SUDANESE FOREIGN POLICY CHALLENGES IN THE TRANSITIONAL PERIOD AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS ON NATIONAL SECURITY

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Abstract

The main argument of this paper is that stability in Sudan cannot be achieved within the transitional period without a restructuring of its international relations in a manner that serves the interests of the country. Herein, the challenges in the Sudanese foreign policy were discussed after the recent changes that resulted in a popular revolution that overthrew the regime of Al-Bashir. It also highlighted the impacts of this change on Sudan's national security at both the regional and international level. It was argued that the country's foreign policy can play a key role within the transitional period in structuring, thus leading a modern Sudanese State that can actively be involved on a local and global scale. The analysis of the current situation confirmed the critical role that the Sudanese foreign policy and diplomacy should play and the urgent need to restructure their functions, approaches, and strategy so that international support and national interests can be realized, thus allowing the transitional period to end successfully and productively. Therefore, the main idea of this study was to analyze the challenges of Sudan's foreign policy within the transitional period and explore the possibility of its upgrading and reformation to enable a positive and effective contribution to the development and wellbeing of the country.

Keywords*: Sudan, Foreign Policy, Sudanese Foreign Policy, Sudanese National Security, Transitional Period*

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GEÇİŞ DÖNEMİNDE SUDAN'IN DIŞ POLİTİKADA YAŞADIĞI ZORLUKLAR VE BUNLARIN ULUSAL GÜVENLİK ÜZERİNE ETKİLERİ

Öz

Bu çalışmanın temel argümanı, geçiş döneminde Sudan'ın uluslararası ilişkilerinin yeniden yapılandırılmadan bu ülkede istikrarın sağlanamayacağı konusudur. Çalışmada yazar, Beşir hükümetini deviren halk devriminin yarattığı son gelişmelerin ardından Sudan dış politikasında meydana gelen güçlükleri incelemektedir. Bu güçlüklerin ülkenin ulusal güvenliğine yarattığı etkiler bölgesel ve uluslararası boyutlarıyla ele alınmaktadır. Dış politikanın modern Sudan devletinin inşasını içeren geçiş sürecinde ve devlet liderliğinin bölgesel ve uluslararası topluluğa aktif biçimde katılımında oynadığı role vurgu yapılmaktadır. Bu husus, geçiş sürecinde Sudan diplomasisi ve dış politikasının önemli bir rol oynamasına neden olmaktadır. Bu noktada ülkenin geçiş dönemini barış içinde tamamlama ihtiyacına yönelik olarak ulusal çıkarların sağlanması için uluslararası desteği temin edecek şekilde bu boyutların ele alınmasının önemine değinilmektedir. Bu bağlamda, bu makalenin odaklandığı temel noktalar geçiş döneminde dış politikanın rolü ve önemi, bu alanda karşılaşılan güçlükler ve dış politikanın olumlu katkılarının artırılması için başvurulabilecek yöntemlerdir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Sudan, Dış Politika, Sudan Dış Politikası, Sudan Ulusal Güvenliği, Geçiş Dönemi*

Importance of the Study

The Sudanese State has been going through a particularly important and decisive phase in its recent political history. This can be considered as a significant opportunity for which all of the efforts and teamwork of the State segments and institutions should be unified and devoted towards national interest. Such tireless work should be directed towards securing the position of the country and realizing the aspirations of the Sudanese people for the long-awaited building of a developed, emerging, and strong Sudanese State within the regional environment and becoming an active power in global politics.

It is well known that diplomacy is not only the official instrument of implementing foreign policy but also represents the element that can effectively contribute to the configuration of the State's foreign policy. Therefore, having a clear vision and strategy to manage foreign relations is the most important success

factor at both the internal and external level. After the emergence of globalization and its mechanisms, and the subsequent global system, the world has become a worldwide political and economic system whose components interactively affect one another and are affected by each other. Moreover, its political, economic, cultural, and social aspects are increasingly becoming closer and more mutually interdependent. Hence, in the context of an almost unified global policy, economy, and security unity, it is difficult for any State to achieve internal success without building external relations with its regional and international environs.

In this perspective, the present research subject is significant, as it deals with the most significant issues, considering the comprehensive peace achievement and the collapsed economy reality, which defies the Sudanese State within the transitional period. This country is going through an unprecedented phase, which is expected to have a considerable impact on shaping the future of the country in all sectors: security, economic, social, and internally and externally political. Correspondingly, Sudan's strategic position within the region should be considered.

Therefore, due to the importance of diplomacy in attracting the international support required to achieve national wellbeing, Sudan's foreign policy should be fashioned in such a way that it plays this pivotal role within the transitional period. This confirms the importance of making past experiences and practices useful in many significant issues of regional and international nature. Consequently, the priorities of Sudan's foreign policy within the transition period should be accurately and scientifically determined, and interim phased strategic programs and plans should be developed as well.

Based on the above, this research is one of the studies that dealt with Sudan's foreign policy during a pivotal stage in the history of the Republic, which is a topic of utmost importance.

Introduction

The Republic of Sudan is one of Africa's most resource-rich and potentially powerful countries, which can possibly be placed at the forefront, both at the regional and international level. However, due to a deficiency in strategic planning and national vision, since its independence in 1956, Sudan has remained poor and underdeveloped in all sectors. This has occasioned many problems, which have hindered the development and renaissance in all of its vast areas. The performance level of State institutions has declined, and the Sudanese State is

risking total collapse, especially in the economic sector, which has experienced a continuous weakening in recent years.

Nevertheless, Sudan is still expected to be a significant regional power and a figure that cannot be surpassed regarding international policy in Africa. On the other hand, it is necessary to admit courageously the problems that defy the Sudanese society and to carry out essential and inevitable reforms that must be made. The Sudanese State's foreign policy is essential and is influenced by regional and international changes; hence, reforming the visions and management files of the Sudanese State's foreign relations is a priority. It is impossible to reconsider how the obstacles should be removed to allow the country to play a positive role in constructing the foundation necessary to build a new Sudan and be an effective participant in the international system.

There is no doubt that Sudanese diplomacy in the transitional period has been experiencing a very complex challenge with regards to how to manage the foreign relations issue within the framework of national interest and the ability to restore the vision of dealing with external relations in order to play an appropriate role that is compatible with the aspirations of the Sudanese people. This also includes the possibility of handling regional pivots in foreign policy, pursuing international relations in a more independent policy, and changing the unbalanced policies previously undertaken, which have significantly weakened the country. In addition, it is crucial to adopt an objective policy, maintain distance from regional polarizations, have a keen respect for others, and maintain good neighbourliness.

Hence, the main idea of this paper was to focus on the Sudanese State's foreign policy, which has recently been experiencing a critical stage that might represent a turning point. In the same context, the study will discuss issues and files which should be set as priorities for the Sudanese foreign policy during the transitional period. The focus will also be on the challenges that the foreign policy will face within the transitional period, which should be surpassed to build a balanced foreign policy that can actively contribute to the planning process, to lead the country to safety shore. Sudan indeed witnessed a significant change on April 11th, 2019, when a popular revolt emerged, which ousted the Al-Inqaz (salvation) regime that had been ruling Sudan, as the result of a coup d'état that occurred on June 30, 1989, after turning against the democratic government of Sadiq Mahdi.

The study will also underline the importance of the State's external relations and its role in building internal stability and introducing the constitutional act, which is the governing pact during the transitional period and the objectives entrusted to the foreign policy during this period. It will also discuss some issues of strategic importance for the Sudanese State that are associated with foreign relations. In conclusion, the study will underline the findings and the recommendations that are believed to play a positive role in shaping the vision of the Sudanese State's vision of foreign relations during the transitional period.

There is no doubt that any instability in the State's foreign policy will negatively affect its internal affairs and vice versa. Thus, the study will discuss the link between the State's internal stability and security and its external relations in the following section. In other words, the association of the internal and external security and stability of the State.

1. National Security from an Internal and External Perspective

Recently, the concept of security has been radically transformed and redesigned in line with the changes imposed by globalization in all other aspects of life, resulting in modern concepts, terminologies, and definitions of security. The concept of security that has emerged due to globalization is called contemporary security. The concept of contemporary security differs from traditional security since it comprises concepts and dimensions that have not been covered by traditional security, such as environmental, economic, political, cultural, technological security, and the like. In the traditional concept of security, the military aspect is dominant. However, due to the evolution that has altered the concept of security and the emergence of the term of contemporary security, there have been radical changes in the definition of security, its framework, and the elements that threaten its assurance, as well as the means of realizing it (Al-Jahani et al., 2004: 28).

With the concept of contemporary security resulting from globalization, the State's internal and external security cannot be dissociated. The external and internal security of the State are dealt with within the same framework and referred to as 'intermestic security'. This term combines two parts; the first is 'international', which refers to external security, and the second is 'domestic', referring to the State's internal security (Tirab, 2016:176).

From this point of view, and based on this close connection between the concept of internal and external security, it is not possible to deal with the State's

external relations without relying on its internal security, counting its domestic developments in various fields, particularly those forming the pillars of its foreign relations. In a contemporary security approach, the country's internal and external security cannot be viewed independently. For instance, it cannot be said that the different cultures and ethnicities contained in the social structure of the State, and the problems and conflicts, which may arise accordingly, represent a threat to internal security alone, with no impact on external security. The threat will compromise internal security as well as the State's external security and will have negative repercussions on the country's external relations, on the formation of regional and international agreements and partnerships, and on political blocs and State security agreements, as well as on the State's positioning within the international and regional system.

In this context, we can underline, for instance, the problem of Sudan in the Darfur region and its global impact on the external relations of the country. There was, in fact, a charge of mass extermination against the Head of State, and the International Court of Justice subsequently issued an arrest warrant. It can be said that the crimes of ethnic cleansing against Rakhine State Muslims, for instance, and their condemnation by the whole world, reinforce the hypothesis that the dimensions of the internal and external security of any States are not independent of each other. The problems in any country will thus be the concern of the whole world. This would indeed affect, positively or negatively, the reputation and position of the concerned State in the international scene.

The above-mentioned arguments confirm, undoubtedly, that the Sudanese State should urgently, within the transitional period, solve these critical problems and settle serious issues, which have continued to hinder it from achieving internal stability and peace since its independence to the present day. Therefore, the ultimate objective is to enhance efforts in building external relations based on solid foundations, considering the national interest that appreciates the values of mutual interest, following a comprehensive national strategy. From this perspective, this study will highlight the role of Sudan's foreign policy and reflect on the positive aspects of similar experiences of other countries worldwide. Indeed, one of the strategic management methods today is to study the experiences of other nations and use them as benchmarks to develop national systems (Tirab, 2016: 1).

2. The Role and Importance of the State's External Relations

The external policy of a country plays a pivotal role in making internal efforts successful. Such efforts are usually deployed by any nation to build emerging or advanced states (Acemoğlu and Robinson, 2013: 332). Therefore, being keen to realize internal change, international changes and the State's external relations should be considered so that the cycle of stability and renaissance can be closed. Considering the adjustments of the significance of the foreign policy concept, any State cannot realize national gains without building solid relations with the surrounding countries that aim at accomplishing mutual national interests. This requires adopting a clear, objective, and flexible policy, based on transparency in handling and coordination, to deal with local, regional and international challenges*.*

Therefore, to resolve the crises that have defied the State of Sudan in the past decades, especially its failure in building successful foreign relations that support national interests, the country should adopt a balanced foreign policy that enhances the State's higher interests, emphasizes peace support, attains development, promotes international and regional cooperation, and the country's effective contribution to regional and international issues. Since the country's independence, all successive national governments have largely failed to realize this due to internal political conflicts. This point will be dealt with in the following section.

3. Sudan's Past, Present, and Future Political Reality

Sudan's land has politically and culturally been the cradle of many cultures, civilizations, and political systems throughout history. Some references have indicated that the documented history of the State of Sudan began 50 centuries ago (Omar, 2005: 7). This statement is based on Nubian inscriptions in some parts of Sudan, skeletons in ancient cemeteries, some handicrafts made of iron and copper minerals, and other historical monuments (Shantov, 1998: 68). Before the entry of Islam into Sudan, and after, Sudan was inhabited by several civilizations and kingdoms, including the Kush and Meroe civilizations, the State of the Fong, the Nubian civilization, and the Blue Sultanate. Some periods within Sudan's history were characterized by interactions with some regions of the Arabian Peninsula for commercial purposes. Because of Sudan's attractive bounties to traders at the time, the merchants of the Arabian Peninsula and ancient Egypt used to refer to Sudan as "Tanhasu", which means "land of souls" or "land of God", to

show their appreciation of its well-being, land fertility, and enormous natural potential (Mohamed Fouad, 1963: 408).

One of the significant historical periods in Sudan was the Turkish-Egyptian rule between 1821 and 1885, a period whose influence on the aspects of Sudanese life remains evident in its culture, politics, military, and the like. (Al-Qaddal, 1992: 34). It is well known that Sudan's richness in natural resources and human power was the main reason behind the idea of Muhammad Ali Pasha, who was the ruler of Egypt at the time, to expand his reign towards Sudan. Muhammad Ali Pasha wanted to have a strong army to neutralize European ambitions, aiming at taking over his land. He was in total disagreement with the centre of the Ottoman caliphate in Istanbul and started cultivating ambitions, aspiring to secede from the Ottoman Empire, and form his own State (Tousin, 1936: 45).

Mahdiyya, which ruled Sudan between 1881 and 1899, and was led by Imam Muhammad Ahmad Al-Mahdi, represented an important period in Sudan's national history. Seen as a national revolution, it was a reaction against excessive negligence of the English ruler and the subsequent worsening of the situation in Sudan. That was the spark for the revolution of 'Muhammad Ahmad Al-Mahdi', a defender of an Islamic reformist thought, against the English Egyptian forces, within the Sudanese territory at that time (Al-Qaddal, 1992: 61). Some contemporary historians (Hassan, 2004: 76) have defined the Mahdiyya revolution as one of the most important revolutions in Sudan's history, and the first torch led the country towards independence. Al-Qaddal (1992: 67) assumed that Sudan was at that time experiencing a severe lack of living and total misery. The structure of society, which suffered under British government-imposed taxes, was majorly composed of groups of scattered tribes, who dominantly embarrassed the Sufism at that time.

The English indifference and the underestimation of the impact of the Mahdist revolution at the beginning enabled it to attain victories, such as entering Khartoum in January 1885 and ruling Sudan until 1898, which was the year that marked the end of the Mahdist revolution and the beginning of the English rule of Sudan (Al-Tunisi, 2007: 83). Among the major causes of the decline in the Mahdiyya revolution was the disagreement between Caliph Abdullah Al-Taishi and some prominent men in Mahdiyya, the disputes between the tribes over the leadership of Mahdiyya, the stoppage of trade activities, and the Mahdiyya State failure, at the time, to be able to participate along with the outside world

effectively. Participation that might have managed to improve the State representation, preserve national interest, and gain external support. This resulted in dissatisfaction with the Islamic world and the Muslims caliph and other reasons that depreciated the Mahdiyya movement and its teachings (Malik, 1987: 282). After the Mahdist revolution, Sudan witnessed a period of Anglo-Egyptian occupation, which lasted until the independence of Sudan on January 1st, 1956.

Despite the heinousness of colonization and occupation, the period of English rule set up a basis that has remained steady until today and can be seen in all aspects of Sudanese society. During this period, many of the country's infrastructure systems were launched, such as the railways and other projects. There were also significant changes to the country's administrative system and its formal and societal mechanisms, such as the Native Administration, which played a crucial role in containing tribal conflicts in a highly ethically diversified community. However, due to deteriorating conditions in the country, because of the absolute domination of the English and Egyptians over the country, and in line with international developments during that period, the struggling national movements, calling for the country's independence, began to appear and become active (Al-Azhari, undated: 5). These activities resulted in the country's independence on January 1st, 1956, and the first national government in the country came into power, led by Ismail Al-Azhari. However, after independence, the failure of the Sudanese political parties to present a consensual vision for the government system and draft a constitution for the country created an atmosphere of disagreement that lasted for several years after independence. Likewise, its failure to provide a national vision to resolve the problem of South Sudan resulted in total deterioration of economic and security conditions. This situation nourished growing public discontent, which paved the way for army intervention, led by Lieutenant General Abboud, and power seizure on November 17th, 1958, taking advantage of the citizens affected by the worsening situation in the country (Mohammad, 2006: 11). This meant that the civilian government, headed by Ismail Al-Azhari, lasted for only two years, 11 months, and 17 days before relinquishing the power. Then, a military rule, led by Lieutenant General Abboud, ruled the country for six years and 11 months, from November 17th, 1958, to October 1964. In the first years of the rule, Lieutenant General Abboud's government adopted development reforms in various country sectors, such as the agriculture and transportation sectors, and put forward actual projects to develop the Sudanese countryside (Mesbah, 2016). It also took practical steps in the

country's foreign policy and worked to resolve the fateful issues of the country, such as the issue of the Nile water, where it reached an agreement with Egypt, according to which the country's share of the Nile water was increased (Salman, 2014: 85).

However, over the years, the performance of the government weakened, and it failed to continue to provide solutions to the problems and requirements of the political situation in the country at that time. These can be represented by the degradation of the situation in the South of the country, economic hardships, and political and societal tension. This situation paved the way for political parties to exploit the anger of the people, and mobilize their political and intellectual cadres, to organize revolutionary demonstrations calling for a change in the government system. Indeed, there was a success, subsequent to violence against the demonstrators by security services, shooting to kill some of them, and leaving many others injured or traumatized. This eventually forced Lieutenant General Abboud to submit his resignation and dissolve the government and the military council (Salman, 2014: 87). A transitional government was formed, headed by Sir al-Khatim al-Khalifah, which ruled the country until elections. Lieutenant General Abboud remained as Head of the State until his succession by a presidential council consisting of 5 members. Thus, the second period of democracy was launched, after the first democracy, which was headed by Ismail Al-Azhari (Ahmed, 1995: 73).

As evident in the previous section, the military rule in Sudan ended on October 1st, 1964. Then, the political and partisan system was relaunched in the country, and work began actively to restore the political system in the country to resolve essential issues that impeded stability and construct a stable and effective State, where all Sudanese spectrums, without exception, participated in structuring its pillars. Therefore, the parties participating in the transitional period declared that the permanent constitution issues would not be discussed until elections were held, and an elected democratic government would oversee those issues (Abu Ras, 2010: 19).

At the level of external activities, the transitional government managed to maintain a dynamic foreign policy, paving the way for establishing an effective State regionally and internationally. The dynamism of the Muhammad Ahmad Al-Mahjoub government emerged in the Arab region and hosted, on August 29th, 1967, the Arab summit (the summit of the Three No) in Khartoum (Mansour,

2018). The government also made, at that time, efforts to resolve the country's problems in the South; however, it was unsuccessful for several reasons, some of which were related to the positions of the opposers themselves, while others were related to the positions of the transitional government. This worsened the situation, and the opposition in the South declared that they were favourable towards establishing an independent country, known as the Nile Republic and the Ennedi Republic (Rida, 1975: 43).

The Prime Minister, at that time, Muhammad Ahmad Mahjoub, submitted his resignation, so that Sadiq al-Mahdi assumed the premiership on July 25th, 1966, after he was elected as President of the Umma Party in November 1964, following a disagreement between himself and his uncle, Imam Al-Hadi Al-Mahdi. He formed a coalition government with the Federal National Party. The government of Sadiq Al-Mahdi was characterized by weakness and political, security, and economic instability. In addition, it caused deterioration in the political practices of the country. That government dissolved the Sudanese Communist Party and banned its activities due to atheism in 1965 and coordination with the Muslim Brotherhood. Despite the Communist Party's appeal to the Supreme Court and the issuance of a decision aborting the Sadiq Al-Mahdi government's decision, they ignored the Supreme Court's verdict and implemented it (Abu Ras, 2010: 21). All of these conditions combined, in addition to the aggravating conflict in the South of the country, as well as the severe economic situation that the Sudanese State experienced at the time, paved the way for Colonel Jaafar Muhammad Nimeiri to lead a coup d'état and seize power on May 25th, 1969, after a civilian government that lasted for a period 4 years, and 5 months, from October 1964 to May 1969 (Collins, 2008: 89).

Nimeiri ruled Sudan for a period of 16 years, 1 month, and 21 days, from May 25th, 1969, to April 6th, 1985. During this period, he managed to resolve many of the country's unsettled issues regarding its political, security, economic, social, and foreign relations. It can be said that Sudan witnessed a kind of stability at the beginning of Jaafar Nimeiri's reign, especially the South Sudan issue, which experienced the most extended truce since its first spark in 1956 (Rida, 1975: 13). The truce lasted for 11 years, and the Nimeiri regime was able to achieve success in ruling the country and opening it to the outside world. However, the resurrection of the South Sudan conflict after the end of the truce and the intensification of the internal political conflicts in the country led to a decline in its economic, political, and security conditions. This provoked rage in the

Sudanese people and paved the way for a popular revolution that managed to end Nimeiri's rule. The army, led by the Minister of Defense, Lieutenant General Suwar al-Dahab, took over power on April 6th, 1985 (Collins, 2008: 153).

Suwar al-Dahab announced the intention of the armed forces behind the power takeover, arguing that they intended to prevent the country from slipping into chaos and insecurity, and promised to hand over power to political bodies within a period not exceeding 1 year after organizing elections where all Sudanese political representatives could participate. Accordingly, several decisions were issued by the Military Sovereignty Council, which stipulated the suspension of the constitution, the declaration of a state of emergency in the country, relieving the country's president of his post, the dissolution of the government, and the dissolution of the Socialist Union Party, which was the political incubator for the government. The transitional government also began preparing a national political action charter, which was constructed upon basic foundations, stipulating the complete independence and preservation of national unity. Then, on April 9th, 1985, the formation of a transitional military council was announced to exercise the legislative and executive powers headed by Lieutenant General Abdul Rahman Suwar al-Dhahab, with Lieutenant General Taj al-Din Abdullah Fadl as his deputy, in addition to the membership of 13 senior army officers, including 2 from South Sudan. Respectively, a civilian government was formed, headed by Al-Jazouli Dafa Allah (Collins, 2008: 191).

Definitely, after one year in power, as a political precedent in Africa, in the Arab world, and indeed, in the Middle East, Lieutenant-General Suwar al-Dahab handed over power to the elected government, after holding the elections that he had promised, nearly on time, as the duration exceeded by only ten days. The Umma Party won, and Al-Sadiq Al-Mahdi became Prime Minister once again, and Ahmad Al-Mirghani became Chairman of the Sovereignty Council (Musa, 1992: 30). However, the third period of democracy was characterized by instability, as five coalition governments were formed within four years, and the security situation worsened due to the war in the South of the country, which directly led to a general decline in the economic, political, and social conditions (Collins, 2008: 210). This paved the way for the Islamic Front, which was at the head of the opposition at the time, to plan to seize power through a military coup d'état, carried out by its affiliates within the armed forces. Consequently, on June 30th, 1989, Brigadier General Omar Hassan Ahmed Al-Bashir launched a military

coup d'état and seized power in Sudan, announcing the Sadiq Al-Mahdi civilian government's period four years, from 1985 to June 30th, 1989.

Externally, the period of the al-Inqaz (Salvation) Government was characterized by fluctuations. At the beginning of its reign, it declared its frank hostility against the Western camp and adopted an approach that instigated animosity by many countries. Moreover, Sudan's role within the international community was utterly indolent. However, al-Inqaz soon renounced those rigid positions and began approaching the same countries it had previously declared enemies. The previously maintained positions by the Government prevented the country from building stable relations with regional and international communities (Abdel Hameed, 2012: 57). On the other hand, within the last years of its reign, despite the accumulated failures, and definitely due to international changes, al-Inqaz managed to build foreign relations that could be described as good with countries such as China, Russia, and Turkey.

Internally, during its beginnings, the al-Inqaz Islamic Government, led by Field Marshal Al-Bashir, as a military interface, was able to present a project that attracted most of Sudan's youth and brought about radical changes in the political pattern that has been adopted in the country since its independence. The central government dominated the country's administration through traditional sectarian parties (Makki, 1999). On the contrary, the al-Inqaz government was keen to let people of marginalized areas participate in the governance and management of the country in order to consider the social diversity of Sudanese society (Abdel Hameed, 2012: 62). An effort was also deployed to resolve the country's issue in the South, but it was not as successful as the previous efforts made by the civil and military governments that followed independence (Al-Banna, 2012: 52). At an economic level, and despite the radical mistakes committed, the al-Inqaz government managed to achieve qualitative economic booms in the country, represented by extracting oil, opening roads for foreign investments to enter the country's labour market, and developing the country's infrastructure to some degree. As for the social and security level, in addition to the policies that led to the development of the Sudanese security system, the al-Inqaz government adopted policies that increased the intensity of the conflict and expanded its circle. This conflict expansion covered the tension in Darfur, the Nouba Mountains, Blue Nile, and Eastern Sudan. Such tensions were portrayed as tribal conflicts or conflicts between the centre and the armed movements in these areas.

The conflicts increased in intensity and expanded, and the political, administrative, financial, and social corruption that overwhelmed the al-Inqaz government worsened the situation in the country and deteriorated all aspects of life. This led the government to adopt a policy of domination, repression, and military (and security) solutions to deal with these situations. Consequently, the international community was obliged to accuse the government of committing massacres in some parts of the country and violating human rights. The country was also classified as a terrorism-sponsoring State and was categorized among the most corrupted countries in the world (Beloved, 2009). All of this dragged the country into a state of economic recession and political blockage. The Sudanese people were exasperated; hence, they organized protests several times, asking for changes in the country's political system, but instead experienced violence and inhuman treatment, mainly by the security services. This includes the recent demonstrations, as well, in December 2018, which lasted for six months. All segments of Sudanese society participated in protesting against the deteriorating economic conditions, the high cost of living, the spread of government corruption, and the continuation of the war in the regions. These protests were described as a popular revolution that managed to overthrow the al-Inqaz regime on April 11th, 2019. The army seized power (as the Security Committee), putting an end to a rule that lasted for 29 years, 2 months, and 29 days, from June 30th, 1989, to April 11th, 2019.

Based on this brief description of the Sudanese political movement above, it is obvious that the Sudanese elites, from independence to the end of the Al-Inqaz regime, have been unable to present a political vision for Sudan management in a way that guarantees its stability as a country of strategic importance in the region, with substantial natural potentials and resources.

The absence of a national project has had severe effects on all aspects of life in the Sudanese State. The incapacity of the country reflects this to invest its huge potential due to enduring wars and conflicts, its inability to manage its tribal and ethnic diversity, and its incapacity to build the democratic rule on a solid foundation to ensure its persistence (Tirab, 2020: 18). All of this has enabled the military to control and govern for 54 out of the total of 63 years after the country's independence on January 1st, 1956. The nine remaining years have witnessed the power transfer between several civil governments.

According to this sequence, the country continued to revolve in a vicious circle, incarnated in a string of civil governments, followed by a military coup d'état, then a revolution, resulting in a transitional period, then a civilian government, and so forth. The country remained the same until the last serious change, probably similar to all previous causes that led to different Sudanese revolutions.

The army's hegemony over power in the country has turned it into a fundamental and constitutive element of Sudanese politics and a refuge for all popular revolutions in the country, which always explain their success by praising the army's army support against a despicable military government. The army has thus become a legitimate partner in any transitional government. Likewise, the army is considered as a partner in the transitional government, announced subsequently after the last revolution of December 2018. That was considered the only way to manage the country's affairs during the announced transitional period, and this will be the theme of the paragraph below.

4. Definition of the Transitional Period

The change in Sudan resulted from a popular revolution, known as the December 2018 Revolution, led by the Freedom and Change Forces, and shouldered by several political bodies, human rights organizations, and civil society organizations, notably the Professionals Assembly. The Freedom and Change Forces made an agreement with the Sudanese army, which had played a fundamental role in the victory of the revolution after its bias towards the people, declaring the overthrow of the regime, and arresting its civilian and military leaders. The agreement was subsidized by an African-Ethiopian mediation, announcing a transitional period of 3 years, beginning on September 6, 2019, and ending on December 6, 2022. The transitional government is represented by the Sovereign Council headed by Lieutenant General Burhan and the Council of Ministers, headed by Dr Abdullah Hamdok. The transitional government is supposed to focus on dealing with the country's fundamental issues, such as ensuring peace through an agreement between the Sudanese battling parties, fighting against corruption, redressing the collapsed economy, and other issues that have hindered the establishment of a stable, emergent, and developed Sudanese State throughout the country's modern history. The transitional government should also rectify the distortions that have burdened the Sudanese

political scene and prepare for free democratic elections, after 39 months, at the end of the transitional period, as agreed upon in the Constitutional Act.

4.1. The Constitutional Act

As stated in its introduction, the Constitutional Act is the document whose terms and provisions were agreed upon and approved after lengthy negotiations between the Military Council and the Freedom and Change Forces. It consists of 67 items divided into 15 chapters, which regulate the Sudanese approach and mechanisms during the transitional period. The general provisions contained in the constitutional act concern: the duration and functions of the transitional period, the transitional period's governing bodies, the Sovereignty Council, the transitional cabinet, as well as common provisions concerning the constitutional officials, the Transitional Legislative Council, national judiciary bodies, the Public Prosecution, the Auditor-General, the defence and security bodies, the independent commissions, the declaration of a state of emergency, the charter of Rights and Freedoms, and the comprehensive peace issues (the Constitutional Act for the transitional period 2019).

Among the most prominent items and provisions mentioned in the Constitutional Act is the establishment of a parliamentary system, which retains most executive powers and State governing by Cabinet of Ministers nominated by the Freedom and Change Forces and appointed by the Sovereignty Council. The Sovereignty Council is one of the most important power levels of the transitional period, aside from the Council of Ministers and the Legislative Council. The Constitutional Act stipulates that the Sovereignty Council will have honorary powers and limited executive powers, whereas the Council of Ministers, with executive powers, will oversee the State. Clause 1 of Article 15 stipulates that the Council of Ministers will consist of not more than 20 ministers, appointed by the Prime Minister and approved by the Sovereignty Council, while the prime minister is nominated by the Freedom and Change Forces and approved by the Sovereignty Council*.*

For the governance system in the country, Clause 3 of Article 9 stipulates that the civil government will define the form of the State, i.e. whether the country will be divided into regions or states (currently 18 states). The Constitutional Act has also underlined the country's security system and its restructuring in line with the visions of the new Sudanese State. Accordingly, it (the Security and Intelligence Service) was changed into (the General Intelligence Agency), and its

jurisdiction was significantly reduced, as it formerly had unrestricted powers, which are now limited to information collection and processing. In this context, Articles 35, 36, and 37 of Chapter 11 stipulate that the General Intelligence Agency (formerly Security and Intelligence) should be subject to the sovereignty and executive authorities. On the other hand, the Armed Forces and the "Rapid Backing Forces" would be directed by the Commander in Chief of the Armed Forces, subject to the Sovereignty Council. It is also postulated that the Armed Forces should be reformed, and the Police Forces should be subject to the Council of Ministers. In the same context, Clause 1 of Article 15 will mandate the military component of the Sovereignty Council to nominate the Ministers of the Interior and of Defense, who are subordinate to the Council of Ministers, which oversee their performance.

Considering the significant role that Sudanese expatriates played in leading the political movement in the country, and significantly contributed to the revolution success that toppled Al-Bashir's regime, the Constitutional Act has specified how the Sudanese dual nationalities holders can participate in managing the country and regulated the different forms of their contributions during the transitional period. Clause 2 of Article 17 stipulates that holder of dual nationalities have the right to hold positions in the Council of Ministers, except for the sovereign ministries (Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Defense, Interior, and Finance), as well as the Prime Minister's position, subject to negotiation between the Sovereignty Council and the Council of Ministers. Dual nationality holders are in addition allowed to participate in the parliament and different commissions. Likewise, the Constitutional Act highlighted the critical role that the country's foreign policy plays during the transitional period in interesting external support, necessary for the country to be appropriately repositioned within the international community and contribute to achieving international and regional peace and security. This was detailed in the Constitutional Act, as given below.

5. Foreign Policy Functions during the Transitional Period

In the transitional period functions chapter, clause 13 of Article 8 of the Constitutional Act deals with the country's foreign policy and its basic orientations, aiming to achieve the new Sudan's aspirations after the change. The clause stipulates that one of the functions of the transitional period "is to develop a balanced foreign policy that achieves the higher national interests and improves Sudan's foreign relations, built based on independence and common interests in

a way that preserves the country's sovereignty, security and borders". Within the framework of managing the country's foreign policy during the transitional period, Paragraph (H) of Article 12 of Chapter 4 deals with the authority of the Sovereignty Council, its composition, functions, and powers, for instance, the appointment of Sudanese ambassadors and other countries ambassador's accreditation in Sudan. The clause of the functions of the Sovereignty Council specifies this function, stating that "accreditation of Sudanese ambassadors abroad shall be upon a nomination by the Council of Ministers and accreditation of foreign ambassadors to Sudan." Despite the official statements regarding the transitional government's efforts to reactivate the foreign policy, there are some challenges for the country's foreign policy in the transitional period (Ibrahim, 2020). This will be discussed in detail in the next paragraph.

6. Transitional Period Challenges Concerning Foreign Relations

The transitional period that Sudan is currently experiencing is a starting point for re-evaluating the country's foreign policies, settling its weaknesses, and reinforcing the strengths. This can be a preparative phase so that foreign relations can play an influential and active role in the country's progress towards revitalization, development, and prosperity.

In this context, defining the country's priorities regarding foreign policy within the transitional period to constitute guidelines and orientation is necessary. Referring to the above-mentioned arguments, it can be said that some issues, which have been pending for many years, that should be considered as priorities during this transitional phase and efforts, should thus be exerted within the framework of foreign policy.

6.1. Challenge of Contributing to Peace Making

There is no doubt that peace is one of the issues that should be considered a priority by the transitional government. Although the existing internal factors helped build social and political solidarity and unity, the civil council did not pay attention to this opportunity. In contrast, they started to set up international relations without enhancing the internal situation, and, as consequences of losing this opportunity, the tribal conflict continues in areas such as Kasala, port Sudan, and Aljenina. Despite the firm desire and visible effort made by the transitional government to make comprehensive peace in the country, some Sudanese academics (Jahallah, 2020: 6) believe that, although the peace-making process is the most prominent challenge for the current government in Sudan, it is not easy

to be realized, as it seemed to many after the success of the revolution and the formation of the transitional government. They believe that peace can be achievable only if the atmosphere resulting from the revolution of the Sudanese people is oriented towards rejecting all types of conflicts that have been persisting for a long time.

The country's foreign policy can play a key role in bringing in external support to enhance the deployed efforts to achieve a comprehensive peace. Making peace in Sudan requires the assistance of the international community and neighbouring countries. It is worth saying that, in such a context, in order to make comprehensive and sustainable peace in the country, it is necessary to eradicate the causes of the conflict and request support from powerful countries to facilitate negotiation processes and satisfy the requirements of peace.

6.2. Challenge of Contributing to the Creation of an Appropriate Atmosphere for Economic Reform

One of the most important issues, which should also be considered a priority within the transitional period, is the economic question. The country's foreign policy should be shaped to play a pivotal role in surpassing the country's economic hardship that is currently experienced. The Sudanese diplomatic outlets could thus contribute to resolving the economic crisis, starting with efforts towards removing sanctions against the country, encouraging other countries to have partnerships and investments, as well as providing development support to the post-revolution Sudan. Moreover, it will be necessary to hold workshops and exhibitions to inspire investors and private sector firms to attract foreign investment, positively impacting achieving economic development in the country and evolving its productive sectors.

For example, organizing an international economic conference to transfer the experiences of other countries in managing the economy, to be used in drawing a new road map for the economy. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, through its embassies abroad, can play this important role.

6.3. Challenge of Reassessing the Country's Foreign Policy

There are some fundamental problems with the country's foreign policy system. This requires setting up a strategy for reassessing the country's foreign policy and dealing with the issue as one of the transitional period priorities. Such a strategy can aim at structuring:

• A foreign policy based on the values and foundations of the international law's well-established principles,

• A foreign policy based on the principles of rejecting strife and grievances, of achieving Sudan's interests, and of upraising the value of supreme national interests,

• A foreign policy embodied in the diplomatic practice of serving the country, not serving the political regimes,

• A foreign policy that reflects the domestic political decision of independence that expresses the country's sovereignty,

• A foreign policy that liberates the country from political isolation and exclusion has been a real hindrance resulting from past political mistakes for long periods.

6.4. Challenge of Institutional Adaptation to Country's Political Change

The close link between the country's internal policy, its foreign stances, and their mutual influence, is a key element in the country's foreign policy orientations and an indicator of its features, methods, and mechanisms. Since the Sudanese State is going through a transitional phase that is expected to result in a new era, it is necessary to consider restructuring the Sudanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs to keep pace with the expected radical change in its policy directives in the next phase. It is important that restructuring of the Ministry includes the headquarters and Sudan's external representation, such as embassies and diplomatic missions.

The Ministry restructuring process is considered as a priority that includes the functional structure and adoption of a specialization-based approach to achieve an effective and influential diplomacy, according to scientific guidelines that keep pace with the rapid development in international diplomatic practice. This will also enable the attainment of vigorous Sudanese diplomatic deployment in countries of political influence in the world. Thus, international cooperation goals will be reached, in a way that responds to the requirements of national interest, in the short and long term, necessarily desired within this particular period of Sudan's history.

It is known that political systems formed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in past eras to serve their partisan interests parallel with their foreign alliances. Therefore, it is necessary to restructure the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to serve the country's interests in the strategic term, and this requires changing the principles which guide the country's politics externally.

6.5. Challenge of the Country's Reintegration within the International System

International isolation and boycott are considered as one of the most critical threats to the national security of the State and constraints of its foreign policies. Their negative impact on the State is profound, making it challenging to realize development (Muhammad Zain, 2008: 49). The effect of this international isolation on Sudan was evident in past periods. The global political cut-off and economic blockade, which Sudan experienced because of its positions and inadequate management of its foreign relations, were among the reasons for impeding its internal stability and its ability to achieve renaissance and development at a national level (Ballah, 2011: 132). Sudan should thus review its principles of managing foreign relations to fit in the aspirations within the next stage. It is hard to construct a vibrant and developed State while foreign policy and domestic policy are disconnected. It is worth saying that this link between the country's internal policy and its external orientations should be based on the strategic dimension. According to the historical stage requirements, it should not in any way be built on internal political gain, which may subsequently hinder all efforts deployed to rebuild the country's foreign relations, according to the historical stage requirements, as that was what happened during the Inqaz (Salvation) regime.

In this context, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs must consider the priorities of the country's new policy towards the international and regional community. For example, working to open the doors of diplomatic representation in countries that are expected to play a positive role towards Sudan in the transitional period, and bilateral relations between them and Sudan were non-existent during the previous era. Moreover, improving the country's image in international organizations and forums is also of utmost importance, one of the most important tasks of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the transitional period.

6.6. Challenge of Restructuring Relations with Neighboring and African Countries

According to the Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed between the Government of the Republic of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement in 2005 (Naivasha), which approved a referendum on the right to self-determination for the people of Southern Sudan, the south of Sudan was separated from the mother country of Sudan on July 9th, 2011. The majority of the participants voted in favour of the separation decision in the referendum held between September 1st and December 1st, 2011 (Doop, 2013: 130). Consequently, the Republic of Sudan became adjacent to 7 countries, namely Egypt, Libya, Chad, Central Africa, South Sudan, Ethiopia, and Eritrea, instead of being adjacent to 9 countries. Thus, three countries, namely Kenya, Uganda, and the Democratic Republic of Congo, are no longer bordering countries with Sudan. These countries became neighbours with the newborn State (South Sudan), imposed by the secession. Accordingly, the Republic of Sudan had to rearrange and restructure its relations with neighbouring countries to cope with the new situation, especially relations with the State of South Sudan, which shares long borders and many overlaps in many regions. The strategic importance of the excellent relationship with the neighbouring countries is a key element in playing an active role in the regional environment (Tirab, 2020: 76). This leads to the necessity to highlight the importance of considering the relationships with the State of South Sudan as one of the priorities within the transitional phase to realize national interest for both countries, based on the shared history, cultural, social and economic ties.

The Republic of Sudan has a particular geostrategic position on the African continent and comprises demographically diverse ethnic compositions, uniting many African and Arab groups through their different languages, cultures, and tribal dimensions. This is, moreover, associated with cultural, societal, and economic integration liable to persist. Thus, the neighbouring countries as a whole, including the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on the other side of the Red Sea, are of strategic importance for Sudanese national security and its strategic perspective of its relations with bordering countries (Hayati, 2001: 93; Hauck, 2017: 223). This importance is evident at all vital levels, such as political, cultural, economic, security, and military. In addition to this, we can highlight the strategic importance for the African Union, African economic and development organizations, and the strategic circle of the Nile Basin and Lakes, which includes

Burundi, Tanzania, Kenya, Democratic Congo, Uganda, Ethiopia, Sudan, Egypt, and Eritrea (as an observer) (Al Amin, 2018; Mohamed, 2016).

National issues, the necessary efforts towards consensus on a permanent constitution for the country, and internal crises, which are closely related to the countries of the regional neighbourhood, should all be considered when Sudan constructs a national vision to build external relations with the regional international States. Likewise, the current interactions at the regional and international levels have their direct effects, inevitably, on Sudan's relations with its close neighbours. Consequently, it is necessary to identify and deal with it with rationality and insight that reduces the extent of negative impact on the country's national strategies.

6.7. Challenge of Rehabilitating Relations with the West

Sudan used to have excellent relations with the European Union and Western countries, in general, during the post-independence period until the 80s of the last century (Zwan, 2011). However, these relationships began to freeze and downturn gradually. The reason behind this was the approach that the Sudanese political leadership had adopted at the time, which led to a confrontation with the European Union countries and Western countries in general (Al-Mahboub, 2009). This caused Sudan to lose many of its entitlements according to international agreements. It also obliged Sudan to be distant concerning the international events due to the isolation imposed against the country for its ill-disposed positions (Waal, 2007). These positions can be described as ideological rather than based on safeguarding the country's interests. The European countries have based their disagreement with Sudan on principles and conceptual attitude regarding, for instance, human rights and democratic governance. Those countries believed that the government of Sudan (the Inqaz regime) was adopting practices in managing internal affairs that violated human rights. Likewise, the Western countries accused the Inqaz Government of not implementing good democratic governance (Al-Hussein, 2015).

The Sudanese government at that time rejected the accusations of all Western and European countries and considered them as antireligion bodies desiring to take control of the Sudanese issue. Nonetheless, the same government later adopted what was repeatedly requested by the European countries and praised and presented that as being one of its achievements aiming at making peace. The European Union has been asking the Sudanese government to organize

a comprehensive national dialogue that includes all parties, Sudanese political entities, and civil society organizations, without excluding anyone, regardless of the size of their influence, in an appropriate climate that appreciates and respects freedoms and human rights. It considers it the only means to resolve conflicts, disagreements, and crises in Sudan. What was stated above was part of the resolution by the Council of the European Union, issued on July 22nd, 2013 (Al-Hussein, 2015). Indeed, after wasting time, efforts, and resources in opting for military and security solutions, a comprehensive national dialogue was announced in 2014. However, the lack of credibility in dealing with issues led to distrust between the opposition parties and, consequently, the dialogue failed, and the transparent implementation of its outcomes was hindered.

Nevertheless, the European Union did not have complete disinterest in what was going on in the Sudanese scene throughout that period, as it preferred to be present under informal components and various means. The European Union continued to provide aid through non-governmental humanitarian organizations and directly to regional governments without coordinating with the central government. This was totally objected to by the central government and demanded counterpart development aid (Khaled, 2009). Despite all of this, the European Union played an important role in supporting the countries of the African Union to solve the pending issues between Sudan and South Sudan. Thus, it supported and financed all stages of the negotiations in a quest to reach a lasting peace that will achieve stability in the two countries (Tull, 2005: 6).

Likewise, the tense relations between Sudan, the European Union, and Western countries, in general, obliged Sudan to deviate from the international scene completely. The isolation has had harmful consequences on Sudan and prevented it from benefiting from the scientific, technological, and technical development that the world has attained. It was also unable to build straightforward foreign relations, which help play an essential and strategic member at the regional and international level. This has had a negative impact at both the internal and external level, as Sudan is a member of an international system that can affect others and be affected by them.

However, the recent change that occurred in Sudan, after the December 2018 Revolution, offered Sudan the greatest and most pivotal opportunity of its modern history if only that chance is properly exploited. That means that if a comprehensive national strategy is set up, there will be a radical change in Sudan's

fortune and future, thus allowing it to build a powerful and well-established State. Consequently, all internal problems, such as the identity crisis and diversity management, will be dealt with so that national interests are preserved, and material and human resources are properly used. It is also an opportunity for Sudan to readjust its approach to managing its foreign relations to realize its interests and interact at regional and international levels.

In this context, undertaking initiatives to reform diplomatic relations with European capitals within the transitional period is crucial, since building stable relations with those countries will directly contribute to Sudan's benefit in making use of the advanced European capabilities in science, training, qualifications, technology, agricultural engineering, etc., from which Sudan has been deprived for decades due to the international blockade.

6.8. Challenge of the Halayeb and Al-Fashaqah Cases and Management of its Relationships with Egypt and Ethiopia

The Republic of Sudan is bordered by Ethiopia and Eritrea in the east, the Arab Republic of Egypt in the north, the Red Sea in the northeast, the State of Libya in the northwest, the Republic of Chad in the west, the Central African Republic in the southwest, and the south, the Republic of South Sudan. By its strategic geographical location, Sudan is a commercial and cultural pathway between the North and South Africa on the one hand, and between the Arabian Peninsula and Africa, especially of West and East Africa, on the other side. Sudan's land borders are shared with seven countries, estimated as 6780 km (Zayinabddin, 2017). Its borders with the Arab Republic of Egypt are estimated as 1280 km and 727 km with the State of Ethiopia (World Atlas, 2018).

Figure 1. Map of Sudan

It is worth saying that since its independence, the borders of the Republic of Sudan with neighbouring countries have not been practically defined. This has led to unresolved clashes and disagreements with neighbouring countries. The disagreements between Sudan and the Arab Republic of Egypt over the Halayeb Triangle and Wadi Halfa are among the oldest and most intense border disputes. The quarrel was so exaggerated that in 1958, the Egyptian forces invaded and occupied the Halayeb Triangle area under the pretext of its subordination to Egypt. The incident was repeated once more in 1995 (Sudan Tribune, 2013), after the famous attempt to assassinate Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in Addis Ababa in 1995. This triangle is still under Egyptian control.

Sudanese-Egyptian relations are ancient, as the two countries form a mutual strategic extension of national security, which has been strongly imposed on the relations between the two countries since the independence of Sudan. Despite this, relations between the two countries have experienced tension, coldness, and sometimes a lack of confidence throughout different eras (Al-Maltham, 2010: 141). However, these ups and downs have always been the cause of the continuity-discontinuity of sequential relations. Therefore, as a principle of non-interference in internal affairs and respect of national sovereignty on both sides, the transitional government should continue to maintain communication to

resolve the pending issues between the two countries by the first government after the end of the transitional period.

The Halayeb case remains one of the issues that need to be treated thoughtfully and trustworthily, contributing to pushing relations forward and reaching adequate solutions for both parties. This is essential because the persistence of the unresolved case, as it is currently evident, will constitute a threat and a potential trigger for conflict at any time in the future.

Moreover, Ethiopia is one of the countries that plays a crucial role in conceiving a common vision and a mutual understanding by the Sudanese parties after the recent change in Sudan. It is undeniable that the current leadership's keenness tends to cooperate with Sudan and create stability, believing in the importance of Sudan and the bilateral relations between the two countries. The case of the Al-Fashaqah area has remained unresolved and has constituted a cause of tension at different times. Thus, this undecided case continues to be a permanent issue of interest for both countries.

There are many similar cases of such disputes around the world. Their solution has always been based on the political will and credibility of both sides and reasonable actions based on international laws that regulate these kinds of disputes. Therefore, the current political leadership in the two countries should seize the opportunity to make progress in resolving Al-Fashaqah issue and in bilateral cooperation files.

Conclusion

Except for some opaque experiences, Sudanese diplomacy has always been, since the country's independence to the present day, acting so sincerely and dedicatedly that Sudan's national interest could be realized. As best as possible, it has represented the country's bright reality, portraying the tolerance of the Sudanese people in both regional and international forums admiratively. Gradually, the accumulated experience became so crucial that, if it is adequately employed following a comprehensive national strategy, it can contribute significantly to the realization of the national interest. Hence, progress can be made in various sectors and issues, such as security and peace, economy, and others, as different questions will inevitably require urgent radical reforms at the internal level and varied support at the external level.

In light of all of this, it can be said that the Sudanese government of the transitional period, in line with the requirements of this stage and with the aspirations of the Sudanese youth, must prepare, adopt, and declare a new foreign policy in preparation for re-establishing an innovative Sudanese national strategy. This will allow foreign relations management reform to realize regional and global peace and security, according to a vision based on respecting the spirit and principles of international law and based on common interests and regional and international cooperation. It is also necessary to build the country's new vision of managing foreign relations on the principle of rejecting untrustworthy alliances, which will not serve the national interest in any way. Moreover, there should be a consistent upraising of the values of cooperation in maintaining international peace and stability, combating causes of international terrorism, and managing its devastating effects on countries and societies worldwide. Likewise, an approach of openness should be adopted to build up all forms of international cooperation, both commercial and political, to maintain all doors wide-open for communication with the international community.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is the major body for achieving the country's foreign policy and openness to the outside world. It is necessary to restructure the Ministry, readjust its imbalances and rearrange its priorities to be in line with the country's vision in the subsequent stage. Likewise, the reform should align with regional and international laws and agreements that regulate diplomatic action. Efforts should also be deployed to qualify and train the human cadre of diplomats and administrators concerned with implementing the country's new vision in managing its foreign relations. All of this will surely help in achieving Sudan's national interests. Based on this principle, it can be said that there is an urgent need to reshape the Sudanese diplomatic concepts in a new way, considering the changes that have recently occurred in the Sudanese political reality.

Similarly, it is necessary to review the role of the media and its relations with the country's foreign policy. The media is as essential as the State is on becoming a regional and international power. Thus, the State should have a target-based media that reflects its achievements, clarifies its role in regional politics, and highlights its efforts to make progress in regional and international interest and security. The media is soft power and an effective means of popular and societal diplomacy. It reflects the culture, customs and traditions of the people, the country's bright aspects, and it markets its resources and products as well.

Finally, and within the framework of the country's efforts to rebuild its national vision in managing its foreign relations, it is believed that it is necessary to include the Sudanese State's review of its approach of managing external relations to match its aspirations in the next phase. Similarly, the internal conflicts, which are a source of the sufferings of the Sudanese society, should be settled since, as explained above, it is not possible to build an emerging and developed State while the external policy is disconnected from the internal affairs. It is worth noting that the link between the country's domestic policy and the foreign policy should be based on the strategic dimension, rather than a link motivated by internal political gain because this will impede the State's efforts to rebuild its foreign relations according to the current phase requirements. Therefore, it is believed that it is necessary to reshape the country's foreign policy based on the following:

First, preserving the country's sovereignty, decision-making independence, and unity, and protecting its potential and achieving its supreme national interests. Second, adopting a moderate positions policy ensures defending, as far as possible, the just causes of the people, while the national interest should always be considered. Third, deploying efforts to achieve regional integration and rejecting conflicting blocs and alliances, especially those based on ideological and doctrinal convictions. Fourth, maintaining an approach of non-intrusion in other countries' internal by any way or means, ensuring consolidation and dialogue and sincere negotiation in resolving conflicts and disputes between States and groups by peaceful means. Fifth, enhancing bilateral integration with neighbouring countries within the country's national security strategy and exchanging cultural, economic, and other assets in consistency with the country's national interest. Sixth, adopting a policy of flexible borders with neighbouring countries unless that represents a threat to national security. Seventh, there is no doubt that the United States of America is one of the most powerful countries that directly influence shaping the world's political map. This means that having stable relations with that country is important. Therefore, it is recommended that efforts be thoughtfully deployed to normalize relations with the United States of America, open communication channels with its institutions, and do whatever is necessary to realize these objectives.

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