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## IMPACT OF HOUTHİ MOVEMENT IN THE RED SEA ON SUDAN'S NATIONAL SECURITY

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### **Abstract**

The Red Sea is considered of strategic importance to the Arab countries in general and Sudan in particular. The importance of the Red Sea stems from being an Arab strategic depth, in addition to its geopolitical characteristics, which in turn have become a magnet for regional and inter- national forces. Such forces are eager to play a vital role in the region to achieve their interests, and to take advantage of the economic conditions, political turmoil and the collapse of state institutions in some bordering countries. Moreover, Sudan has the coast on the Red Sea, which requires attention to its security. This study provided a different perspective for the security of the Red Sea through several different and diverse entry points. The study recommends the establishment of a regional organization that includes all countries on the Red Sea, through which political, economic and security issues will be discussed. This study attempts to shed light on the geopolitical importance of the Red Sea and attempt to find an approach to defining the Red Sea and maritime strategy, as many of the Arab countries bordering it share the collective responsibility for its protection, and after both the Suez Canal and the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, the entrances to the Red Sea are among the most important sites affecting its security and movement. Navigation in it is of strategic and economic importance, and the security of the Red Sea is part of the security of the countries surrounding it, in addition to its importance to the major countries with regard to the movement of navigation in it and the connection between this and the commercial and economic interests of those countries. The movement of interaction has recently increased at the regional level, especially with the emergence of new players in the Red Sea arena, such as Iran and the Houthi group it supports, in addition to the interest of the major powers in the continuity of shipping traffic in it, and an attempt to study the impact of this and ways to interact with these variables.

### **Introduction:**

Sudan's geographical location is characterized by strategic importance. It is located in northeastern Africa, bordered by Egypt to the north, Libya to the northwest, Chad to the west,

the Central African Republic to the southwest, South Sudan to the south, Ethiopia to the southeast, Eritrea to the east, and the Red Sea to the northeast. The Red Sea is considered an Arab strategic depth for Sudan, and any breach of security in it or in the countries bordering it has repercussions that negatively affect the national security of Sudan and the Arab region. The Red Sea is characterized by strategic, economic, and military importance at the national level for the countries bordering it and the desire to protect their national security, as well as at the regional level for countries aspiring to exercise regional leadership, and also at the international level for countries seeking to preserve their interests in distant overseas territories, because the Red Sea is a strategic Arab depth, a vital area and a coveted regional and international by its geopolitical characteristics. It is considered one of the busiest straits for commercial and military maritime traffic at the global level after the Strait of Hormuz and the Strait of Malacca, and approximately three million barrels per day of oil passes through it towards the western countries of the Arabian Gulf, in addition to being the shortest trade route between East and West and a convenient route for the rush of military power towards the world's oceans. Since Sudan overlooks the Red Sea. It must build a strategy through which it can protect its national security in the face of challenges that it may face at its long western borders against any foreign ambitions and aspirations that will negatively affect its security and stability.

### **Study problem**

Sudan was concerned with the security of the Red Sea due to the heavy foreign presence of countries that were outside the region's security calculations at the international level, such as China and Japan, and at the regional level, such as Israel, Iran, and Turkey. This, in turn, raises a state of concern for Sudan due to the strategic importance of the Red Sea to Sudanese and Arab interests, which requires an unconventional Sudanese vision that goes beyond military force, which is no longer useful alone to guarantee Sudan's security. Accordingly, the following main question arises: What is Sudan's strategic vision to ensure the security of the Red Sea? This raises several sub-questions:

- On the vision of the Republic of Sudan for the security of the Red Sea, most notably: What are the strategic characteristics of the Red Sea?
- What are the patterns of conflicts in the Red Sea region and the Horn of Africa?
  - What is the reality of the foreign presence in the region?

### **Study importance:**

The importance of the study stems from the importance of the increasing role of the Red Sea on the foundations of security for Sudan and the Arab world due to the heavy foreign presence, whether regional or international and the regional conflicts in the region, especially the war in Yemen. The war on terrorism, and the fight against piracy in turn opened the door for countries that have ambitions in the region that they seek to achieve, using those conditions as an excuse to intervene and achieve their interests. Therefore, this study helps clarify the strategic

importance of the Red Sea and identify the reality of regional conflicts and problems in the Red Sea region and the Horn of Africa, understanding the reality of regional and international ambitions towards the region and working to build a strategic vision to protect this region from regional and international ambitions that threaten Sudanese national security in particular and Arab national security in general.

### **Study objectives**

1. Highlighting the geostrategic importance of the Red Sea.
2. Attempting to find an approach to defining Red Sea security and its regional and international dimensions.
3. Analyzing the role and competition of international powers towards the Red Sea and how to enhance dealing with its gains.

### **Previous studies**

Salem's study (2016): It is entitled Iranian encroachment in the Red Sea and the Arabian Sea, and it sought to clarify Iranian ambitions in the Red Sea region, explaining its tools and methods to achieve this, It also addressed the extent of Iranian penetration into the Red Sea and Horn of Africa countries. The Iranian strategic thought is based on its ambitions in that region as a follower of the Persian government in the defunct Persian state of Khosrau, and what combines this study with the current study is to clarify the extent of the Iranian expansion in the region.

Al-Sayed's study (2010): It is entitled American policy towards the Horn of Africa after the Cold War, dealt with American policy towards the Horn of Africa during the period after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the fall of the entire region under American influence, and shed light the new American justifications for its presence in the region under the pretext of combating terrorism and piracy as a justification for legislating its presence. It also addressed the size and locations of the American presence in the countries of the region, and in its entirety it coincides with the current study in shedding light on international and regional influence and ambitions in the Red Sea region.

Sultan's study (1984): It is entitled The Red Sea, the Arab -Israeli Conflict and Competition between Two Strategies. The researcher sought to highlight the geopolitical importance of the Red Sea and the Horn of Africa and the impact of this importance in attracting regional and international powers, which in turn worked to exploit the political conditions and their problems in justifying and supporting their survival, Especially the Israeli presence and its danger to the Arab strategic depth represented in the Red Sea region, which in turn meets our study by highlighting the importance of the Red Sea and regional and international ambitions in the region. This study is distinguished from previous studies in that it presented a strategic vision for achieving security in the Red Sea and the Horn of Africa region through several political, economic, military, social, and cultural approaches, presenting unconventional

security proposals that went beyond the traditional thought of achieving security that depends on the military entrance. This military entrance has proven to be ineffective through its high cost, ineffectiveness, and failure to meet all the requirements expected of it. This encouraged the researcher to present an unconventional security approach that would be a logical alternative, at the very least, to achieve the security of the Red Sea, transcending traditional security thought.

### **Study approach**

The study relies on the analytical approach to analyze international agreements and what has been written in this field. We also used the descriptive approach to define and clarify the concepts that are addressed in the context of the study and the historical approach.

### **Study structure**

The study is divided into two chapters. The first chapter deals with the Red Sea and its importance in two topics. The second chapter deals with the impact of the Houthi movements on Sudanese national security in two topics. It then discusses the most important outcomes of the study and the recommendations that we deemed appropriate.

### **Chapter One: The Red Sea and its importance**

#### **First topic: The importance of the Red Sea**

The "Red Sea" is extremely important because it is considered one of the most important maritime roads in the world as it provides regional and international powers with the ability to reach the Mediterranean Sea "the open oceans". The Red Sea occupies a major political and strategic importance to regional and international powers, where many reasons are explained for the Red Sea that illustrate its importance

#### **First: Red Sea site and its importance**

The sea 22/3, the sea is a long, narrow basin that covers an area of up to 178 thousand square miles. The Red Sea is located between latitude 36.12 and longitude 25.17. The Red Sea is bordered to the northwest by the Gulf of Suez and to the south by Bab al-Mandab. It reaches from Bab al-Mandab to the entrance to the Gulf of Suez about 1,380 miles (Muhammad Tawfiq, 1983, p 29). It was larger in its middle, and shallower at its two ends, and the distance of the Red Sea reached about 1,180 miles, with a great depth of up to 10,000 feet (Muhammad Tawfiq, 1983, p 85). The width of the Red Sea has varied greatly, although the average of the Red Sea is about 170 miles. It narrows from the north and south, but there is a situation that may lead to a choke at the Bab al-Mandab Strait from the south and the Tiran Straits from the north, The Red Sea extends to 190 miles, located between Massawa in Eritrea on the African coast and Jizan in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on the Asian coast. The narrowest area in the Red Sea may reach only 40 miles between the "Aseb" located in Eritrea "On the African Coast" and the "Al-Mokha" in the "Arab Republic of Yemen".

The length of the Red Sea coasts extended with the Gulf of Aqaba and Suez reached about 3069 miles, and with the addition of the coasts in the Gulf of Aden, the total length of its coasts

reached 4347 miles. The coastline of the Red Sea is long, and each mile of this coast covers about 57.9 square miles of water surface (Muhammad Tawfiq, 1983, p29), the excessive length of the coastline helps the countries located on it to better monitor or control the sea in terms of geological effects (Muhammad Tawfiq, 1983, p29).

The Red Sea is subject to the possibility of coastal control through the rule of Its disproportionate length and limited width, as well as the situation of severe lack in terms of navigational depth, considering that this control is increasing as we turn south or north, where navigation is also difficult due to the shallowness of the waters (Muhammad Tawfiq, 1983, p86). The Red Sea continental sidewalk is narrow and Its width ranges between six miles and a hundred miles, but there Is a state of lack of this sidewalk in some parts. The continental sidewalk is narrow, especially to the north, and wide to the south, at latitude 17. It is also narrower on the African coast than on the Asian coast, as it becomes narrower with the presence of deep water through the middle points (Ajih Younan, 1986, p28). The geographical features of the Red Sea, we find them as follows:

#### **Gulf of Aqaba:**

The “Gulf of Aqaba” represents the rift point of the Red Sea and is its northeastern arm. The Gulf of Aqaba is located between approximately 28 and 29 latitudes and to the north, and Its length reaches 110 miles. Its width ranges between 8 and 17 miles, with an average of 10 miles in width, although it narrows to reach only 8 miles at the entrance to the Gulf. However, the depth of the Gulf becomes clear, as it is heavy at the head, then its depth increases by about 2160 feet, and the deepest point is located in the middle, reaching 4,600 feet. As soon as the gulf returned to shallowness again reached 2,400 feet. The Straits of Tiran are located at the entrance to the Gulf of Aqaba, and the islands of Tiran and Sanafir divide them into three actual waterways, including one navigable waterway, which is the link between Tiran Island and Sinai, with a width of up to (3.7 miles), as for the other two waterways in the balance of shallowness. The Gulf of Aqaba is surrounded by “the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia” with a coastline extending to 94 miles, Jordan with a coastal line extending to five miles, Israel with a coastline extending to seven miles, then “Egypt” with its coastline reaching approximately (125 miles) (Muhammad Tawfiq, 1983, p28-29).

#### **Gulf of Suez**

The Gulf of Suez is considered the northwestern arm of the Red Sea and is defined as a depression located between latitudes 27 and 29 to the north. The length of the Gulf of Suez reaches two hundred miles, and the width of the Gulf reaches twenty miles on average. It narrows at its entrance to about 18 miles, but in terms of depth, the Gulf reaches on average 200 and 300 feet. At the entrance to the Gulf is the Strait of Jubal, which includes several islands, the most important of which are Umm Qamar, Shadwan, and Jubal (Muhammad Tawfiq, 1983, p28-29). The Suez Canal, which opened in 1869, connected the Gulf of Suez and is considered a link between them. Its width ranges between 700/500 feet and its depth

does not exceed 38 feet (Muhammad Tawfiq, 1983, p28-29).

### **Bab al-Mandab**

Bab al-Mandeb is the main choke point and the basis of the southern entrance to the Red Sea. Bab el-Mandeb is twenty miles wide and Perim (Mayyun) Island is divided into two waterways, the Eastern Canal is less than two miles wide and reaches a depth of about 85 feet, while the Western Canal is about 16 miles wide (Mahmoud Naana, 1974, p 7), and reaches a depth of 990 feet. It is considered the only navigable canal (Amal Ibrahim, 1978, p25).

### **Islands**

The Red Sea consists of 379 islands, most of which are very small. In every square mile of the water body, there is an island (Imad Qaddoura, 1988, p14). Most of them are found in the southern part of the Red Sea, and this number decreases if we head north. Some of these islands are volcanic, while others are coral and uninhabited. It is possible to use most of them for military purposes. These purposes are described as tactical points or starting points for controlling navigation in the Red Sea (Abdullah Abdul Mohsen, 1984, p31).

The strategic importance of some of the Red Sea islands is based on doubling the efforts of the coastal states extending over it to control these islands, and they are also increasing the defensive responsibilities that must be annexed by the countries owning the islands themselves, and since about 66.8% of these islands are all Arab lands, the Arab countries located on the Red Sea consider it necessary for them to defend their islands against Hostile forces (Ajih Younan, 1986, p30). This is as shown in the following Table (1):

**Table 1:** Distribution of islands in the Red Sea

<b>Country</b>	<b>Island NO.</b>	<b>The most important island</b>
Ethiopia (Eritrea)	126	Malak, Fatima, Haleb, Doumir
Djibouti	6	Ceiba, Molelah
Saudi Arabia	144	Farasan
Sudan	36	Suakin
Egypt	26	Shadwan, Suhail, Siyal
South Yemen	2	Prem, Hanish Al- Kubra
North Yemen	39	Kamaran, Zuqar

The navigation movement in the Red Sea fell into a major problem. For example, when the Europeans came to the Red Sea in early times, they had to adjust their sails to suit the winds of the Red Sea, and this situation continued until they learned from the Arabs the necessity of hanging the sails on the masts to benefit from the changing, violent winds that blow over the Red Sea (Muhammad Tawfiq, 1983, p24).

### **Second: Geopolitical Implications**

#### **The site:**

The Red Sea is characterized by a unique geopolitical location that imposes a state of

complexity on regional and international relations (Abdullah Abdul Mohsen, 1984, p33). It is located at the meeting point of three continents: “Africa” to the west, Asia to the east, and “Europe” to the north. The Red Sea is located " in a large place between the seas of the East and the West, it can be likened to a floating bridge connecting the East and the West, the Red Sea connects the Arabian Sea, the Indian Ocean, and the Mediterranean Sea through the Bab al-Mandeb strait in the south and the Suez Canal in the North, so the "Red Sea" becomes a strategic point for many waterways. The Red Sea is considered part of the unstable Middle East region that was the source of the three divine messages: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The Red Sea is located in a range adjacent to South Asia, the Indian Ocean, the Horn of Africa, and the Mediterranean Sea. Most importantly, the Red Sea is located between the largest oil fields in the Arabian Gulf and the largest oil consumers in Western Europe (Ajih Younan, 1986, p57). In 1976, the Red Sea produced oil fields in the Gulf amounting to 21.489 million barrels or 38% of the value of the world’s oil. In the same year, Western industrial countries consumed 33,110 million barrels or 56.3% of global oil consumption. Since 1976, Western industrialized countries have imported about 96.9% of their needs for Gulf oil, which contains 85.5% of the value of known global oil reserves (Jalal Yehya, 1962, p6).

### **Second topic: The Strategic Importance of the Red Sea**

The Red Sea is one of the most important global maritime routes, given that the Red Sea serves many regional and international powers and has the potential to reach the Mediterranean Sea, the Atlantic Ocean, and the Indian Ocean, hence the strategic importance of the Red Sea through its geographical location (Ajih Younan, 1986, p57). As soon as the year 1869 came, the “Red Sea” became a large extension of the Suez Canal. Then the importance of the Red Sea increased after the discovery of oil in the Arabian Gulf region and in recent years since World War II. Especially since the Arab-Israeli War in 1973, the world's attraction to the Red Sea has increased because of its political, military, and economic importance.

In the political context, since the 1973 war, the Red Sea has become a vital security issue that is being fought over by all the countries bordering it, the Red Sea also became "a central axis around which these countries competed for influence and control it. Likewise, the competition between the East and the West replaced the traditional competition that was raging between both the English and the Arabs in the Red Sea. As for the northern Red Sea, the Israelis, in turn, added the Zionist complexity to the Issue after 1967 on the other hand (Muhammad Tawfiq, 1983, p37). In 1977, Ethiopia came to power since the Marxists took power, and with it its main allies, the Soviet Union and Cuba entered power, in addition to the arena of competition with the Arab countries regarding “Eritrea” and other points in the region. From a military perspective, the importance of the Red Sea is the main entrance to the Indian Ocean, and this is through the Bab al-Mandab Strait, which is characterized, along with the Horn of Africa, of great importance to the two superpowers. As it is based on the presence of these powers in the Indian Ocean and its adjacent regions, these two powers are engaged in

competition, especially around the Red Sea, the Indian Ocean, and the Mediterranean Sea, due to the great importance that the locations of those seas acquire in related to the interests of those two powers through the economic, military, and strategic aspects (Imad Qaddoura, 1988, p40).

As for the economic aspect of the “Red Sea”, it constituted a valuable reason for connecting the people living on its coast, who continued to enjoy mutual benefits among them, especially in the field of trade, hence, the Red Sea has continued throughout history to represent the main outlet for the peoples overlooking it, especially Because most of the Red Sea countries do not have a sea outlet other than it, except the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, with Its 300-mile coastline on the Arabian Gulf, “Egypt,” whose Mediterranean coastline is 538 miles long, and “Israel,” whose Mediterranean coastline is 118 miles long (Abdullah Abdul Mohsen, 1984, p35). Some countries do not have other sea outlets, so they depend heavily on the Red Sea. The countries of Djibouti, Somalia, and South Yemen are all located on the Gulf of Aden, which is considered the natural entrance to the Red Sea, it participates with it through its natural characteristics and geopolitical importance. From the geographical aspect, these countries are considered the Red Sea countries (Jalal Yehya, 1962, p 4-5). The number of Arab countries “the Red Sea countries” reaches eight: “Jordan, Saudi Arabia, North Yemen, South Yemen, Somalia, Djibouti, Sudan, Egypt.” As for the non-Arab countries, they are “Israel.” On the northeastern side, and Ethiopia on the southwestern side. It is worth noting that a number of these countries are coincidentally concentrated near the narrow northern and southern outlets of the Red Sea, a fact that could lead to a conflict between these countries if they seek more control and influence over the reins of the Red Sea, which overlooks it. The Red Sea is distinguished in our current times as a waterway crossed by the most important strategic commodity, which is oil, Since the 1930s, there has been a revolutionary revolution in the regional and international functions that the Red Sea performed after it became the main route for Gulf oil heading to Europe and the United States of America. The Red Sea is considered a waterway for Western industrial products that are exchanged for raw materials coming from the Third World. Hence, the Red Sea has great importance from the economic aspect for the Arab countries in particular, as there are commodities whose main export is oil, at a rate of 93-100% of the exports of Arab countries such as “Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, and Oman”.

The Red Sea is considered to have strategic importance, whether because of its proximity to the oil fields in the Arabian Gulf or the sources of raw materials in Africa (Abdel Nafi, 1979, p 97). Historically, the Red Sea has continued to be a hotbed of conflict through the tension of prominent conflicts in the region, and there is a major difference between those conflicts, not a difference in diversity, but in the degree and timing of their occurrence. These differences reflect the emergence of the characteristics of the Red Sea over the centuries, as well as the great relationship between the characteristics and other forces (Ahmed Ezzat, 1980, p660).

The increasing importance of the economic and strategic "Suez" route has led to an increase in the importance of the Red Sea as a trade crossing, with the increasing importance of oil, demonstrating the importance of the Arabian Gulf as a major producer and exporter in the world, with its great importance to Western Europe and America on the other side of the route. Among these characteristics is also the importance of the Red Sea in the history of colonialism as a maritime outlet on the route to India and the Far East, and in the colonization of eastern Africa by Western countries, this importance increased after the digging of the Suez Canal. The Red Sea witnessed abundant economic and military activity and competition. These Arab countries almost cover all the shores of the Red Sea, but the small Israeli presence on the Gulf of Aqaba and the role of the Red Sea as an outlet for Israel's trade with the regions to its south and east. This makes the Red Sea an area of conflict between Israel and the Arab countries, and there have been attempts to reach a settlement of the issue for some time now. They may fail if they end in settling the existing conflict between "Israel" and some Arab countries, it is possible that the conflict between "Israel" and some other Arab countries will last for quite a while and will be reflected in the Red Sea (Ahmed Ezzat, 1980, p661).

It is possible that these images can be added to some important phenomena in our current world, they are phenomena that have repercussions on the Red Sea and the conflict existing in it. The first of these phenomena was the phenomenon of the increasing importance of the Arab world and the Middle East through its multiple and diverse outlets and in various directions through its huge oil production, reserves, exports, stocks, and financial strength. That has a major impact on the world, whether advanced or backward, while demonstrating its huge purchasing power, and its closeness to the southern Soviet Union, one of the two giants. That is as an intermediate link in the heart of the continental triad, with all its serious importance, and at the entrances from the north and east to the African continent. The second phenomenon was the increasing importance of the African continent at the current stage through its huge and increasing wealth. Which is being discovered again day after day, through its large market, whether for consumption needs, production, or influence. Or as a large and growing field for colonization through its strategic importance, considering that it is a source of many materials of strategic importance (Ahmed Ezzat, 1980, p663). The third phenomenon in our current world, is the phenomenon of increasing international conflict over these regions and Third World countries, especially its clear appearance in the Eastern Hemisphere. The cases of conflict and its circles have increased, whether local, regional, or global, it supports all sides with common or close interests in the face of opposing sides that support each other. It is possible to decide for various outlets, especially the maritime ones, in today's conflict-ridden world, a big role. There is an increasing importance that the Red Sea has great importance among these outlets, especially with the importance of the surrounding areas.

In the recent past, especially in the recent period, the conversation increased about the Red Sea and its security, and the government has paid attention to this issue and mobilized many

different bodies to discuss this topic. And to pay attention to multiple governmental meetings, whether bilateral or multilateral, during the past two years regarding the statements issued by these meetings and the statements announced by officials in many countries. It is sufficient to clarify, for example, the necessity of thinking for a while, and reaching the form it has reached today is due to the joint research project carried out by the Center for Political and Strategic Studies, which is affiliated with Al-Ahram Foundation, by assisting with research groups located in Italy and West Germany (Muhammad Abdel Salam, 1977, p5).

Many people talk about transforming the Red Sea into an Arab lake, how to control its entrances or exits, the Arabs blocking off whoever they want or do not want, the dimensions of the Red Sea from the influence of major powers, and international conflict, etc. Knowing that by simply controlling the coasts of the Red Sea, over oil of great strategic importance, or an island with an important position in a certain period. All of this, despite its great importance, does not guarantee complete unity of maritime control over a region, given that the important element in maritime control is the maritime power itself. This power, if achieved, would excel over others, and it would have achieved sovereignty at sea, and failed in others or prevented him from achieving that sovereignty, its oil centers were of great strategic importance and prevented others from doing this, and sometimes even took them out of it. The guardian of these gates and the strategic oil does not achieve control or sovereignty and is based on assistance and support, but the lesson is mainly based on sovereignty and control (Jalal Yehya, 1962, p15).

United States of America highlights all its interests considering that it is a crossing point for global trade, especially the oil crossing. The Red Sea is an important link based on the flow of its maritime forces on the global side and its necessary presence if the situation escalates. In this sea or any other place, it helps friends and deters enemies, so it flexes all its muscles and demonstrates its presence, in any case, for the sake of the Soviet presence with an American presence (Ahmed Ezzat, 1980, p20), also the Soviet Union has vital interests in the Red Sea (Muhammad Tawfiq, 1983, p87). There is part of the universality of the interests and power of the two giant countries, which is their presence everywhere on the planet. Therefore, no public sea has been closed, no matter how small or narrow, it is unimaginable for anyone to allow this, and the rules and facilities have prevented them from working to exist no matter what the cost, but it is not impossible in any way (Amin Huwaidi, 1980, p104).

The phenomenon of bunkering in the Red Sea is an existing reality and has large dimensions, and it compensates for the lack of provision of the necessary land facilities in the case of progress in shipbuilding and development in the use of fuel that does not require the presence of multiple and close bases. It is also necessary in the past, even in the recent past, that the state of progress in strategic aviation and the capabilities available in transporting airborne forces constitute, when necessary, an important support for maritime forces in carrying out their missions in many places in the world (Muhammad Hassanein, 1972, p3). We must

remember an important point first, which is that in this world where the state of conflict and competition over third world countries is increasing. This leads to an increase in the state of conflict over third-world countries, where the circles of using facilities that were used at a later time overlap. It is possible that this aspect will be prevented from being present in a region and influencing it very effectively, and the giant country will not allow this no matter what the situation (Ahmed Ezzat, 1980, p664). These countries have acquired many facilities in other places while complicating those facilities in other places. It is sufficient to explain, for example, that while the Soviets lost some facilities in the Red Sea and beyond in Egypt, Sudan, and Somalia, these facilities they provided increased in South Yemen, Ethiopia, and other places in the Indian Ocean.

It is purely hypothetical that most of the local forces all stood together, and this is in the circumstances that are widespread at that stage in which we live. These giant countries and the international conflicts between them are all wishes that are difficult to come true. The presence of the Red Sea is considered a link in a group of global navigation routes linked to the sea outlets beyond it. The presence of Red Sea itself is one of the most important seas in the world, due to its great strategic importance. All this has major issues and it is not possible to keep the world powers away from this sea, no matter how many attempts as well as dreams and aspirations reached (Muhammad Tawfiq, 1983, p43).

The state of conflict and competition between the two giant countries is not based only on the presence of the two giants in the Red Sea, but also gives others more freedom of movement in it, and no one is allowed to use this sea with an International Bank and strategic importance. The lesser powers' countries enjoy a greater degree of freedom of movement than before, in addition to the presence of international norms and freedom to roam the seas. It usually belongs to a bloc that exists for the sake of conflict against another, and it is in the interest of its friends that it must be present to add activity, strength, and assistance. It is important to add another activity in the world of indirect intervention that exists at this stage, and in the world of intervention by proxy. We often find that these countries have an important share in the distribution of roles and in playing these roles and that the presence of these forces in the Red Sea is necessary for them and others (Jalal Yehya, 1962, p18). These countries were playing an influential role by proxy in the region in which, if it did not win over one party in the competition of giants and blocs if it offered something, it would be a great deal at the regional level for the other giant party with the help of a political trend and a specific group. The freedom of these forces in the seas, and small countries was not a vital issue for their interests, but rather an important issue for the movement of large countries and their rise in the current international framework (Ahmed Ezzat, 1980, p667). The implementation of all methods of pressure, grants, and deprivation in exceptional circumstances of international polarization, which is characterized by controlled conflict and a state of coexistence and competition at the same time. That is considered an unrealistic issue and cannot be imagined unless an agreement

is reached between the two giants or what those two giants remain silent about together and at the same time, and this thing is not easy to imagine in light of the international conflict that exists today. This brings us to what some confirm and what others hope that the Arabs will succeed, if they unite, in closing the Red Sea to “Israel”. It is important for us here to address this matter with some objectivity:

1. All the countries bordering the Red Sea, except Israel, unite to ensure the achievement of the goal because in the interest, necessity, and reality there are foreign countries that this behavior affects their interests and status and cannot remain silent about it. They are considered capable of preventing the movement of those who are trying to prevent this, it is not in the interest of the other side in the controlled international conflict we are living in to assist this prevention with the meanings it carries, and this leads to one of the complications of this. As well as the Union of the world of all the countries overlooking the Red Sea in the conditions of polarization that the countries of the Third World cross, and this is an unrealistic assumption.
2. There is an assumption that all the Arab countries overlooking the Red Sea will unite in the circumstances of polarization and social conflict that surround third-world countries, and this is an unrealistic assumption. The experience of the 1973 October War with “Israel” demonstrated, days after it began, that the attempt to close the Red Sea to “Israel” could not last because the Western bloc and the United States of America could not allow this.
3. In addition, “Israel” found another outlet on the seas, through the Mediterranean Sea, although this outlet is the primary outlet for Israel through North Africa, South, and East Asia, considering that it is a much longer outlet than if the Red Sea was used as an outlet for those areas. Before 1956, “Israel” did not kneel in its conflict and did not prevent its movement with the aforementioned areas. Events later made clear that the idea of closing the Red Sea to “Israel” was an issue that it could not, nor could its major friends, accept and remain silent about (Ahmed Ezzat, 1980, p666).
4. Talking about this issue these days and with many attempts to reach any final settlement with “Israel”, this settlement is based on the freedom of movement of “Israel” and freedom of movement to and from it. All of these reasons indicate that absolute control over the Red Sea through international conditions spread by a force present from outside or several forces within this sea is unthinkable. This fact is closely linked to the following fact, this fact means the removal of any force from the Red Sea or the prevention of any force, whether internal or external, from seizing and using this sea, and this removal is considered unthinkable. Therefore, keeping the Red Sea away from the presence of these major powers is out of the question, and this has been made clearer than ever before in the circumstances of the widespread state of polarization in the current circumstances, in addition to the circumstances of severe overlap between the levels or circles of conflict, whether local, regional or global.

In light of the talk about the “Red Sea” and turning it into a neutral and peaceful sea, as some claim, this will not go beyond mere talk, and it is difficult for this talk to be achieved in the circumstances of today’s world. It is sufficient to explain what happened by transforming the Indian Ocean into a sea of peace and getting rid of the military bases located in its various parts. Despite the United Nations resolutions and the statements of the Non-Aligned Countries, the least that was said by a major country was that this should be based on the principle of equality (Abdullah Nasser, 1979, p19). Then comes a more important topic, which is the necessity of working to develop cooperation between the countries overlooking the Red Sea, which is considered a link between them, whether between all the countries of the Red Sea or between the Arab countries that overlook it. It is difficult for any rational person to oppose attempts to develop this coordination and cooperation between these countries, whether between their activities as states, or in their joint work, on the necessity of exploiting the riches of the Red Sea itself, and working with the utmost effort and to the greatest extent possible is something required (Ahmed Ezzat, 1980, p670).

This field includes a vital issue, which is the issue of private security in each Red Sea country, and it is considered the issue of collective security for Arab countries, joint work in this field is important. This includes another vital issue, which is the issue of defending the movement of oil through the Red Sea towards the north and west. It is enough that this issue is vital for everyone (Jalal Yehya, 1962, p12) and this is what makes it concerned with the continued flow of oil freely through all its outlets, in addition, there is an alternative road to the road that represents an important link to the Red Sea, which is the Cape of Good Hope Road (Jalal Yehya, 1962, p12).

## **Chapter II**

### **The Impact of the Houthi movements on Sudanese national security**

#### **First topic: Houthi movements**

Suddenly, the Red Sea became the focus of global attention after the Houthi attacks that targeted the passage of ships heading to Israel. But the question is: Who will protect the Red Sea? Is it America or the concerned countries that overlook this vital seaport, and why did these countries not participate in the security force formed by the Americans? The threats posed by the Houthi group in Yemen to ships passing through the southern Red Sea conveyed the anxious situation that other ships in the Arabian Gulf have faced for years, the second began to involve a security debate similar to the first case in terms of the main actors and forces seeking hegemony, and the intertwining of economic and military interests. A large part of the security and commercial complexities of the Arabian Gulf were resolved after strenuous periods of push and pull, which left room for maneuvers carried out by some forces from time to time when they wanted to harass a specific party or deliver messages to it. This has sometimes made the Arabian Gulf a volatile region and represents a major security threat to a country, threatening the economies of powers that depend on the export and import of oil and

gas, because the formula of implicit understandings between competing or conflicting and cooperating countries can be shaken at any moment (Al-Arabia Magazine, 13003).

The Israeli war on the Gaza Strip transferred part of its repercussions to the southern entrance to the Red Sea due to the targeting of ships heading to the Gulf of Aqaba and from there to Israel, although the Houthi threats involved showmanship and political propaganda. Dealing with them seriously by the United States and other predominantly Western powers has given them great importance, and the talk about alliances, armies, and fleets began to escalate, who is with it and who is against it. The countries bordering the Red Sea were absent from participating in the security force that the United States announced its formation under the slogan of the Prosperity Guardian Alliance, and the security of this vital international waterway appeared to be in the grip of countries from outside it. The Houthis, and behind them Iran, represent a direct threat to navigation, and the United States, and behind it the fleets of several countries, are in the position of defending the security and stability of the region, or rather the security of Israel. No practical fingerprints have emerged from the Washington-led coalition in terms of dealing with Houthi threats or ensuring freedom of navigation for Israel and completely preventing its targeting. The debate begins to grow about which countries are worth sponsoring security in the Red Sea, whether inside or outside it, or both. It is a debate reminiscent of what took place in the 1980s and 1990s between Iran and the Gulf states, and between them was the United States, which entered as a dominant force in the Arabian Gulf, entering into skirmishes and conflicts, at times controlling security and at other times leaving it.

Observers of security in the Red Sea keep in mind the results that resulted from security in the Arabian Gulf, from the standpoint of the outcomes it has reached in light of deep disagreements between forces interested in it. It concluded that each party formulated its system in a way that would preserve a large number of its security interests and achieve its economic goals and that it had discrepancies that made the Gulf a region of extended conflicts, and its main powers were unable to establish fixed rules for understanding, as the equation between Iran and its counterpart countries is sometimes zero. The Red Sea may be facing a similar equation, because most of its countries find it difficult to agree on a comprehensive vision, and there are countries outside its surroundings that have multiple interests that they will not neglect. Some of its countries also have ties and interests with external parties that believe that the Red Sea should be part of their strategic calculations under the pretext of freedom of global trade or undermining competing forces seeking to get close to it. Or under the pretext of the right of ships heading to Israel to cross in safety, most of its foreign trade depends on this waterway (Al-Arabia Magazine, 13003).

There is a possibility that the Red Sea will turn into a war zone in the future or a region in which regional and international powers will struggle. This could produce a situation close to that which prevailed in the Arabian Gulf, which has not reached a high degree of stability. And

its security could be disrupted if any of the active forces take the initiative by adopting an approach that does not serve competing forces. However, it reached a level of stability after a long series of tensions, which the region has not yet been devoid of. The Red Sea does not necessarily reach a formula similar to that experienced by the Arabian Gulf, and this corridor may face worse if a country is unable to reach a vision from within it that guarantees calm, security, and stability because the factors of conflict in the Red Sea are numerous and intertwined and the countries overlooking it from the African side are mostly unstable, such as Somalia, Djibouti, Eritrea, and Sudan, not to mention Yemen on the other side.

There are three countries with a peace agreement, which are Egypt, Jordan, and Israel, Saudi Arabia, on the other side, has good relations with each of them, even if it has not yet concluded a peace agreement with Israel. It is one of the countries most concerned with the security of the Red Sea in terms of its peace project in Yemen That faces difficult challenges in light of the Houthi threats to international navigation, and in terms of the ambitions of its major economic and development projects in NEOM, which will not succeed unless this waterway is stable. Reaching preliminary understandings to maintain the security of the Red Sea between the four countries, Egypt, Jordan, Israel, and Saudi Arabia, is a kind of fantasy at this stage because the three Arab countries do not want to appear as the guardians of Israel's interests. That has with each country a large network of declared and hidden interests, and each of them can attract a country that suffers from chronic internal problems based on common security and complex economic interests. There was a Red Sea security initiative from countries combining its two shores, but it faltered due to disagreements over leadership, priorities, and goals to be achieved. Red Sea security has entered a new phase with the threats of the Houthi group and Iran's statements supporting it in what it is doing in this region. The United States claims to defend freedom of navigation, and there is still a part immersed in these complications. That relates to Russia and China, as they will not be satisfied with arrangements made by a party that could affect their interests. The movements taking place at present will have repercussions in the future on its ambitions in this region, which has attracted the eyes of several regional and international powers for a while (Al-Arabia Magazine, 13003).

The Gaza war sparked the Red Sea security crisis after various parties tried to deal with it in a way that was compatible with their interests over many years by avoiding major clashes, but now some changes require preparation to confront real clashes. The Houthis may have thrown the bomb without knowing its results because some seized it to resolve an issue that was absent or remained forgotten. After all, it did not reach the level of direct threats unless the major countries overlooking the Red Sea took the initiative to develop strategic plans to deal with its developments and potential transformations. They will face suffering that may be more severe than that in the clips we have seen in the Arabian Gulf. The recent hostilities in the Red Sea have caused a shock to international companies transporting vital goods, but it is not the only problem facing major transport companies at the beginning of 2024. Giant companies such as

Maersk say that the sector, which deals with 90 percent of the volume of global trade, faces the possibility of huge disruptions for many reasons which are current wars and droughts affecting major routes such as the Panama Canal. Complex schedules for large cargo ships, oil tankers, and other cargo vessels will likely not go as planned during the year, this will increase delays and raise costs for retailers such as Walmart, IKEA, and Amazon. As well as food manufacturers such as Nestlé and supermarkets such as Lidl. “This seems to be the new normal, these waves of chaos that seem to rise and fall before returning to some level of normal,” said Jay Foreman, CEO of Basic Fun in Florida. Another event occurs that takes things a bit out of control and Foreman sends toy trucks from factories in China to Europe and the United States. Peter Sand, chief analyst at Xeneta, a shipping data platform, said that additional risks in 2024 include the possibility of expanding the scope of attacks from the Red Sea to the Gulf. This could affect oil shipments and escalate tensions in relations between China and Taiwan, which would also affect important trade waterways. The Russian war on Ukraine continued to affect grain trade since Moscow Invaded its neighbor Kyiv in 2022. Maersk joined major shipping companies in diverting the routes of its ships away from the Red Sea to avoid missile and drone attacks in the area that leads to the vital Suez Canal.

More than 10 percent of total maritime shipments and about a third of global container trade pass through the route (Al-Arabia Magazine, 13003), although tankers carrying oil and fuel supplies to Europe continue to pass through the Suez Canal, most container ships carrying goods are diverted their bath the southern tip of Africa. The Yemeni Houthi group attacks ships in the Red Sea to show support for the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas), which is fighting with Israel in Gaza. Fuel costs for ship owners increase to up to two million dollars for each round trip after changing course away from the Suez Canal, and the spot price of shipping from Asia to Europe jumped more than double the average in 2023 at 3,500 dollars per 40-foot container. Below are the actions taken by some companies CH Robinson: the global logistics group said on December 22 that it had rerouted more than 25 ships sailing around the Cape of Good Hope route over the previous week, and this number is likely to continue to increase. It added, “It is expected that traffic at ports or areas on ship routes will continue to be canceled, and prices will rise for many trade movements in the first quarter of 2024”. The French shipping group CMA CGM said on January 5 that it had not changed its plans announced last month to gradually increase the number of ships crossing the Suez Canal. The company previously changed the course of many ships to take the Cape of Good Hope route. Belgian tanker company Euronav said on December 18 that It would avoid the Red Sea region until further notice. Taiwanese container shipping company Evergreen said on December 18 that its ships bound for Red Sea ports would sail to nearby safe waters pending further notice. The path of ships scheduled to pass through the Red Sea will be changed to the Cape of Good Hope route. It also temporarily stopped accepting the transport of Israeli goods. Promotion-based oil tanker group Front Line said on December 18 that its ships would avoid

passing through the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden. Norwegian shipping company Gram Car Carpers, which specializes in car truck carriers, said on December 21 that its ships would not pass through the Red Sea. German container shipping company Hapag-Lloyd told Reuters on January 2 that it had decided to continue avoiding the Red Sea, and would instead divert ships to the Cape of Good Hope until at least January 9, which is the next date to evaluate the situation again. Hapag Lloyd added that it incurred costs in the range of millions of euros in double digits (Al-Arabia Magazine, 13003) during the period between December 18 and 31 as a result of the diversion of 25 ships in response to attacks on ships in the Red Sea. A projectile believed to be a drone hit one of its ships on December 15 while it was sailing near the Yemeni coast and no crew members were injured. South Korean container shipping company HMM said on December 19 that it had ordered its ships that normally use the Suez Canal to reroute to the Cape of Good Hope route. The Danish shipping group Maersk said on January 2 that all its shipments would continue to avoid the Red Sea route until further notice, before announcing on January 5 that it would suspend the passage of its ships in the Red Sea for the foreseeable future. On December 31, the company suspended all sailing operations in the Red Sea for 48 hours after Houthi militants attacked the Maersk Hangzhou container ship (Al-Arabia Magazine, 13003).

### **Second topic: The impact of the movements on Sudanese national security**

It is noted that there are many summits, meetings, and committees that are agreed to be held between African and Arab countries, but the Arab and African countries need will and continuity, as the Arab and African sides cannot maintain the regularity of the meetings and work of the specialized technical cooperation committees away from political disputes and conflicts. Especially the Permanent Committee for African-Arab Cooperation, which constitutes the focus of cooperation between the two parties (Jalal Yehya, 1962, p8). This is in contrast to what happens in many international cooperation frameworks existing between many political parties in the world, as those are often keen to keep the door ajar before any possibility of communication and meeting to pave the way for finding solutions to situations of political tension and conflict between them. Also, it is necessary to activate Arab cooperation with the African Union on border disputes in Africa and to reach understandings and coordinated positions with it on the main political and security issues of interest to both parties such as issues of combating extremism and terrorism, combating corruption, human rights, problems of displaced persons, regional asylum, and the Union Agreement for Cross-Border Cooperation known as the “Niamey” Agreement. As well as Arab cooperation with the African Union in establishing the African Union Center for Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Development.

### **Houthi group**

It is among the most prominent threats to the security of the Red Sea. In October 2016, it attacked missiles launched from the Houthi-controlled Yemeni coast, causing serious damage

to the Emirati ship (Swift), which serves as a landing airstrip for troops and a logistics center, also attacks against ships in the Red Sea were repeated. On January 30, 2017, a Saudi frigate was attacked off the port of Hodeida, which was controlled by the Houthi group. However, these attacks were responded to by the destroyer SS Mason and others. The US Navy also directed several Tomahawk missiles with the aim of hitting the coastal radars of the Houthi group (Asmaa Abdel Fattah, 2016, p43).

The growing relations between Iran and the Houthi group represent a clear threat to the security of the Red Sea and a threat to Gulf security. Because it allows Iran to circumvent the Gulf region, and thus threaten interests and Gulf national security. Therefore, any naval or air presence in Yemen would pose a threat to traffic through the Suez Canal, and would also threaten the oil flows that pass daily in the waters of the Red Sea (Amira Abdel Halim, 2018, p 59).

### **Conclusion**

The Horn of Africa and the Red Sea region have maintained their geo-strategic importance over the previous centuries in the calculations of countries aspiring to play a regional or international role. This justifies the influx of regional and international powers at present and the work to build alliances with some countries in the region, exploiting the tensions and political problems in the region to find a foothold through which they can implement their political agenda to achieve their interests. This presence, in turn, is considered a threat to the security of Sudan and the Arab countries, especially from countries that have ambitions and goals through which they seek to threaten the security of the Arab world. This requires building an integrated Arab strategy to confront this threat, relying on its political, economic, military, cultural, and social capabilities, in which it exercises the role of leadership and works through the intervention of various Arab and international countries to build alliances according to the requirements of the intervention, and it calculates the capabilities and capabilities available to each country, which was presented by the Houthi movements in the Red Sea on Sudanese national security, which was presented in the study.

### **Results**

1. Since its inception until now, the Sudanese state has faced political, economic, and cultural challenges that have affected state-building, stability, growth, and development in various fields. However, in light of the capabilities it possesses, it has contributed to embodying national unity in facing these challenges.
2. The state of instability experienced by some countries in the region has had a direct negative impact on Sudanese national security, this was represented in the case of the Arab-Israeli conflict, and then the American occupation of Iraq. Finally, the events taking place in Syria and Yemen, all of which formed and continue to pose challenges that continue to affect the security and stability of the Sudanese state.

## **Recommendations**

1. Establishing a regional organization that includes all countries on the Red Sea and the Arabian Sea through which the political, economic, and security issues of the region are discussed.
2. Working on establishing the Sea Security Center promotes the development of both security and military aspects.
3. Working to develop the concept of Sudanese maritime diplomacy, which can be used as one of the components of the maritime strategy.

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