CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Red Sea has long since become a geo-strategic arena of increasing importance in the international system. Throughout the memorandum, the changes that have occurred in the region in recent years—political, security-related, economic, and infrastructural—were examined, and a map of the interests of global and regional actors in this arena was outlined. This analysis positions the Red Sea as a vital maritime transportation axis for global trade, with growing importance for Israeli national security.

This memorandum emphasizes how the Houthis in Yemen, backed by Iran, have turned the southern Red Sea into a challenging area that threatens international freedom of navigation and harms the interests of many countries, including Israel. Faced with this challenge, various countries—including the United States, European states, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Egypt—aim to establish military or diplomatic coalitions to ensure maritime stability, despite significant gaps in perceptions and policies among the actors. The maritime policy of each of these countries and others was reviewed, whether in establishing naval bases, investing in infrastructure, promoting security agreements, or initiating civilian economic projects.

The memorandum presents a series of strategic recommendations for the State of Israel, pertaining to the buildup of an appropriate naval force for operations in the challenging coastal area of the Red Sea, promoting civilian and security collaborations with regional countries, and strengthening critical infrastructures such as the Port of Eilat, terrestrial and maritime conduits, and joint economic projects. The memorandum emphasizes that Israel needs to formulate a clear maritime policy, encompassing both the development of its navy to protect freedom of navigation and strategic assets, as well as to realize the civil-economic potential of the maritime domain.

Israel's position in this arena can be strengthened through several strategic avenues: First, it should deepen its security and intelligence involvement in

the maritime domain—both through cooperation with foreign navies and the deployment of naval forces, as well as through the smart deployment of advanced technological capabilities to detect and monitor threats. Second, it can promote civilian solutions based on its relative advantage in desalination, mariculture, cyber, and communication fields. Third, the Eilat area can be developed as a logistics and port center that could serve as an alternative to other trade routes in emergency situations. Fourth, Israel can initiate integration into regional and international coalitions focused on protecting freedom of navigation and lead innovative models of diplomatic-maritime collaboration. Finally, it should employ soft diplomacy in the arena—reciprocal ship visits, technological contributions, non-violent security assistance, and integration into regional initiatives.

The Red Sea is not merely a domain of risks and threats but also a profound arena of opportunities. Israel can—and perhaps must—position itself as a vital regional player, blending military strength, advanced technology, diplomatic vision, and a willingness for partnership. Maritime diplomacy is key to this process, and realizing its potential lies in the ability to formulate a multi-tiered strategy that is based on initiative, builds trust, and is aligned with the regional zeitgeist. The Red Sea is not merely a maritime corridor but also an emerging crucial arena, and Israel can shape and fulfill a unique role within it.

Israel, which is interested in strengthening freedom of navigation in the Red Sea and near the centers of Iranian-Houthi influence, must follow what is occurring in Djibouti. Although there are no direct diplomatic relations, monitoring China's presence and the Western countries' approach to this country are part of Israel's security considerations in the Red Sea's southern arena, especially in light of the Houthis' attacks on civilian shipping. Djibouti illustrates how a geographically and demographically small country can become a key player in international discourse, as long as it leverages its location and manages its foreign relations in a flexible and strategic manner.

The inter-power tensions in Djibouti is a microcosm of a much broader struggle between the West and China—over control, presence, and influence in the Red Sea and in the global maritime system. Therefore, developments in Djibouti will continue to be at the forefront of the security agenda for anyone interested in maritime stability in the southern Red Sea and maintaining freedom of navigation along this vital trade route.

In conclusion, this memorandum positions the Red Sea not only as a security challenge but also as a regional opportunity for Israel. It advocates for the integration of naval strength, smart diplomacy, and the development of civilian infrastructure to position Israel as a key player in the emerging arena, one that is poised to redefine the geopolitical balance between Asia, the Middle East, and Africa. Israel can, and indeed should, become a full partner in establishing a new regional maritime security forum that combines intelligence, operational capabilities, international enforcement, protection of maritime and cyber infrastructure—while incorporating private and international economic sectors operating along these critical trade routes.

Beyond the security aspect, control over the undersea communication infrastructure has become a paramount geo-strategic tool: Israel must consider scenarios of deliberate cutting or disabling of these connections—scenarios that have implications not only for security systems but also for business, banking, and transportation activities. The undersea communication cables traversing the Red Sea are not merely conduits of information but lifelines of the digital economy. Every country that relies on information—and in our era, this includes all—must comprehend its vulnerability in this domain. Israel and the countries of the region must consider:

• Forming a joint maritime mechanism to protect communication cables.
• Establishing a maritime-intelligence warning system against sabotage attempts.

- Developing and increasing the number of undersea communication cables connecting Israel to the world, including defining the concurrent use of multiple undersea cables for transmitting essential communications and prioritizing essential communications over other communications to enhance infrastructure redundancy.

- Improving the response in cases of damage to undersea infrastructure by establishing state-level capabilities and fostering international collaborations to improve such capabilities.

Recommendations for Israel: Policies and Actions

1. **Strengthening the Port of Eilat and communication and transportation infrastructure**—Transforming Eilat into a logistics hub, free trade zone, and a focal point for joint economic activities with regional countries, particularly with Egypt, Jordan, and the Arabian Peninsula countries, predominantly Saudi Arabia.

2. **Expanding and deepening maritime security cooperation**—Participation in multinational forces, unique exercises, and establishing coordination mechanisms with Red Sea states, emphasizing the creation of a shared maritime vision and addressing underwater threats.

3. **Expanding cooperation and developing the capability to utilize relevant maritime infrastructures in the region for the Israeli Navy**—Exploring and expanding cooperation with countries, with an emphasis on African states, to utilize relevant maritime infrastructures.

4. **Adapting the naval force buildup**—Improving and tailoring the Navy's capabilities in the Red Sea region parallel to the Mediterranean arena, with an emphasis on deploying naval forces in distant areas and addressing asymmetric threats, while improving and enhancing the ability to conduct strikes from the sea.

5. **Multidisciplinary civil-security involvement**—Promoting projects in mariculture, tourism, search and rescue centers, undersea communication infrastructure, and maritime healthcare initiatives such as hospital ships—as a means to create soft presence and positive civilian visibility.

6. **Strengthening the connection with local forces in Africa**—Deepening diplomatic and security ties with the Horn of Africa countries (Djibouti, Somalia, Somaliland), as a balancing factor against Iranian and Chinese influence and to strengthen the African dimension in Israeli diplomacy.

7. **Continuously monitoring foreign investments and emerging threats**—Tracking Chinese investments, Russian presence, undersea infrastructure, and Iranian actions, in order to preserve the national security domain and identify changes in the arena in real time.