



AFRICAN NARRATIVES

Russian Military Expansion in Africa: New Dependency and Growing Influence



Author:



Ahmed Gamal El-Sayyad

Researcher in Political Science

Published by:
African Narratives

Introduction:

The African continent has become a stage for significant geopolitical transformations in recent years, witnessing a complex interplay of internal and external forces. These changes include a wave of military coups that have destabilized countries in the Sahel region, the eruption of violent conflict in Sudan, and the persistence of long-standing crises, most notably the ongoing instability in Libya. These events have created a fluid and often volatile political landscape, opening up opportunities for external actors to exert influence and pursue their strategic interests. Among these actors, Russia has emerged as a prominent player, actively engaging in various African affairs and expanding its footprint across the continent.

It is noteworthy that several of these crises have inadvertently facilitated Moscow's penetration and expansion of its influence in the region. The series of coups in countries like Niger, Mali, and Burkina Faso have led to the establishment of military regimes that have often taken positions contrary to the interests of Western powers in the Sahel. This has resulted in the withdrawal of Western military forces, creating a geopolitical vacuum that Russia has been keen to fill. Moscow has actively supported these military regimes, offering military aid, training, and political backing, thereby strengthening its ties and expanding its influence within these countries. This strategic maneuvering allows Russia to position itself as a key security partner, potentially at the expense of Western influence.

Beyond supporting military regimes, Russia has also sought to capitalize on other challenges facing the African continent, including the pervasive threat of terrorism. Several regions, particularly the Sahel, which has become a new arena for

Russian influence, are grappling with the rise of extremist groups. This presents both an opportunity and a challenge for Moscow. While Russia can present itself as a partner in counterterrorism efforts, thereby further justifying its military presence, the volatile security environment also poses a threat to the stability of its newfound influence. The ongoing fight against terrorism in the Sahel requires a significant commitment of resources and carries inherent risks, potentially jeopardizing Russia's long-term strategic goals in the region.

Furthermore, Russia's growing involvement in Africa is not limited to security matters. Moscow has also actively pursued economic partnerships, particularly in the extractive industries, and sought to expand its cultural and diplomatic ties. This multifaceted approach underscores Russia's ambition to become a major player in African affairs and reshape the continent's geopolitical landscape.

Based on this dynamic context, this study aims to provide a comprehensive analytical framework for understanding the phenomenon of Russian military expansion in Africa. It will delve into Moscow's multifaceted motivations for increasing its influence, exploring both its strategic and economic interests. The study will also map out the key areas of Russian presence on the continent, highlighting the diverse range of its engagements. Finally, the study will examine the most prominent challenges facing Moscow in its pursuit of influence in Africa, including the security threats posed by terrorism, the complex political dynamics of the region, and the potential for competition with other external actors. By analyzing these factors, this study seeks to offer insights into the future trajectory of Russia's role in Africa and its implications for the continent's stability and development.

The First Pillar: Motives and determinants of Russian expansion in Africa

Moscow has a number of motives to increase its influence in the African continent. The Russian expansion in Africa expresses the Russian quest to establish a new, more balanced world order, by building a series of alliances with countries of the global south, including African countries. Through these alliances, Russia seeks to achieve strategic gains and tactical advantages, according to Moscow's strategy, which is considered contrary to the Western approach that relies on long-term partnerships that involve upholding neoliberal principles, which is considered one of the forms of political conditionality imposed by the West in its relations with African countries, unlike the Russian approach that seeks to achieve quick gains while emphasizing upholding the principle of national sovereignty of allies, which helps Moscow form multiple alliances in the African continent⁽¹⁾. The most important Russian determinants regarding its relationship with Africa can be identified as follows:

1- The diplomatic weight of the African continent countries:

Moscow seeks to move towards a new multipolar world order, more balanced for the Russian strategy, which necessitates Russia clashing with the West. Increasing Russian influence in Africa allows Moscow to strengthen its power in the face of the West, especially the United States, in order to achieve the aforementioned goal of Russian policy. The countries of the African continent represent a quarter of the seats in the United Nations, which is considered one of the most important Russian determinants in its relationship with African countries, and justifies the increased Russian interest in the continent. Moscow's increase in its expansion in the continent gives it a major advantage in balancing Western influence, especially American influence, by giving Russia

weight in the diplomatic arena. For example, we find that in the 2014 UN General Assembly resolution on Russia's annexation of the Crimean Peninsula, 29 African countries voted against the resolution, while 6 African countries abstained from voting.⁽²⁾ Russia's strengthening of its relations with African countries and increasing its influence on the continent gives it diplomatic weight that enables it to move forward in achieving the goals of Russian foreign policy, which is one of the most important determinants of the Russian role on the continent.

2- Africa is a huge market for arms exports and military companies:

Africa is one of the world's largest markets for arms imports, and it has become an arena for increasing activity by private military companies. It is estimated that 10% of global arms exports go to African countries.⁽³⁾ This represents an important opportunity for Moscow to increase its arms exports to Africa. Between 2010 and 2017, Russia signed seven military cooperation agreements with African countries, with these agreements reaching 20 by 2021. Russian arms exports are an important part of these agreements. According to estimates, Moscow now controls approximately 44% of arms exports to African countries.⁽⁴⁾ Russian arms exports to Africa are one of the most prominent determinants of Moscow's interest in increasing its influence on the African continent, especially with the increase in Western sanctions imposed on it.

1 Hamdi Abdel Rahman, Russian expansion in Africa, goals and consequences, Future Center for Advanced Research and Studies, publication date 6/20/2024, access date 12/19/2024. <https://shorturl.at/TFnfp>

2 Nihad Anwar Sayed, The Impact of Growing Russian Influence on the Development of Russian-African Relations: A Case Study of the Egyptian State, Journal of the Faculty of Politics and Economics, Issue 23, July 2024, p. 256.

3 Ahmed Dahshan, Russian Influence in Africa: Motives, Strategy and Tools, Abbad Center for Strategic Studies, publication date 1/30/2024, access date 12/19/2024. <https://shorturl.at/gF06e>

4 Nihad Anwar Sayed, The Impact of Growing Russian Influence on the Development of Russian-African Relations: A Case Study of the Egyptian State, p. 259, previous reference.



3- Enhancing the use of African natural resources:

Africa has a great diversity of natural resources, such as oil, natural gas, minerals, and renewable energy sources. According to estimates by the United Nations Development Program, Africa has approximately 12% of the world's oil reserves, in addition to approximately 30% of the world's mineral reserves, 8% of the world's natural gas reserves, and 65% of the world's agricultural land.⁽⁵⁾ This diversity of natural resources is considered one of the biggest factors in increasing Moscow's interest in the continent, and even other international powers as well, within the framework of enhancing the use of the natural resources that the African continent possesses.

4- Strengthening Moscow's military and security position:

The Russian presence in Africa guarantees Russia many strategic gains, because this presence is important for controlling the strategic shipping lanes in the Red Sea and the Mediterranean, which helps Moscow expand its naval operations, in addition to considering Africa a major

market for Russian arms exports⁽⁶⁾.

5- Providing space for Moscow to pressure the West:

The increase in Russian influence in the African continent represents a threat to Western interests in the continent, which helps Moscow put pressure on the West, and the threat of illegal immigration flows from Africa to Europe, and the increase in military and economic burdens on Western countries as a result of the threat to their interests in Africa, which provides Russia with room to maneuver in important files such as its war with Ukraine, which represents pressure cards for Moscow that it can use against European countries and the United States in other files of strategic importance in Russian foreign policy.⁽⁷⁾

6 Mahmoud Khalifa Gouda, The Growing Russian Interest in the African Continent: Motives and Reasons, p. 3, previous reference.

7 Ahmed Dahshan, Russian Influence in Africa: Motives, Strategy and Tools, previous reference.

5 Mahmoud Khalifa Gouda, Increasing Russian Interest in the African Continent: Motives and Reasons, Information and Decision Support Center, p. 2.

6-Enhancing Russia's economic gains:

Moscow sees its economic relations with Africa as an opportunity to keep pace with Chinese and American influence on the continent. This opportunity involves opening up a geopolitical space for Moscow in Africa that helps it enhance its economic gains, mitigate the severity of the sanctions imposed on it, and ease the isolation imposed on Russia. This trend was clear at the first Russian-African summit held in 2019, which resulted in 92 agreements in the field of economy and trade between Moscow and some African countries. Despite the growth in the volume of trade exchange between Russia and Africa, it is still limited compared to the volume of trade between Africa and the United States or China. The volume of trade exchange between Moscow and African countries in 2023 amounted to \$22.8 billion. As for direct Russian investment in the continent, it is clear that Russia is seeking to increase its investments in African countries, as evidenced by several examples such as investing \$12.5 billion in the railway sector in Ghana, and implementing investments equivalent to \$1.6 billion in Zimbabwe in the field of platinum mining, in addition to the Russian-Angolan company Kemang owning diamond mining rights in Zimbabwe and Angola. Moscow's mining companies also have exploration rights in 7 African countries, such as the platinum mining project in Zimbabwe, and bauxite mines and an alumina refinery in Guinea. It is noteworthy that Moscow is interested in investing in the fields of mining, gas and oil exploration, and coal extraction, which represents 90% of the volume of Russian investments in the African continent.⁽⁸⁾ From the above, it is clear that Africa represents an important opportunity for Moscow to strengthen its economic position globally, which is considered one of the most important determinants of the Russian role that pushes Moscow to increase its expansion and extend its influence in the African continent.

The Second Pillar: Most important areas of Russian expansion in Africa

The African continent has witnessed an increase in Russian influence in more than one region on the continent, based on Moscow's motives to increase its influence on the continent at all levels, which has made some regions, such as the African Sahel countries, an area of conflict between Moscow and the West. The most important areas of Russian expansion in the African continent are the following:

1- Libya:

Libya is of great strategic importance in Russian foreign policy, and Libya was one of the most important areas of Russian military expansion in Africa. This importance stems from the fact that Libya provides Russia with an opportunity to extend its influence in the Mediterranean, in addition to the fact that it has borders with countries that have become of interest to Moscow, such as Chad. Moscow has a strong presence in the Libyan file and in strategic locations such as the Al-Qardabiya base located in central Libya, and the port of Tobruk in the east. It is also stationed at the Brak Al-Shati base and the Al-Jufra air base. The presence of Wagner forces has also been observed in the city of Sirte, which is an estimated 450 kilometers from the capital, Tripoli, within the framework of the Russian support provided to Haftar in 2019, which included direct combat operations, Russian logistical assistance, and the deployment of advanced Russian weapons such as fighter jets and Russian air defense systems. Moscow seeks to further increase its military influence by establishing what it calls the African Corps, as evidenced by Moscow's transfer of its forces to the port of Al-Hariga located in the city of Tobruk in eastern Libya, and these forces are accompanied by Russian military equipment such as ammunition and other military equipment. The aim of establishing this corps, which is based

in Libya, is for Russia to increase its military penetration into Africa, starting from Libya and passing through the African Sahel countries such as Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso and reaching the Central African Republic. ⁽⁹⁾From the above, it is clear that Libya is one of the most important areas of Russian expansion, which Moscow seeks to make a center for one of its military divisions (the African Corps), in an effort by Russia to increase its expansion and presence on the African continent.

2- Sudan:

Russia began its presence in Sudan through Wagner forces, following the visit of former Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir to Moscow in 2017. These forces provided training to some elements in Sudan, such as the Rapid Support Forces, in exchange for obtaining contracts to prospect for gold in Sudan. ⁽¹⁰⁾For several years, Moscow has been seeking to obtain a Russian military base overlooking the Red Sea, since the agreement signed by Omar al-Bashir with Russia in 2017, which stipulates the establishment of a Russian naval facility in Sudan capable of receiving nuclear-powered warships. This base is used for repair and resupply work. Despite the freezing of this agreement, the past months have witnessed Russian attempts to restore this agreement, as is evident in the statements of Lieutenant General Yasser al-Atta, Assistant Commander-in-Chief of the Sudanese Armed Forces, who stated that Russia requested the establishment of a fuel station overlooking the Red Sea. ⁽¹¹⁾This reflects Moscow's efforts to increase its influence in Sudan, an effort supported by the geopolitical determinants of Russian foreign policy towards Africa.

9 Here is Rami, The African Corps: Restructuring the Russian Military Presence in Africa from the Libyan Gateway, The Egyptian Center for Thought and Strategic Studies, publication date 5/30/2024, access date 12/20/2024.
<https://shorturl.at/ANpbE>

10 Shaima Ali Salama, Security Dimensions in Russian-African Relations, African Horizons, Issue 56, 2023, p. 67.

11 Sky News, Why is Sudan heading towards the Russian-African axis? Publication date 6/4/2024, access date 12/20/2024.
<https://shorturl.at/1U1lh>

3- Countries of the African Sahel region:

The Sahel region of Africa has witnessed many disturbances in recent years. Since 2012, the region has witnessed more than one armed rebellion that required international intervention. This intervention was led by France, and the intervention was through Operation Serval in Mali and Operation Barkhane in the Sahel countries. However, Paris was unable to achieve satisfactory results through its intervention in this region. Rather, the years following the international intervention led by France brought with them many disturbances for the rest of the Sahel countries, which led to humanitarian crises in the region, most notably waves of displacement. This led to an escalation of anti-French rhetoric and Western intervention in the region, which can be considered a state of popular discontent against Western intervention in the Sahel, which led to a series of military coups in more than one country in this region, the most prominent of which was the Niger coup on July 26, 2023, led by Abdel Rahman Cheyeni against President Mohamed Bazoum, who enjoys Western support. Mali also witnessed two military coups in 2020 and 2021. The first coup was against Abu Bakr Keita, who enjoys support from France, and the second coup against The transitional government, some of whose members had French support, is noteworthy. It is worth noting that the leader of the military council in Mali, Assimi Gota, saw Moscow as a better alternative to Western forces, especially French forces. Burkina Faso also witnessed a coup led by Ibrahim Traore that overthrew President Roch Kaboré. Following the same steps as Mali, Traore saw Russia as a better alternative to ally with instead of Western forces, especially France, which contributed to the development of security and military relations between Russia and Burkina Faso. ⁽¹²⁾

12 Reasons, How to understand the future of Russia's influence in the Sahel region through the Niger coup, publication date August 2024, access date 12/21/2024.
<https://shorturl.at/owMLq>



One of the most important consequences of the previous events in the Sahel region, especially the series of military coups, is the reduction of Western influence in the Sahel region. The most prominent evidence of this is the withdrawal of French forces from Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso, Chad's termination of the military cooperation agreement with France on November 28, in addition to the US withdrawal from Niger last August, and the US closing its military base in northern Niger.⁽¹³⁾ Russia is taking advantage of the security vacuum resulting from the Western withdrawal from the countries of the region to increase its influence and increase its military expansion in the African Sahel region. Moscow has provided support to the new regimes in the Sahel countries, in light of the need of the new leaders to support their political legitimacy and train their military forces. In return, Russia benefits from the natural resources in this region, in addition to Moscow's deployment of Wagner forces in the Sahel region to extend its military influence in the region. For example, Wagner forces have officially begun to deploy in Mali since 2022, as part of providing logistical and military support to the Malian army, in exchange for allowing the

Russians to prospect for gold.⁽¹⁴⁾

4- Central African Republic:

The Central African Republic is one of the most prominent areas of Russian influence on the continent. One of the manifestations of Russian expansion in it is the African country's permission for Moscow to establish a military base on its territory. The Central African government has allocated land in Beringo to establish a Russian military base with a capacity of 10,000 soldiers, which is 80 kilometers away from the capital, Bangui.⁽¹⁵⁾ In addition to the presence of Russian Wagner forces in the Central African Republic since 2017, after Russia obtained an exemption from the UN arms embargo, as part of its support for the Central African army and the provision of weapons and military equipment by Moscow, in addition to Wagner forces providing training to local soldiers in the Central African Republic, and assisting the national army in its military operations against the rebels, especially in 2021,

13 Sheikh Muhammad, *The Sahel Region... An Arena of Conflict between the West and Russia*, Middle East, Publication Date 12/20/2024, Access Date 12/21/2024.
<https://shorturl.at/RONLF>

14 Russia in Africa: Growing influence but still unstable foundations, *International Outcomes*, Issue 40, 2023, p. 7.

15 Sky News, *Russian base in Central Africa.. Moscow establishes its presence on the continent*, publication date 2/12/2024, access date 12/21/2024.
<https://shorturl.at/9pdyw>

in addition to providing protection for President Faustin Touadera, and this support is in exchange for obtaining diamond exploration rights.⁽¹⁶⁾ From the above, it is clear that Russian influence in Africa has increased in recent years and up until the present time. This influence is concentrated in the Sahel region, Sudan, Libya, and the Central African Republic, regions that have witnessed numerous disturbances and crises that reflect the security fragility of the countries in these regions, and the subsequent security vacuum, especially after the withdrawal of Western powers from them, such as the French and American withdrawal from the African Sahel, which Moscow exploited to fill this vacuum and to increase its military expansion in the African continent.

The Third Pillar: Most prominent challenges facing Russian expansion in Africa:

Despite the increase in Russian military expansion in Africa, Moscow's influence is now surrounded by a set of challenges that impose themselves on Russia as it seeks to extend more influence in Africa. The most prominent challenges are the following:

1- The growth of terrorist groups' activities in Africa:

It is noted that terrorist activity continues to grow in the African continent. A region such as the African Sahel has witnessed many acts of violence and terrorist acts, and it is one of the African regions that is witnessing the expansion of extremist groups' activity. One of the most prominent terrorist groups in the African Sahel is the Organization for the Support of Islam and Muslims (JNIM), and the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS), and the Islamic State of West Africa (ISWAP). The Sahel region also includes areas that have witnessed a significant increase in terrorist activities, such as central Mali, the tri-border area (Liptak and Gourma), the Lake Chad basin, western Niger, and southwestern Burkina Faso.⁽¹⁷⁾ It is noteworthy that terrorist organizations do not stop carrying out their extremist activities in the

Sahel region. Perhaps the most prominent of these attacks was carried out by Al-Qaeda last September, when the terrorist organization attacked a military airport and a gendarmerie school in the Malian capital, Bamako. This extremist attack resulted in 70 deaths, which is a warning that terrorism is capable of reaching vital places in the heart of the capital in Mali, which indicates the extent of the security breach that the African Sahel region suffers from.⁽¹⁸⁾ In addition to the announcement by the Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims of holding two Russian hostages in Niger, the increase in terrorism in the Sahel region of Africa threatens the Russian presence in the region. This represents a major challenge to Moscow, regarding its ability to confront terrorism and extremist groups in the Sahel region, as it is one of the most prominent military partners of the countries of this region that suffer from security breaches and the growth of terrorism. It is worth noting that France has intervened in this region for decades without being able to achieve field gains against terrorism as expected.

2- The growth of separatist movements in Africa:

Some areas of Russian influence are witnessing a growth in the activity of separatist movements, such as the Tuareg movement in northern Mali. It is worth noting that the most prominent event in this regard is the armed clashes that took place between the Malian National Army and the Russian Wagner forces against armed groups affiliated with the Tuareg rebel movement, on July 22, which resulted in the killing of approximately 80 members of the Wagner forces and the Malian army, in the city of Tinzaratne, located in northern Mali. This battle represents a crisis for Moscow, which is considered the most prominent security partner for the countries of the African Sahel region as an alternative to the Western forces that were unable to eliminate the separatist movements and terrorism in the region, especially France.⁽¹⁹⁾

16 Shaima Ali Salama, Security Dimensions in Russian-African Relations, African Horizons, p. 68, previous reference.

17 Afaf Yahya, Renewed Conflicts in the African Sahel Region: An Analysis from a Socio-Political Perspective, International Politics, Issue 238, Volume 59, October 2024, pp. 77 and 78.

18 Sheikh Mohammed, The Sahel Region... An Arena of Conflict between the West and Russia, Middle East, previous reference.

19 Ahmed Askar, Why was Wagner defeated in northern Mali? Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies, publication date 8/1/2024, access date 12/22/2024. <https://shorturl.at/abBRG>

The increasing activity of separatist movements in the Sahel region poses a challenge to Russia, to prove its strength and the effectiveness of its military presence in eliminating rebellion and terrorism movements in the region. This will require Moscow to further strengthen its military presence in its areas of influence in Africa, so that Russia's image does not shake in the eyes of African public opinion, especially in its areas of influence, as a security and military partner capable of eliminating rebellion and extremism in its areas of influence, especially since Russia, represented by the Wagner forces, has a failed experience in Mozambique when it failed to achieve its goals of eliminating extremist movements there, which ended with its withdrawal from Mozambique.

3- Accusing Russia of supporting authoritarian regimes in Africa:

Russia faces criticism that it represents a model similar to the Chinese model, which faces accusations of exploiting African countries economically. In this regard, the Russian model faces accusations of supporting authoritarian regimes in Africa to achieve Moscow's economic interests. Some of Moscow's positions are referred to, such as Russia's obstruction of the United Nations' efforts to examine the results of the disputed elections in the Congo in 2019. Russia also faces accusations that it supports instability on the continent by providing military support to authoritarian regimes in order to achieve its economic interests by obtaining exploration rights for oil, gas and other strategic resources in its areas of influence in Africa. This accusation assumes that Russia is interested in Africa out of a desire to oppose Western influence as part of its quest to create a balanced and multipolar international system.⁽²⁰⁾

4-The impact of the Russian-Ukrainian war on the Russian role in Africa:

The Russian-Ukrainian war has negatively affected Russian arms exports, which have decreased by 30% due to sanctions imposed on Russian defense industries, which may be reflected in Russian military expansion in Africa. In addition, Moscow's use of Iranian weapons in its war against Ukraine may raise doubts among African decision-makers about the future of reliance on Russian weapons, who may look for other alternatives to Russian arms exports.

From the above, it is clear that Russia's intervention in some regions in Africa, and its increasing military influence there, imposes a number of challenges on it, as it is the military partner and alternative security ally to the West. The West has not been able to achieve the expected results in the files of terrorism and separatist movements, and since Moscow has exploited the vacuum caused by the Western withdrawal from some regions, it has become imperative for Russia to deal with these files effectively, in addition to some other challenges that impose themselves on Moscow in a way that threatens its expansion and influence in Africa.

The Fourth Pillar: Future prospects for the Russian role in Africa:

By reading the current events in the African arena, it becomes clear that the Russian role in Africa is governed by several scenarios, such as:

Scenario 1:

Russian-African relations are likely to witness positive developments that support the expansion of Russian influence in Africa. African countries are seeking to establish strategic partnerships with emerging powers such as Russia and China, which will represent an opportunity for Moscow to increase its influence on the African continent. The recent wave of coups in the Sahel region of Africa reflected the extent of convergence between the

20 Shaimaa Al-Baksh, Russian-African Military Cooperation... Three Challenges, Egyptian Center for Thought and Strategic Studies, publication date 10/26/2019, access date 12/22/2024. <https://shorturl.at/4Bofs>

new regimes in more than one African country and Moscow. These countries saw Moscow as an alternative ally to Western allies such as France and the United States. Russia's efforts to increase its military presence in Africa may also represent an opportunity to increase Russian military bases in Africa in the future, such as the Russian military base in the Central African Republic. Some African countries also see Moscow as their hope in confronting grain and food shortage crises. This is supported by Russian President Vladimir Putin's pledge to provide grain for free to some African countries so that they can meet their food needs and overcome food shortage crises, which supports Russian influence on the African continent.⁽²¹⁾

Scenario 2:

If political unrest, terrorist crises, separatist movements, and the resulting humanitarian crises continue,

assuming that Moscow does not play the role expected of it in containing these crises and achieving stability in its areas of influence, the Russian role in Africa may decline.

The Russian-Ukrainian war has had negative effects on Moscow's influence in Africa. For example, the sanctions imposed on Russian military industries have led to a decrease in their arms exports, which may affect Russian military support provided to African countries as one of the most prominent military partners of some African countries, such as the Sahel countries. The United States will also try to contain the Russian tide in Africa. In 2022, the US House of Representatives issued sanctions against Moscow's activities and sanctions on African countries cooperating with Russia. If this American pressure on some African countries continues, the Russian role may decline in some areas of Moscow's influence.⁽²²⁾

21 Nour El-Din Hassani Sharqi and Abdullah Muhammad Qasim, Russia's Strategy in the African Continent, Objectives, Determinants, Future Dimension, Dijlah University College Journal, Issue 2, Volume 7, June 2024, p. 103.

22 Nour El Din Hassani Sharqi and Abdullah Muhammad Qasim, Russia's Strategy in the African Continent, Objectives, Determinants, Future Dimension, p. 104, previous reference.





Conclusion:

The growth of Russian influence in Africa represents a significant shift in the continent's political and military landscape. Moscow's efforts to strengthen its presence could reshape relations between Russia and African nations, particularly as some countries view Russia as a viable alternative to the West. This perception stems from the West's perceived failure to deliver on promises such as achieving stability and eliminating terrorism and rebel movements. However, this presents a crucial challenge for Moscow, determining whether its influence will expand or contract. Russia is compelled to provide substantial military and security support to countries within its sphere of influence. This approach is driven by Russian objectives, notably the pursuit of a multipolar world order that balances global power. This necessitates challenging Western, particularly American, influence in regions like Africa, which, with its vast potential, has become an arena for international competition.