

The Geopolitical Strategic Importance of Sudan

Sudan is a country of immense geopolitical significance, shaped by its vast landmass, abundant natural resources, and a location that places it at the heart of some of the most vital trade and political routes in the world. Despite facing decades of political instability, Sudan remains a focal point of interest for regional and global powers due to its strategic positioning and untapped potential. Its importance is not only contemporary but also historical, especially during the era when it was part of the greater Islamic Khilafah (Caliphate), where it played a pivotal role in connecting and strengthening the wider Muslim world. And its importance will remain in the future, when the Khilafah returns.

Sudan's geographical position is one of its greatest strategic assets. Located in northeast Africa, Sudan borders seven countries; Egypt, Libya, Chad, the Central African Republic, South Sudan, Ethiopia, and Eritrea. This makes it a central link between North Africa, the Sahel region, and Sub-Saharan Africa. It also boasts a significant coastline along the Red Sea, directly across from the Arabian Peninsula and near the Bab al-Mandeb Strait, one of the most critical maritime chokepoints in the world.

The Bab al-Mandeb Strait connects the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden and the Arabian Sea, making it a vital corridor for international trade and oil shipments. Nearly 10% of the world's seaborne oil passes through this narrow passage. Sudan's proximity to this waterway makes it a strategically desirable location for global powers seeking influence over maritime routes and naval logistics. Control or alliance with Sudan can offer significant leverage in managing Red Sea security and trade flow between Asia, Europe, and Africa.

Moreover, Sudan is rich in natural resources that significantly elevate its geopolitical value. It is one of the largest producers of gold in Africa, and its mineral wealth includes chromium, manganese, zinc, iron ore, and uranium. Despite the secession of South Sudan in 2011, which took with it a large portion of oil fields, Sudan still retains considerable oil and gas reserves, especially in the east and along the border regions.

Additionally, Sudan possesses vast areas of arable land and is home to the Blue and White Nile, granting it immense potential for agriculture and food production. It has long been seen as a possible "breadbasket" for Africa and the Arab world. With proper infrastructure and governance, Sudan could play a key role in ensuring food security in the region.

Beyond its geography and resources, Sudan's broader strategic value lies in its influence within African and Arab political spheres. It serves as a cultural and economic bridge between Arab North Africa and the Muslim-majority regions of Sub-Saharan Africa. This position makes it a critical player in regional diplomacy and in broader projects aimed at economic integration or political unity.

Global powers such as the United States, China, Russia, and regional actors like the Gulf States and Türkiye have all shown interest in Sudan, whether through military cooperation, economic investments, or political alliances. The Red Sea corridor is becoming increasingly militarized, and Sudan's territory is often at the center of this competition. The country's ports, airspace, and territory offer strategic opportunities for influence, particularly in light of shifting global alliances and the decline of Western dominance in certain regions.

Sudan's strategic and resource-based importance was evident even when it was part of the broader Islamic Khilafah. Under the Ottoman Caliphate, Sudan served as a key frontier of the Islamic world. Its Red Sea ports were critical for trade and religious travel between Africa and the Arabian Peninsula, facilitating pilgrimage routes and economic exchanges across the Ummah.

Sudan's fertile lands and mineral wealth supported both local development and regional trade, and its integration into the Caliphate allowed it to benefit from and contribute to the broader Islamic economic and legal system. During this period, Islamic governance unified diverse ethnic and tribal groups under the banner of Islam, applying Sharia law and promoting justice and stability. Sudan's position as a southern outpost of the Khilafah enabled it to serve as a launch point for Islamic outreach into Sub-Saharan Africa, strengthening the ideological and spiritual unity of the Muslim world.

All of Sudan's immense strategic and resource-based potential can only be harnessed correctly and justly under an Islamic State—the Khilafah. It is only through the implementation of the Islamic system, based on the Qur'an and Sunnah, that Sudan's wealth, geography, and influence can be managed in a way that serves the interests of its people and the wider Ummah. The repeated political instability, economic collapse, foreign interference, and internal division that Sudan has suffered are direct consequences of the absence of the Khilafah. Without a unified Islamic leadership that governs by divine law, the country remains vulnerable to exploitation by foreign powers and manipulation by secular, tribal, or ideological factions. The Khilafah would ensure the protection of Sudan's sovereignty, unify its people under one creed, and direct its strategic position and natural wealth toward uplifting the entire Muslim world, free from colonial influence and internal chaos.

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