Task: The geopolitical position of the African continent

Shaghayegh Hosseini

Introduction

The African continent is a strategic region for superpowers. In terms of the activities of the world powers in this region, the implementation of peace on the part of Africa, armed activities, continuous terrorist activities, and environmental destruction activities, in terms of natural resources, this continent is considered one of the richest continents. But wealth in natural resources is not something that causes growth and development in its normal state. Of course, the dynamics of geopolitical conditions are not limited to geographic and natural conditions, but with the passage of time and media space and the progress and development of recent years and cyber, new economic information and communication technologies and forces of globalization, as well as real social interactions or virtual space, geopolitics has been Going beyond the power chain.

Research Methodology

It has been tried to collect information through reliable data and materials obtained from scientific journals. And it was only collecting information according to the library method. totally is used APA method for referencing data with methodical research.

research question

Here, the research question can be summarized on the same topic, what is the geopolitical position of Africa in the vastness of a continent?

* Geopolitics condition

Before the geopolitical conditions of Africa, it is necessary to explain the importance of this issue.

Geopolitics explains how countries, political groups, terrorists, businesses, etc. with a global geographic feature try to achieve their goals. These features of geography are called geographic entities, which include regions, territories, scales, and networks that shape the world.

* African Continent

4 main aspects and indicators for the geopolitical conditions of Africa can be considered, the armed conflicts between governments that exist, foreign greed and foreign influence, and efforts to integrate and cooperate between African countries in the African continent are emphasized. (Bassou, 2017)

The first thing that comes to mind is the location of the geo-strategy at the country level. Thus, this continent is trying to achieve continental sovereignty. There are two necessary conditions to achieve these: autonomy at the African Union (AU) level concerning African economic communities and integration at the continent's level. (Philani Mthembu, Francis Kornegay Jr, 2020)

One of Africa's most important influencing factors is foreign influence and the fragmentation of these regions. For this continent, the main goal that seems important in geopolitical conditions and the goal is continental integration. Because in the direction of economic, political, and international goals, the first thing that changes the conditions is a more integrated and coherent continent that obtains strategic interests in an international environment.

Chaillot’s article describes two spaces for identifying geopolitics that is active and playing in Africa. Geographic spaces and functional space. In the first case, it pays attention to the geopolitical and geographical features of this continent, which, despite the existence of land, air, and sea routes, connects the north and the south, and this increases the importance of this continent. At the same time, the maritime, urban, and territorial spaces are included in this discussion. In addition to this, the existence of violent and extremist groups in Africa defines the concept of the periphery. In the discussion of functional space, a non-physical discussion is discussed. The reason for addressing this issue is that, despite the geopolitical dynamics and beyond the physical issues, we are getting to the free trade and technology and information space in Africa.

With the expansion of the new space and economic integration, the issue of geopolitical importance does not end only with geography and its conditions. Digital geopolitics or online business is something that can cause a geopolitical change in the African continent. (Faleg, 2022)

* Geopolitical challenges

Geopolitical challenges are said to be the struggle over the control of geographical entities with international and global dimensions and the use of these geographical entities for political interests.

In this section, we try to examine the challenges facing this continent and its relationship with geopolitics and geopolitical changes and developments.

In the discussion of geopolitical challenges, we will first deal with economic challenges. For example, with the challenge of the Dutch disease, countries with many valuable resources are almost unable to control their resources. That is, they often face the "curse of resources" or the "paradox of abundance". Therefore, they do not get healthy wealth from their resources and fall into the cycle of underdevelopment. This is called the Dutch disease. This disease came from the Netherlands in the 1970s. The sudden increase in the value of natural resources led to an increase in the real exchange rate, and their exports of unnatural goods become more expensive and less competitive in the international market. This currency obtained from natural resources can buy internationally exchanged goods, but it only reaches the price of domestically produced goods. Domestic labor and materials are sent to the booming resource sector, and the price of resources in the domestic market increases, which leads to increased costs for producers in other sectors and destroys the previous sectors. (Bassou, 2017)

If this happened in the industrial sector of the Netherlands, in Africa the economic decline was in the agricultural sector. In this model, governments become rentier and since the provision of expenses does not depend on the citizens, they do not have to worry about welfare of the citizens. This model of the national economy causes problems such as severe environmental damage (such as the Niger Delta), forced migration, insecurity, permanent instability of the government, violence, and finally, civil war and government failure.

Another challenge facing this continent is that, with years of continuous efforts towards economic dynamism and expansion, the continent came to a standstill due to the Covid-19 disease. With two decades of efforts since the 21st century and the creation of economic prosperity and demographic prosperity, this continent has reached its stable state, which has led to the sustainable economic growth of most African countries. According to statistics, the African class has tripled. Despite the post-Covid damage to the continent, trade and exchange between African countries are set to increase with the presence of a strong private sector and the opportunities offered by the AFCFTA. This issue causes the production and exchange of more goods and the transfer of knowledge and the creation of more value, which makes Africa one of the most influential continents in the world. (Faleg, 2022) (Lin)

* The importance of African geopolitical condition

Another geopolitical discussion in this section is the discussion of the importance of this continent in international opinion.

One of the importance of this continent for foreign powers is energy.

In Africa, almost 60% of conflicts within its continent are related to the issue of energy and natural resources with the names "curse of oil" and "blood diamonds". This is one of the most pressing conflicts documented in Africa. Despite the old view of Europe and foreign powers of inter-state conflict and genocide and such problems to promote the African continent, this view changed after benefiting from the energy of this continent. Thus, Africa becomes a profitable source for increasing investment in oil and gas and natural resources of Europeans, China, Russia, India, and the United States in the world market. The reasons for the change in opinion are first the increase in energy demand from China and India (Asia) and the Middle East, and second the uncertainty of supply and the continuation of conflicts in the Middle East, which turns Africa into a profitable economic and geopolitical region. Other reasons include cheaper transportation and lower sulfur content of these sources in Africa, which increases the quality of oil and it is light.

Another reason for focusing on the African continent is the issue of terrorism in Africa. The continent of Africa is a continent without a government and mostly failed, which tries to integrate at the continental level. This issue causes violence. Now, this issue becomes very important especially for the military superpower, because by monitoring and dealing with terrorism and Africa's security, the military expenditure of the United States and the source of terrorism against the United States will be reduced. At the same time, this issue and regional instability will affect the global oil price.

Another reason for the US's focus on Africa and increasing the geopolitical importance of this continent is financial aid loans and China's activities in Africa. In the first place and the short term, financial aid and financial activities are helpful for structural adjustment to reduce poverty, human rights, and democracy, and improve sustainable development in poor African countries, but with the continuation of this process, it becomes soft-dependent on China, which It is caused by China's loans and infrastructure activities. (Lin)

The result

As a result, it should be pointed out that it is not only the natural and economic interests that increase the importance of this continent, but the strategic position of this continent and its political dynamics and the solidarity and integrity of the continent that they are trying to address increase the importance of this region. Regarding the geopolitical position of this continent, it is defined according to the capacity of this continent and the reliance of powers on its natural resources and economic interests. Despite the regional conflicts in this continent and the insecurity of this region, it still has geopolitical importance, but it is not limited to its geographical capacities, but it operates beyond geography because it has a much higher capacity and ability. One of the most important discussions of issues of geopolitical importance is the discussion of integration at the level of a continent, which is considered the rarest example of geopolitical importance.

# References

Bassou, B. A. (2017). African natural resources and geopolitical realities. *policy brief*.

Faleg, G. (2022). African Spaces,The new geopolitical frontline. *European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS)*.

Lin, C. Y. (n.d.). The Rise of Africa in the International Geopolitical Landscape a U.S. Energy Perspective.

Philani Mthembu, Francis Kornegay Jr. (2020). Africa and the World: Navigating Shifting Geopolitics. *IGD*.