

Strategic approach of America's foreign policy towards Africa (case: Sudan)

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Abstract

The present paper aims to study the dominant approach in America's external policy towards the African Continent and particularly Sudan as one of the most important African and Islamic countries. Therefore, according to general principles governing America's policy related to Africa and Sudan in the last two decades which will be later discussed, we seek to answer the following questions: first, what are the main elements forming America's foreign policy towards Africa and particularly Sudan and then what are factors contributing to the domination of American strategic and security approach to Africa after the Cold War? Also, exploring America's external policy towards Sudan as a case study of the U.S. policy related to Africa, we will discuss how the American strategic and security policy towards this country became dominant in order to realize this matter in a more objective and better way. To answer the question, investigating contributing factors to these policies, we suggest discovering energy resources in some locations of Africa and America's motive to controlling and accessing these resources in the face of competition with new consumers like China, weakening regional opponents as well as removing terrorist threats from Africa along with America's foreign policy becoming more secure are the main factors and reasons for the domination of the strategic and security approach towards Africa in the last decade. Regarding Sudan, weakening the Sudanese central government as an Islamist state, motive to access the south oil resources by supporting the rebels in south Sudan, and claim for fighting against terrorism and removing terrorism threats from Sudanese groups are the main factors shaping American external policy towards Sudan as their manifests will be addressed while discussing America's orientation towards some Sudanese internal affairs.

Keywords: America, Africa, Sudan, African-related policy of America, strategic approach

Introduction

For some reasons such as elimination of strategic competition with the Soviet as well as risk of communism penetration, the end of the Cold War reduced the importance of regions like Africa in America's foreign policy. This matter was also intensified by the African countries' position like low importance of their security problems and economically insignificant status in international system; as in the 1990s, African countries were taking less and less priority in America's foreign policy. But as it will be later discussed here, despite disappearance of America's strategic concerns towards Africa as opposed to the Soviet after the Cold War, a set of factors at different levels made a serious turn in America's foreign policy towards Africa, so the strategic approach dominated America's policy regarding Africa, again.

Meanwhile, in spite of these changes in America's policy regarding Africa, we can notice that America has put special emphasis in foreign policy on particular African counties like Sudan; As this focus has considerably influenced the Sudanese domestic trends such as the internal crises. Therefore, trying to understand these

changes and address general principles dominating America's policy regarding Africa in the past two decades, we seek to answer questions about factors that caused changes in America's policy towards Africa, because these changes in the U.S. policy towards Africa have affected general framework of America's policy towards Africa. Since Sudan is a very important country in America's foreign policy regarding Africa, and since this African country is a large Islamic- African country rich in energy resources as well as influential in South African crises, while case studying general principles of American foreign policy towards Sudan, we discuss these policies and how and why changes have been made to them in order to better understand dominant approach in America's foreign policy towards this African country.

The U.S. external policy towards African Continent

Given the situation resulted from three levels of international system, African Continent crises, and dominant approach in America based on specific policies in different government of America, it can be generally addressed that one or a combination of the three views, namely, realistic, geo-economistic, and meliorism has been dominant in America's policies towards the African Continent. Realistic view, basically, tailors America's policy towards Africa to strategic approaches and security policies and originates in America's foreign policy structure which has taken top priority after the Cold War and the September 11 attacks. Geo-economistic view focuses on economic interests, business interests of private sectors, and cooperation with international financial institutes, and, finally, Meliorism view refers to as humanitarian policies and programs. To many experts, these two approaches in America's external policy towards Africa were simultaneously paid attention to in Clinton era (Mead, 2001: 34-55). Next, discussing America's policy towards Africa, these views and that how they became dominant will be addressed.

The end of the Cold War as well as competition with the Soviet regime changed the nature of America's policy regarding Africa to a large extent. While the African Continent had been prominent in America's foreign policy due to fear of communism and the Soviet penetration, it got marginalized, again, in America's foreign policy after disappearance of communism and the Soviet regime danger. Regardless of the African Continent being marginalized in America's foreign policy, America's strategies and goals towards Africa changed direction, as the strategic approach towards Africa was replaced with geo-economistic and meliorism approaches. After the Cold War and unlike the past, the American government officials reduced the military role of the U.S. to the least extent and it was clearly stated in the American Strategic Document in 1995 that America had little strategic interests in Africa (Ploch, 2010: 11). At this time, despite emphasis on strong, two sided relations with some African countries which had been a focus during the Cold War, American government officials adopted regional policies and put principles, such as insistence on democracy establishment, prevention of conflicts and establishment of security in the African Continent along with adaptation of multiple approaches, in first place . The most important features of the Clinton administration's foreign policy towards Africa at the beginning of the Cold War are as follows:

- Reinforcing view of marginalized Africa in America's foreign policy
- Noticeable reduction of aids, especially military aids, to African counties due to disappearance of communism penetration
- provided assistance in case of promoting human rights
- Increasing the importance of economic interests in establishing relations with Africa compared to the past
- Increasing concerns of Islamism
- Adopting a multifaceted approach to solving regional crises (Schroeder, 1994: 250-256).

Why Africa strategically matters to America?

In comparison to the 1990s and Clinton era, for some reasons there have been some changes, in the last decades, in America's foreign policy towards Africa at three levels, that is, international system, African Content crises, and the dominant view in the American government; as we can say that has had a strategic place in America's external policy. In the last decade and, particularly, after the September 11 attacks, due to security and economic reasons, America focused again on the Africa Continent, so George Bush, the U.S. president, went there during his two presidential terms. In his 2003 and 2008 trip to Africa, Bush visited 5 African countries each time which shows how important the continent is to America in the new era. Also, Bush appointed some watchmen in some African regional organizations like the African Union, and Development Community for South of Africa, and the post of foreign minister consultant for African diplomatic and energy affairs was anticipated in the American foreign ministry in order to better watch over the African affairs (Ploch, 2010: 7-8). These issues

reflecting the importance of Africa to America again in economic and security aspects indicate that the strategic approach is reconsidered regarding Africa.

Main reasons for changes in America's policy towards Africa can be sought in different incidents and events. Incidents like bomb blast in the U.S. embassies located in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998, and the September 11 attacks which directly threatened the U.S. security, and changes on the energy market such as instability in the Middle East, and America's energy security being threatened, and advent of new competitors in energy consumption like India and China as well as energy resources discoveries in some African countries had America pay especial attention to the African Continent. Due to the above-mentioned changes, in the last decade, America's foreign policy towards Africa has been based on two issues: war against terrorism and security threats and control of energy resources.

Generally speaking, the strategic importance of the African Continent is resulted from both positive and negative aspects of the Continent, that is, both the African Continent oil resources and threats against America from the continent have drawn America's attention more to the region. Since the U.S. has always had a security view in providing its required energy, new oil resources discoveries in some African countries, in the last two decades, have attracted America's special attention. Indeed, America's position towards oil resources is that they serve as a compliment to America's national security, so America's foreign policy has regarded Africa, particularly its oil resources, as security and for this reason Africa has become a strategic area for the U.S. Also, outbreak of threats against America from some African countries in 1998 as well as the presence of groups in some African countries which have tried to make threats against America and its global interests have made African countries, in the last two decades, have a more prominent place in America's foreign policy and America has been made in a way to pay more attention to Africa to remove these threats. Besides these two issues, after Africa's having been marginalized and less important in the U.S. foreign policy in the 1990s, concerns about the penetration of emerging powers like China into African countries in order to exploit their economic and political resources in competitive structure of international system is considered another reason for Africa' becoming strategically important to America in the last decade. As this concern has come up among American officials that if China, as the main opponent of America in economy and partly policy, penetrate into Africa, it can expand its strategic domain and, eventually, use it in the face of competition in order to raise its strength; this concern, as a result, has had America make a strategic shift in its foreign policy and pay more attention to African countries with the purposes of exploiting the African Continent resources, removing threats from there, and controlling China. In fact, in contrast to the past which Africa was a marginalized region, it has, in recent decades, turned into a place for America to thoroughly interfere (Klare, 2001: 219).

The main attentions in America's foreign policy regarding Africa, in the last decade, namely, at the time of Bush as well as in the first term of Obama, have been turned to issues such as war against terrorism, control of oil resources, establishment of standing military bases in Africa, trade relations and use of African markets and resources, and fighting against radical Muslim groups. Next, each is briefly discussed. It should be noted that the above-mentioned have taken priority at the time of Obama, but he has cooperated with other countries in issues like war against terrorism.

War against terrorism

As mentioned above, incidents like bomb explosion in the American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania and the September 11 attacks, in general, have been a catalyst for changes in the American foreign policy, and put more emphasis on security issues. As discussed, the penetration of terrorist and extremist groups in some parts of Africa as well as the potential to launch terrorist acts in some African countries has had changes caused to American external policy towards Africa. Hence, to fight against these terrorist threats and their crucial importance to the U.S., war against terrorism has become a focus in America's foreign policy towards Africa and some policies and actions have been, consistently, taken. For instance, political and military relations between the two sides have become emphasized to the extent to help African countries security and military aspects, rather than developmental ones have been strengthened in order to fight terrorism. We can mention policies in the Bush administration in order to fight terrorism in Africa as another American action in this regard which were international and included bilateral relations. In the line, the U.S. has implemented joint programs with some African countries to fight against weapon smuggling, drug trafficking, and terrorist activities. Trying to pass a resolution in the UN Security Council, the Bush administration attempted to attract international will over fighting terrorism in the horn and, particularly, north of Africa (Frazer, 2009: 103-104).

Controlling oil resources

Oil resources discoveries in some African countries has had America pay attention to this continent and changed American foreign policy from indifference into a military strategy and economic presence. Since the African Continent accounts for over 10% of the world's total oil reserves, it has got America, in the recent decade, pay special attention to the continent. According to the American strategic document in the 2003 year, cooperation development with African oil producing countries has been a top priority. As planned, besides reducing dependency on the Middle East oil by 2015, America has to import 25% of its needed oil from Africa which is not out of reach, because due to the policies taken, America imported 19% of the oil from Africa and the figure reached to 24% in 2008 (Goldwyn, 2009: 4-6). In fact, it seems that the root cause of this attention can be found in unforeseeable environment of the Middle East as one of areas supplying America's energy, advent of consumer countries like China and India, and importance of controlling oil resources to pursue global policies which altogether have resulted in moving towards African oil reserves. In other words, taking control of oil resources in the world's many different locations is the main strategy of America. For this reason, oil has become a focus in America's policy regarding to Africa. America in its policy focuses on improving bilateral relations with African oil-rich countries, as far as non-democratic actions of some of these countries have also been ignored which demonstrates America's discriminatory behavior and its priority access to its interests that is in contrast to the declared policies of America. Considering the statistics and analysis, America's attitude towards Africa has been profoundly changed compared to the early years of the Cold War when America had announced that Africa hasn't much traditionally strategic resources for it. It is also worth noting that the U.S. plans to enhance ties and secure the oil-rich countries in Africa, including implementation of political reforms and strengthening military presence to better control energy resources.

Establishing permanent military bases in Africa

One of America's major programs in relation to Africa, in recent years, for its global strategic expansion is military presence in the continent. America, first, intended to establish military bases in 21 African countries, but faced with the countries' objections, America, in the second term of the Bush presidency in 2007, introduced the idea of establishing American command in Africa. Although, America has yet not been able to set up a permanent headquarter in Africa for Africom or the command center for American forces in Africa and the current headquarter is now located in Stuttgart, Germany, in accordance with Gibouti negotiations it is more likely to transfer to Africa in the near future (White, 2010: 11). It is noteworthy that America has announced that Africom aims to fight terrorism and prevent al-Qaeda from penetrating to Africa as well as help to solve security crises and cooperate in humanitarian programs. But to the opponents of America like some African countries and china, America's goal of this effort is to better control African oil resources, to fight against terrorism, to compete with china, and to expand its influence to more areas. Despite all objections to this policy, the Obama administration, continuing the Bush policy, has, also, defended the plan and rejected all the accusations against America. In 2010, the America's current administration allocated a budget equivalent to \$ 300 million to Africom and announced the forces' readiness for operation in Africa (www.africom.mil/getArticle.asp?art=3175&lang=0).

Trade and economic relation

The existence of rich mines and resources in Africa draw attention of any country. Regardless of the fact that Africa accounts for %90 of cobalt mines, %64 of magnesium, %50 of gold mines, %40 of platinum mines, and %30 of uranium mines in the world, due to the weakness of domestic industries, African large consumer market has provided a good opportunity for other countries' exports. The U.S. government, in recent years, has paid special attention to the continent in order to get more economic benefits out of this situation, as America's trade relations with sub-Sahara African countries reached from \$ 31 milliard in 1997 to \$ 113 milliard in 2010 and to \$ 116 milliard in 2011 which demonstrates America's special attention to expanding special trade relations with the continent (www.census.gov/foreign-trade/balance/c0013.html). As for the two sides' trade relations, it has revolved around Africa Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) through which America has tried to develop special economic trade with sub-Sahara countries that are a member of the Act and in this regard, it has implemented policies such as reducing or lifting customs duties on African goods. The Bush administration, for example, allowed %98 of African exports to America to be exempted from tariffs in order to improve relations with African countries under the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act. America's trade and economic relations with the African Continent, particularly with sub-Sahara countries, have been growing, as in 2010 compared to 2009 theses relations demonstrate % 32 growths, while America's trade with the world has been increased by % 22. It is

noteworthy that oil accounts for % 81 of African export to America which indicates America's policy pursuing American oil and economic interests and another point is this growth mainly includes countries under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (Loucif, 2010).

Fight against Muslim radical groups and political Islam

Due to conflict of interests, there is, in general, somehow of concerns about Islamic movements. Having been planted bombs in two America's embassies in Kenya and Tanzania as well as linked them with extremist Islamic groups, special sensitivity was created in America's foreign policy towards Islamic groups in African countries. Given the population of Muslims in Africa and existence of grounds for terrorist activity of extremist groups against America's interests, this country has taken specific policies against Muslim groups. So, on the pretext of fighting terrorism, preventing Islamic groups from gaining power and weakening Islamists ideology became a priority in America's policy towards Africa which, in turn, have led to and facilitated America's military presence in the area to control oil resources. Military training of some African countries to fight terrorism and opposition groups as well as intervening in African countries' education in order to prevent the spread of Islamic belief and Muslim groups from gaining power is policies developed by America's Foreign Ministry in cooperation with Defense Ministry to guarantee its presence in the continent (Soares and Otayek, 2007: 168-171).

In general, after the September 11 attacks, America looks to Africa have changed and after the domination of strategic approach, the continent is viewed as a reservoir to provide oil and a place to fight terrorism and pursue America's global policies in the line with keeping and expanding America hegemony. In better words, America's goals and interests, in recent years, have become strategic in Africa and changes to administrations haven't much impact on it, but it is the way that may change. The most important goals of America in Africa are to access cheap energy resources and control it in the face of global competition with other major powers as well as to get African countries to accompany with its regional policies (and as a result, to weaken oppositions) and to fight terrorist threats. Most of America's positions and behaviors towards African issues revolve around oil, terrorism, and expansion of sphere of influence.

Being addressed America's policies towards Africa, the goals and principles of the U.S. regarding Africa was stated as focusing on expanding sphere of influence as well as weakening the oppositions, controlling energy resources and fighting terrorism. In this regard and for some reasons that'll be later discussed, Sudan, as one of African most important countries, has gained a prominent place in America's foreign policy. To better understand America's foreign policy towards the African Continent, we investigate and explain America's foreign policy towards Sudan. Attempting to understand America's approach towards Sudan that is derived from its general approach towards Africa, we try to explain the specific approach towards Sudan and clarify strategic aspects of this policy.

America's foreign policy towards Sudan

At first, as we address the U.S. foreign policy towards Sudan, it is noteworthy that according to America's foreign policy general guidelines (i.e. weakening the oppositions and eliminating threats), its main goal and strategy towards Sudan similar to its foreign policy towards Africa is to further weaken the Islamic regime in Sudan as an opposition of America's regional policies and to have the Sudanese oppositions accompany with its policies as well as to access and better control Sudanese energy reserves in the face of competition with other powers. Next, addressing the history of America-Sudan relations and the importance of Sudan in America's foreign policies, we investigate America's foreign policy general guidelines towards this African country and move on to explain America's position in relation to Sudanese domestic issues to better understand the approach.

A historical look at America-Sudan relations and reasons for Sudan's important to America

During the Cold War due to changes to Sudanese governments and ruling governments' view towards east and the soviet, America-Sudan relations were not stable. America and Sudan had begun to have relations soon after the independence of Sudan, with the Arab-Israeli war in 1967; Sudan broke off diplomatic relations with America. But in 1971, when the Sudanese Communist Party attempted to overthrow the current government in a coup, Namiri that suspected the soviet involvement in the coup resumed relations with the U.S. Also, the relations between the two countries grew even better at the time Namiri mediated in the release of 10 Americans in Eritrea in 1967 and America, in that year, decided to resume economic aid to Sudan (www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5424.htm#profile). This trend continued till 1985 when the U.S., due to the penetration of Libyan terrorist groups in Sudan, reduced the number of its embassies in Khartoum. In April, 1985, America-Sudan relations weakened in the wake of America's attacking Libya. In 1986, however, Sudan was the largest

sub-Saharan country receiving military and development aid, but with the arrival of General Omar al-Bashir in a coup by National Islamist Front, the aid was suspended (www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5424.htm#profile).

Soon after the arrival of General Omar al-Bashir and at the request of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak that was America's regional ally and a supporter of General Omar al-Bashir from the beginning, the Bush administration (Bush Sr.), due to strategic reasons like regional penetration, recognized the coup government of Sudan and also asked its western allies to do the same. It was important at that point, for this action had the passage of increasing America's economic aid act to a military regime postponed. However, this situation discontinued and America-Sudanese relations began to grow cold (Sidahmad, 2005: 72).

After having adopted some policies by the revolutionary government of Sudan and America's concerns about its interests being threatened, the relations between two sides grew worse in the 1990s. Some Omar al-Bashir's practices like support of Iraq during the invasion of Kuwait, relations with some anti-American Islamic groups, and finally, the nearness of the ruling government of Sudan to Iran, made America concerned and worried which led to America's adopting policy of coercion against Omar al-Bashir at the time of Clinton. In this regard, the Clinton administration cut off economic aid and investment in Sudan, which had been a major receiver of the U.S. assistance, and took the policy of isolating the Sudanese government (Connell, 2005). Having been adopted these policies, the American government, in 1993, put the Sudanese government on the list of terrorism-advocating countries and in 1996 condemned it for getting involved in the operation against America's embassy in Khartoum. In 1998, following an incident in America's embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, the American government, accusing the Sudanese government, launched missile attack on Sudan. That year, following the conflicts, the last American ambassador, Tim Carney, left Khartoum and since then America hasn't sent an ambassador to Sudan and its embassy is run by charge d'affaires (www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5424.htm#profile). Putting pressure on the Sudanese government, the new government of America has paid special attention to this country, as in October, 2009, Hillary Clinton and the president's special representative in Sudan's affairs announced the U.S. new strategy towards Sudan. The strategy includes the following three principles: 1. Definitive end to conflict and human rights violations and genocide in Darfur, 2. Implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement between north and south, and 3. To ensure that Sudan isn't a safe place for international terrorists (www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5424.htm#profile).

As for the importance and position of Sudan in America's foreign policy, it should be noted that by the end of the Cold War as well as By eliminating the threat of communist influence, America reduced attention to Africa and African countries were, again, on the margins of America's foreign policy; but coinciding with the end of the Cold War, a regime came to power who drew the U.S. attention. From 1989 when a revolutionary and Islamist government has gained power in Sudan, America, for reasons such as anxiety and fear of political Islam in the region, Sudan's support of anti-American nongovernment groups as well as discoveries of oil reserves in Sudan, has shown a considerable attention to Sudan. Besides, Osama bin Laden's presence in Sudan in the mid-90s, threats and actions taken against America in east Africa, and the September 11 attacks, in particular, have had America focus more on recent developments in Sudan. On the other hand, in the document of the National Strategy to Combat Terrorism that was issued by the Senate, Sudan has been considered a terrorists sponsoring state demonstrating the depth of concerns shown by the U.S. to Sudan. Sudan's geopolitical position in the Horn of Africa and at the edge of the Red Sea is among the other reasons that have made America pay more attention to Sudan. Since Sudan is the confluence of two approach of Islam and Christianity as well as a mixture of diverse ethnicities, the motives of the U.S. politicians to interfere to the Sudan's internal affairs have doubled in order to expand sphere of strategic influence and develop its national interests (El-Husseini, <http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2009/969/re73.htm>).

In addition to the above-mentioned factors that have made Sudan the priority in America's foreign policy, the intervention-based strategy of the U.S. in worldwide regional crises to extend its hegemony, particularly, after the September 11 Attacks, has resulted in America's interfering in situation like the civil war between north and south of Sudan as well as influencing in Darfur crisis in west Sudan.

Diplomacy of sanction: result and developments

Imposing extensive economic and diplomatic sanctions on Sudan, in the last two decades, has been an important policy of America in order to put pressure on this country. As discussed earlier, Bin Laden's entering to Sudan and Hassan Altraby's being accused of sponsoring al-Qaeda made America worried about terrorism in Sudan. To American politicians, Sudan had become a safe place for al-Qaeda. In this regard, the Clinton administration, declaring Sudan as a terrorism-sponsoring country, imposed economic sanctions against it. Following this policy, America was reducing its employees in Sudan till 1996 in order to isolate and reduce its

relations with this country. From 1996 to 1999, getting Sudan isolated and imposing extensive economic and diplomatic sanctions against it were the main characteristic of America's policy, and America's ambassador's leaving Khartoum and reducing the number of embassy staff led to America's less presence in Sudan as well as lack of access to information as to terrorists groups. In 1997, for example, President Clinton ordered unilateral severe economic restrictions to be imposed on Sudan for human rights abuses and support for terrorism, but there were little changes in the behavior of the Sudanese government (Maller, 2010: 71). In the 1990 due to this strategy, when the U.S. could have played a more active role in negotiations between the sides involved in the civil war, but it took no action and the situation got worse, because America hadn't had access to information. The only achievement was when America persuaded Sudan to expel Bin Laden.

To experts on America's foreign policy like Tara Maller, America's sanctions against Sudan, in the 1990, not only haven't reached any achievement, but they also haven't resulted in any changes in the behavior of Sudan. The strategy of sanctions against the Sudanese government not only failed to achieve its goals but it also wasn't orchestrated with other tools used by the United States to gain interests. In the 1990, America, imposing unilateral sanctions, was after making changes in the Sudanese regime, but it required more appropriate tools. The lack of sufficient inadequate dialogue between Sudan and the United States essentially undermined the ability of sanctions to modify Sudanese behavior, because the Sudanese government view the sanctions as being unilateral and aimed at overthrowing the regime and has claimed that "despite the many positive achievements" made by its government in response to U.S. demands, sanctions had remained in place. Following the ineffectiveness of unilateral sanctions, America's government is convinced to take multifaceted strategy along with sanctions against Sudan, as in 2000 and in the line with the strategy of combatting terrorism, America set an agenda for establishing relative relations with Sudan which has succeeded in accessing information as to terrorist groups as well as achieving its goals (Maller, 2010: 73-74).

In the line with changes occurred after the September 11 in America-Sudanese relations, the relations along with sanctions were followed by such other actions such as direct negotiations and America's embassy in Sudan, though without ambassador, reopened which showed that America had reconsidered its unilateral policy on sanctions. This increased the role and influence of America in Sudan and this influence can be seen in the negotiations for a comprehensive peace agreement in 2004; as the Sudanese government, also, declared readiness to cooperate more in the fight against terrorism. Regarding diplomacy of sanction, in general, it seems the American government has come to the conclusion that a combination of economic sanctions, diplomatic pressure, and limited and direct relations could be appropriate strategy in establishing relations with Sudan in order to achieve its interest; the policy taken towards the African countries that are not on America's side.

Trade and economic ties

Although Sudan is considered an important African country in economy, markets, and mines and resources, for political reasons as well as sanctions against Sudan from America, in the last two decades, there have been little relations between the two countries. It is noteworthy the America's economic policy towards Africa is focused on the countries that are members of AGO, and in the line with putting pressure on Sudan, America has refused to have trade and economic relations or to invest in Sudan, except to invest in the oil resources in south Sudan that has separated from the central government. As illustrated in the table below, in recent years, this trend has been continuing and although the relations between America and the whole Africa is increasing, there has been a drop in America's trade relations, and particularly exports, with Sudan.

Table 1. America's exports to Sudan

Year	2008	2009	2010
America's exports to Sudan (per million dollar)	143.3	78.4	115.5

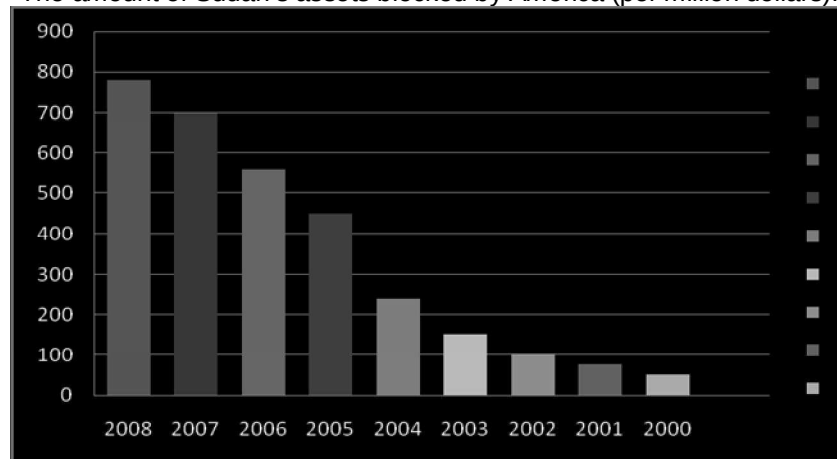
(Source: U.S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of Census, Feb. 11, 2011)

According to the trade statistics, Sudan is the hundred and sixtieth trading partner of America which demonstrates trade relations with Sudan is of little importance to America. This goes the same for Sudan, as America isn't among Sudanese main trade partners. In 2009, America's trade relations with Sudan was a total of about \$ 88 million (www.agoa.gov/build/groups/public/@agoa_main/documents) which of this, only \$ 10 million was Sudan's exports to America and America's exports to Sudan was worth about \$ 78 million which shows a reduction of %45 compared to 2008 (www.ustr.gov/countries-region/africa/east-africa/sudan).

Another important consideration in America-Sudanese economic relations which has been influenced by the two sides' political relations is that not only has America not been reluctant to develop trade relations with

Sudan, but also in the line with implementing sanctions to put pressure on the Sudanese government, America has blocked many bank accounts belonging to some Sudanese corporates as well as accounts and assets of some of Sudanese authorities, and has also banned economic relations with some Sudanese public companies (The OFAC Report to Congress, 2009: 32). The amount of assets belonging to Sudanese citizens and public companies blocked by America in 2000 is shown in the table below. As seen in the table, in 2005 and at the height of the civil conflict in Sudan's Darfur, the amount of assets blocked has increased.

The amount of Sudan's assets blocked by America (per million dollars).



Source: "Effectiveness of U.S. Economic Sanction With Respect To Sudan", The Department Of Treasury, Office Of Foreign Asset Control, Report To Congress, Jan 2009, P.32.

While investigating America-Sudanese relations, we shouldn't lose sight of the fact that Sudanese oil and energy reserves, due to their strategic and security importance, are of importance for America. Sudan's oil is important, because this country produces 500 thousand barrels of oil per day, and owing to threats against oil made from the Middle East, it is critical for America to have control over Sudan's oil for its energy security which is part of America's overall security. Another important element in the control of Sudan's oil is the risk of taking control of such resources by China, as America's main rival in the area, which promotes the win-lose game for America. These two aspects, that is, the importance of Sudan's oil for America's security in the long-run and the probability of the Advent of China in the face of competition with America in case of controlling Sudan's energy reserves, along with other factors and motives have made America take different policies and programs towards Sudan in such issues as economic, political, and security, as some of them have been, so far, mentioned. America's practices and policies to weaken the Sudanese central government and help the rebels of south and west Sudan to separate from the central government are because of taking control of the oil fields in these sections of Sudan; because of the current government of Sudan, there is little potential for America to control Sudanese oil reserves. Having developed long-term strategies regarding energy security, the U.S. has made huge investment to explore and extract oil in south Sudan which has undergone the transition stage for independency from the central government.

Addressing the general principles of America's foreign policy towards Sudan and clarifying the goals of these policies, we discuss America's foreign policy positions and actions towards Sudan's domestic issues like the civil war in south and north Sudan and the separation of south part, Darfur crises, and America's positions towards Sudan's internal issues in international forums to better understand America's foreign policy towards Africa, and particularly Sudan.

America's position towards Sudan's domestic issues

In this section, considering Sudan's internal environment and crises, we will be trying to have a basic understanding of America's foreign policy towards the above mentioned issues in Sudan. So, next, we address America's position towards Sudan's domestic affairs as well as the relations between the two countries. It can be

said that America's general principles and behavioral framework towards Sudan is similar to those towards Africa; in other words, attempt to weaken the Sudanese central government as a country opposing America's regional policies, attempt to access the oil reserves with the support of the rebels in south Sudan, and attempt to combat terrorism have been the foci of America's foreign policy towards Sudan.

America's relations with Sudan in light of fighting against terrorism

In the last two decades and particularly after the September 11 attacks when a security approach became dominant in its foreign policy, the American government, accusing some states that are opposed to its interests, has always been trying to exploit it for putting pressure on such states. Sudan, as one of these states, is still on the list of terrorism-sponsoring states, though there have been changes in its foreign policy.

In the early years of the 1990s and due to the presence of Islamic extremist groups in Sudan and good relations between Sudan and countries such as Libya and Iran as opposition countries to America, the state of America expresses concerns about Sudan's policies, and, finally in 1993, the Clinton administration put Sudan in the list of terrorism-sponsoring countries. According to what America announces, the presence of groups such as al-Qaeda and Hamas in Sudan soil and Sudan's support of such groups were the reasons for the action (Bhattacharji, 2008). Besides these acts during these years, America resorted to sanctions against Sudan, as discussed earlier. In the following of this trend, in 1996 after sanctions against Sudan taken by The U.N. Security Council, the state of America accused two Sudanese diplomats of trying to plant bombs in the U.N. building. America, after the bombings in its embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998, also accused Sudan of collaborating with al-Qaeda in the incidents and, for this reason, launched missile attacks on Sudan (Bhattacharji, 2008). In 1999, the state of Sudan, expelling terrorist group from its soil, showed willingness for cooperation in fighting against terrorism; accordingly, the Security Council led by America was convinced to lift some sanctions imposed against Sudan. In fact, after new proceedings and approaches in relation to terrorism taken by Sudan and regional evolutions, it seems that there have been changes in America's foreign policy towards Sudan. In the past decade, Sudan has taken steps in combatting terrorism which has brought about direct dialogues with America. In addition to dialogue and cooperation with America, Sudan has also ratified some international conventions for the condemnation of terrorism. These proceedings taken by Sudan were so important that America's foreign ministry, in 2007, described Sudan as "a strong ally in fighting against terrorism" (Bhattacharji, 2008). Despite these proceedings, Sudan is still in the list of terrorism-sponsoring states which demonstrates the selectivity of America's regional policies as well as the dichotomy of these policies.

After the September 11 attacks, the Sudanese state condemned it and declared preparation for cooperation in fighting against terrorism. Afterwards America's foreign minister, Colin Powell, called Sudanese Foreign Minister Mustapha Ismail several days after the terrorist attacks which was the first high level contact between U.S. and Sudanese officials in many years; on the phone, Secretary Powell stated that Sudanese officials offered to cooperate with the United States and appeared eager to join the coalition and the state of Sudan declared unrestricted preparation and took steps in this regard (Dagne, 2002: 11-12). Despite all these changes, Sudan is still on the list of terrorism-sponsoring countries, and after having accused Sudan of supporting terrorism, America has considered the following policies against Sudan: ban on selling and exporting weapons to Sudan, export control of goods and tools with dual purposes to Sudan after Congress' making restrictions against terrorism-sponsoring countries, imposing financial restrictions for American public companies and international financial institute for operations in Sudan, ban on financial aid to this country.

America's policy and role in the process of south Sudan's dependency

for reasons such as dividing a Muslim country with a ruling Islamic state that is against America's policies, the potential of taking control of energy reserves in south Sudan in case of separation from the center, Christian's coming to control and establishing a base in newly established state in south Sudan along with cooperating to contribute to Zionist regime's interests in this region, the U.S. has always directly and indirectly supported the position of the rebel groups in south Sudan from the begging of new round of the civil war and also made military and non-military contribution to them. Actually, the importance of south Sudan is so much that America has opened three consulates in this area (<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5424.htm#profile>). In addition to laying groundwork to penetrate into the Sudanese future government, the goal of America is to control vast oil resources in this area that is partly achieved. To pursue this strategy, the U.S., putting pressure on the Sudan's central government, has always supported the position of the rebels in south Sudan during numerous negotiations by 2005. Having Sudan adopt the agreement during the Kenya negotiations is an example of the policy. However, America has exploited resolutions and declarations in international communities like the

Security Council to support the rebels in south Sudan and to put pressure on the Sudanese central government. In this regard, it should also be noted that during the 2004 negotiations which led to comprehensive peace agreement in 2005, the Bush administration played an important role in encouraging the two sides to ratify the agreement; because under this agreement, the possibility of the south secession and independency as a sovereign nation rose, as with executing this agreement, we witnessed the independence of this sector of Sudan in 2011; so, it can be said that America and the rebels in south Sudan achieved their goals under this agreement. It should be also mentioned that America, in the years before the South's and holding referendum, was insisting that the provisions of the agreement should be abided by and that referendum should also be held (www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5424.htm#profile). In general, it can be said that although the civil war between the north and south of Sudan is the root cause of the South's secession from the central government in 2011, America, as an outsider, played an important role in this regard. As discussed, America not only supported the rebels during the negotiations and made contribution to them, but also it, putting unilateral pressure on the Sudanese central government like imposing economic sanctions and blocking financial accounts (Office of Foreign Asset Control, 2009: 32) as well as putting international pressure on Sudan using its position in the Security Council, has been trying to weaken the Sudanese central government in favor of the rebels in south which has, eventually, influenced the Sudanese central government to hold referendum and reach an agreement with the rebels.

America's position and goal regarding Darfur crisis

With the beginning of Darfur crisis in west Sudan in 2003, the American government, for reasons such as not having vital interests in the region as well as the two sides' being Muslims involved in the conflict, was silent about the crisis and killings for about a year and showed no serious reactions. But in 2004, America's foreign policy changed for some reasons. In this year, due to the whisper of energy reserves discoveries in this part of Sudan, the possibility of undermining the Sudanese central government during the negotiations between north and south Sudan, the pressure of human rights group on America for appropriate reactions, and international organizations Acts, the American government expressed more serious reactions to the crisis, and condemning Sudan's acts, took some acts (Black and Williams, 2010: 158). However, the quality of America's reactions to Darfur crisis has been influenced by the following four factors: 1. Willingness to maintain relations with Khartoum regarding fighting terrorism 2. Emphasis on the negotiations and peace between north and south Sudan 3. Reducing tensions with arms embargo policies, and 4. The Iraq war and negative impact of unilateralism on America's foreign policy at global level (Black and Williams, 2010: 164).

America's position and acts regarding Darfur crisis in recent years should be analyzed in line with its regional strategies and general policies towards Sudan. America's main goal concerning Sudan like its policies towards Africa is to further weaken the Islamist central state of Sudan, access energy resources in south and west Sudan as well as fight terrorism with the help of Sudan. In this respect, America has condemned the killing in Darfur and tried to undermine the Sudanese central government through massive and multilateral pressure. Following these policies, America called the killing in Darfur genocide and having tried to internationalize the crisis and reduced the legitimacy of the Sudanese government, has attempted to lay groundwork for its influence in Darfur. In some experts' opinion, America put the south version of Darfur on the agenda (Flounders, <http://www.globalresearch.ca/the-u-s-role-in-darfur-sudan/2592>).

Presence and role playing in Darfur is part of America's major policy to be in African countries with energy reserves. After the crisis, about 12 oil wells were discovered and America has succeeded in taking control of these reserves in Darfur through cooperation with its oil companies (Wear & Whitehouse, 2006). Other goals of America in Darfur are as follows: imposing pressure on the Sudanese central government, continuing the step by step dissection scenario of Sudan as the African largest Muslim country that is against America's policies, considering the south version of Sudan, preventing other countries that are against America from having access to Darfur uranium, and playing a considerable role in Darfur to interfere in this section of Sudan in line with pursuing its regional policies.

America's position on the International Criminal Court in sentencing Omar al-Bashir: the verdict of the International Criminal Court in sentencing Omar al-Bashir, the president of Sudan, rose after the killing and crisis in Darfur. According to the report of the U.N. fact-finding commission to the Security Council in 2005, genocide occurred in the wake of the widespread slaughter in Darfur and the commission, in its report, recommended the Security Council refer the case to the International Criminal Court for referral and sentencing (Report of the International Commission of Inquiry on Darfur to the United Nation Secretary General, Geneva 25 Jan. 2005). This is followed up by the French government's preparing a draft of resolution to refer the case to the Court, but

the United States, due to its overall opposition to the jurisdiction of the International Criminal Court and its international efforts to undermine this international institution, intended to veto the resolution and suggested the case be handled in an independent court. Due to serious objections to America's suggestion, the Security Council, eventually in resolution 1593 on March 21, 2005 with America's abstention referred the case to the Court. It is noteworthy that under international pressure concerning the legitimacy of this international institute as well as the connection of the case to one of its opposition countries, America aborted to veto the resolution. Due to opposition to the Court, America had very little role during the sentencing, but because of the influence of its Western Allies on the Court, America reached its aim and the Court Attorney, eventually, condemned Omar al-Bashir, the president, and some other Sudanese individuals for committing international crimes and issued an arrest warrant for him. After the International Criminal Court condemned Omar al-Bashir, America's foreign ministry, despite its opposition to the jurisdiction of the Court, declared on March, 2009, that criminals should be held accountable for their actions and announced its support for the Sudanese president's arrest (www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5424.htm#profile).

The Obama administration's strategy towards Sudan and its problems

Basic principles and foundations of policies in America's new administration is a continuation of previous administrations' policies and only its tactics and behaviors, under some circumstances, have changed. The roots of this change can be searched in two factors: general framework of the Obama administration's foreign policy which puts more emphasis on multilateralism and direct interaction, and developments in the international system and competition between great powers. Therefore, the Obama administration like America's previous administrations has made the following top priorities in its foreign policy towards Sudan: weakening the Sudanese ruling political system, having access to oil resources and fighting terrorism, and three other issues, that is, north-east conflict, Darfur conflict, and terrorism threats which demonstrate the continuation of America's policy towards Sudan. The Obama administration's policy towards Sudan represents a shift from the policy during the previous administrations. The emphasis of America's current administration on changing situations in Darfur and Sudan, as a whole, is one of these changes in the policy. Another change is that the current administration places more emphasis on direct interaction instead of trying to isolate the Sudanese government (White, 2010: 21-22). However, this shift in America's foreign policy regarding other countries is observable.

It seems that Obama has resorted to both incentives and sanctions strategies towards Sudan. In other words, explicit dialogue with Sudan is the priority of America's current administration and if there is no change, the U.S. will adopt a more serious reaction. In fact, Obama's strategy is based on practical relations with Sudan with the emphasis on Sudan's implementing comprehensive peace agreement regarding the south, fulfilling pledges on Darfur and fighting against terrorism. The reason for adopting this strategy is that unilateral condemnation of Sudan isn't a viable option and the mass killing was over by 2005 (Morrison and Coke, 2009: 1-2).

Conclusion

As addressed, a set of issues like elimination of security threats against America from Africa, attempt to control energy resources, and control of China in order to prevent the spread of its strategic influence in Africa are among factors for Africa to matter to America, as we can see America's strategic approach towards Africa and particularly some African countries in the last decade. The U.S., after the Cold War, has adopted relatively similar goals and priorities for development its foreign policy towards the African Continent and Sudan in particular. Therefore, three principles, namely, weakening the political system that is against America, trying to take control of energy reserves, and fighting terrorism have been the foci of America's foreign policy towards the African Continent and specially Sudan. In this regard, the U.S. has paid focused on putting pressure on Sudan using such tools as political, economic, security as well as international institutions in order to pursue the three abovementioned principles and weaken the Sudanese Islamist government. To access energy resources and according to the fact that the major part of the Sudanese energy resources is located in the south and west of Sudan, the U.S., in the last two decades supporting the rebels in these areas, has set it goal to dissect this sectors from Sudan and to make long-term plans to influence these sectors in order to control their energy and establish potentially dependent countries in the face of competition with other foreign powers which we addressed the examples while explaining America's position on Sudan's south-west crisis. After ineffectiveness of imposing unilateral pressure on Sudan in order to change Sudan's behavior for a better, America, in the last several years and according to the cooperation of Sudan in this respect, put direct dialogue and bilateral cooperation in the top place in its foreign policy in order to pursue the strategy of counterterrorism. Although

having made some change like emphasis on direct dialogue and interaction with Sudan as well as focusing on multilateral approach to Sudan's issue, America has followed the same principles and goals of the previous administrations; therefore, the American current administration like the previous administrations has pursued three goals regarding Sudan and in addition to trying to weaken Sudan and dissect it, has made the followings top priorities in its foreign policy towards Sudan: supporting the independence of south Sudan which came true, Darfur crisis, fighting terrorist threats, and trying to control oil resources in the south of Sudan (which now is independent).

As we addressed these policies, the following factors have led to adoption of the strategic and security approach: energy reserves discoveries in Sudan and other locations of Africa in the 1990 and America's motive to control and access these resources, increase in extreme groups' activity in Africa and somewhat Sudan which has resulted in security threats against America, and Sudan's Islamist government as well as disagreement with America's foreign policy in the climate of the post-September 11 attacks. Therefore, after the elimination of concerns about threats such as the spread of communism influence in Africa during the Cold War, the above mentioned factors made America return to security and strategic approaches regarding Africa and specially Sudan depending on its political situations; while after the early years of the Cold War, Africa had been extremely marginalized in America's foreign policy, the above factors made a change to this situation.

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