■ *Prof. Tarek Fahmy*

Professor of Political Science,
Advisor of the National Center for Middle East Studies

Emerging International and Regional Dynamics

Impacting the Red Sea Security

Introduction:

The Red Sea holds exceptional geostrategic significance, situated at the heart of the world and linking the three continents of Asia, Africa, and Europe. It serves as a vital maritime corridor, connecting the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea in the south to the Mediterranean Sea in the north. It encompasses critical chokepoints such as the Suez Canal, which serves as the northern gateway to the Red Sea, connecting it to the Mediterranean Sea and the Bab al-Mandab Strait.

Given these geopolitical dynamics, recent developments in the Middle East, notably the Gaza conflict, have precipitated significant instability across the region. These events have exacerbated existing tensions in regional conflict zones, particularly within the Red Sea. Furthermore, the crisis has eroded the regional security architecture, prompting Arab states to explore alternative security paradigms. Concurrently, the United States has expanded its maritime presence and influence not only in the Red Sea but also in the Bab al-Mandab Strait and the Arabian Gulf. This development signifies a fundamental shift in the Red Sea's geopolitical status, transitioning from an exclusively Arab-dominated maritime domain to a contested space. Historically considered an Arab lake, the Red Sea is now subject to competing interests. The concurrent adoption of both defensive and offensive security postures by various actors underscores the absence of a stable political and security environment within the region, necessitating a comprehensive reassessment of prevailing strategies. Hence, the multifaceted developments occurring within the

Red Sea region, encompassing the Horn of Africa, East Africa, and the core of the African security architecture, collectively indicate a critical and precarious juncture characterized by regional and international instability. These transformations within the prevailing security paradigm portend significant uncertainties that could substantially influence the trajectory of regional developments in the medium to long term [1]. The Red Sea will now be the scene of further confrontations, and it will no longer be a stable Arab lake, due to the role of non-state actors who operate within a framework proposed by Iran, as tehran employ them in a remarkable manner and when necessary to pressure the American and Israeli sides to deal seriously with the Gaza front.

Aim of the Study

This study aims to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the regional and international variables impacting the Red Sea region. By examining how these factors have influenced the trajectory of international politics and the national security interests of both the Arab world and Egypt, the

research will develop novel strategic approaches. A meticulous examination of the political and strategic dimensions within the Red Sea, with a particular emphasis on security implications, will underpin this investigation.

Methodology

The descriptive approach constitutes a cornerstone of scientific research methodology, particularly well-suited for the examination of phenomena characterized by non-numerical data. Its prevalence is especially pronounced within the social sciences. This approach involves a systematic process of problem identification, followed by comprehensive data collection. From these data, researchers formulate hypotheses or research questions to explore potential solutions. Subsequent analysis, interpretation, and hypothesis testing contribute to the development of explanatory frameworks and conclusions.

Sections of the Study

1- **The geopolitical, security, and geo-economic importance of the Red Sea.**

2- **The system of regional and international variables and their effects on security in the Red Sea**

First: Geopolitical, Geosecurity and Geoeconomic Significance :

1. The Red Sea is a narrow, elongated, and relatively shallow body of water positioned between the Arabian Peninsula and the African continent. Extending in a curved formation from the Gulf of Aden in the south, it terminates at the Sinai Peninsula in the north. From this northern point, the Red Sea bifurcates into two subsidiary bodies of water: the Gulf of Aqaba to the east and the Gulf of Suez to the west, with the Sinai Peninsula forming a geographical divide between them[2].

2. - The Red Sea is bordered by eight countries: Yemen and Saudi Arabia to the East, and Jordan, Palestine, and Egypt (including the Sinai Peninsula) to the North. Saudi Arabia possesses the longest coastline along the Red Sea, followed by Egypt,

Eritrea, Sudan, Yemen, and Djibouti. In contrast, Palestine and Jordan have significantly shorter coastlines, confined to the northern reaches of the Gulf of Aqaba. With an estimated surface area between 438,000 and 450,000 square kilometers, the Red Sea exhibits a relatively shallow depth at its extremities, deepening towards its central axis where it reaches approximately 3,000 meters. The average depth, however, is approximately 500 meters. Extending approximately 1,930 kilometers from the Suez Canal in the north to the Bab al-Mandab Strait in the south [3].

3. The Red Sea exhibits variable width, characterized by an irregular shape with alternating expansions and contractions. This pattern is more pronounced in the northern and southern sections. In the north, the width approximates 180 kilometers, gradually expanding southward to reach a maximum of 370 kilometers at latitude 16 degrees North. Beyond this point, the sea narrows again, culminating in its narrowest

the Red Sea's geographic dimensions are substantial

point, excluding the Gulf of Suez and the Gulf of Aqaba, at the Bab al-Mandab Strait with a width of approximately 30 kilometers [4].

4- The Red Sea includes 3 natural straits, namely:

A. Bab al-Mandab Strait: It is located south of the Red Sea and is the only port that controls its southern entrance, linking it to the Gulf of Aden, the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean.

B. Tiran Strait: It is located in the northern Red Sea from the eastern side and is the main entrance to the Gulf of Aqaba and is of particular importance because of its association with the Arab-Israeli conflict, as it is the entrance to the Israeli port of Eilat.

C. Strait of Jubal: it is located north of the Red Sea towards the West, and it is the gateway to the Gulf of Suez.

5. The Red Sea encompasses approximately 1496 islands, the majority of which are coral reefs characterized by small size and uninhabited status. These islands exhibit a geographical distribution aligned with the coastal nations bordering the sea, with particular significance, such as:

A. The Saudi Islands, numbering around 1150, with a subset supporting human habitation, including Farasan, Majeed, Abu Ghneim, and Disan. Farasan and Majeed are notable for their larger size.

B. Yemen Islands: up to 152 islands, located south of the Red Sea, and a number of them enjoy a strategic location on the Bab al-Mandab Strait, allowing them to supervise the shipping lane, Prominent examples of these islands are are Mayun (Brim), Jabal al-Tair, Zaqr, Hanish and the Zubair Islands [5].

C. Egypt Islands: A large number of islands within the Red Sea Governorate reach 47 islands, some of which are of security and military importance.

D. Sudan Islands: They are about 36 Islands, the most important of which is Suakin Islands

E. The Eritrean islands: comprises a total of 126 islands, the majority of which remain uninhabited. Among these, the Dahlak Islands, Fatima Island, and Haleb Island are particularly noteworthy. The latter island occupies a strategic position overlooking the northern navagational road through the Bab al-Mandab Strait.

6. The Red Sea constitutes a critical maritime nexus between the Mediterranean and Arabian Gulf. All vessels traversing the Mediterranean must utilize the Suez Canal to access the Red Sea, while those originating from the Arabian Gulf necessitate passage through the Strait of Hormuz, Gulf of Oman, Indian Ocean, Gulf of Aden, and Bab al-Mandab Strait to reach it. This strategic position renders the Red Sea indispensable for naval communications between the Mediterranean and Indian Ocean fleets. Furthermore, it serves as the primary maritime route to Upper Egypt and the Nile River headwaters.

7. The Red Sea occupies a pivotal geostrategic position at the confluence of Asia, Africa, and Europe. It serves as a critical maritime link between the Indian Ocean and Arabian Sea to the south and the Mediterranean Sea to the north. The sea's strategic importance is further amplified by key chokepoints, including the Suez Canal at its northern terminus, connecting it to the Mediterranean, and the Bab al-Mandab Strait at its southern entrance, linking it to the Gulf of Aden and Indian Ocean. These crucial waterways, integral to the geostrategic landscape of the Red Sea, facilitate the shortest and most economically viable shipping route between East Asia, Africa, and Europe. As a result, the Red Sea has emerged as a vital global trade artery, supporting billions of dollars in commercial goods annually.

8. The Red Sea's unique geographical position serves as both a physical and geopolitical boundary between Africa and Asia. Its centrality to regional and global interests underscores the critical importance of understanding the intricate interplay of local, regional, and international factors influencing its stability. Such factors have direct implications for the national security of coastal states and broader strategic alliances. Given its geopolitical and geostrategic significance, as well as its proximity to the Arab-Israeli conflict, the Indian Ocean, and the Arabian Gulf, the Red Sea region is inherently susceptible to a range of threats and conflicts that directly impact its security.

9. Regional and local conflicts exert significant negative impacts on the stability and development of the Red Sea region. Prominent examples include the Arab-Israeli conflict, instability in the Horn of Africa, challenges in South Sudan, and the civil war in Somalia. Moreover, border disputes among littoral states hinder cooperation

and development efforts. The Red Sea's unique geographical features, characterized by numerous islands, strategic straits, and limited deep-water port infrastructure, exacerbate security challenges in the region.

10. The Red Sea holds substantial geopolitical, geostrategic, and economic significance due to its position as the shortest maritime corridor linking industrialized nations with developing countries exporting raw materials. It serves as a critical conduit for the transportation of oil from Gulf states to Europe and provides the most efficient route for industrialized nations to access traditional markets in Asia and Africa. The distance between the Strait of Gibraltar and the Bab al-Mandab Strait via the Red Sea is approximately 6,500 kilometers, significantly shorter than the alternative route around the Cape of Good Hope, which spans nearly 19,000 kilometers—nearly three times shorter. This geographic advantage translates into substantial savings in terms of energy consumption and transit time [6].

11. The Red Sea serves as a critical conduit for international trade between Europe and Asia, with an estimated twenty thousand commercial vessels traversing its waters annually. The seabed's rich resources fall within the exclusive economic zones of coastal states, notably enhancing the strategic depth of both Saudi Arabia and Egypt. By significantly reducing the distance between East and West, the Red Sea borders regions of paramount importance, including the Nile River basin and Islamic holy sites.The Red Sea encompasses numerous islands and bays of strategic importance. The Gulf of Suez, a natural extension of the Suez Canal, serves as a vital shipping lane and hosts most Egypt's oil fields. The Strait of Jubal, guarding the entrance to the Gulf of Suez, is a strategically significant waterway.

12. The Bab al-Mandab Strait stands as one of the world's most critical maritime chokepoints, facilitating es-sential trade and energy movement. Approximately 15% of global shipping traffic traverses this strategic wa-terway, which lies between the Yemeni coast to the east and the Djiboutian coastline to the west. The strait encompasses the Yemeni island of Perim, dividing it into two channels: an eastern passage measuring 3 kil-ometers in width and a depth of 30 meters, and a western passage spanning approximately 22 kilometers with

a depth of 300 meters. The latter serves as the primary route for ship traffic. Strategically, the Bab al-Mandab Strait is inextricably linked to the Gulf of Aden, Yemen, the Arabian Sea, and Somalia to the south and east, as well as Eritrea, Djibouti, and the Comoros Islands to the north and west. The Gulf of Aqaba, on the other hand, serves as Israel's sole maritime gateway to Africa and Asia. Its significance to Egypt has been further enhanced by the establishment of a shipping route connecting Nuweiba to Aqaba Port. For Jordan, the Gulf of Aqaba represents its only maritime outlet [7].

13. The Red Sea is projected to endure sustained instability due to a complex interplay of domestic and in-ternational interests. This instability is exacerbated by the increasing geopolitical competition in the region. China's expanding influence manifested in infrastructure development through the Belt and Road Initiative and a growing military presence, is a significant contributing factor. Concurrently, other global powers are enhancing their strategic engagement in the region, while Egypt has fortified its naval capabilities at Berenice Base.

14. Sudan's port infrastructure has evolved within the broader geopolitical landscape of the region. A notable example is China's renovation and expansion of the Port Sudan Container Terminal, now integrated into the Belt and Road Initiative. Additionally, the Red Sea has emerged as a crucial corridor and convergence point for numerous transcontinental submarine communication cables.

15. The Combined Maritime Forces (CMF) constitute the world's largest naval coalition, led by the Commander of the United States Naval Forces Central Command. Under the CMF umbrella, Combined Task Force (CTF) 150 is one of five operational task forces. The Combined Maritime Forces (CMF) is a multinational coalition, comprising twenty-five member states, headquartered in Bahrain dedicated to countering international terrorism. Under the CMF umbrella, several task forces have been established: Combined Task Force (CTF) 151, formed in 2009 to combat piracy; CTF 152, operating in Gulf waters; CTF 153, created in 2022 to safeguard the Red Sea; and CTF 154, also established in 2022 to enhance maritime security across the Middle East. In parallel, the European Union launched Operation

Atalanta in 2009 to address the piracy crisis off the Somali coast, with Spain, Germany, Sweden, Greece, and the United Kingdom among the participating nations.

Second: The Regional and International Dynamics and their Effects on Red Sea Security

International Dynamics

1. The predominance of military strategies in addressing regional conflicts has contributed to the transformation of Red Sea coastal countries into potential adversaries. Israel's continued use of force in Gaza, characterized by a reliance on military solutions, serves as a potential model for other Red Sea states, including Djibouti, Eritrea, and Somalia. This trend has significant implications for future security arrangements in the region [8].

2. The International Security Council's shortcomings in addressing the evolving situation within the Red Sea, coupled with the continuous emergence of threats, have rendered the UN resolution on Yemen ineffective. The international community's apparent lack of zeal in supporting Yemen's legitimate government or undertaking proactive measures within the country has further exacerbated the ongoing conflict between the various Yemeni factions. This inaction unfortunately suggests a prolonged period of confrontation in the foreseeable future. The Houthi militias, capitalizing on the current environment, are demonstrably exploiting the situation to their strategic advantage.

3. The relentless escalation of non-state actors' activities across the region and along crucial Arabian and international maritime routes extends beyond the southern borders, driven by the expansion of regional actors' networks. This poses a significant threat to stability in the Red Sea, the Arabian Gulf, and the Bab al-Mandab Strait. Consequently, non-state actors will play a substantial and influential role in shaping Arab and regional developments, even influencing major powers that base their actions on national and regional interests, primarily aligning with Iran. This underscores the enduring Iranian pressure on these actors' decision-making. This will lead to a more or less destabilization of the Territory [9].

4. The strategic significance of the Red Sea, the Horn of Africa, and the Upper Nile basin has attracted the increasing involvement of international powers. This development is evident in the recent activities of Russia, China, France, and Britain, all acting within the context of broader international competition to secure their interests. France's renewed focus on the Red Sea and its determination to pursue a distinct and potentially more assertive strategy exemplifies this trend. Meanwhile, China's ongoing efforts to counter the European initiatives of the International Gateway and Economic Corridor project further highlight the competitive nature of these engagements. This heightened international presence underscores the reality that major geopolitical conflicts are often driven by the pursuit of national priorities

5. The recent influx of multinational and national companies signals the development of robust economic and investment frameworks in the southern Red Sea, the Bab al-Mandab Strait, and extending towards the Arabian Gulf, Horn of Africa, and Nile Basin countries. These companies, operating under rigorous intelligence gathering, are establishing themselves as key players in the region. Their presence underscores their anticipated role in future regional arrangements, likely facilitated by major powers.

6. The international community's failure to develop effective country-specific strategies for the region has yielded limited tangible benefits. This lack of a coherent regional approach is particularly concerning in light of the evolving nature of conflicts. International actors are accustomed to confronting threats posed by nation-states, but the emergence of non-state actors, such as militias, necessitates new strategies that directly address the risks these groups present with their flexible and adaptable tactics [10].

7. Protracted and unresolved political conflicts are casting a long shadow over the international and regional political landscape. These seemingly intractable situations generate significant political ramifications that inevitably spill over into the economic and commercial spheres. The continued threats to major maritime navigation routes serve as a stark illustration of this dynamic. Without addressing the root causes of these conflicts, be they within the Red Sea region or elsewhere, achieving lasting stability and fostering a climate conducive to economic activity remains elusive. The current impasse in finding viable political solutions suggests a potentially turbulent future for the region's economic landscape

8. The Red Sea has transitioned from a zone of stability and security to a potential flashpoint for conflict. The ongoing hostilities in Gaza heighten the risk of escalation and militarization within the Red Sea region in the foreseeable future. This possibility underscores the urgency of addressing the underlying tensions to prevent further destabilization.

9. The coming events in the Bab al-Mandab Strait, a crucial waterway at the southern tip of the Red Sea, promise to be a complex web of competing interests. This narrow passage, bordering Yemen, Djibouti, and Eritrea, acts as a bridge between Africa and Asia, connecting the Red Sea to the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea. However, the claim of a single port controlling the entire Red Sea militarily and commercially is inaccurate. The Strait's true strategic importance lies in its role as a vital chokepoint for global trade. The US, facing competition, leads an international effort to reshape Red Sea politics and control the strategic waterway. This follows Houthi attacks on shipping in the Bab al-Mandab Strait, prompting a US-led maritime coalition for protection. The US is at the forefront of a global race to reshape the Red Sea's political landscape, driven by competition for control of this vital waterway.

This is evident in their launch of a maritime coalition to safeguard shipping after Houthi militias in Yemen targeted vessels passing through the Bab al-Mandab Strait[11].

Regional Dynamics

1. Ongoing conflicts around the Red Sea, fueled by the Houthi movement's threats to shipping, risk escalating confrontations. This volatile situation could worsen if the Houthis, in response to international pressure, use their political and media influence to support Palestinians and disrupt Israeli shipping by blocking Red Sea and Bab al-Mandab passages. Such actions could further isolate Israel and disrupt regional trade, resulting in considerable financial loses for Israel[12].

2- The refusal of Arabic countries to join the maritime alliance «Guardian of Prosperity», an alliance formed by the United States based on a political and military decision, and the inclusion of some Western countries and Bahrain in the face of the Houthi militias's of threatening security and navigation in the Red Sea, and obstructing international movement in the Bab al-Mandab Strait as well as the Arabic and international seam areas[13].

3. Faced with regional instability, particularly the Houthi threat, Israel seeks to discreetly integrate into the regional security system. This avoids friction with Arab members who might object to formal membership. By leveraging its established partnership with the United States, Israel can contribute unofficially and prioritize maritime security cooperation, a more readily achievable objective. However, this approach might be a stopgap measure. Long-term stability necessitates a broader strategy addressing the underlying causes of regional tension.

4. The intractable conflict in Yemen has morphed into a regional tinderbox. The lack of a cohesive solution has exacerbated tensions, particularly in critical maritime chokepoints like the Red Sea, Bab al-Mandab Strait, and potentially the Arabian Gulf. This volatility coincides with the ongoing war in the Gaza Strip, prompting Israel to implement heightened security measures within the territory. This confluence of crises underscores the urgent need for a comprehensive solution that addresses the root causes of conflicts across the region.

5. Despite the normalization agreement between Saudi Arabia and Iran, the landscape of the Persian Gulf remains fraught. Iran's continued adherence to its established strategy, including proxy deployment, suggests the normalization might be a limited tactical move within the framework of Iranian diplomatic tradition. While the agreement might have eased tensions and averted immediate conflict, it hasn't yielded substantial progress. The core issues dividing the two countries persist, creating a fragile détente at best. The recent normalization of relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia has failed to produce a significant transformation in the Gulf region. Despite this formal rapprochement, Iran's continued adherence to its established strategic approach, including the utilization of regional proxies, suggests a persistence of tensions. This continuity in Iranian foreign policy limits the potential for a more comprehensive reconciliation. While the agreement has arguably mitigated the immediate threat of conflict, it has not addressed the core issues stemming from the regional behavior of both Iran and Saudi Arabia and the extent of to which structural developments can take place.

6. The enduring threat posed by Iran's proxy network in the Middle East and Red Sea destabilizes regional security. This extends beyond the Red Sea, which has transitioned from an Arab-dominated waterway to a truly international one. This transformation introduces new risks to the region's future stability. Furthermore, the continued targeting of American and Israeli vessels by Houthi militia, allegedly under Iranian pressure, further undermines regional stability. Previous military strikes against Houthi strongholds have proven ineffective in dismantling the group. This ineffectiveness suggests that these strikes may have been primarily symbolic or political in nature, rather than constituting a well-defined and impactful counterinsurgency strategy. Previous military strikes against Houthi strongholds have proven ineffective in dismantling the group. This ineffectiveness suggests that these strikes may have been primarily symbolic or political in nature, rather than constituting a well-defined and impactful counterinsurgency strategy.

7. Turkey's growing strategic presence in the Horn of Africa adds a new dimension to the region's complex dynamics. Its influential role and efforts to forge strong ties with Ethiopia, alongside its foothold in Somalia, highlight a strategic shift. This shift extends Turkish interests beyond the Middle East, towards the Horn of Africa's crucial sea lanes, a strategic priority for regional powers like Turkey, Iran, and Israel.

8. Despite the emergence of new actors in the Red Sea region, Gulf countries, particularly Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), maintain a significant presence and exert considerable influence. This is evident through their continued engagement and substantial investments in Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Djibouti. These large-scale investments across various strategic and economic sectors indicate the Gulf states' adoption of an interactive strategy to solidify their position in the region (14).

9. srael views its Red Sea port of Eilat as a strategic gateway not only to Arab and Asian countries, but also to Africa. This vision is reflected in plans to establish marketing and trade centers for the port in several African nations. The underlying rationale is that fostering economic cooperation can pave the way for lasting political peace.

10. Israel appears to be shifting its political and strategic focus towards the Red Sea region. This is evidenced by its significantly improved relations with Ethiopia, encompassing cooperation across multiple sectors. Furthermore, Israel's adoption of a distinct diplomatic approach towards Eritrea suggests a nuanced strategy tailored to each nation's specific context. This adaptability in Israeli foreign policy underscores its proactive efforts to cultivate new partnerships in the Red Sea region, solidifying its position as a key player.

11. The persistence of Arab powers within their existing frameworks, without recalibrating their calculations and priorities to align with the contemporary dynamics of the Arab regional system, presents a significant challenge. The concurrent efforts of neighboring regional actors to establish a broader Middle Eastern system further complicate this situation. This external pressure could potentially expedite a more comprehensive realignment of Arab interests within the wider regional context. However, the mere continuation of the Arab summit as an institution, absent the ability to produce effective and actionable decisions, offers little tangible benefit.

12. The recent calls by major powers for a Red Sea regional grouping echo earlier proposals, including Israel's initiative for a 'Red Sea Forum.' While Saudi Arabia established the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden Forum, the current emphasis underscores the perceived need for a more specifically Arab regional body. This potential new grouping could serve as a counterweight to emerging international initiatives, such as recent U.S.-led efforts, or address unforeseen security threats in the Red Sea region. The recent calls for a Red Sea regional grouping necessitate a firm response to the Houthi militia threat. This urgency contrasts with the past success of the international maritime coalition against piracy in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden. Unlike that earlier intervention, the current situation poses a significant risk to maritime navigation across the entire Red Sea region, potentially impacting not just individual countries but also international straits and vital sea lanes.

13. According to a report by the Center for Cooperation and Awareness of Maritime Information (MICA), a well-known maritime security center based in Brest, France, piracy incidents around the world decreased by 1.7% in 2023, reaching its lowest point since 2008. MICA reported a total of 295 piracy incidents

in 2023, the lowest annual number recorded since the center began tracking these statistics in 2008. The report further highlights a regional disparity in piracy activity. While the global total remained relatively stable, Southeast Asia witnessed an upward trend, counterbalanced by a slight decrease in the Caribbean. Notably, 47 piracy and robbery incidents occurred in 2023, primarily concentrated around the Bab al-Mandab Strait and the Strait of Hormuz near the Indian coast.

14. Recent disruptions to the Suez Canal, a critical hub for global maritime trade, pose a significant threat to the financing of some Red Sea nations, particularly Egypt. These disruptions have severely impacted shipping traffic and consequently, the Suez Canal's revenue stream. The ongoing Gaza conflict is a key factor exacerbating this risk, with potential short- and medium-term consequences for the Canal's finances. Furthermore, this situation cannot be viewed in isolation; it is part of a broader pattern of protracted conflicts in the Bab al-Mandab Strait and the Red Sea, further jeopardizing regional stability.

15. The protracted conflicts and the absence of any discernible path towards resolution in the Red Sea region and beyond suggest a continuation of this crisis-ridden environment. This implies that interstate relations within the Red Sea basin will likely operate within the framework of ongoing tensions. The future dynamics will be shaped by the interplay between regional actors, littoral states, and major powers whose strategic interests converge in critical areas. The current militarization of the Red Sea necessitates engagement with regional and international actors beyond the littoral states. This situation transcends the exclusive purview of the original regional powers. The strategic concerns are further amplified by Ethiopia's actions in Somaliland and its own internal security challenges. Additionally, Israel's multifaceted strategy in the Horn of Africa and its expanding presence in Eritrea, despite denials, raise concerns about the absence of a stable security architecture in these island-dotted areas [15].

16. Code-named "***Operation Sincere Promise***" by the Allah Party, a military intervention was undertaken by its fighters along the Lebanese-Palestinian border. The stated objective of this operation was to fulfill a pledge made by the Allah Party to secure the release of Lebanese captives currently detained in Israeli prisons. Furthermore, during the 2023 Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the Red Sea became a theater of operations against Israel. The Yemeni armed forces, aligned with the Yemeni Ansar al-Allah movement, launched attacks targeting Israel with the intention of pressuring them to cease their aggression on the Gaza Strip. This Israeli offensive resulted in a significant Palestinian civilian death toll, exceeding 30,000. The offensive encompassed a multifaceted assault on southern Israel. Ballistic missiles, unmanned ground vehicles (rovers), and aerial drones were utilized in a sustained bombardment campaign. Additionally, freedom of navigation for Israeli vessels was challenged through the imposition of a blockade on the Bab al-Mandab Strait, the Red Sea, and the Arabian Sea. Fur-thermore, naval formations and missiles were employed to directly target Israeli ships, resulting in the capture of at least one vessel. In retaliation for these attacks on Red Sea and Gulf of Aden shipping lanes, the United States and the United Kingdom launched a series of counterstrikes against Ansar al-Allah controlled areas in Yemen. The text describes a cost-ineffectiveness challenge in defending against Houthi drone attacks in the Red Sea. It highlights the significant disparity in cost between the Iranian Shahid drones (around 20,000 euros) employed by the Houthi militia and the defensive measures used to counter them. For instance, the French Aster anti-aircraft missile launched from warships can cost one million euros per interception. This asymmetry creates a logistical and material strain on forces patrolling the Red Sea to combat piracy, as they grapple with the high cost of defending against these low-cost drone threats.

17. The December 18th, 2023 inauguration of "Operation Guardian of Prosperity," a U.S.-led international maritime coalition, signifies a potential escalation in response to the escalating Houthi piracy within the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden. This strategic sea corridor faces a heightened threat to global trade, potentially necessitating the coalition's employment of military measures to ensure the unimpeded flow of commerce. Operation Guardian of Prosperity draws inspiration from the successful model established by Operation Recommended International Transit Corridor (IRTC). Launched in 2009 by a joint NATO-EU initiative, the IRTC secured a crucial navigational route in the Gulf of Aden against pirate threats. The current operation

aims to replicate this success by establishing a similar protective framework within the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden to ensure the unhindered flow of maritime traffic. **It is noteworthy that the most important military bases in the Red Sea are the American Lemonnet Base, the Emirati Berbera Base, the Emirati Assab Base, the UAE Mayun Base, the Volcanic Island, the Turkish Military Base, the Turkish Suakin Island, the Israeli Archil Base, and the French Force Francis Djibouti Base.**

Third: Results of the Study

1. The research underscores the Red Sea's paramount strategic and geopolitical importance. It ranks among the world's most critical waterways, serving as a vital connector of three continents: Africa, Asia, and Europe. Furthermore, it acts as a bridge between numerous global seas and oceans. The Red Sea's unique geopolitical and geostrategic position stems from the presence of strategic chokepoints controlling entry and exit points. The Suez Canal in the north and Bab al-Mandab in the south are the most crucial of these chokepoints. The region also boasts strategically relevant islands, including those in the north (Shadwan, Gobal, Tiran, and Sanafir) and the south (Mayun, Hanish Archipelago, Dahlak, Kamaran, and Farasan). An analysis of the governing strategic and political data paints a concerning picture. The Red Sea region, in its political and geostrategic context, has emerged as a potential hotspot for future conflicts. This heightened risk stems from the region's persistent in-stability, fueled by the protracted war in Yemen and ongoing conflicts within Horn of Africa nations. Further exacerbating the situation are the interventions of certain countries and the prevailing climate of political flux and instability. This volatile mix has already produced a full-blown political and strategic crisis that threatens to cast a long shadow over the region's future. Moreover, some actors actively exploit these tensions, fueling existing conflicts.

2. The recent actions of the Houthi militias appear to confirm this bleak assessment. Their targeting of Israeli ships, threats to international maritime traffic, and adoption of a direct confrontation strategy with Israel all contribute to the escalating tensions. These actions, coupled with threats to the strategically important region bordering Israel, further exacerbate the problem. The situation has reached a critical point where attacks like missile strikes on Eilat endanger international trade routes. This has necessitated the formation of a US-led maritime coalition to safeguard these vital waterway. However, the coalition currently faces challenges in expanding its membership. Arab nations have been hesitant to join, with only Bahrain participating, likely due to the presence of a US naval fleet stationed within its territory.

3. The escalating militarization of the Red Sea, with the deployment of additional naval assets and capabilities by major powers, paints a worrisome picture. This trend suggests a high likelihood of further conflict despite significant discrepancies in the approaches adopted by various actors. Notably, the US and UK appear to be more hawkish in their posture compared to the potentially more cautious stances of France and Germany. The recent US airstrikes against Houthi positions mark a worrying escalation and suggest a potential shift towards a more militaristic approach. These strikes can be interpreted as an initial pressure tactic to force the Houthis to back down. However, this action might have been strategically motivated by Iran, aiming to utilize its proxies in Iraq and Syria to divert pressure from Houthi fronts in Yemen. This strategy would involve escalating tensions elsewhere (potentially through Iraqi or Syrian militias) in exchange for a temporary de-escalation in the Red Sea. This theory is further supported by the presence of Iran's proxy, the Allah Party, near the Yemeni theatre of operations[16].

The Houthi attacks on ships in the Red Sea have prompted several shipping companies to reroute their vessels away from the Bab al-Mandab Strait, a crucial passage for East-West trade, including oil shipments. This rerouting is a significant disruption to global maritime commerce, as vessels must now take the longer route around Africa via the Cape of Good Hope. Interestingly, some observers have drawn parallels between the situation in the Red Sea and the ongoing conflict in Gaza. The suggestion is that a potential de-escalation in Gaza could lead to a similar calming of tensions in the Red Sea, including an end to the Houthi attacks on shipping in the Bab al-Mandab Strait. This speculation is based on the notion that Gaza serves as a point of origin for broader regional tensions, and that a resolution there could have a ripple effect on other conflict zones.

Conclusion:

The real problem with the Red Sea Security is primarily linked to two main points:

1. *The recent actions of certain Red Sea nations, particularly the agreement between Ethiopia and Somaliland granting Ethiopia access to the port of Berbera, raise concerns about potential destabilization in the region. This deal can be interpreted as part of a broader strategic shift, with trade routes potentially being rerouted away from Somalia towards Ethiopia and Djibouti. The involvement of major powers in the region adds another layer of complexity. This confluence of factors, including the shifting trade landscape and the presence of major international actors, creates a volatile environment where regional and international disputes are likely to erupt.*

2. *Major powers in the Red Sea region have adopted significant steps to address security concerns and maintain stability. The establishment of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden Council by Saudi Arabia and its Arab member states aims to develop a cohesive regional strategy. This initiative reflects a desire to preserve the Red Sea as an Arab domain and prevent the formation of non-regional alliances. Additionally, there are calls from other international actors for broader security arrangements, potentially leading to the internationalization of the Red Sea. However, this could further complicate the already intricate web of conflicts involving multiple regional and international stakeholders. Egypt, emphasizing the criticality of navigation security in the Red Sea and its impact on global trade, has highlighted the financial losses incurred due to security breaches. The country has also stressed the need for enhanced Egyptian military, economic, and political presence, particularly in the southern Red Sea. Collectively, these developments underscore the Red Sea's pivotal role in global trade and its significance as a commercial corridor connecting East Africa to the Middle East, Europe, and Asia.*

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(١٣) تحالف حارس الازدهار هو تحالف بحري متعدد الجنسيات تقوده الولايات المتحدة يهدف لشـن عملية عسكرية للرد على الهجمات التى تشنها القوات المسلحة اليمنية الموالية لأنصار الله الحوثيين على السفن الإسرائيلية والمملوكة لإسرائيليين والمتجهة إلى إسرائيل أو المرتبطة بها فى جنوب البحر الأحمر وخليج عدن، أعلنـه وزيــر الدفـاع الأمريكى لويد أوستن فى البحرين يوم ١٩ ديسمبر ٢٠٢٣ عقب زيارة قام بها إلـى إسرائيل، وقال إن الحلف تشكل تحت مظلة القوات البحرية المشتركـة وقيــادة قـوة المهام المشتركـة ١٥٣ كرد على الهجمات التى تشنهـا القوات الموالية لحركة أنصـار الله فى اليمن ضد السفـن المرتبطة بإسرائيل فى البحرين: الأحمر والعربى بهدف إيقاف الحرب الفلسطينية الإسرائيلية فى قطاع غزة ودخول احتياجات القطاع من الغذاء والدواء.

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Emerging International and Regional Dynamics Impacting the Red Sea Security

■ *Prof / Tarek Fahmy*

Professor of Political Science, and Advisor to the National Center for Middle Eastern Studies

Abstract:

The article contributed to the following most important elements: To the security of the Red Sea and the distinctive developments associated with it, the war organization affiliated with it was attached to the Gaza Strip and an endless return as a result of the practices of non-state actors and the tendency of the major countries to re-establish their interests and goals in the Red Sea, which agreed that the military and strategic options You will be ahead. Strategic Strategies The situation of not choosing differences will also lead to a post-context matter that requires the Arab countries to redefine their interests. He succeeded in creating a confrontation strategy to deal with military options in both matters in general and the Red Sea in particular.

Keywords: Red Sea, Red Sea security, regional variables, international variables, major powers' strategies.

المتغيرات الإقليمية والدولية المستجدة لإشكالية الأمن فى البحر الأحمر

■ أ. د/ طـارق فهـمى

أستاذ العلوم السياسية، مستشار المركز القومى لدراسات الشرق الأوسط

المستخلص :

يركـز المقـال على أهم المتغيـرات الإقليمية والدولية لأمن البحر الأحمـر، وما ارتبط به من تطورات مفصلية تعلقت باستمرار الحرب الإسـرائيلية على قطاع غزة، وعودة عدم الاسـتقرار نتيجية ممارسـات الفواعـل مـن غيـر الـدول، واتجاه الـدول الكبـرى لإعـادة ترتيب مصـالحها وأهدافهـا فى البحـر الأحمر الذى يؤكد أن الخيارات العسـكرية والاسـتراتيجية ستسـتبق الخيارات السياسـية، كما ستؤدى حالة عدم الاستقرار لنشوب نزاعات فى سياق ما يجرى، الأمر الذى يتطلب من الدول العربية إعادة تحديد مصالحها وفـق المتغيـرات المسـتجدة، مع وضع اسـتراتيجية مجابهـة للتعامل مـع تصاعد الخيـارات العسـكرية فى الإقليم عامة والبحر الأحمر خاصة.

الكلمات المفتاحية : البحر الأحمر، أمن البحر الأحمر، المتغيرات الإقليمية، المتغيرات الدولية، استراتيجيات الدول الكبرى.