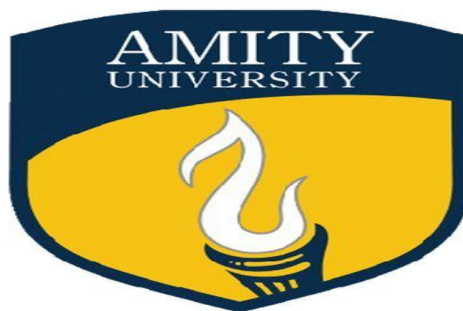


Choke Point of Power: The Red Sea Crisis and Extension of Geopolitical Rivalries

Non-Teaching Credit Course Major Project Submitted for the Partial
Fulfillment of the Degree of
Bachelors of Arts (H) in Political Science



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ABSTRACT

When referring to international trading routes, the Suez Canal is the most commonly heard answer around the world from laymens, however, it is only one of the four critical maritime chokepoints. The Strait of Bab el-Mandeb is at present, one of the most critical passageways for commercial shipping along with attracting attention for being infested with some of the most explosive actors in the world, being entangled in current geopolitical tensions while also suffering from extensive political turmoil and regional instability. This study dives deeper into the armament of these waters, the interplay of Yemen's militia movement with Iran's Axis of Resistance and the role it plays in the ongoing conflicts in the Middle East.

The newly 'liberated' Syria, along with the weakening of Hezbollah and Hamas, in the wake of Israel's brutal offensive strikes, have all contributed in one way or another to the further strengthening of control the Houthis have over the international waters of the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden. This paper also sheds light on the covert role the United States is playing in the region, which has substantially affected the global trade flow and led to a clandestine shift in economic trade deals of various Asian countries. Ultimately, it comes down to the fact that the regional players realise the importance of these waters for the international community, which forms part of the reason for this increasingly hostile environment for control, which is not just becoming progressively more expensive for the militaries of the states involved, but also for intercontinental shipping companies, who depend of these maritime passages for the smooth exchange of commodities. This clamors for greater stable jurisdiction of key trade routes, and the stricter applying of international conventions such as UNCLOS and the DCoC on these regions.

Keywords - Axis of Resistance, Houthis, Horn of Africa, Global trade, United States of America.

1. A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE RED SEA

The Red Sea occupies a highly strategic and critical position in global trade and resource flow. To its north, the Gulf of Suez connects to the vital Suez Canal, while to the south, the Red Sea links to the Gulf of Aden through the Bab-el-Mandeb Strait, one of the world's most important maritime chokepoints. The vitality of these waters, not just for commercial usage but for the display of power, has led to the heavy militarization of the same, with major nations such as the United States, China, United Arab Emirates and France having established military bases in Djibouti, a country at the head of Bab el-Mandeb. The extent of the military intrusion was seen when Japan settled their very first military base in the Horn of African country, making the already tense waters increasingly dangerous with the beginning of maritime warfare by the Houthis.

The Red Sea signifies the interactions of turbulent actions resulting from crumbling regimes and a struggle for power and more importantly, survival. The last decade has seen radical alterations in the states surrounding these waters, with Ethiopia and Sudan plunged with high

scale violence and the fractionalisation of Yemen with a waging civil war between the Internationally Recognised Government (IRG) and the Houthis.

1.1 BACKGROUND OF CONTROL

Different sources cite the width of the Red Sea varying anywhere between only 305-355 kilometers, this results in no nation having defined territorial waters in the region, which makes the Red Sea being regulated by international agreements and conventions. This puts the intercontinental waterways into a sticky situation, being surrounded by littoral nations, states who play a crucial role in combating maritime crime due to their strategic positioning along coastlines and control over territorial waters, these countries have vast abilities and responsibilities to monitor and regulate activities in their Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs), which allows them to enforce laws against piracy, smuggling, illegal fishing, and other transnational crimes.

Additionally, littoral states hold geopolitical influence in securing major shipping routes and chokepoints, such as the Strait of Malacca and the Strait of Hormuz. Yet, more often than not when it comes to littoral countries along Bab-el Mandeb, these waters are often used as a means of survival for the war torn countries and a way to escape the same.

The Djibouti Code of Conduct (DCoC)¹ is the sole formalized international agreement that acknowledges the perilous nature of these waters and outlines a cooperative framework to address the increasing incidents of piracy and armed robbery targeting commercial vessels. However, this was signed in 2009, during the peak of Somali piracy, in order to combat piracy and other risks to the safety and security of navigation, the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) has been assisting participating states in the code, which include key nations such as Yemen, Somalia, Saudi Arabia and Egypt in strengthening their maritime law enforcement operations since 2010. However, this convention does not mention anything for the Houthis, even after the 2017 Jeddah amendment to the DCoC, which only refers to the need to address more broad maritime security issues in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden.

While this did not directly lead to the Houthis capturing major control of the southern part of the sea, specifically the strait of Bab el-Mandeb, also known as the Gate of Grief in Arabic, a very fitting name considering the turmoil it has historically been a part of, it did contribute to the free will they believed they had over the usage of these waters. Currently, the Houthis have command over the significant Al Hudayah port, situated midway of the country's western coast, it, along with the ports of Salif and Ras Issa, also part of the Al Hudaydah Governorate, account for about 70% of all imports into Yemen, along with 80% of the humanitarian aid for what the United Nations calls 'the world's worst humanitarian crisis'.²

¹ *DCOC states – DCOC*. (n.d.).

² *Yemen*. (n.d.-b). United Nations Population Fund.

Across the Gulf of Aden lies Somalia, a nation so deeply entangled in armed conflicts. Its citizens, plagued by poverty and foreign intervention, often see their fishing boats—vital to their livelihood—confiscated under accusations of piracy.

Stripped of resources, some have turned to Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing and others, frustrated by the absence of basic necessities, have embraced the very piracy they were unjustly accused of.

1.2 ECONOMIC SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RED SEA

Given its tactical location, the Red Sea is extremely vital for the survival of a major chunk of global trade. The Suez Canal, connecting the Red Sea and the Mediterranean, accounts for roughly 10 percent of global maritime trade and is a source of much-needed foreign currency for Egypt.

The Suez Canal Authority (SCA) stated that approximately 1.27 billion tonnes of cargo passed through the waterway in 2021, generating \$6.3 billion USD in transit fees—13 percent higher than the year before and the biggest figures ever recorded.³ This is in direct relation to the amount of cargo that transits into the red sea and through the Bab el-Mandeb strait, making up almost 15% of the global maritime trade volume that goes through the currents. This points to why European countries are deeply concerned with the crisis, as this passageway is a direct connection between them and the Asian countries, which accounts for large orders of European nations machinery and chemical products. An European Commission report⁴ states that ASEAN accounted for over 252.5 billion euros of trade with the EU in just 2023, this is after the association of nations is only the third largest trading partner of the EU, after Asia's giant, China.

This clearly indicates the weight of burden and relevance the waters will continue to hold, and why military operations like PROSPERITY GUARDIAN⁵ and ASPIDES⁶ in the region continue to operate even after the usage of highly expensive and sophisticated weapons in comparison to the outdated arms used in offense by the Houthis.

2. LEAD UP TO MARITIME TAKEOVER: A SCRUTINY OF THE PAST

With its unique convergence of colonial-era power struggles, political discord, state fragility, and unfolding situations, the Red Sea region remains one of the world's most unstable zones. The maritime takeover came not out of the sudden Houthi control over the Yemeni ports and

³ Afp. 2022. “Record Cargo Shipped Through Egypt’s Suez Canal Last Year.” *The Economic Times*, January 3, 2022.

⁴ *EU trade relations with Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN)*. (n.d.-b). Trade and Economic Security.

⁵ U.S. Department of Defense. (n.d.). *Statement from Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin III on Ensuring Fr.*

⁶ *EUNAVFOR Operation ASPIDES*. (n.d.). EEAS.

the direct result of the Israel-Gaza conflict, but stemmed out of a buildup beginning from the 1990s.

The Horn of Africa consists of some of the most erratic nations in the world, plagued by constant military takeovers, instate hostilities, a plundering economy and the worst cases of poverty seen in the world, a lack of Naval forces from these countries adds to the tensions, with the Somali Navy forces being disbanded the same year the war begun.

The fight for control over the region can be largely divided into two parts, with Pirates from Somalia on the African side of the waters and the Houthis on the Asian side. The contemporary world saw the rise of the Red Sea's Arab neighbours as the Houthis took up space in the power vacuum left by the suppression of pirate activities, but this comes at a high cost of having the western countries spreading their influence in the region, especially with the heavy militarization of the waters.

2.1 FROM COASTAL FISHERMEN TO OCEANIC THREATS: THE SOMALI PIRACY PHENOMENON

In his 1932 book *The History of Piracy*, English piracy scholar Philip Gosse introduced the "Pirate Cycle,"⁷ a framework that outlines how piracy develops and evolves over time. His theory identifies three distinct stages, each marked by increasing sophistication and power, and offers insights that can be applied to the phenomenon of Somali piracy.

The origins of piracy in Somalia can be traced back to the collapse of Siad Barre's regime. With the fall of the dictatorship, the Somali Naval Forces also disintegrated, creating a void that led to the emergence of IUU fishing and the advent of illegal foreign fishing vessels in the country's waters which devastated the local fisheries population, the people now faced by a rapidly falling national economy, no central control and a disbanded coast guard, decided to take matters upon themselves to defend their stock of survival.

With easy access to arms due previous stated reasons, fishermen gathered together and began patrolling the waters in an effort to scare off the illegal vessels, and more often than not, gain some monetary yields. This signifies the first stage, which emerges when impoverished coastal communities resort to piracy as a means of survival. At this point, piracy is unorganized and opportunistic, targeting only poorly protected merchant ships. This is often referred to as "subsistence piracy."

As piracy proved to be a lucrative enterprise, it transitioned into a second phase characterized by the rise of larger, well-structured pirate networks. These professional groups dominated the waters, either absorbing smaller, informal pirate bands or driving them out of business. This was seen during the peak of Gulf of Aden piracy in 2011, when as many as 237 ships were

⁷ Edward R. Lucas, *Somalia's "Pirate Cycle": The Three Phases of Somali Piracy*, *Journal of strategic security*, Volume 6, No. 1: spring 2013

attacked while transitioning through the Bab-el Mandeb strait off the coast of Northern Somalia, in this stage, the pirates are now capable of mounting strategic attacks against even heavily armed ships.

In the final stage, pirate organizations begin to function almost like independent political entities, wielding significant power. At this point, they may establish alliances with states, using their influence to gain mutual advantages during conflicts. Fortunately, due to various measures taken by the Puntland government, the United States, European Union and NATO deploying missions in the region, this stage was never reached.

However, this clever grab for resources spiralled into what today comes under Article 101 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)⁸, which states in brief terms, involving illegal acts of violence, detention, or depredation for private ends on the high seas or outside state jurisdiction, participation in operating pirate vessels, or facilitating such acts. Now, this article vis a vis the activities of these violent non-state actors (VNSA) can be seen as somewhat vague as it further states that in accordance to part II of UNCLOS, the cases of armed robbery against ships are different from offences of piracy, and the former will be handled by the coastal state security forces itself.

This puts the application of international laws on these waters in a tricky complication, as more often than not, these acts were carried out by former fishermen who functioned in predominantly unorganised groups and their attacks in many cases did not materialise in any gains as ships either escape their attempt at capture or, military aid is quick to rescue them. Even when these clusters of men began to organise and mobilise themselves into structured militia, this law is difficult to apply, as there are no coastal state security forces who can carry out the defensive acts.

Gosse's pirate cycle offers a valuable lens to understand the dynamic nature of piracy and how it evolves into a more organized, politically significant force—insights that remain relevant in analyzing Somali piracy.

2.2 THE HOUTHIS' RISE: A STRATEGIC ASCENDANCY

The Houthis, also known as Ansar Allah ("Supporters of God"), are an Iran-backed militia group in Yemen. They are Zaydi Shiites, a minority in the Muslim world. While the Houthis were slowly growing in their influence, Yemen was collapsing under economic hardships, the rapidly increasing inflation, socio-cultural divides and the skirmishes between the armies of the north and south of the country who had yet to integrate.

⁸ United Nations. (n.d.). United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. In *United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea* (p. 21).

The Arab Spring uprisings of 2011 was a pivotal moment in Yemen's recent history. Widespread protests erupted throughout the country, marked by clashes between various factions and a unified demand for the ouster of President Ali Abdullah Saleh's regime.

The ongoing war in Ukraine has further exacerbated the situation by driving up global food prices, disproportionately impacting Yemen's already malnourished population.

A new period had started in the Middle East, with Israel's aggressive response to Hamas October 7th 2023 attack, the Houthis had declared their goal of targeting any ship linked to Israel in the red sea, further adding US and UK ships to their list of targets after the countries executed airstrikes on Houthi bases. This declaration of attacks on marine vessels is born out of the Houthis' take over of the key city of Al Hudaydah, which includes the crucial ports of Al Hydayadh, Al Salif, and the Ras Isa Marine Terminal, which are responsible for approximately 70% of war-torn country's external aid and income.

2.3 LINKAGE BETWEEN THE PIRATES AND REBELS

While there has been considerable debate about a potential relationship between the Houthis and pirates, it is widely acknowledged that their motivations are fundamentally different. The former actors have been active in their offenses for political and geostrategic gains; however, the incentives of the pirates largely stems out of economic benefits and a need for survival. During the peak of Somali piracy between 2010 to 2015, Somalia became a ground base for Houthis to smuggle weapons, largely from Iran, to fuel their newly gained power in the Civil War torn country.

Moreover, a confirmed suspicion of a partnership between the two was borne out of a particular hijacking of MT *Central Park*, an Oil Tanker which was captured by the Somalian pirates in November of 2023, the U.S. Destroyer *USS Mason* responded to the distress call from the ship which prompted the perpetrators to attempt an escape, surprisingly towards the coast of Yemen. An even bigger astounding fact was when it was revealed that about an hour to an hour and a half later, two ballistic missiles launched from Houthi-controlled areas in Yemen struck the Gulf of Aden about 10 nautical miles away from the ship.

Now, the Pentagon did report that the missiles were targeting the merchant vessel and not the US Navy ship, but it did raise speculations about the intent of the firing. Some experts suggest that because of the old surveillance system of the Houthis, they were simply not aware of the military vessel already near the commercial ship, and the firing of the missile was largely due to the latter's Israeli affiliation.

However, the more widely held opinion is that why would the Houthis waste precious and limited missiles on defending a revived and mostly unorganised and impoverished group which had intercepted a ship, albeit with Israeli connections, bringing cargo to Yemen itself?

3. LAYERED GAINS OF HOUTHIS CONTROL OVER THE WATERS

The main motive of the attacks on merchant vessels, as declared by the militia is said to deter the Israeli aggression on Gaza and to proclaim their support for Hamas, a key actor of Iran's Axis of Resistance, along with the Houthis and Lebanon's Hezbollah. However, this can be seen as only a fraction of why these attacks started, with dominance over the currents the Houthis have leading to a direct access to the revenue being generated by these ports.

A UNSC report⁹ gives an account of the enormous amount of revenue generated by the Houthis from these ports and other illegally collected taxes, citing it at roughly \$13 billion USD. This money is then funneled through channels in Iran, which are used to supply drones and missiles that perpetuate attacks on cargo containers. Other than financial gains, the Houthis also benefit vastly from the control, by using these ports to launch their attacks on commercial ships, which solidify their reign of terror on the waters which invertably have the opposite effect on the region as a whole, displaying a sense of support that the rebels are extending to the Palestinian cause, particularly resonating among the populations of the surrounding Islamic Republics, who resonate with their Muslim counterparts in the Gaza Strip.



One can also argue that the spread of the Red Sea Crisis is also allowing Houthis to establish themselves firmly in the littoral country, by making their presence known by these attacks, which permit the Houthis to open dialogue with other nations to give ground for negotiations. This can be seen in steps taken by Russia in abstaining from voting from the 2015 United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 2216¹⁰, which stated in simpler words to sanction those destabilizing Yemen and urged the Houthis and other parties to end violence and safeguard the political transition, this move was further done by China as well as Russia again

⁹ UNSC, Panel of Experts on Yemen , S/2024/731 dated 11th October 2024.

¹⁰ S/RES/2216 (2015) / Security Council. (n.d.).

in 2024 by abstaining from voting in two UNSC Resolutions¹¹, which call for the Houthis to stop attacks on merchant vessels and release the *M/V Galaxy Leader* and its crew. The group released the latter on 22nd January 2025 but has continued to keep the ship hostage, which has turned into a sort of tourist spot for ordinary Yemenis to go explore.

Abstaining from such moves has allowed China and Russia to ensure safe passage of their vessels through the Red Sea Corridor, although due to the outdated and inaccurate data system of Houthis, a vessel carrying Russia Oil was attacked in late January 2024, along with the Chinese-owned oil tanker *Huang Pu*. China can play its relatively neutral relations with the Houthis and Iran to its advantage, and can use its position to showcase itself as a potential security guarantor in the region, with its refusal to be part of the US led military coalition and its caution in condemning the Red Sea attacks. The refusal of Beijing to call on the Houthis to obey international maritime law does not come as a surprise, given its own actions undermining UNCLOS in the South and East China Sea.

China has also been a vocal supporter of the Palestinian cause, but regardless has continued to maintain full diplomatic relations with Israel and would not resist the lessening of U.S. influence in the region given the already brewing dissatisfaction for its intervention in the area as it seeks to assert itself as a formidable global power

4. THE RED SEA: A THEATER FOR US GEOPOLITICAL & ECONOMIC INTERESTS

The United States has significant strategic and economic interests in the Bab el-Mandeb Strait. Viewing these costs, along with the fact that The United States of America sees itself as a “defender” of the international order in the Middle East, it is not surprising that US involvement in the Red Sea Crisis has been far reaching. However, the popular opinion by Middle East policy experts is that this particular involvement might have negative ramifications for the most powerful nation of the world in the long run.

Starting by observing it from a political perspective, back in 2021 one of the earliest executive orders made by the newly formed Biden administration was removing Ansar Allah from the list of Foreign Terrorist Organisations (FTO)¹², removal from the list of FTO was done in an

¹¹ *Adopting Resolution 2722 (2024) by recorded vote, Security Council demands Houthis immediately stop attacks on merchant, commercial vessels in Red Sea | Meetings coverage and press releases.* (2024, January 10).

Adopting Resolution 2739 (2024) on Yemen, Security Council Demands Houthis Immediately Cease All Attacks against Merchant, Commercial Vessels | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases. (2024, June 27).

¹² *Foreign Terrorist Organizations - United States Department of State.* (2025, January 11). United States Department of State.

attempt to open path for a dialogue with the Houthis and ensure that humanitarian aid reaches Yemeni civilians without any impediments, as when such a designation is enforced upon an unit, no American individual or body is permitted to have contact or provide funds to such a body, if found they would be liable to prosecution under US laws. This puts the state as a whole into a sticky situation, as Yemen is in serious need of external aid and resources for stabilization of the health and food sector.

This extension of good faith did not deter the Houthis in the slightest, as right after the revocation of the designation, the groups amped up their attacks, including a major attack on the Abu Dhabi International Airport leading to the death of three civilians.¹³ Following direct assaults on civilian sites and U.S. facilities within the UAE, the Emirati government had called on the United States to reinstate the Houthi separatist extremist group on its list of FTO.

Biden, before ending his tenure as the president re-designated them in 2024 as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT) entity. This SDGT tag is a step down from the former label but aims at requiring U.S. financial institutions to freeze their assets if in relation to the Houthis and prohibited members of the organisation from entering the United States.

The re-election of Donald Trump as the president has opened new, slightly uneasy possibilities for the Red Sea region, as the “re-location of Gazans” declaration made by the Trump administration has caused major discontent in the Middle Eastern Republics. He has also inserted back the Houthis in the FTO index, this can potentially risk debstabling the already shaky Israel-Hamas truce and cause the Houthis to resume their maritime attacks which they temporarily halted, stating that the standstill will be discontinued if the group perceives any wrong step taken by Israel.

Moving on to the US’s role from a military standpoint, the maritime Operation PROSPERITY GUARDIAN was launched in December of 2023 as a response to the heightened level of attacks by the Houthis in November of the same year, a month after the Israel-Hamas War began. The first red flag or indicator of caution should have been the denial of involvement by Egypt and Saudi Arabia, when the former’s economy heavily depends on the revenue generated by the Suez Canal, and the latter has been on the forefront of the formation of the Internationally Recognised Government (IRG), along with critical US backing, in Yemen and the attempts to oust the Houthi dominance from the capital of the nation, Sa’naa.

The second sign was the inaction of the European countries in taking part in the US-led operation, this can be seen as an attempt by EU to establish themselves as a maritime power on their own, as in response to the Houthi attacks which was greatly impacting European trade, the International Organisation put to sea Operation ASPIDES in February of 2024. ASPIDES is adopting an exclusively defensive strategy and has announced its mandate not to conduct any strikes on land, its role being solely devoted to providing a safe passage for merchant vessels travelling through the currents. The US’s coalition, with the United Kingdom being a

¹³ U.S. Department of Treasury. (2021). *Returning the Houthis to the US terrorist list*.

heavy contributor, on the other hand, has conducted numerous airstrikes on Houthi bases in Yemen.

This offensive strategy in response to an already offensive approach taken by the Houthis, will significantly impact the US Defense budget, as already the sophisticated missiles used by the US military pales in comparison to the old Iranian origin Anti-cruise and Anti-Ballistic Missiles used by the Houthis. For every \$80,000 USD ABM used by the Houthis, the US and British Navies are countering the action with weapons starting from \$1.7 Million USD per piece.¹⁴ This is proving to be a very expensive game plan for the western operation, and does not seem sustainable in the grand scheme of military tactics.

Pentagon isn't particularly keen on escalating the conflict by getting further involved by confrontation with the Axis of Resistance, Iran's continuous role with the Houthis will have a direct impact on the region as a whole if intervened with, and could lead to a full fledged war in the waters, the US is already adjusting to back to the Trump Administration, along with the new president's rather forward and accelerating policies regarding the Middle East and his intention to focus on his country first rather than investing in world around, which also signifies Trump's push to lessen funds being sent to Ukraine. By attacking the Houthi bases and ships in the region, the US is still projecting its military prowess while also attempting to maintain a distance from the region's instability, having learnt crucial lessons from the Iraq War.

5. ANCHORING INFLUENCE: INDIA'S GEOPOLITICAL STAKES IN THE REGION

India has been a crucial part of the Sea Lines of Communications (SLOC) for centuries, this also includes having critical ports for ships sailing across the Gulf of Aden and having a major stock in the global trade passing through the region. The crisis has led to a surge of prices for Basmati rice and tea from India to other parts of the world, specifically Western Asia and Europe. The Indian government set up an Inter-ministerial Services Improvement Group (SIG) under the leadership of the Commerce Ministry to monitor and manage the crisis and its effects on India's export-import trade.¹⁵

A more complicated snag was the halting of the India Middle East Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) due to the passage crossing right through the area of the heightened strikes, the project also hit a roadblock due to the involvement of the Haifa Port in Israel, the largest port in the country and the target of various drone attacks by the Houthis.

The Indian Government, upon getting the invitation to join Operation PROSPERITY GUARDIAN, had decided to excuse itself out of the same and rather maintain an independent naval presence in the region, specifically the Gulf of Aden and the Western Indian Ocean. The

¹⁴ Vikramaditya, K.S. (2024, January 17). *The Red Sea conundrum*. National Maritime Foundation.

¹⁵ Ahmed, S. N., MP-IDSAs, Elisabeth Braw, Marine Link, Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS), THE INDIAN NAVY AND MARITIME SECURITY IN THE RED SEA. In *MP-IDSAs* (pp. 1–3) [Issue Brief].

Red Sea, in recent times, has found its place in India's maritime areas of interest (MAI) zones, along with the historically included Northern Indian Ocean, Bay of Bengal, Arabian Sea and the Persian Gulf.

While the Indian Navy has no separate patrolling units for the Houthis, it has deployed several ships for anti-piracy operations in the GOA and in the waters surrounding Somalia. According to media reports, there are currently five frontline guided missile destroyers deployed in the Central Arabian Sea, away from the US-led coalition in the Red Sea. The MV Ruen became the first vessel hijacked by Somali pirates since 2017, seized approximately 260 nautical miles off the Somali coast. In response, the Indian Navy deployed its elite MARCOS unit, leading to the surrender of 35 pirates.

The Indian nation has decided to adopt a vigilant approach towards dealing with the Red Sea Crisis as a whole which includes the Houthi attacks. Rather than a head-to-head clash with the VNSA in the waters, India is taking the non interventionist approach, keeping in consideration its traditionally good relations with Tehran.

6. FINAL THOUGHTS: THE CRISIS AND GEOPOLITICAL REALIGNMENTS

The Red Sea has encountered various power shifts since the last few decades and has seen at best only half a decade of stability in contemporary times, as the decline of Somali Piracy gave way to the Houthi maritime attacks, with regional driving forces pushing their way into the waters for their own gains. The beginning of the Israel-Hamas truce has started a new era for the unstable waves, as a major global trade route hinges upon the maintenance of this fragile ceasefire, along with the Trump administration's recent rather provocative declaration of ideas for the Gaza strip, it is no guessing how delicate this area actually is right now.

For the rebel group, the truce brings a dilemma. They have justified their attacks on ships as support for Palestine, but with hostilities pausing, their reasoning weakens. However, this doesn't mean they will stop. With Iran backing them, they still control key trade routes, using them as leverage in their broader political struggle. Their presence in the waters ensures they remain a force to be reckoned with, regardless of the truce.

The 'Talking it out' method won't work in this region, as the players involved have varying degrees of hot and cold relations with each other, omitting out a grey area to find and settle on. In a conflict like this, waiting for the crisis to solve itself won't be viable in the long run, as VNSA are not particularly fond of letting their ideals fade out, this can be mitigated with a solidified agreement about the waters, the Jeddah Agreement of DCoC needs to be expanded to include the maritime attacks by VNSAs as well, as it currently only mentions crimes like IUU fishing and narcotics smuggling, this code with the renewed efforts of the Regional Maritime Information Sharing Centre (ReMISC) in Sana'a and other centres established through this agreement can help better facilitate communication of incidents to further assist the combating of these attacks as it stands on shaky grounds.

In conclusion, the Red Sea has the potential to become calm again, however it would require world powers who have a stronghold over their Naval capabilities to push an initiative to not only develop the maritime security of the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) as a whole, to ensure not just the stability of Sea Lines of Communications but also for the future of whole economies and stability of the regional countries by and large.

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