EARLY AMERICAN EXPLOITS IN THE RED SEA REGION, 1860-1945

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Abstract
This article examines the beginning of the U.S. interest in one of the most strategically important regions of the world, namely the Red Sea. At the end of the 19th century the U.S. appeared to share in the interest of this vital region. The U.S.'s involvement in the Red Sea started for purely commercial purposes. After the end of WWI, the U.S. relations with the Red Sea began to evolve, and it is no longer limited only to business concerns but has entered other dimensions as well as cultural and diplomatic dimensions. The economic dimension grew with the discovery of oil in the Gulf region. The Red Sea was linked to the Gulf region as a passage to transport oil to Europe and the U.S. Because Saudi Arabia is the largest oil-producing country in the region and constitutes one of the Red Sea states, this further raised the importance of the Red Sea in American eyes. During World War II, the U.S. policy changed dramatically. After joining the war and growing as the incoming superpower, the U.S. began to focus its foreign policy on the Red Sea region as an important strategic location for its military movements. The establishment of the state of Israel in 1948 also represented a prime change in the Red Sea region, and this change added a new dimension for U.S. interests. Consequently, providing security to Israel and freedom of navigation in the Red Sea has become a prime goal of the U.S. policy in this region.