

Iran's Dual Geopolitical Approach towards African States

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Abstract : Written to satisfy the needs of Western powers, classical geopolitics bore the tint of Eurocentrism. Both Mackinder's heartland and Nicholas Spykman's rimland were intellectual creations set for the purpose of the Anglophone nations dealing with Eurasia. However, while today's world is moving towards multipolarity, other emerging regional actors are following their own interests using a different geospatial map. Such is the case of Iran which has developed an engagement pattern in Africa, directed mostly towards coastal states, in order to break the rimland grip of Arab states and also the international pressure established against Tehran's nascent nuclear program. Capitalizing on literature review and analysing statements from key public figures, our paper argues that Iranian African geopolitics displays a dual message: on the one hand, it uses tiers-mondiste rhetoric to garner the support of different coastal African states and, on the other hand, it employs Shiism to gain a foothold in strategic parts of the black continent.

Keywords : African geopolitics, Iran, Shiism, tiers-mondisme

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