

Student Name: Muneer Ahmed

Supervisor Name: Prof. Mohammad Sohrab

Department: MMAJ-Academy of International Studies

TOPIC: Geo-Strategic Significance of the Sinai Peninsula with Special Reference to Security Environment of the Region

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FINDINGS

The study attempts to understand the dynamics of unrest in the Sinai Peninsula. In doing so, the study highlights various factors and nuances that are underplay in and around Sinai Peninsula. The study aims to analyse the reasons of the emerging and escalating security crises in the Sinai Peninsula. It also seeks to scrutinise the state policy towards the autochthonous Bedouin tribes of Sinai who have been alienated from the main socio-political centres of Egypt based in the Nile valley. The marginalisation of these groups seemingly leads to them falling prey to the extremist ideology and they join the other violent groups against the state. Moreover, this situation in the deserts of Sinai does not remain confine to the Peninsula itself. Thus, regional security vortex, although, appears to have always had the upper hand in influencing the situation inside Sinai, despite the fact that the situation in Sinai reinforces a regional security conundrum in return.

The significance of researching security upheaval in Sinai unearths several layers of the intersectional dynamics that are at play both within and around the peninsula. This is one of its kind research projects on the Sinai Peninsula which not just contributes to the better understanding of the situation but will also immensely contribute to the limited literature that is available on this subject. The study highlights geostrategic importance of the Sinai as it is positioned between the Mediterranean Sea to the north and the Red Sea to the south and acts as a land bridge connecting Asia and Africa and Europe and Asia, through the Suez Canal. Therefore, it is essential for the security of West Asia and North Africa to maintain peace in Sinai. It has a history of being a violent hotspot, most notably during the 1967 and 1973 Arab-Israeli Wars. The Sinai Peninsula will undoubtedly continue to be of utmost importance from a geostrategic perspective. Given this, every effort should be made to preserve tranquilly and stability in this critical region.

The objectives of this study are: 1)To study the geo-strategic significance of Sinai Peninsula as the source of contestation between States. 2) To evaluate and explain the perceived irredentist prominence of Sinai Peninsula by the contending parties. 3)To explore the propensity of peace between states due to situation in Sinai and vice versa. 4) To understand the relationship between the situation within Sinai and regional security upheaval 5) To study the situation and its causes in and around Sinai Peninsula before and after the Arab Spring. 6) To study the nature

of demographics and state policy towards the Bedouins within Sinai as the potential reason for security upheaval.

The hypotheses of this study are: 1) Strategic prominence of Sinai Peninsula is the consequence of its geographical location vis-à-vis security environment of the region. 2) Deterioration of relations in the security sub complex of the region is potent of creating a security vortex in the form of Sinai Peninsula. 3) Situation in Sinai Peninsula both during and after the Arab Spring is causally related to the alterations in the security sub complex of the region. 4) Constant neglect of autochthonous Bedouin population of Sinai by the state due to security depth has exacerbated the situation of segregation and alienation.