

The Red Sea Area: Importance, Regional Conflicts and Impact on Sri Lankan Trade and Security

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One of the most vital maritime corridors which has shown considerable importance for global trade is the Red Sea. Due to existing threat in the region major powers made their footholds in nearby Bab-El-Mandeb at the Red Sea. Houthi rebels in Yemen targeting ships aligned with Israel leading to significant delays in trade has resulted in countries finding alternate trade routes. With the emergence of artificial intelligence, there is also the concern of using this technology in warfare within the region, but such advanced technology utilized effectively can be also used to mitigate difficulties facing the country as well. The red sea being a vital trade route for countries like Sri Lanka there is the high risk of it significantly impacting the countries trade and security, if any hinderance to its trade routes were to occur, it will incur extra cost for the country with the increase in prices due to additional insurance premiums, container freight rates and the additional fuel that is needed for the safe and secure travel of the countries imports and exports affecting trade and the economic stability of the country. Ensuring the safety and security of international trade routes such as the one in the red sea is necessary for the county's financial stability and certain steps must be enacted to ensure the nation's safety and security as well. In this study, the research aim to analyse these impacts and outcomes of the difficulties which plague the red sea to Sri Lankas own national security and its impact on trade and present possible solutions and mitigation strategies for policy makers and the Sri Lankan government to enforce and implement, which may allow Sri Lanka to face potential threats and maritime security concerns and its affects in trade within the country. This research takes the form of a qualitative study which uses both primary and secondary sources.

Keywords: *Geopolitical Tensions, Bab-El-Mandeb Strait, Artificial Intelligence, Maritime Security*