of the other in their own way, in order to prove their presence and position on the vast political map and the diverse natural resources of Sudan. The United States is a strategic ally of South Sudan, unlike China, which was considered the main ally of North Sudan earlier. Data was also monitored on the volume of China's foreign investments in Africa, and a decrease of -171,900 million US dollars was recorded in 2022. This represents a decrease from the previous value of 94,290 million US dollars for the previous year. This is shown in the following figure:

Fig 6. Annual FDI flows from China to South Sudan between 2012 and 2022 (in million U.S. dollars)



Source: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1426281/china-outward-fdi-flows-to-south-sudan/>

The statements of some American human rights activists at the United Nations stated that: There is a possibility that Chinese oil facilities in Sudan will be subjected to attacks unless they pressure the Khartoum government to stop the violence in Darfur and South Sudan. In addition, China, which holds a permanent seat on the Security Council and enjoys the right of veto (veto), "bears a great responsibility in the search for solutions to the conflicts in Darfur and South Sudan (Haddad:, 2014, p. 30). In addition, they said that China must bear that responsibility. Otherwise, Sudan will be destroyed and the first thing to be broken will be China's economic interests. This expression in the diplomatic language used in the event of crises is considered a menacing threat, which prompted Sudan to express its gratitude to China for its efforts and its quest to settle the Darfur issue (Ahmad, 2010, p. 5).

He also pledged to continue coordination and cooperation with the United Nations and the Organization of the African Union, and to facilitate the deployment of the joint forces of the United Nations and the African Union in Darfur. The observers believe that China has played an important role in the Darfur issue, as one of the international decision makers. It abstained from voting on Security Council Resolution 1556² and indicated on more than one occasion that it would use its veto to block any UN resolution issued against the Sudanese government, but despite all this, the fact that China is striving to achieve its interests above any other considerations should not be overlooked.

In light of the Chinese positions, the United States is trying to break China's thorn, which is intensifying over time, and therefore, if it is necessary to engage in a war, it has done so, and if it is necessary to ignite internal strife and sectarian strife that it planned, and it has found access to Sudan from a range of options, indirectly expelling Chinese companies. It provoked the people of the south against the people of the north, so it achieved the goal of separating the south from the north through a referendum in 2010 (Rafferty, 2010), as well as the issue that Sudan was harboring bin Laden and terrorist cells, and then reaching President Omar al-Bashir himself, who became a claimant in the International Criminal Court.

5. Energy resources, the main cause of violent internal political conflict:

Less than a year after the division of Sudan, the secession of the south from the north, and the emergence of two new states, the two sides once again entered into a state of war. Energy resources, especially oil, were one of the main causes of the conflict between the two Sudanese countries. After secession, this conflict greatly worsened, and this is because about 75 percent of Sudanese oil is now controlled by South Sudan, which has greatly reduced the North's revenues and weakened its economy. As for the series of other conflicts, which quickly led to violence, they include: In particular, attempts to control lands along the north-south border in the Blue Nile, Abyei, and South Kordofan, and here the economies of both parties are suffering from internal political and tribal conflicts, while they are trying to build the state on parceled-out lands according to the carefully planned interests of major beneficiaries.

The internal conflicts that continue to this day have produced an economic recession that has seriously affected living standards. This is due to the competing parties competing for the region's wealth from the major countries, which put Sudan on the verge of complete bankruptcy (Verhoeven, 2023) , This country was classified among the largest oil producers in Africa, as it was pumping about 500 thousand barrels per year.

The ongoing conflicts in Sudan multiply the suffering of the people, which has become immeasurable, with great economic and social costs. Loss of human lives and human capital and destruction of infrastructure and institutions; political instability; It further hinders investment and

² UN Resolution 1556: Provides for the imposition of sanctions on Sudan represented in the imposition of a ban on the supply and export of weapons and military equipment to the rebel factions and all non-governmental entities.

economic growth - not only during the conflict but also after it and for a long period, making it difficult to rebuild the Sudanese economy and extricate it from the “trap of major power conflict over its resources”, In addition, conflicts have complicated and weakened the state budget, reducing its revenues due to increased military expenditures and public debt.

6. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings presented in this paper show that the negative economic impact of conflict in Sudan is significant and persistent. The results from low growth indicate that average annual growth and the cumulative effect on per capita GDP continue to suffer significantly over time. This effect is due to severe internal conflicts and the impact of the clash of rival major powers to achieve the greatest proportion of interests and control over resources.

There is no doubt that the armed conflicts in Sudan, and their continuation in the future, will further complicate the economic situation at the local and external levels, and the priority of spending in Sudan will not be education, health, or basic economic infrastructure, but the major budget will be directed to armaments, and to the requirements of resilience in this conflict, in addition to the spread of corruption in all sectors.

As part of their strategic game on the African continent in general and in the Sudan region in particular, the major American and Chinese oil companies are seeking to maintain positions of strategic control in the face of intense competition from other companies, and this is through penetrating the existing political authorities or creating and financing rebel movements, with the aim of bringing them to power one day. This ensures the continuation of its achieved economic and geopolitical privileges, an example of which is the Chinese company “CNPC” with the authority and opposition in Sudan and South Sudan.

However, the Chinese presence in Africa in general remains more positive than the other competitors for Sudan’s resources. Its diverse investments have helped build huge infrastructure in various fields, which should serve the countries benefiting from them and help them achieve significant economic results. China's investment policy was not based on imposing projects or drowning countries in debt, unlike other competing countries.

7. CONCLUSION:

After presenting the most important variables of the research topic, and clarifying the most important pivotal points that appear in the context of the geo-economics and geo-political competition between the major powers (the United States as an example) on the one hand, and China as a country that can be classified as one of the most economically and diplomatically pivot countries, therefore, the study concludes with a set of conclusions as follows:

- International oil companies look at the oil project and other promising strategic and vital

resources in Sudan with great eagerness, especially American companies (which work through other foreign companies in handling) and Chinese companies. They have made huge budgets to achieve this and have established facilities and extended pipelines transporting crude, In addition to the huge investments in exploiting the region to achieve geopolitical-military goals.

- Sudan's resources have opened the door wide to investors in various vital fields, as happened for Chinese, Malaysian and Indian companies working in the fields of construction and mining, which prompted them to seek to strengthen the distinguished bilateral relations in a diplomatic manner in various ways, such as China erasing 60 percent of Sudan's debt, or by using political pressure and economic blockade, in addition to the use of military force, as in the case of the United States.
- The oil game and the conflict of interests in Sudan over strategic resources have involved non-traditional forces competing with the major countries, namely China, India, Malaysia and other Asian countries. This must raise the sensitivities of companies affiliated with major powers, such as the withdrawal of the American company Chevron, its closure of oil wells, and its abandonment of the concession to explore in them.
- The emergence of opening the doors to investment in the field of strategic resources in Sudan has weakened the economic blockade imposed on the country by order of the United States, and opened it to major foreign companies (mostly Chinese) and funds that wish to invest, most notably the International Monetary Fund. This broke the American will. Rather, in continuing to implement the theory of dual containment of the Sudanese regime, besieging it and isolating it economically and diplomatically.
- Since Sudan depends on oil export revenues equivalent to 95 %, and since Sudan's conflicts and conflicts continue to end, which will cause a major humanitarian crisis.

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