

## **The regional and international geopolitical dimensions of the Gibraltar region**

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### **Abstract**

This research shows the geopolitical importance and its regional and international dimensions to the territory of Gibraltar. The region gained this importance through its geostrategic and geopolitical location due to its long-term regional and international political and economic impacts in the world as it represents the most important commercial navigation routes in the world linking the Mediterranean Sea to the Atlantic Ocean and the bridge linking the African continent and Europe Through which most of the oil tankers and merchant ships carrying various types of goods and merchandise pass from the Middle East to European and American countries across the Atlantic Ocean. The study showed the political, military and economic importance of Gibraltar to European and Arab countries and to the United States of America. Closed distances between east and west This research dealt with several axes of the geopolitical importance of Gibraltar at the regional and international levels for Britain, Spain, Morocco, the Arab world, America, China and Russia

**Keywords:** Regional; International; Dimensions; Gibraltar region.

### **Introduction**

Gibraltar is considered one of the most important regions that possesses a strategic geographical location, which represented the site of an international struggle for influence and control over it due to its geographical and economic components, its geostrategic role and its geopolitical, political, economic, security and military dimensions in drawing relations.

In terms of international and regional politics, the study area in terms of geopolitics has become more extensive in terms of physical geography, as it represents the connection point and the main axis of the navigational marine transportation routes that connect the West with the Middle East and the main gateway or entrance to the Mediterranean Sea from its western side and access through it to the south of the European continent and the north of the continent African and Middle Eastern countries bordering the eastern shores of that sea.

The Gibraltar site is from The most important strategic sites in the world that have a geopolitical impact on international political and economic relations, especially after the prosperity and development of industries and oil discoveries in the Arab Gulf states, which increased the importance of this site. Industries in all Western countries, especially after the

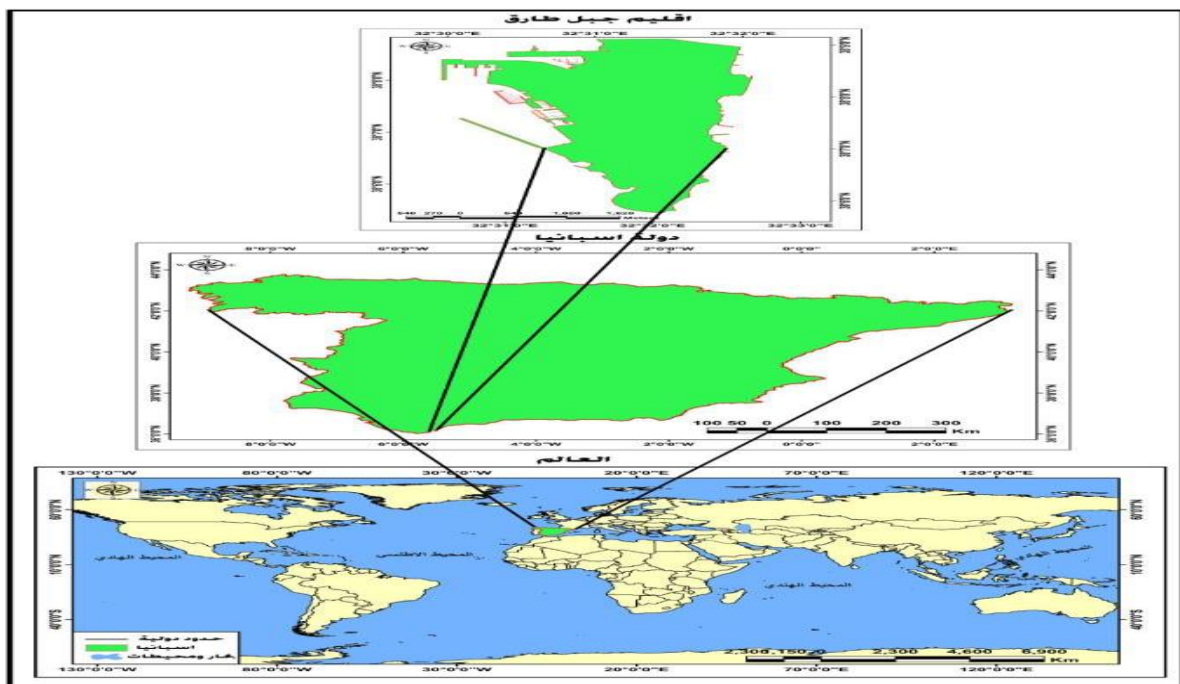
industrial progress that took place in the United States and the United Kingdom, increased the importance of opening commercial markets and discharging products, and here the study area represented the main dominant location on the maritime navigation routes, especially after the opening of the Suez Canal, where the importance of the Strait of Gibraltar increased, as it is an international waterway And a global safety valve, by virtue of its geopolitical location, where all the vital interests of Britain and the interests of the United States were placed. The link from west to east is the only link between the Atlantic Ocean and the sea The Mediterranean, as well as it is located between the European Economic Area and the future African Free Trade Area, the largest in the world.

This site granted privileges to the riparian countries with important prospects in terms of economy and global trade. The Strait of Gibraltar provided its residents with an opportunity for economic transformation through economic diversification strategies and its investments in ports. In addition to what is hidden in its waters of unique and diverse natural wealth.

The geopolitical importance of the region is closely related to the geographical location of Gibraltar and its ability to control and influence the movement of world trade, being the only gateway that opened to the Mediterranean Sea on the Atlantic Ocean . And an ancient and contemporary history of conflicts, as the maritime countries sought to control it since the era of the Phoenicians, the Carthaginians, the Romans, and the Islamic conquest of Andalusia.

**importance of the study:** The research seeks to clarify the importance of the geopolitical dimension of the distinctive geographical location in which the territory of Gibraltar is located in the Strait of Gibraltar, which is one of the most important commercial marine navigation routes in the world.

**The spatial boundaries of the research:** represented by the Gibraltar region, as shown in Figure Map (1). The borders of the region lie between two latitudes (36.6.30 5 - 36.9.30 5 ) in the north and longitudes (5.22 5 - 5.20.22 5 ) in the west, with an estimated area of (7.2) km 2 ). It thus represents the borders of Gibraltar, from the east by the Mediterranean Sea, from the north by Spain, from the west by the Gulf of Tariq, and from the south across the strait of North Africa.



**Figure1** map (1) Gibraltar location

*To demonstrate the geopolitical importance of Gibraltar at the local, regional and international levels, according to the following axes:*

first axis: the geopolitical importance of Gibraltar for Britain

Britain occupied an important and large space in this study, and it emerged as a key element and a direct influence in all matters related to the Gibraltar region, since Britain's sovereignty over the region and its direct control made it a British territory on Spanish land, although Britain is located in northwestern Europe and is an island country. It has many colonies, including the territory of Gibraltar. Which it began to establish as a British territory on Spanish territory since it obtained it in 1704 AD and was able to officially impose its influence and sovereignty on the territory by Spain ceding the territory to Britain under the Treaty of Utrecht 1713 AD, and Britain became with its control of the territory of Gibraltar a major naval power in the Mediterranean Sea (Tariq & Abdul Wahhab, 2021; Arora & Manchanda, 2021; Arora & Nangia, 2021; Çavuşoğlu et al., 2021). In addition to being the way to the Mediterranean countries, especially after the opening of the Suez Canal, which increased the importance of the Strait of Gibraltar, most of the international trade passes through this strait where it played a distinguished role in the political and military arena and its extreme importance for its ruling role in commercial maritime navigation. With its distinguished geographical and strategic position, which was previously talked about, it occupied a position of geopolitical importance that attracted the attention of countries. Britain gained through its control over the region several important geopolitical points, including :

- 1) Controlling the Strait of Gibraltar and thus controlling the global trade routes and securing communications for the empire.
- 2) It represents an outlet for Britain in its foreign relations with Africa and the Middle East in the event of any European movement aimed at isolating Europe from its regional environment
- 3) It represents an important military base for Britain. Britain has worked to install a military naval base in the region, as well as the giant British fleet in the strait, and a major point in the anti-submarine campaign and the starting point for convoys to supply the Anglo-American invasion of North Africa
- 4) An important economic gain and resource for Britain's economy revenues through the commercial centers. It has commercial, maritime and strategic importance to secure the passage of British ships, secure roads leading to its interests in the east, control traffic in the Strait of Gibraltar, and a watchtower to control the western entrance to the Mediterranean in case of war. (Chris, 2012).
- 5) Securing the delivery of energy resources to Europe 50% of oil and 40% of gas, as well as controlling terrorist threats in the Mediterranean, as well as controlling illegal immigration.

Britain seized the most important naval key and turned it into a vital naval base for its military (Muhammad,2017). , economic and commercial fleets . Politically, in the Napoleon War (1803-1815 AD), Gibraltar served as a royal naval base that was able to besiege the Spanish cities of Carthage, Cadiz and the French city of Toulon. Napoleon British goods coming from the continent, and since that time Gibraltar has become a major center for trade and smuggling of British goods. In addition to Gibraltar serving as a base and a strategic location for supplies and updating intelligence in the Battle of Trafalgar, where the Royal Navy destroyed the biggest threat to British security for 200 years and achieved the biggest victory nautical .

had geopolitical and political dimensions , not only as a British military base to repel the enemies, but also became a shelter and hospital inside the mountain where the wounded were treated, and that among the countries that thought of seizing Territory Germany during World War and France also sent a naval fleet to Gibraltar, but France's attempts failed (Abdul Razzaq,2017).

As a dispute occurred between Britain and France to impose sovereignty over the strait, France controlled the southern coast of the strait during its occupation of Morocco and Britain controlled the territory Gibraltar, and accordingly, they are two parties in controlling the strait, and the dispute and dispute between them was resolved by Britain's pledge to respect freedom of navigation in the Suez Canal in accordance with the provisions of the 1888 agreement, and France pledged that no fortifications or actions would hinder the freedom of navigation in the strait (Ali,1998).

Gibraltar played a decisive role in World War I and II . It was the most important military base for the attacks launched by Britain in the campaign against submarines. In World War II (1939-1945) the region was evacuated from the population for security reasons, so most of them went to Britain, Morocco, Spain and Jamaica (United Nations,2001) Britain took the mountain as a shelter for the war-wounded and their treatment . The location of the region, with its direct connection to the land route with the European countries in the south of the Iberian Peninsula, played a major role in the war, as well as the British naval fleet in the Strait of Gibraltar enabled Britain to achieve victory and exit with the least losses from the war. Britain from the northwest side as a geographical location for Britain's empire and the use of its military bases in the Middle East during the war and its control over the most important global waterway in southern Europe enabled it to achieve geopolitical political, military, security and economic goals . In the east , it also increased the control and enabled Britain to control the movement of the Mediterranean countries, when Britain was in control of it The Suez Canal could have imprisoned the Mediterranean countries by closing the Suez Canal and the Strait (Hossam,2008).

As for the geopolitical economic dimension of the Gibraltar region for Britain, Britain's distinguished location, which mediates the trade route across the North Atlantic Ocean, made it one of the most important trade routes in the world in terms of trade for the industrial centers in eastern North America and its counterpart in Western Europe n.

one of the first industrialized countries that became famous for its industry and started looking for markets to dispose of its products (Ali & Mohamad, 2001). so it was able to expand its trade, and this strait facilitated the entry of commercial ships coming from the Middle East to Britain to Through it you get energy sources and the expansion and development of industries as well as goods and merchandise from North Africa to Britain exports and imports and the ease of transporting goods and merchandise, especially after the opening of the Suez Canal (Muhammad ,2018.) to and from the countries of the Middle East. supplying and equipping it and a fortress to protect trade from the Mediterranean to Europe and the West , Britain followed a policy of achieving economic balance by working to encourage industrialization and Exporting and relying on its colonies in the availability of raw materials necessary for industry and control of navigational routes in order to increase its economic wealth and to achieve this it entered into conflict and conflict in its international relations . Gibraltar is only a few kilometers separated from the sea. The number of ships coming from the Mediterranean to Britain and America increased, loaded with rice and sugar, and the Gibraltar region became a repository of trade for merchants from all over the world (Idris,2014.)

By 11 Mediterranean ports each (the United Kingdom and the ports of Spain, France and Portugal) as well as other shipping lines (Abdul Razzaq,2017). In addition to a security issue in the illegal trade, whether smuggling, drug trafficking or illegal immigration across the strait, which witnessed a steady increase in immigration. The British and their allies used the states The united region as a control tower and all means of intelligence and communications for electronic surveillance, where there is an intelligence base and a base Air, military, and naval base that made this indispensable place to stop, to repair nuclear submarines, and to load and unload (Nawfal, 2021.).

### ***Second axis: the geopolitical importance of Gibraltar for Spain***

Although Gibraltar occupies only a very small area of Spain , it has other factors that make it relevant It has an important geopolitical dimension , with an area of( 7.2 km<sup>2</sup>) a proportion of the area of Spain . Now the worrying factor for Spain is represented in many factors, including the presence of the British military base, which worries Spain, especially in Britain's withdrawal from the European Union and the continuation of its strong alliance with United States of America.

Spain has taken many paths in order to recover the territory because by natural law it is part of the territory of Spain, but it is under the sovereignty of Britain . The increase in the importance of the study area from the economic and military point of view made Spain insist on reclaiming it under its sovereignty, but to no avail .

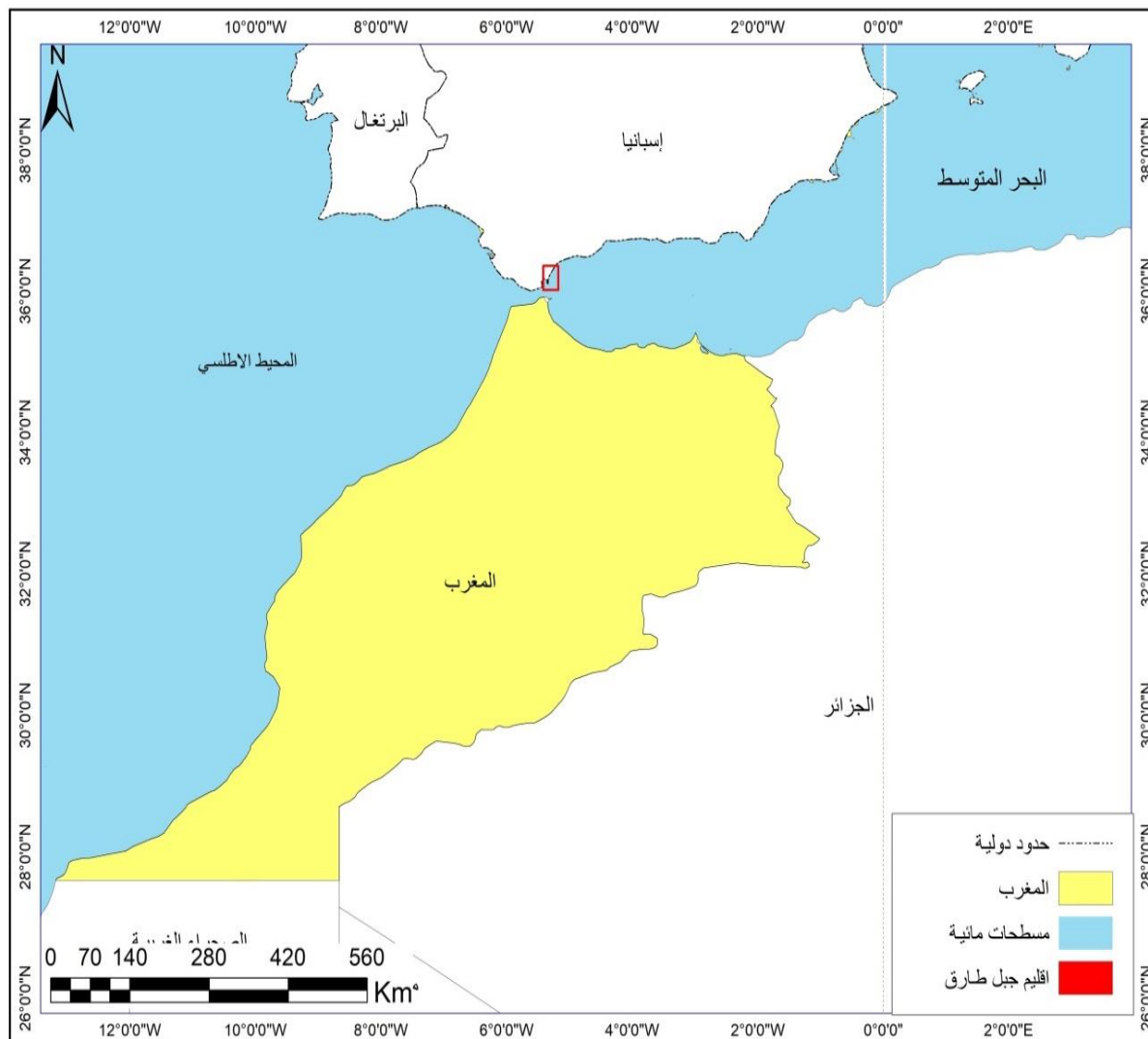
The siege on the study area and France joined with Spain in trying to restore the region, and the siege lasted for four years and then ended with a peace agreement, but it does not mark the end of Spain's claim to the region ,In 1955, Spain became a member of the United Nations, and since then the dispute between Britain has turned And Spain over the territory of Gibraltar to an international issue. Spain opened the claim to the territory and proposed to the United Nations the question of territory and sovereignty through negotiations between the two parties (Yves,2010).

Spain demanded to include the territory of Gibraltar even if it was under British administration, but the population rejected in the referendum conducted by the United Nations in 1967 AD (Rachel,2016) Spain's demands for sovereignty, and the region remained under Britain's influence. In rejecting Spain's demands, and in 1969 AD, autonomy was granted to the region, as the government took over all the internal tasks in the region. As for the external matters under the sovereignty of Queen Elizabeth, here Spain withdrew its workforce in the region, closed the borders, tightened communications, prevented any trade, and imposed a siege on the region In 1973, Gibraltar became part of the European Union and joined the European Economic Community along with Britain in an attempt to open the border with Spain. Britain threatened to use the right of the Veto and Spain did not lift its siege. The border was opened in 1985 AD ( between Spain and the territory of Gibraltar, Economic relations between them have begun, and about 10,000 workers from Spain enter the region daily to work in Gibraltar, in addition to the importance of the land route from Spain in terms of Economical in trade exchanges as well as tourists who flock to Gibraltar by land and in 2002 AD Spain demanded the division of sovereignty, but the request was rejected by a vote of .9% by the residents of Gibraltar rejecting the division of sovereignty between Spain and Britain, and in 2006 a request from the residents of Gibraltar Choosing to stay in the status quo And the adoption of a new constitution ,the people of Gibraltar decided to remain under the sovereignty of Britain and to obtain autonomy. Spain's view of reclaiming the region to achieve the goal of controlling the northern coast of the strait since it controls the southern coasts of the strait through its sovereignty over Ceuta and Melilla,The grip of the strait from all directions. The conflict between the two parties continues to this day over the sovereignty of Gibraltar, and according to the Treaty of Utrecht, Britain obtained sovereignty over the territory of Gibraltar, but Spain is committed to recovering the territory because it was originally a Spanish land, especially when Britain left the European Union encouraged Spain to open The issue of sovereignty once again made it clear that Britain would not interfere in arrangements in which the people of Gibraltar would be placed under the sovereignty of another state against the wishes of the population that they had expressed democratically and freely . its right to territorial waters and argued that the United Kingdom had illegally occupied the isthmus adjacent to Gibraltar and had built facilities, a fence and an airstrip that extended half a kilometer into the waters Spanish territoriality, Spain confirmed that it would not give up its right to sovereignty and territorial waters, and that it would return the land that was stolen from it (James,2014. ) , that Gibraltar is the focus of the Spanish strategy

### ***Third axis : the geopolitical importance of Gibraltar for Morocco***

There is no doubt that Morocco's relationship with the study area has historical roots that extend back to the Islamic conquests of Andalusia and the crossing of Tariq bin Ziyad Al-Madiq in the year (711 AD), which was the launch from Morocco to Spain( Map2) (Figure2) It is the North African countries that played a major role in political relations with Spain, Britain and Gibraltar and since ancient times, where Islamic history referred to the Islamic conquests that entered European countries and spread Islam through the Strait of Gibraltar and since then trade exchanges have been charted The economic and political relations between them and then took another turn during the periods of European occupation of the continent of Africa, including Morocco and Algeria. France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Portugal and Britain

established colonies in the continent of Africa , where France pursued a policy of monopolizing influence in Morocco, authoritarianism and superiority over German trade there ,exploiting The circumstances in which it was and the weakness of the authority, especially after the two world wars, here the Strait of Gibraltar became the separator between Europe and Africa, so migrations and exchanges took place. Goods and merchandise are transported through him and he occupied an important role in.



**Figure2** map (2) Gibraltar is located in Morocco

The flow of trade between the north and the south of the Moroccan foreign trade with Europe, as well as the human flow of more than ( 5 million tourists), 40% of them through the strait, and that the commercial and human movement through Gibraltar to and from Morocco led to regional integration between them and economic development, despite the security strategies represented In fortification and protection, but there are networks of illegal immigration and smuggling between the two sides of the strait (United Nations,2001) , as Morocco’s trade accounts for nearly two-thirds of foreign trade with the European Union, including 22.1% with France, followed by Spain 13.2%, Italy 5.9%, Germany 4.2% and Britain 3.4%, thus gaining its place Economic with the European Union as part of the neighborhood

policy Spain and Morocco have signed more than 104 agreements, more than two-thirds of which are related to the Strait of Gibraltar, procedures for the movement of people and cooperation between border authorities (Flore,2019). The Strait of Gibraltar is a link between North Africa and Europe. The strait is equipped with ports and harbors that guarantee the northern and southern transit of goods and people, represented by the Algeciras, Ceuta, Tangier, Tarifa, and Tangiers, which are linked to strong highway networks and have recently been modernized. The main area of the strait is the territory of Gibraltar and its port, which Like the main place of world trade from east to west, where nearly 100,000 ships pass through it every year (container ships, and oil tankers and other goods) as well as the Sixth Fleet of the United States of America has a major naval base near it, as for Ceuta and Melilla, it is still a point of contention between Spain and Morocco and has a political dimension, as Spain's claims to recover Gibraltar concern the rulers of Morocco, as it is the pressing card on Spain By Morocco, by returning Gibraltar to Spain, Morocco will demand the return of Ceuta and Melilla under its influence because it is a Moroccan land, and these claims and disputes over sovereignty are still ongoing by the concerned parties, whether Spain or Morocco. The relations between Morocco and Spain are linked by economic, political, security and cultural interests They are common interests of the two countries that complement one another and reinforce this factor of neighborliness, and these relations cannot be dispensed with in the strategic calculations of both countries. On the region, where Morocco supplied the region with vegetables, foodstuffs and fruits, and this situation continued until 1985 M Where the borders were opened by Spain and Gibraltar's relationship with Morocco was in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, where a trade hub between Gibraltar and Tangier was distinguished and its importance increased after the opening of the Suez Canal and the movement of commercial ships through the strait increased towards the port of Tangier, Morocco, as well as the merchant ships coming from Europe, where it was standing in the Tangier marina, and then heading to Gibraltar for maintenance The number of pilgrims ' ships from Tangier was 22 Moroccan ships, 200 pilgrims on a Swedish ship, and 320 pilgrims on Spanish ships, and it rose to 1,000 and 2,000 pilgrims from Tangier Marina, passing through the Gibraltar road towards the Arab Mashreq. As a result of the goods and merchandise transported by the pilgrims, the trade movement increased and ranged from 500,000 francs to 1,000,000 francs . The commercial exchanges between Tangiers and the port of Gibraltar amounted to 354 boats in the year (1858 AD ) with a tonnage of 171,465 pounds, and the number of boats leaving in the same year 357 with a load of 121702 pounds of exports, now The Spanish-Moroccan war had a negative impact on trade exchange, which led Britain to make efforts to prevent the outbreak of this war for the sake of existing commercial interests between Gibraltar and Tangiers. Gibraltar was the main engine of Moroccan trade and linked it to European trade for all European countries in the eighth century Nineteen and nineteen, and not only trade, but all aspects of the diplomatic, tangible and military (United Nations,2001). And 75% of Morocco's imports came from Britain and Gibraltar, but they are few compared to Morocco's exports to them. Transit freedom of navigation As a riparian country, Morocco actively participated in the negotiations held by the conference, which were the first global negotiations that took place in 1973-1982 AD, where Morocco supported the Montego Bay Convention in 1982 AD, which gave freedom of navigational movement for all ships and the right of transit without any obstacles .



Morocco has nothing to do with political control. Rather, what aroused its interest is technical control over the navigation of ships with mutual guarantees between neighboring countries, Spain and the nearby countries and Morocco. The commercial factor played a major role in the political relations between European countries and Morocco, especially Britain, Gibraltar and France, where Both Spain and Morocco are considering constructing a bridge over it or a tunnel under it, and Morocco prefers to make a suspension bridge, and since 198 AD, it was agreed between them to construct a tunnel under the strait through which railways would pass to connect Africa with Europe, in addition to the construction of a pipeline under the Strait of Jebel Tariq transports natural gas from Algeria to France via Morocco (Abdul-Aziz & Abdul-Majid, 2014), and Britain also plans to link Gibraltar to Tangiers in northern Morocco, in order to enhance European-African trade exchange. This idea came along the lines of a tunnel between France and Britain in the, especially after Britain's exit From the European Union in order to enhance Britain's strategic position at the global level and as a result of the deepening of American support for Britain to achieve this project, as a partnership agreement was signed between the two countries as of December 2021 Expected to open up new horizons for the economy between them. And attract foreign investments to the country, and that this project is also Spain's dream and the possibility that it will provoke fierce competition between Britain and Spain, as a result of this project, as well as Spain's fear of increasing the economic and strategic importance of Morocco at the global level with American support after Trump's recognition of Morocco's sovereignty over the Sahara This causes a source of concern for Spain over the cities of Ceuta and Melilla, and from Morocco's claim to them, Here the geopolitical importance of Gibraltar for Morocco emerges by increasing the strategic, economic and political importance of Morocco at the global level if the project to link them is achieved. Given this importance, Morocco has a role in The protection and prevention of cross-border risks and threats through the Strait of Gibraltar, especially illegal immigration, where 350 people died in the western Mediterranean, which made the security of the Strait of Gibraltar a global issue, in addition to Morocco's important role not only in relation to migration, but also in contributing to the protection of The waters of the strait are protected from pollution resulting from hydrocarbon leaks and pollution from industrial complexes on its banks. In 2010, Morocco worked to form a team To prevent and treat pollution, as well as a system to monitor and assist marine navigation with the aim of contributing to the flow of traffic and avoiding collisions, as well as combating illegal trade and illegal immigration.

Gibraltar is considered the field of development and security for Morocco, as the perception of Morocco with regard to the region stems from two factors, the first: its geographical location Which represents the entrance to the Strait of Gibraltar, which gives it responsibility in the Euro-Mediterranean area and secondly: Morocco's vision of the region's role in the development of traffic Strengthening and securing the coasts and their development, especially the port of Tangier, which led, within ten years (2007-2017), to become the port of Tangier Med with a degree of distinguished economic development, and also the maritime connection took its connection with 127 ports and 74 countries across (5 continents) in the world in terms of connectivity Bahri is now ranked first in Africa and Latin America, and has affected the political and security development of Morocco, as Morocco has mobilized a workforce of 24,000 men consisting of all the Kingdom's security forces at a cost of 200

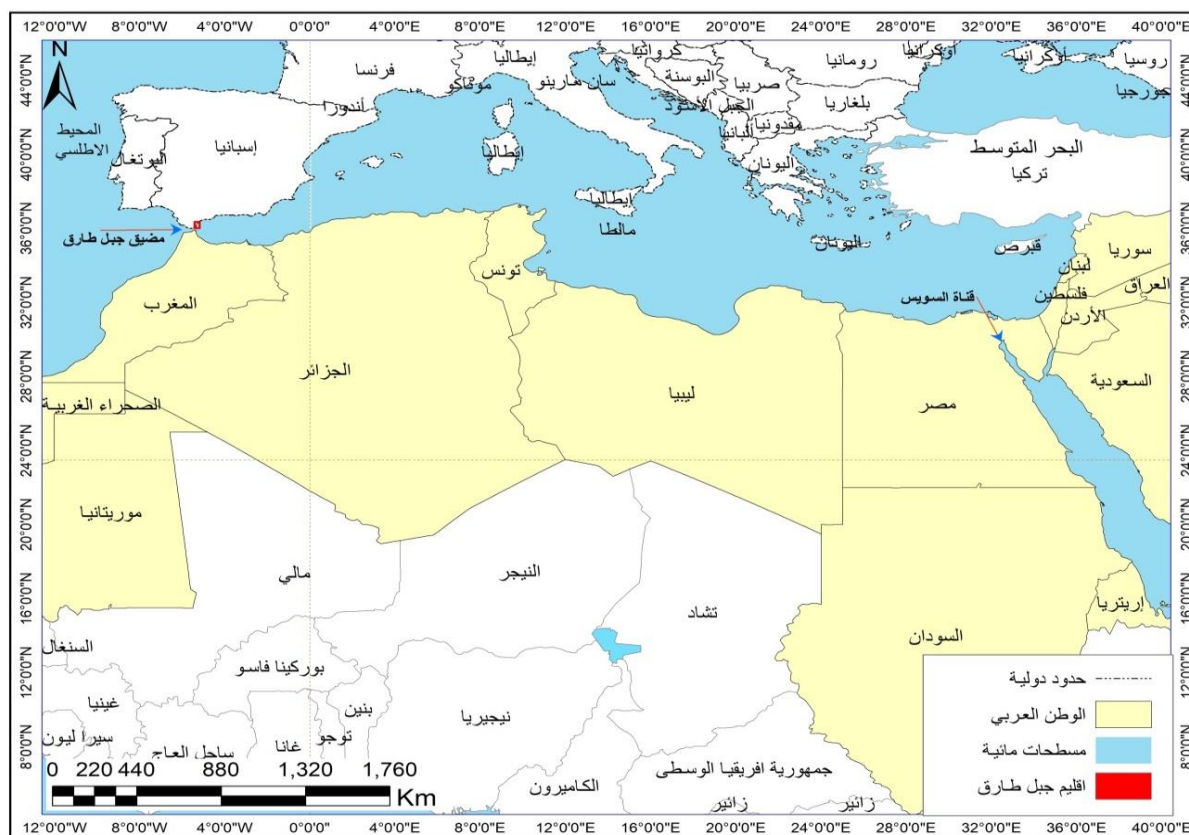
million annually, and fixed checkpoints along the coast, by land, sea and air. In constant contact with the boats at sea and in a state of readiness to direct them to suspicious targets, and since then, Morocco has renewed and developed its marine components with advanced and modern technology, including multi-tasking frigates, equipment, missile launchers, aircraft and submarines operating with modern technologies, as well as establishing its first naval base on the Mediterranean coast with a strategic scope. She has worked since 2016, where she played an important role in the security of the southern flank of the Strait of Gibraltar and Northwest Africa.

***Fourth axis: the geopolitical dimension of the Gibraltar region in the strategies of the Arab world after the opening of the Suez Canal***

The Arab world is a geographical area with ancient historical and cultural roots, a common language and religion Islam and Christianity, and extends from the Atlantic Ocean in the west to the Arabian Sea and the Arabian Gulf in the east, and includes the countries that belong to the League of Arab States in West Asia, East and North Africa. It is located between the three continents of Asia and Africa. and Europe

and overlooks the Mediterranean Sea, the Arabian Sea, and the Indian Ocean to the east and the Atlantic Ocean to the west. The regions in the world produce and export oil, which has a very big impact on shipping lines and global trade Figure 3 map(3), in addition to the presence of the most important corridors and straits that have a great and important impact, including the Bab al-Mandab Strait, the Strait of Hormuz and the Strait of Tiran, as well as the Its view in North Africa over the Strait of Gibraltar, and the Suez Canal, which facilitated maritime transport operations between East and West and led to shortening the distance between them. It reduced costs, time and effort, and facilitated the movement of ships, oil tankers, and the rest of goods and merchandise to all European countries, especially western Europe, heading to the Atlantic Ocean and to the United States of America through the Strait of Gibraltar. For example, the Suez Canal shortened the distance between the islands of Japan in East Asia and Britain in Western Europe by about 24%, and it became about 11,000 km, while it was 14,500 km by turning from the Cape of Good Hope (Abd al-Razzaq,2015), and Gibraltar is the closest point of contact and meeting between the homeland The Arab wing of the African flank with the continent of Europe (Khaled,1997). Where the distance traveled by the ship from the Strait of Gibraltar to the Red Sea through the Suez Canal and then the ports of the Arabian Gulf within 37 days, while when it was taking the Cape of Good Hope it takes 60 days (Hossam,2005). In addition to the fact that Gibraltar was the military base (711 AD) during the Islamic conquest of Andalusia by the leader Tariq bin Ziyad and the spread of the Islamic religion. Also, the study area represented the civilizational and cultural communication between peoples. It is the link between Africa and Europe and a corridor for the transfer of illegal immigrants from Africa to Europe, as well as the importance The military, in particular Britain, which established a naval base in the region to set out to the Middle East. The region is considered the station for ships heading to India through the Suez Canal, so it reflects the extent of the special situation that characterizes the Arab world linking the three continents, as a result of the struggle of the colonial powers over oil deposits and wealth and bounties The Arab world has emerged as the role of those straits and canals in the movement of commercial

maritime transport because it is one of the cheapest means of transport, and also the importance of the islands and the areas overlooking them has emerged because of their influence and control over trade routes and the connection between continents and countries .



***The fifth axis: the geopolitical role of Gibraltar on the presence of US and Russian forces in the Mediterranean***

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the United States believed that the way to the Muslim coast was through Europe and the Mediterranean, where American ships were sailing under the English flags in 1779 AD, and the American ship Maria was the first ship to fall into Algerian captivity in the Atlantic , and America held negotiations with countries The Maghreb is in Gibraltar, where the territory of Gibraltar was the seat where agreements and treaties were concluded between the parties (Nawfal,2021). At the present time, after the United States of America has become an emperor in the world and possesses the largest military power and a huge economic power that competes with the great countries in terms of economic, military, financial and diplomatic terms in the twentieth century, as it became competing with other powers, each of Russia and China , where they exercised control On Eurasia as it possesses the resources, economic wealth and nuclear powers, as well as America’s dependence mainly on Gulf oil and securing oil shipments from Saudi Arabia and Iran -port-tanger-med-premier-semester-. and Asia, which embodies the reality of the marine economy that is constantly growing (Sabri&Hassan,1999) The Strait of Gibraltar formed a strategic axis that allowed the naval forces to enter the Mediterranean, as the United States of America considered it the preferred and fastest way for it to reach the Middle East, Israel, the eastern Mediterranean, Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan, and to obtain energy and hydrocarbon resources, where there are more than 60% of the Arab Gulf Of oil reserves and 40% of natural gas, from

here this site stands out in that it constitutes a central location for the American strategy (Abd al-Abbas & Saadia,1999.), in addition to the fact that the Middle East is a contact area for Russian-American influence and interests, as the American strategy aims to control the Gulf oil and gas to control the sources of oil and gas. While Russia aims to maintain its military presence in the region and establish economic partnerships with its countries, and America has worked to establish an American fleet on the Mediterranean. It also owns a naval air base in Rota, near Cadiz, Spain. It is one of the most important US naval bases and a forward center for stationing submarines that carry nuclear warheads and are used in nuclear deterrence operations, as well as the presence of the United States' Sixth Fleet in the area near the strait. The study area contains an air and naval base dedicated to stopping and supporting British and American warships and nuclear submarines. It also includes an information and intelligence gathering base. America uses it, and it also has underwater listening devices and equipment to monitor movements in the Strait of Gibraltar, and it has a US destroyer quadruple armed with 14 Tomahawk missiles accompanied by at least three submarines and nuclear weapons stationed in the Mediterranean basin, an aircraft carrier and two destroyers entered through the Strait of Gibraltar towards the eastern Mediterranean. The US Naval Forces succeeded in equipping US war equipment and naval barges across Gibraltar to enable them to sail to the Arabian Gulf and attack Iraq in what is known as the Battle of Desert Storm 1991. Brzezinski's geostrategic view of American supremacy centers his analysis on the exercise of power on the Eurasian mainland, which consists of the greater part of the world's population. Through its control of the most important maritime navigational routes to achieve its ambitions and interests on the Eurasian mainland it is closely monitored (Hashem,2010.) by Russian observers, especially during the period of Russian-American competition over Syria. America on any issue of the Middle East after 2003 AD. Until the change began (2011-2016), as Russia's relations with the West deteriorated due to influence in Eastern Europe, where Russia made great efforts, confirming that it has partners in the East and a strong competitor is The United States. The Russian strategic repositioning in the south is evidence of Russia's capabilities not only from the point of view of the Middle East, but also for the sake of European countries and NATO.

And that Russia used the Strait of Gibraltar in 2018, when a modern submarine left the Baltic Sea to join the Black Sea Fleet in the Crimea, passing Gibraltar and heading to the eastern Mediterranean. Mediterranean and to The West in both directions and being short distances and effort. It is a global corridor across continents. And that Russia has long aspired to reach warm waters, although the Russian coast is the largest in the world, with a coast length of 38,800 km, but most of its coasts are not usable because of freezing only in the summer, using icebreakers, so Russia's naval strategy remains defensive, Mahan emphasized in his theory that Russia is a picture of the continental landlocked countries (Alyan,2016), so it sought to the Syrian coast to reach the Mediterranean, and Putin appointed the former Russian ambassador to the UAE as ambassador to Syria, and established a military base for the first time in Syria in order to achieve an outlet for it in the warm waters of the Mediterranean (But Russia remains a continental power and cannot achieve its goals of becoming the second largest naval power in the world because its new navy is not equipped to operate on the high seas and in major oceans, but this goal is still in Putin's opinion to spread in the Mediterranean and discourage

Western powers, especially NATO from attacking interests Russia in the Middle East If Putin stressed that the Russian presence in the Mediterranean will become permanent and gradually more important (Ibrahim,2018). For Russia, the Mediterranean is a corridor to reach the Atlantic Ocean from the Black Sea and through the Suez Canal and then the Strait of Gibraltar. On the other hand, the United States of America is seeking To a new vision in America's imperial ambition to preserve a unipolar world and not allow any real competition, and adopted a policy of deterrence and containment, for the other poles and seeking to occupy the position of absolute and undisputed hegemon on the international scene ,Gibraltar was recently placed on the chessboard in the contemporary seaport and re- The structure of global transport, Gibraltar is the true observatory of the changes taking place in this part of the world and a center for exchanges and openness to the world. It is a highway between East and West for powers The Atlantic, which wanted to display its naval forces in the Middle East, also formed a center for the Islamic world, and then Britain and its ally America.

### ***Sixth axis: Chinese geopolitics in the Mediterranean***

In recent decades, China has emerged as a colossal global economic and military power, as well as its human strength, and has held a place in the forefront of the geopolitical map. The geopolitical scene today is witnessing the competition of great powers for global domination and domination. Where the competition of the United States of America has become, as it wants to achieve control over the oceans and seas, and the theater of the Great Game is no longer confined to Asia and Eastern Europe Makander, or according to what Spikeman said between the Middle East, Europe and East Asia, or even the Eurasia checkerboard, as Brzezinski said, but rather it was entered into it Africa as well and thus complete the global island (Ramadani,1984).

China has worked to expand its sea routes and look towards the Maghreb by entering into competition with the European Union, as it expanded its trade in partnership with Algeria, Mauritania and Libya. Its trade with Algeria since 2013 has reached about 8 billion dollars, and it accounts for half of Mauritania's trade exports and is a partner in the first place with Libya. China seeks to be present economically and politically in Morocco The Arab League through the Belt and Road Initiative, where it signed in Algeria the comprehensive strategic partnership in 2014 and with Morocco the strategic partnership was signed in 2016 AD and signed a memorandum of understanding with Morocco in 2017 for the Belt and Road and in 2022 the joint implementation plan for the Belt and Road Initiative was signed, the Chinese weapon seemed to find its way To the countries of the Maghreb, where Algeria is one of the largest importers of Chinese weapons, especially drones, naval vessels and electronic warfare systems. China provided both Tunisia and Mauritania with equipment and money support, and China scattered its pearls on the coasts of the Maghreb by constructing the Friendship Port in southern Mauritania with \$300 million on The Atlantic Ocean and the construction of the Hamdania port in Algeria overlooking the Dead Sea Central and is expected to be the largest port in Africa, and in Morocco, China is working to invest in the port complex and build regional logistic centers.

The increase in transshipment freight trade in various seas and external oceans and the adoption of the Belt and Road Initiative made it secure for shipping vessels crossing oceans

and seas, where the great countries cannot impose their hegemony and power without controlling global sea ports. West on the issue of one of the major powers capable of better than others to play the Islamic card

The Chinese strategy ( Amiral Jean-Francois ,2018).the pearl necklace is heading to the seas and establishing military naval bases in its allied countries to secure traffic and security of passages, and the importance of China comes as the second importer of oil in the world, as it surpasses America in its commercial strength and economy, while America surpasses it in terms of military power.

In 2017, two frigates, a Chinese ship of the first rank and a supply ship, crossed the Suez Canal by passing several ports in the eastern and western Mediterranean for several months to cross the Strait of Gibraltar to the west and back to the east, and through the Silk Road project and the pearl necklace, which provides a network of bases and support points for navigation, where he points This spread indicates that there is an opportunity for more openness to the seas, as China has worked to develop ten ports around the Mediterranean, including the port of Cherchell in Algeria in 2016. Which enables it to circulate in the Mediterranean, including through the Strait of Gibraltar. The increase and development of crises in the Mediterranean Sea restores the military importance of Gibraltar.

The great powers' competition for control and domination for a solid economy and military powers made them expand their geopolitical visions across continents, oceans and seas, including the study area.

## **Conclusions**

- 1) Gibraltar is one of the most important geographical locations with a strategic location, with geopolitical, political and economic dimensions.
  - 2) 2- The region formed the bridge between Africa and Europe, and the main gateway connecting the Mediterranean Sea to the Atlantic Ocean.
  - 3) 3- The study showed that Gibraltar has a regional and international geopolitical importance that contributed to the transfer of energy security from east to west.
  - 4) 4- The region is one of the most important global trade navigation routes that linked the Middle East with European countries and the United States.
  - 5) 5- The region formed the military and navigational base for the British fleet and its ally America and the NATO countries.
- 6- Reinforce regional and international economic importance.

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