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Africa in the Top Documents of the United Arab Emirates' Foreign Policy

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Abstract

The foreign policy of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) in Africa can be explained from various dimensions. In this article, the author explains the UAE's foreign policy in Africa based on the country's grand strategy documents (official and public documents). By studying these documents, we can gain a deeper understanding of the motivations, strategies, actions, and impacts of the UAE's foreign policy in Africa. Ultimately, this leads to a better understanding of the interactive patterns of the UAE with various African countries. These documents, which include strategic frameworks and initiatives, aim to delineate the UAE's goals and interests in foreign policy across multiple domains-political, economic, security-military, and cultural-in Africa. This research seeks to answer the question: how can the UAE's foreign policy in Africa be explained through its grand strategic documents? (while presenting an extracted model

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for the UAE's foreign policy objectives in Africa), the proposed hypothesis is that the central aim of all UAE documents and initiatives in Africa is ultimately economic development on the continent, with improving the lives of African people at its core.

To test the hypothesis, in the first step, the UAE's high-level documents are examined, and in the second step, the country's initiatives in Africa are reviewed. Under each document, the intended objectives are explained, particularly focusing on economic objectives and contributing to improving the quality of life for people. In the third step, an interpretive conceptual model is extracted, and finally, a conclusion will be presented.

Methodology

The methodology employed in this article is the objective analysis method. This involves analyzing objectives derived from studying initiatives, programs, and documents designed by the government of the United Arab Emirates. This approach is particularly useful when the researcher lacks direct access to the individuals, groups, and organizations. In such cases, studying their plans, programs, and documents can reveal their objectives and motivations.

Studying high-level documents can help better understand the foundations, objectives, strategies, and frameworks of foreign policy by identifying fundamental principles, values, broad objectives, grand strategies and policies, coherence and coordination between domestic and foreign policies, priorities, developmental approaches as well as establishing legal frameworks for foreign policy. This can clarify the trajectory of foreign policy and its underlying principles.

Results and Discussion

1. UAE Top Documents

The UAE has developed numerous strategies and documents to advance its foreign policy objectives and interests. As previously mentioned, under the leadership of Mohammed bin Zayed, the country has implemented significant changes in its regional and international policies. The UAE has formulated several strategies to achieve its foreign policy goals, focusing on stability, economic growth, technological innovation, and social development. By creating multiple strategies and documents, the UAE aims to increase its influence at both regional and international levels. The country seeks to its national interest and To be recognized as a key player in the Middle East through security cooperation, active economic diplomacy, and interventionist policies. Key strategic documents and visions that

influence the UAE's objectives and foreign policy interests include:

- Economic Vision 2030
- "We the UAE 2031"
- Projects of the 50
- Vision 2050
- United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

2. UAE Initiatives for Africa

The UAE outlines its engagement with African countries through various foreign policy documents and strategic initiatives. The UAE has been actively involved with Africa through different initiatives and documents to achieve its objectives. The following are some key documents and initiatives:

- UAE Consortium for Africa
- Support for G5 Sahel Joint Force
- Agriculture Innovation Mission for Climate (AIM for Climate)
- Food and Agriculture Organization's "Hand-in-Hand" Initiative
- UAE-Africa Connect
- Written Statement to the UN Security Council

Conclusions

The UAE's objectives in Africa can be broadly categorized into four main areas: security-military, political-diplomatic, cultural, and economic. However, the central goal of all UAE initiatives in Africa is ultimately economic development, with the improvement of African people's lives at its core. If these objectives are visualized in concentric circles, security and military goals would form the outermost circle. Moving inward, the next objectives would be political-diplomatic and cultural, with economic goals closest to the center, aimed at achieving the central objective of enhancing the quality of life for African people. These concentric circles can be illustrated by combining the important goal of "preserving and enhancing stability" into a model.

The arrangement of these layers does not mean that one area is more important or has higher priority than another in the political relationship process between the UAE and other African countries. Rather, it means that all objectives are aligned to achieve the central goal of economic development, ultimately improving the quality of life for African people. This "concentric circle model" illustrates a reciprocal, interactive, and synergistic structure among all dimensions. This multi-layered model represents a complex structure where each layer influences the ones above it. Through efforts to enhance the quality of life for people, the UAE aims to create a positive and reasonable image of itself among

African countries and the international community.

The UAE has adopted a comprehensive and strategic approach to engaging with Africa, which can be seen as part of its broader grand strategy for the continent. This approach includes various initiatives across diverse sectors, reflecting the UAE's long-term vision for its role in African development and its geopolitical position. Based on the study of UAE's high-level documents and initiatives, it can be said that the central goal of all UAE's security-military, political-diplomatic, cultural, and economic initiatives in Africa is ultimately economic development, with the improvement of African people's lives at its core. The UAE's multidimensional approach to Africa, including economic investments, strategic partnerships, military cooperation, and diplomatic initiatives, clearly demonstrates a well-calculated grand strategy. These tactics are designed to position the UAE as a key player in Africa's development landscape, secure its economic interest, and enhance its global geopolitical standing.

Through this approach, the UAE aims to present itself as an important, reliable, strategic, and benevolent economic partner in Africa's economic development and humanitarian efforts. The UAE's approach in providing financial investments and humanitarian aid portrays it as a committed, multi-dimensional ally dedicated to Africa's long-term welfare and future, a mid-tier global power with significant influence beyond its region, and a model for other Persian Gulf countries on how to use economic diplomacy to strengthen regional influence and security.

While this grand strategy and vision have been promising, its long-term success depends on how effectively the UAE navigates the complex political and economic landscape of Africa, balances its interests with those of African countries, and addresses criticisms and challenges it faces. These challenges include accusations of neo-colonialism and exploitative economic arrangements, concerns over human rights issues, support for leaders with bad records in Africa, and potential conflicts with the interests of other regional powers such as Egypt, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia. However, in general, what is important is that the development of numerous, diverse, and specialized documents across various fields and regions by the UAE can serve as a model for other countries.

Key words: Foreign policy, United Arab Emirates, Africa, Concentric Goals and Interests, Hedging Strategy.