

“Chinese Atitudes Towards Africa and the Geopolitical Conflict With the United States: Oil Ccse”

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ABSTRACT

This paper investigates Chinese strategy in Africa, its significance and objectives, as well as the stakes arising from them. Especially in the field of oil. In recent years, China has entered as a new powerful player in the conflicts of interests in Africa, due to its enormous economic power in addition to its modern technology, and thus it found its way in Africa through investments in the fields of oil and trade. This Chinese presence in Africa raised many questions about the extent of its impact on the traditional balance of power and the strategic repercussions it may entail in light of the competition with the major Western powers, especially the United States, from the standpoint of each one's strive to secure its interests and investments in the region, and on top of them, ensuring oil supply.

The study used the descriptive analytical method and concluded that the Chinese strategy in Africa is closely linked to achieving economic goals, especially controlling energy and mineral resources, opening the region's markets to Chinese products and expanding investments. In spite of the increasing Chinese economic influence in the region and its competition with the most important international actors represented in the United States and the European Union, these actors still possess great influence in this strategic area.

Key Words: Chinese strategy - United States - African Oil - Conflicts of Interests.

1. INTRODUCTION

The emergence of economic powers such as China, Malaysia, Singapore and Japan led to the existence of a multipolar system in the field of international relations, where each rising power seeks to protect its vital interests as there have been conflicts over energy, especially oil. The policy of these powers was based on competition for control of oil and protection of their supplies of energy resources, especially in Africa, which has become, in recent years, part of the strategic reserve on which these forces depend, to secure their consumption and development needs, since these countries began searching for alternative areas of influence, away from the Middle East cycle of conflicts. Despite the widening circle of competition over oil and its revenues in Africa, US-Chinese competition was the most prominent.

This paper aims to keep pace with the Chinese strategy in Africa, its effects, and the extent of African countries handling with. Objectives of the study are reflected in the fact that the topic deals with highlighting the role of China in Africa and the means it uses to extend its influence, expressing the role of oil in international relations as one of the most important determinants of foreign policy, the importance of African oil in the US strategy and the extent of its focus on this region, and the dimensions of the Chinese oil policy in Africa, its stakes and challenges, knowing the strategy that China follows in preserving its investments in the African region, and the implications of this strategy, and then shedding light on the competition between China and America and trying to know the prospects of this competition.

On this basis, the study seeks to answer the following questions: What are the objectives, motives and basic orientations of the Chinese strategy towards Africa? What are the means and methods used by Chinese leadership in developing and strengthening Chinese presence in Africa? What is the US position on the strategy of the Chinese presence in Africa? What are the prospects, future and effects of China's strategy on the African scene?

The importance of studying this issue lies in the transformation of Sino-African relations into organized institutional relations based on clear and studied directions and strategies. The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation has established institutional relations governed by regular meetings, summits and forums that have allowed - broadly - to discuss the pivotal issues of China with the African parties and form a clear vision for developing a future strategy of mutual interests that bind them together.

African countries considered China a real and strategic alternative to the traditional partners, and an opportunity for maximizing the development opportunities provided by China through its model that enables building relationships based on mutual profit. However, there are great concerns about the possibility of China interfering in the internal affairs of Africa, politically and militarily in the future to protect its economic interests.

It is also not possible to establish true partnership relations between China and African countries without participation of civil society, environmental protection societies, human rights and non-governmental organizations, in order to monitor Chinese economic activities, economically, politically, securely and environmentally.

2. THE CHINESE PRESENCE AND THE ADOPTION OF THE ECONOMIC AND TRADE STRATEGY TOWARDS AFRICA

Sino-African relations emerged in the twentieth century, as China began to support liberation movements of African countries who got to know China in Bandung Conference in Indonesia, where it presented itself as a victim of the Western civilization that support Taiwan as a Western model in the China Sea, and at this stage many African countries stood to recognize China as an independent republic, and China exchanged this recognition with most of them.

China's presence indications in Africa show that it started with following a steadfast strategy, which is to avoid interfering in the African countries internal affairs. China is keeping away from getting involved in internal conflicts, and seeks to present a different picture from the one that African leaders know well about the European economy, which aims to outweigh some of its supporters over their counterparts in African countries, and to integrate the economy, while pursuing an expansionary policy that allows Western countries interfere in the internal affairs and absorb African resources under various international pretexts, related to terrorism, relief, or securing Western interests (Said, 2008:46).

The increasing development of Sino-African relations reflects Chinese foreign policy trends and the escalation of China's influence as a global power as China has turned to a policy of expansion, working on a strategic balance with the United States, and searching for alliances to prove its presence, which found through its state-sponsored companies across Africa, run by institutions aimed at securing oil resources.

Half of Chinese exports to Africa were machinery, equipment, electronics, and high-tech products (White and others: 2006) and China is seeking wider horizons in the economy, oil and politics, strengthening its relations and influence and increasing its interests' growth in Africa, as China has become an importer of oil since 1993 after it was self-sufficient, it consumes about 11 million barrels per day, which made it ranked second since 2003 among oil-consuming and importing countries, after the United States, which consumes about 40% of global oil consumption (Talaat, 2008:59)

China's need to import African oil is steadily increasing, reaching 40% after nearly forty years. Therefore, China is seeking, by investing \$ 900 million in various development projects in Africa, to supplement the shortage in its oil resources (Arafa, 2011:72) by concentrating in the Gulf of Guinea region in Angola, Equatorial Guinea and Congo (Pan, 2006) and the Chinese penetration appeared in many aspects, mostly under the form of humanitarian and development aid, which makes it the first competitor to the United States in the economic fields alongside the European Union (Zawawi, 2009: 97).

The tendency of African countries to cooperate and deal with Asian countries, especially China, is an inevitable result of Western countries' policies, and a natural result of a number of international conferences held to support African countries which did not stand still to this day, such as the first European-African summit in 2000, and the subsequent summits, including the G8 summit in Scotland in 2005, where the gathered leaders pledged at the conclusion of their summit to allocate 50 billion dollars to help Africa, and cancel the debts of 14 African countries, but none of these pledges have been implemented until today.

In contrast, China fulfilled much of its commitment to African countries, cancelled debts worth \$ 1.36 billion from 31 African countries, and provided economic aid to 53 African countries in the way to find economic alternatives on which African countries could depend instead of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, which Western countries and Japan did not do. Rather, these countries provided some loans with great interest. Chinese statistics reveal that Beijing provided Africa in 2004 only for example with financial aid worth 2.7 billion dollars, equivalent to 26% of the total Chinese international aid, despite the fact that a country like Japan provided only 11 million dollars to Africa, which made China ranks among the major donors to the continent(Said,2008:47).

The Chinese policy has always been not to mix politics with economy, China has never pledged its relations with African countries with some degree of democracy achievement or links its grants with special standards of human rights or government system, this matched with African countries convictions about the fact that the West does sets set such conditions in order to impose certain reality, realizing that such conditions are not on the Chinese agenda, which is more interested in the world of business and investment.

3. AREAS OF OIL PRODUCTION IN AFRICA

Africa occupies an important place in the global oil production map, as its production reached, according to the African Energy Commission, 11% of global production, and its reserves of crude oil, according to the estimates of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, amount to 8% of global crude reserves. Oil reserves in Africa are concentrated mainly in West Africa, specifically the Gulf of Guinea as Africa is divided according to oil sources into four regions; North, East and Central, West and Southern Africa (Ali, 2006:86)

North Africa includes two OPEC members, Libya and Algeria, where Libya's oil reserves are estimated at 4 billion barrels, it used to produce 1.6 million barrels per day but it decreased to 830 thousand only due to the political instability. While Algeria's daily production reaches 1.05 million barrels, and its reserves are 12.2 billion barrels. As for Egypt, its daily production is about 640 thousand barrels, and it has oil reserves estimated at 3.5 billion barrels (Auge, 2018:7). There are other poor oil producers, such as Morocco, which produces 300 thousand barrels and has a reserve of 100 million barrels, while Tunisia produces 777 thousand Barrels and reserves amounting to 1.7 billion barrels (Iskandar, 2013, 1). As for the eastern and central region, the most prominent producing countries are Sudan, which has started exporting oil since 1999, Chad, Congo Brazzaville and the Democratic Republic of Congo (Shabana, 2016: 78-79).

East Africa is considered poorly producing, except Sudan and South Sudan, which considered among the important countries in the field of oil production with reserves of about 1.5 billion barrels for Sudan and 3.5 for South Sudan (EIA, 2018:4). Democratic Republic of Congo daily production does not exceed 23 thousand barrels, while reserves are estimated at about half billion barrels. Chad began oil production in 2003 which reached about 730,000 barrels with reservation of 1.5 billion barrels (Auge, 2018:7)

In the West Africa region, the most prominent producers are; Nigeria, Togo, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Ivory Coast, Ghana and Benin. West Africa is considered the most promising region for oil in Africa, after the large discoveries in the Gulf of Guinea region, and now this region accounts for about 70% of African oil production, and its current total production reaches about 9.5 million barrels per day. Nigeria comes at the forefront as it is the eleventh country among the largest oil producers in the world, with production reaching 2109 million barrels per day since 2008, and oil reserves amounting to 37 billion barrels (BP, 2020:14-16)

The United States is the largest importer of Nigerian oil, as it alone imports between 40% and 50% of Nigeria's crude oil production, and Nigeria is ranked fifth as the largest source of crude oil to the United States, while the rest of Nigeria's crude oil production goes to some European and Asian countries, in addition to Brazil and South Africa, and others (Sobhi, 2012:26)

Equatorial Guinea has succeeded in increasing its oil reserves to 1.1 billion barrels, and its production to 180 thousand barrels per day, and American companies there seek to raise it to 470 thousand barrels (BP, 2020:14-16). Gabon increased its oil reserves to 2 billion barrels, to become the third oil producer in Africa, and its daily production reached 200,000 barrels. While Cameroon's oil reserves reached 500 million barrels, and its production is 76 thousand barrels per day. These countries are followed by another group in West Africa with weak production, such as Ivory Coast, which produces 27 thousand barrels per day, while its reserves amount to 500 million barrels, while Ghana's daily production is estimated at 17 thousand barrels, and its reserves reach 2 billion barrels (Auge, 2018: 7).

The most prominent producers in South African region are; Angola, South Africa, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. Angola has recently turned into a conflict point among international oil companies and the US in particular, especially after doubling its oil production to reach 1.64 million barrels per day, ranking second in Africa after Nigeria, with a reservation of 11.6 billion barrels. Angola exports 40% of its production to the United States, becoming America's eighth provider of crude oil in the world (Muhammad, 2010: 216). Reserves are estimated at 25 billion barrels, Zambia produces 120 thousand barrels per day, and Madagascar 90 thousand barrels per day (Abdel-Rahman, 2009: 1)

According to the current spheres of influence, it is noticed that the United States dominates through its oil companies the Gulf of Guinea, Sao Tome and Nigeria and France dominates Gabon and Congo-Brazzaville, while China has a strong presence in Sudan and Angola (Shabana, 2016:79).

4. IMPORTANCE OF AFRICAN OIL

There are several important reasons behind countries' rush to African oil, the most important of which is that there are about 40 types of crude oil in Africa, most of these types are high quality due to the low sulfuric content and light weight which reduces refining process costs (Ali, 2006:89), it also commensurate with the specifications of modern refineries and helps consuming countries to adhere to environmental legislation and taking advantage of the different terms of oil agreements according to which foreign companies obtain a concession for exploration on the condition that they bear the expenses, and share the revenues with the government after deducting the costs, an arrangement commensurate with the African countries' poor capabilities, with which companies achieve tremendous profits (Talaat, 2010:186).

In addition, African oil sector has one of the fastest growth rates in the world, as it has achieved a growth rate of 30% in ten years, compared to 16% in other regions, the Gulf of Guinea alone, for example accounts for more than 70% of the continent's oil production and 75% of its reserves (Abdel-Rahman, 2007:29).

In addition to the proximity of African oil to the consumption market in Europe and America, which reduces transportation costs, especially if we take into account the conditions in the Middle East (Muhammed, 2010:212-214). Also, most of these oil reserves are located at sea, which reduces the possibility of friction between oil companies and the local population, and provides a safer environment for exploration and shipping operations, and keeps them away from any potential political or social unrest (Musaddag: 2008).

5. INTERNAL PETROLEUM CONFLICTS IN AFRICA

Africa is witnessing internal conflicts involving various combinations of local and regional actors related to resources (Klare, 2002:167). Many studies on African oil call it a curse instead of it being an encouragement for economic growth and development (Favennec and Copinschi, 2003:138) and concluded that there is a correlation between the outbreak of internal armed conflicts and the states' possession of oil resources. African experience has guided it in many cases, starting with Sudan in the east, passing through the Democratic Republic of Congo in the centre, and Angola and Mozambique in the south, ending with Nigeria and Sierra Leone in the west (GRESEA, 2000:4).

In the same context, several researchers have made a comprehensive analysis of about 45 major wars in the world in the last four decades, where they found that the greater proportion of exports of raw materials relative to the gross domestic product, the greater the risk of conflict. And this relationship has been witnessed in Africa to varying degrees. For example, in the mid-nineties, Africa was affected by about 16 conflicts out of 35 conflicts worldwide. One of the main feedstocks of these conflicts was raw materials "oil in particular" (Ali, 2007:91). It is ironic that oil boom in Africa coincides with increasing poverty of the masses and greater wealth of the ruling elites and their international partners (Obi, 2005:21) ending with the deterioration of the vast majority of the population's conditions as a result of rapid demographic growth and slow, if not negative, economic growth. Add to all, the effects of unfair income distribution (Biernes, 2003:287). In a country like Sudan, for example, oil remained one of the most important causes of the conflicts that tore it apart like the historical war between the north and the south.

6. THE IMPACT OF OIL ON THE COUNTRIES FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS AFRICA

6.1. The Reality and Determinants of the US Foreign Policy towards Africa's Oil

The American interest in the African continent began - during the 1960s - simultaneously with most African countries gaining independence. However, the US preoccupation with the Cold War and the rivalry with the Soviet Union struck its African role in a kind of decline, which continued until the beginning of the nineties of the last century, where American administration has tended to revitalize the American policy in Africa and strengthen control over African oil (Jassim, 2009, 99).

6.1.1. The Importance of African Oil to America

Studies indicate that African oil is of high quality and possesses different specifications because it does not need much time in the refining process, in addition to its proximity to European export ports, all of this makes it the focus of attraction and interest of major countries, especially the United States and the European Union (Barham, 2010:56)

The interest of the United States in African oil is due to the competition shown by China on the continent, and to the low cost of transporting oil and gas from West Africa across the Atlantic to the American coasts compared to Gulf oil. As for the African-American trade exchanges, 87% of them are made up of oil and its derivatives (Ghani, 2009:53). African reserves are directly connected to the eastern coast of the United States, except for the Sudanese fields, which need, to be in direct contact, to the completion of the Chad and Cameroon pipeline, and then the United States prefers to rely on the western half of the continent to obtain 50% of its oil imports (Kayah, 2011:6)

The United States has used three strategies to secure the energy resources coming from Africa; the first is commercial by supporting and developing trade with African countries. American control of African oil opens new markets for American products in Africa, and the United States is also working to push Gulf of Guinea countries to increase their oil production. For example, American companies invested more than \$ 7.4 billion to raise their production to 4 million barrels in 2010 in Nigeria, which supplies America with half of its oil production and strongly supported Nigeria's control of the Economic Community of West Africa. The United States also imports about 40% of Angola's oil production, and US administration seeks to increase oil production there through the American Chevron Corporation which controls 75% of the oil production. American companies also dominate Gabon, which exports 44% of its oil production to the United States, and over two-thirds of the Equatorial Guinea's production (Shabana, 2016:82).

The second strategy is political represented in the frequent visits of American officials, during which securing oil and controlling its sources was a main item on the dialogue between American and African officials, and Nigeria was one of the most important stations in most of these visits, as it alone is responsible for 47% of the oil that the United States gets from Africa (Hanafi, 2006:89). On the other hand, the United States is working to create a stable political environment in the Gulf of Guinea region through the settlement of conflicts, as happened in Angola in April of 2002 and the Democratic Republic of Congo (Amin, 2003:79).

Despite the allegation of the United States linking its policy in Africa to democracy and human rights. It is noticeable in this regard that it attaches the highest importance to national interest considerations in its African policy, which is reflected in its interest in regimes that are not necessarily democratic in the true sense. Rather, in their pursuit of democracy, they are working to form new elites loyal to the West in general, and the United States in special. As an example, the United States turns a blind eye to Equatorial Guinea's file on human rights violations in exchange for its oil interests (Muhammed, 2010:215-217).

The third strategy is to strengthen the US military presence in Africa through two methods, the United States has worked to intensify its military presence in various regions in Africa through concluding several bilateral agreements with Eritrea, Djibouti and Ethiopia in December 2002, which allow the US military to freely move in these countries to ensure the security of the Red Sea and confront what called terrorist organizations. Among the agreements also signed, the one with Nigeria in 2005, to secure navigation in the Niger Delta region, as well as the agreements signed with Cameroon, Gabon and Equatorial Guinea, which allow US forces to use airports in those countries (Shabana, 2016:81-85).

According to the United States, concept of oil security includes, not only searching for oil sources and securing access to them, but also protecting those resources from existing and potential dangers or threats, maintaining the stability of oil prices, and preventing competing forces from accessing these resources. To do so, securing flow of oil, in some cases, requires providing military aid and signing security cooperation agreements. In this context, Nigeria and Angola were among the largest recipients of US military aid in West Africa (Muhammed, 2010:215). Reports and studies confirm that Nigeria relies on the United States and Britain in arming it to preserve its oil, as military support plays an important role in protecting Nigerian oil capabilities (Hassan, 2005:57).

Securing the flow of oil also required seeking to take some military bases, especially in areas of imminent security threat, including Camplimone base in Djibouti, which is the permanent and main US military base in the Horn of Africa, and the sites of advanced operations in Senegal, Mali, Ghana and Gabon, (Hassan, 2006, 86) US forces also have a site in Uganda that provides an opportunity to monitor southern Sudan, where oil wells are located. (Hamdi, 2000:1)

7. THE IMPORTANCE OF AFRICAN OIL TO CHINA

There are 21 oil-producing countries in Africa; North Africa, which includes Algeria, Libya, Egypt, Tunisia and Morocco. East and Central Africa, which includes Sudan, Chad, and the Congo. Southern Africa: Angola, South Africa, and Zimbabwe. West Africa, which includes Nigeria, Togo, Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Ivory Coast and Mauritania (Terfas, 2017: 31)

China has become the largest consumer of oil in the world since 2004 after the United States, and some studies say that China's consumption of oil will increase by 10% annually, China has started to emerge rapidly, affecting a large part across Africa, with foreign direct investment from China of about 72.235 million dollars from 2014 to 2018, compared with 2019) 30.855 of the US investments (Ernst and Young,

Chinese oil companies play an important role in the fields of production and exploration, as they try to acquire a share of African oil. China National Offshore Oil Company purchased a 45% stake in Nigeria's oil and gas field for 2.27 Billion dollars in early 2008, and it had also bought 35% of the exploration license in the Niger Delta for about 60 billion dollars, number of Chinese companies made similar investments in Angola and other African countries, but the size of Chinese investments is still limited ,compared to their counterparts, as the value of investments of national oil companies represents only 8% of the commercial value of investment of all international oil companies (Ghorab and Saber, 2015:5).

China sent military forces to protect oil and natural gas production wells in African countries such as Sudan, and took advantage of the exit of the United States from Sudan in 1990 to gain oil investments, until more than half of Sudan's oil exports went to China, Chinese Sinopec Company has built a 1,500 km pipeline to transport oil production to Port Sudan on the Red Sea, and from there to oil tankers heading to China (Arafa, 2011:69).

China focusing on African oil is a result of its energy security policies which look for diversity. Diversity includes both strategies and tools through obtaining oil from more than one region, including the Middle East, Russia, Latin America, Central Asia and Africa. It also resorted to a strategy of cooperation with some oil-producing countries in the field of discovering new fields or managing and developing old ones. The reason for China pursues this trend is the fear of supply disruptions, given the instability that characterizes the main areas on which China depends in providing energy supplies, and the fear of American presence in Central Asia which aims to encircle China and prevent it from reaching these areas (Ghorab and Saber, 2015: 3).

The Chinese Petroleum Corporation has been able to purchase 40% of the Greater Nile Oil Company's shares in Sudan, which pumps about 500 thousand barrels per day, and another company has extended a pipeline to the Red Sea to facilitate its transportation to China, Beijing also has obtained the right to explore in four other sites, among them is Kenya. Chinese oil companies participate in 20 African countries, and over the past five years, these companies have spent 10 billion dollars on buying oil fields and local companies. Angola has become the largest source of oil to China, as it exports 522 thousand barrels per day, China also acquired a 40% stake in a major oil field in Nigeria (Said, 2008:50).

Chinese interest in African oil and its growth within the African region is due to the increasing Chinese industry demand of oil, Chinese economy has an exceptional growth at an annual rate of between 8 and 10%, which makes it increasingly dependent on imported oil, especially from Sudan, Chad, Algeria, Angola and Gabon and its petroleum needs are expected to double in 2030.

7.1. Oil Place in Chinese-African Relations:

The new competition for Africa has been linked to the growing role of China in, particularly since the 1990s and its quest for oil and raw materials and for opening new markets (Yahya, 2015:2-3). Beijing's increased activities has made it in competition with the United States, which aspires to reduce its dependence on Middle East oil, which has attracted the attention of many international parties and powers reflected through focus of academics, journalists, political studies and research centres on what has been termed as China's new foreign policy adventure, and through China's increasing pursuit of research and acquisition of energy sources.

Over the past 20 years, Chinese-African relations have witnessed unparalleled developments. Although Chinese presence in Africa is neither new nor the result of the last two decades, the size and nature of these relations have changed - to a great extent - since the beginning of the 1990s. This was represented in China's new policy towards Africa, where the purpose was not only to meet its direct and growing economic needs, but also to keep pace with the rapid rise of China on the international stage (Taher, 2008:11-12)

Despite variation in expectations between Chinese and foreign sources about the amount of Chinese oil production and demand over the next twenty years, what unanimously expect is that China's future oil consumption will rise continuously on the basis of today, and the degree of its dependence on imported oil will increase even more, which explains why oil supply security has become an issue of strategic importance for the course of Chinese economic and social development (Oluli, 2014). Therefore, China views Africa as a central component in the project of sustaining the growth and development of China's economy in the long run. Especially since the proportion of African suppliers to China amounts to 25% of China's oil imports, and oil represents 83% of all Chinese imports from Africa (Hassan, 2010: 33). Third of Angola's oil for example, goes to China according to contracts for exploration and production (Engyang, 2008:341).

In a related context, China enjoys significant investments in Sudan for exploration, development and pipelines, In January 2006, the Chinese CNOOC company signed a contract worth 2.3 billion dollars to invest in a group of Nigerian fields (Said, 2008:47-48), in 2007, China bought more than half of Sudan's oil exports and in 2008 China National Offshore Oil Company announced the purchase of a 45% stake in the Nigerian oil and gas fields for 2.27 billion dollars, a 35% share of the exploration license in the Niger Delta for 60 million dollars (Kabalan, 2006:206).

China was able to obtain these investments by pursuing a policy of filling the vacuums arising from the boycott of Western countries - especially the United States - of some countries that reject American policies. Sudan was one of the countries that China has benefited greatly from the vacuum created by the United States; When the US government imposed sanctions on Sudan and expelled its petroleum companies, headed by "Chevron", followed by Western and Canadian companies; The Sudanese government has given the former concession areas to Chinese and Asian companies (Ezzat, 2014:3)

China was able to obtain some petroleum concessions in other countries such as Nigeria; after it provided some aid to extend railways and work on agricultural development projects, after American and Western companies dominated oil production in Nigeria. The same in Angola, where Western countries refused to provide aid, which then obtained from China. Other countries, for example, Congo, are receiving Chinese financing and soft loans instead of conditional Western financing (Said, 2008:46).

In a different context, the United States considered that China, through its dealings with (rogue) countries - as it calls - seeks to obtain oil, and that China's support for the former Sudanese government for example (such as its abstaining from voting in support of a United Nations resolution presented by the United States condemning genocide in Sudan in September 2004, and promised to prevent any move to impose oil sanctions on it), enabled the latter to continue the policy of (genocide) that is pursuing in the Darfur region, and that China enabled in the same way President Mugabe's regime in Zimbabwe to remain in power and continue its violations of human rights (Engyang, 2008:341-342).

8. SINO-AMERICAN COMPETITION FOR AFRICAN OIL IN LIGHT OF THE NEW INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM

As a global power, the United States draw up strategies for controlling oil resources in all parts of the world for the sake of an active and dynamic investment in the field of industrialization, from which the orientation was to some African countries, But with the great acceleration of the globalization movement, emerging powers have also appeared, which are also seeking to impose their presence in the international arena, perhaps the most prominent of which is China.

8.1. American Hegemony over Africa under the New International System

The United States is looking for more reliance on African oil, which enables it to control the global reserve of oil, and this is what prompted it to besiege European influence on Africa, confront the Chinese move, control Iraq, and being in the Caspian Sea after the Taliban regime was toppled in 2001 (Mari, 2013:422).

Sub-Saharan Africa is a region rich in oil, and it is a focus of attention for Asian and European countries, and especially for America as it represents one-fifth of US oil imports, and some sources expect that America's imports of African oil will increase, and will exceed by a greater percentage its oil imports from the Persian Gulf. The Gulf of Guinea, which contains reserves estimated at 24 billion barrels, is expected to become the first place in oil production far outside the borders.

In 2007, the United States announced the establishment of a new unified military command for Africa, called AFRICOM, with the aim of strengthening cooperation and security with countries, and work to create new opportunities for partnership with those countries to achieve peace and security. The command's headquarters is in Stuttgart, Germany. The real establishment goal of this new command was the US desire to crack down on any future role of any global or regional power in Africa, and thus the United States being completely alone in security reinforcements related to the political and economic aspects and controlling the African oil sources (Barham, 2013:79).

Regarding liberalization of trade in Africa, a law called "African Opportunities and Growth Law" was issued on May 8, 2000, aiming at liberalizing African trade open the door to American investments and encourage African products to enter into American markets, according to American, not African conditions, including respect for human rights, political and economic pluralism, the practice of liberalism, as well as the fight against corruption and poverty and in October 2000, a declaration was signed allowing about 34 sub-Saharan African countries to benefit from the advantages of trade preferences granted to African countries in accordance with this (Rasuli, 2011:76-77).

The control and hegemony that the United States imposes on Africa for the sake of African oil, comes for many considerations, including that the United States is the largest importer and the largest producer of oil in the world, which forms one of the pillars of the American economy and a supreme national interest, and this explains the American presence in the oil-rich regions, statistics indicate that oil imports to the United States from Africa amounted to between 20 to 25%, equivalent to about 800 million barrels annually, and the United States is working on protecting its oil interests, especially in West and Central Africa, which suffers from political instability, and ensuring the continued flow which helps it reduce dependence on Middle Eastern oil. Likewise, the United States relies on diversification regarding oil import (Barham, 2013:80).

The essence of the United States policy in dominating Africa, is that it was focusing on the militarization of the region by protecting its influence there, as well as controlling sources of oil using hard power and preventing other rising powers from investing in the field of energy, besides protecting investments through the counter-terrorism strategy. The United States has accelerated military activities in Africa in a fast manner since 2002 and signed a cooperation agreement for the Cooperative security Location with five African countries, Uganda: in Libreville, Gabon: Accra, Ghana: Dakar, Senegal: Lusaka, and Zambia, and there is also a new joint Ugandan-American intelligence centre, outside Kampala in Uganda (Kayah,2011:78).

The American hegemony over Africa is an economic and military one that seeks to control sources of oil, securing oil revenues regions, and meeting its oil needs for its industrial strategy, using military force and military bases in order to protect its energetic influence under the guise of combating terrorism.

8.2. The Growing Role of China in the African Region:

After the approval of the China policies document towards Africa in 2006, and after the international economic crisis and in 2010. China has come to think that the atmosphere is ripe for the confinement of the American and European economies the beginning of the process of Chinese-African cooperation, which then turns into a partnership based on bilateral agreements. This stage required gradual increasing of Chinese presence in solving political crises and defending Africa in international forums, and in 2015, the Permanent Partnership Conference between China and Africa was held, which included a plan of action for the years 2016-2018 where African leaders agreed with China to raise the strategic and diplomatic relations into a comprehensive strategic cooperation partnership, which would help in expanding Chinese-African cooperation scope (Othman, 2017:324).

African-Chinese relations are based on broader and comprehensive political and economic rules than the narrow concept of Chinese acquisition of resources, especially in light of the overlapping of Chinese internal and external factors that played an effective role in shaping the policy towards Africa, as political and economic ideology contributed to the formation of this policy depending on the requirements imposed by these relations at every stage (Arafa, 2011:68).

China, in its investment policy in Africa, adopted an alternative globalization strategy of soft power, which made it penetrate in Africa and rise in the international arena in the area of economic development. Alternative globalization, is a set of values that establish a different alternative to the existing practices, institutions, policies and resources, which is what China did when it resorted to developing its relations with Africa to become more developed in the region and more present, in the form of power and influence, and present it as a possible alternative to the impact of Western power structure and culture in Africa. China's flexible use of various foreign policy tools of economy and culture has contributed to the consolidation of the Chinese role in Africa in front of the old Western influence (Arafa, 2011:73).

In its investment policy in Africa, China has worked to strengthen both economic and political relations, increase financial aid and loans without conditions in order to gain African leaders' confidence, eliminate poverty, build infrastructure for development and achieve security, for example, the fifth session of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation in 2012, gave great importance to developing political and economic relations between the two sides, stressing mutual political trust and strategic consensus, and supporting the African Union efforts to achieve security and peace, in addition to coordinating and supporting other regional organizations efforts in all fields (Terfas, 2017:58)

8.3. China as a Rival Power to America

Conflict in Africa was mainly related to the American-French competition, then with the rise of China and its seek to control over some areas in Africa, through which China became the strong partner and competitor of the United States and France, due to its enormous economic power that helps it play this role effectively and deservedly, especially when African leaders found in it what meets their authoritarian interests such as not interfering in the internal affairs of African countries and not linking investments to unfair conditions, and not spreading any cultural or intellectual ideologies affecting African character, in addition to its enjoyment of great economic potential and modern technology through which it can contribute to the process of sustainable development (Hassan, 2011:29).

The rise of China as an economic power is threatening the US policy, as China seeks to control areas of primary resources such as oil that it uses in its industrialization strategy. A report from the Security and Economic Review Commission of the United States and China pointed out that the energy strategy pursued by Beijing government is a source of concern to the US Energy Security Agency, due to Beijing's escalating interests in controlling oil and other natural resources production sources, directly from their sources, rather than investing, and making more supplies available in the global market (Hadad, 2014:19). Chinese companies have obtained oil investments in Chad, although the regime has diplomatic relations with Taiwan. However, economic interests supersede the principle of a unified China, which China adheres to and sets it as a governing standard for its international relations and investment policy (Arafa, 2011:69).

American interest in African oil explains the United States great relationship with Nigeria because Nigeria is the largest trading partner of the United States in West Africa in particular, as well as South Africa, which is the second largest trading partner of the United States and a strategic ally to represent American interests in the South Africa region. In the East of Africa, especially in the Horn of Africa, the trend was more securely than economic by protecting American interests and using Ethiopia to close monitor conditions of countries that may be hostile to the United States such as Sudan, and to exploit the Ethiopian role in the Horn of Africa and also use the water paper to pressure or besiege both Egypt and Sudan, and the discovery of oil, gold and natural gas in the Horn of Africa enhances the American interest in that region (Barham, 2010:84).

Many international academic studies indicate that the rise and development of the Chinese economy can outperform the American economy by the year 2040, while the United States has a tremendous economic power that enables it to play the main role regionally in South Asia region. This puts China in new options, opportunities, alliances, and trade and economic agreements in order to control that American power and hegemony, especially after September 11, 2001 events (Hadad, 2014:15).

The issue that is the focus of the world's concern is the emergence of China as a power and the desire of the United States to compete to maintain its position on the international stage as a leader of the global international system. The effort exerted by the two parties is mainly focused on securing their energy resources, which may lead in the coming years or the following decades to a direct confrontation between the two major powers (Abdrahman, 2016:82).

The Chinese economic vision is based mainly on a set of important factors, the foremost of which is ensuring the supply of needed raw materials and energy, without ignoring the overwhelming desire of a major economic pole in the global trading system, such as China, in finding a foothold for it in a continent whose large part of its population acquires the status of a consumer society, in addition to that China keeps Africa in order to achieve strong support and political and economic power in international forums (Kalaa, 2017:225).

Both the United States and China's orientations towards Africa took on the economic character, but with different mechanism, for example the United States has worked to encourage African countries to pursue economic policies that are compatible with the global economic environment, which ultimately leads to achieving better opportunities for US trade and investments in the continent. On the other hand, China has implemented in its strategy several reforms to the departments concerned with African affairs, and to enhance cooperation frameworks and equality with African countries by providing aid in exchange for Chinese investments in Africa, but its main goal is of course extracting natural resources and oil to secure its energy needs in return to be covered in meeting the needs essential for countries that are among oil-producing countries (Barham, 2010:121-122).

9. PROSPECTS AND CHALLENGES OF THE SINO-AMERICAN RIVALRY

The future of US relations is linked to the stability of Asia, which in turn is related to the regional role of China that cannot be controlled except by closer relations with it. Therefore, the Chinese role from the US point of view moves within the framework of integration with the world and the most prominent features of this integration is the role China plays in coordinating to stop the spread of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, and paves the way for the previous role; what happened in the gradual transition from China being one of the major exporting countries of these weapons technology to a country that organizes many treaties to stop their spread. China also stopped its nuclear aid to Iran and Pakistan, or at least maneuverer with it under an elusive international environment (Khatib, 2016:90).

Despite the US-Chinese rivalry, there are common interests which lies within the framework of interactions that are part of the international system structure and the rules agreed upon by the international parties. Mutual international interests reduce the intensity of competition as both parties are convergences in terms of powers somewhat and also have common interests, especially those related to economic, which prevent clash possibilities, For example, the United States realizes the importance of China as the largest debtor to it in the world, and at the same time Chinese are also aware of the danger of the collapse of the dollar on their country's economy and the difficulty of replacing it with another currency, or even the US importance as the most important markets for Chinese exports, which represent two-thirds of China's GDP, Therefore, it can be considered that the stability of US-Chinese relations has a great role in reducing the intensity of competition towards Africa, Also, there are common issues such as fighting terrorism, especially when mentioned the role of China in sending peace-keeping forces and supporting developing countries, within the framework of the United Nations and African regional organizations (Barham, 2010:138-139).

On 4/6/2014, the first African-American summit was launched in Washington, in the presence of about fifty African countries. It was under "Investing in the Next Generation," but the economic file, specifically increasing American investments in Africa, along with the security file, "terrorism" was the title of US policy in Africa in the coming period. This was clearly expressed by US former President Barack Obama in his opening speech to the US-Africa Business Forum, where he referred to Africa as a continent of opportunities that includes a number of the fastest growing economies in the world, the size of the middle class is growing, and attracts direct investments from emerging economies. It has become clear that the United States is seeking, through the introduction of the summit mechanism, to join the other industrial powers that have doubled the volume of their trade and investments in African countries, especially China (Altayyib, 2015:196).

CONCLUSION

China's interest in the natural wealth of Africa is closely being watched by experts and decision-makers in Washington, and that it is likely to be a source of clash in the bilateral relations of the two poles, however, this clash will be limited to the commercial arena.

It seems that the new trends of the United States and China toward Africa in the post-Cold War era have highlighted a real competition between the two countries to control African oil under various pretexts, and that competition is evidenced by their use of all political, military, diplomatic and commercial methods, whatever the American-Chinese goals and interests in Africa, its competition in addition to other great and emerging countries made Africa a scene of conflict again, which negatively affected the stability of its countries, and led to the prolongation and continuity of civil wars.

The US-Chinese competition over oil in Africa results in two important issues. First, just as the US strategies differ from the strategies of China and the strategies of other competing countries, the strategies of these countries also differ from one African country to another, depending on their oil potential and their importance to these countries' economies. The second is that highlighting the US-Chinese competition for oil in Africa is nothing but a reduction and simplification of complex and intertwining interactions within a diverse African political and economic scene where, in the best case, only a temporary picture of a feature of international competition on the continent can be captured.

The financial aid packages and loans have critical considerations in determining to which camps will the exploration rights licenses go in the existing race, noting that the impact of China's strategy regarding Africa's natural resources, which mixes trade and diplomacy, is the most influential. Observers agree that China, which imports about 30 percent of its crude oil needs from Africa, played its cards intelligently against the United States, using sub (no string attached) loans that helped some African countries to move away a little from the dictates of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, and their unfair conditions.

The priorities of the Chinese policy imposed a specific pattern of China's orientations, represented in the prevalence of a stable equation of these trends based on the fact that Chinese economy is growing at an accelerating rate, and has become in an increasing need for energy resources, minerals and raw materials, and China has thus become in urgent need to import oil and raw materials from Africa, especially since Africa includes a number of major oil producers on the international scene, such as Nigeria, Angola, Sudan and Gabon. Also, Africa is the continent with the richest reserves of various minerals in the world. China also needs Africa as a market for its products, based on the fact that Chinese economy is mainly an export-oriented economy, and it needs wide markets for its various products.

Hence, the equation of Sino-African relations was based on China's import of oil and raw materials from Africa, in exchange for exporting manufactured products, with some Chinese investments directed to some African markets, especially in the field of oil and mining activity, as well as China's expansion of the policy of unconditional lending to many African countries to serve the strengthening of economic cooperation relations and trade exchange between the two sides. Chinese government also avoids getting involved in political matters, and focused on infrastructure, health care and development projects, in addition to scholarships. Which is seen as a strategy for soft penetration that enables it to achieve superiority over the United States. It has presented itself to African countries as a developing country that seeks mutual benefit without following bargaining or political conditionality, and slowly and cautiously interfering in African affairs, such as doing some neutral and clear mediation like Darfur issue in 2007 and the border dispute over oil-rich areas between northern and southern Sudan in 2012 and the conflict between Congo and Rwanda, endeavours that have been influential more than intrusive, but are strategically important because they announce the transition of the Chinese role to another stage.

The emergence of the unique Chinese economic model, and its fast-growing pace, also posed a threat to the model presented by the United States as the best, and this threat represented in two levels: a meantime peaceful threat that is represented by China competing with the United States to obtain concessions in more than one area of influence, among them is Africa, and a threat in the long term, as a possibility after China completes its superiority in various factors of national power, especially the technological and military, and from here the question arises about the structure of the international system in the future, and about the opportunities and possibilities of the transition to a new international system.

Nevertheless, the prediction of the future of Chinese trends towards Africa remains dependent on a set of basic variables related to the internal environment of both China and Africa, in addition to the international environment variables, as success and development of the relationship between China and Africa is linked to the political and economic situation of Africa and the extent of its success in achieving sustainable development plans and ensuring a security level that helps the

economic recovery, in addition to ensuring the continuation of Chinese economic growth, especially in light of the decline in oil prices. This parallels with the development of China's international relations, especially with the United States and the European Union on the one hand, and the international competition in the African arena and the support of strategic interests on the other hand.

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مستخلص:

تبحث هذه الورقة الاستراتيجية الصينية في إفريقيا ، وأهميتها وأهدافها ، فضلاً عن المخاطر الناشئة عنها، خاصة في مجال النفط ، إذ دخلت الصين في السنوات الأخيرة كلاعب قوي جديد في صراع المصالح في إفريقيا ، بسبب قوتها الاقتصادية الهائلة بالإضافة إلى تقنياتها الحديثة ، وبالتالي وجدت طريقها في إفريقيا من خلال الاستثمار في مجالات النفط والتجارة. وطرح هذا التمرکز الصيني في إفريقيا العديد من التساؤلات حول مدى تأثيره على التوازن التقليدي للقوي و التداعيات الاستراتيجية التي سترتب عليها في ظل التنافس مع القوي الغربية الكبرى وفي مقدمتها الولايات المتحدة من منطلق سعي كل منهما لتأمين مصالحها واستثماراتها في المنطقة ، وعلي راسها ضمان التزود بالنفط .

استخدمت الدراسة المنهج الوصفي التحليلي ، وخلصت إلى أن الاستراتيجية الصينية في إفريقيا مرتبطة ارتباطاً وثيقاً بتحقيق الأهداف الاقتصادية ، لا سيما التحكم في الطاقة والموارد المعدنية ، وفتح أسواق المنطقة أمام المنتجات الصينية ، وتوسيع الاستثمارات. وعلى الرغم من النفوذ الاقتصادي الصيني المتزايد في المنطقة وتنافسها مع القوي الدولية التقليدية وفي مقدمتها الولايات المتحدة والاتحاد الأوروبي ، إلا أن هذه القوي لا تزال تحظى بنفوذ كبير في هذا المنطقه الاستراتيجية.

الكلمات المفتاحية : الاستراتيجية الصينية ، الولايات المتحدة ، النفط الافريقي ، تضارب المصالح