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Security of the Red Sea Shipping Corridor: International Responsibilities and the Role of Japan

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The security of the Red Sea shipping corridor is not merely a concern for nations with direct interests in the region but a responsibility that increasingly extends across the globe. Internationally, the Red Sea shipping corridor is a lifeline for global trade, facilitating the movement of goods between Europe, Asia, and Africa. The strategic significance of this maritime route, connecting the Mediterranean Sea to the Indian Ocean via the Suez Canal, underscores the need for collaborative efforts to ensure its safety and stability.

Regionally, the nations bordering the Red Sea have a direct stake in the corridor's security due to their geographical proximity and economic interdependence. Cooperation among regional powers has become imperative in addressing specific challenges and vulnerabilities unique to the Red Sea region. Joint efforts in intelligence-sharing, coordinated naval patrols, and capacity-building initiatives at the regional level are all steps toward enhancing the region's collective ability to respond promptly to emerging threats.

The responsibility of securing the Red Sea shipping corridor extends beyond military aspects to encompass diplomatic and economic dimensions. Diplomatic efforts should focus on fostering dialogue and conflict resolution to address underlying issues contributing to insecurity in the region. Economic cooperation and development initiatives can also play a role in creating stability and reducing the motivations for disruptive activities along the corridor.

The security of the Red Sea shipping corridor, however, is more importantly a shared responsibility that demands both international and regional collaboration. As a critical artery for global trade, securing this maritime route is not only in the interest of the countries directly adjacent to it, but is a collective duty for the global community. Through joint efforts, encompassing a full range of military, diplomatic, and economic measures, stakeholders can ensure the stability and security of the Red Sea for the benefit of all.

The attacks by the Houthis from Yemen have underscored the risks to the freedom of passage through the Bab el-Mandeb Strait. From an economic perspective, this has an impact on global oil prices, with a knock-on consequence on inflation rates as lengthening supply lines and rising insurance rates increase overall shipping costs. With the security of this critical maritime passage affected, risks to market uncertainty and the potential to cause fluctuations in raw material prices also persist. Investors and traders do closely monitor the geopolitical developments in the Red Sea given that any escalation heightens concerns about oil supply disruptions which could result in increased market volatility.

Japan, as a leading global economic power, has an important role to play in the intricate web of international trade when it comes to the Red Sea and the Suez Canal. It is thus worthwhile to examine the prospective contributions that Japan can make to ensuring security along the Red Sea shipping corridor.

Japan has a rich trade history with the Middle East, dating back to the early 20th century. Initially driven by a need for natural resources, Japan established maritime trade routes with Middle Eastern



countries, particularly for oil and raw materials. This strategic partnership has evolved over the years, with Japanese shipping companies playing a crucial role in transporting a variety of goods between the two regions. The Middle East's importance as a major oil supplier has fostered new economic ties and contributed to Japan's industrial growth.

With Japan's economic prosperity intricately linked to international trade, including the fact that a substantial portion of its maritime commerce passes through the Red Sea, protecting the Red Sea corridor is a matter directly tied to Japan's economic well-being. The significant benefits Japan accrues from shipping activities in this region therefore make its role in enhancing security crucial from both a domestic and an international perspective.

Already, Japan's shipping industry has encountered several challenges in the Taiwan Straits over the years. The Taiwan Straits are a strategic linchpin for Japan's maritime trade routes, but political uncertainties and military posturing in the area have led to increasing concerns regarding the safety and security of shipping lanes. This includes military exercises, territorial disputes, and political tensions between China and Taiwan. The need for careful diplomatic analysis and thoughtful risk assessments becomes crucial for Japanese shipping companies operating in this region in order to effectively cope with these challenges.

In the above context, Japan can extend its experience in maintaining open sea lanes to the Red Sea region. Halting Houthi attacks on shipping vessels in the Red Sea requires a combination of Japan's and other relevant parties' diplomatic efforts and strategic measures. All International stakeholders should engage in dialogue with key regional players, urging them to influence the Houthi leadership towards de-escalation. Implementing stricter maritime security measures, such as increased patrols and surveillance, can help deter attacks. Japan's specific collaborative intelligence-sharing among affected nations can enhance the ability to anticipate and prevent such incidents. Additionally, targeted sanctions against those responsible for orchestrating attacks could serve as a deterrent. Combining these diplomatic, security, and economic measures can contribute to ending the targeting of shipping vessels in the Red Sea by the Houthis.

Japan's prospective contribution to security in the Red Sea shipping corridor is not merely a regional affair; it is a global responsibility. As Japan stands at the nexus of economic interests and maritime trade, its interventions can have a far-reaching impact on the stability of this crucial waterway. By adopting a multifaceted approach encompassing diplomatic, logistical, and direct intervention measures, Japan can fulfill its role as a key player in ensuring the security of the Red Sea shipping corridor and upholding the interests of the global community.

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