

Historical and Legal Investigation of Persian Gulf

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ABSTRACT

Persian Gulf region is one of the most important and sensitive regions of the world due to geopolitical and geostrategic situation. It has received a lot of attention by global powers in the recent centuries and has not remained safe from their intrusions. Security, transportation and energy are factors that influence on the development and stability of the region. In different dictionaries published in different languages like German, American, French, and Turkish and in the most famous encyclopedia of the world like Al-Monjed, Persian Gulf has the same name. United Nations has called this water strip Persian Gulf twice. The present paper investigates Persian Gulf historically and legally and Iran's response to unsubstantial claims is evaluated.

KEYWORDS: Persian gulf (PG), Historical, Legal, Iran, World

INTRODUCTION

Over history, PG not only has been a part of Iranian territory but also it has been called PG, Ajam Gulf, Persian Sea or Bahr-al-Fars as all historical references verify. PG name is a historical name which has been used in documents, contracts and corresponding over the history by all nations and tribes, including Persian, Turkish, Arab, Hindu and European nations. PG is the most passage of the world's petroleum and has a close relationship with Iranian civilization. In spite of this, some neighboring countries have called PG with fake names like Arabian Gulf or Gulf which is against pacific soul of nation's relationships and recently some organizations, institutes, press and journals and international media have used fake titles for PG besides Arabian countries. Considering the fact that Arabian extremist nationalists' attempts lack scientific base in international arena, their attempts will only endanger Islamic world's real unity. Some Arabian countries which are opposed to Iran, ignore Islamic World unity. This is while super-regional states stabilize their presence at the region using such tensions and oppositions. The present research explains strategic situation of PG and investigates PG name legally and Arabs unsubstantial claims in using fake names like the Gulf or Arabian Gulf (Malek and Nouri, 2003).

Natural and strategic geography of PG

PG is a curved strip which contains one fourth of fossil fuels of the world and is attached to Indian Ocean and free waters through Oman Sea. This gulf is about 900 kilometers long and 240 kilometers wide and has been formed in southern parts of Zagros mountain ranges. PG is a branch of Indian Ocean which is located on the way of all marine lines east of Adan and is like a corridor which is between 30 degrees and 24 minutes of northern latitude and 50 degrees and 48 minutes of eastern longitude. It is limited to Iran from northern and north-eastern part, Oman Sea from eastern part and Arabian Peninsula from southern and western parts. Rivers like Dejleh, Forat, Karoun and Karkheh which originate from Armenia and Turkey and Iranian mountains discharge this gulf as well as small rivers like Jarrahi, Hendijan and other rivers. PG water is shallow and has abundant reserves of petroleum and Gas (Hydrocarbon) beneath its bed. Its depth is 70 to 90 meters in the mouth of the gulf and as we move upstream of the gulf, its depth reduces and its depth becomes 30 meters 90 kilometers left to 90 kilometers. Its depth is not more than 50 meters in most spots and its maximum depth is 100 meters. This simplifies drilling and exploitation of hydrocarbon reserves. In pearl catching areas, PG's depth is no more than 36 meters. PG's area is 97 thousand square miles. Its length from Oman beach to sea center is about 50 miles and its width in various regions is between 29 to 180 miles. PG beach includes Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Bahrain, Arabia, Qatar, Emirates and Oman and the lengthiest beach belongs to Iran which is appropriate for navigation and shipping. PG has had an important political place in the region for years and it is considered as the cradle of large civilizations. From centuries ago, elamite used Boushehr port and Khark Island for residence and navigation and government and trading with western Indian and Nile valley. Most Greek historians like Herodotus believe that Babylon people transported their equipments and goods through PG. Babylon was located close to PG and Dejleh and Forat and linked three Persian, Indian and Asvad (=Black) seas. Furthermore, Herodotus and Straboun emphasize that important commercial centers were located in the region. PG is the most important water strip in the world and contains more than 50% of the world's energy (565 billion barrels of petroleum) (65% of the world's petroleum reserves) and 3.7 trillion cubic meter gas). PG and

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the countries around it (Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, UEA and Oman) constitute near 10% of 44million squared kilometers of Asia Continent (Malek and Nouri, 2003).

PG has been under heavy intrusion and struggle over history as the center of west and east trading and it has always been studied by archaeologists and historians and geographers and writers (Bavandian, 2004).

Historical background

According to valid documents, PG has been called Persian Sea by nations which had transaction and association with Iranians, like Romans and Greeks. Arabs also called it PG or Persian Sea for centuries. PG has had the same name over thousands of years and all countries and nations have used this name, including Arabs. All old geography texts, from Hekataios and Batlamious' maps to works of Moslem and Christian tourists and geographers called a branch of Indian ocean which extended parallel to Red Sea up to the core of old world "Persian Gulf" or "Persian Sea". From seventh and eighth centuries B.C., all scientists like Anaxi Mander, Hekataios, Herodotusdudut, Eratosten, Hipark, Pomponi Maleh, Kerates Malous, Straboun, Batlamious, Micropious, Izidorcivili, Mohammed Ben Moses Al-Kharazmi, Abou-Zeid Balkhi, Ebn-e-Sarabioun, Ebn-e-Rasteh, Ebn-e-Faghih, Ghaddameh, Ebn-e-Fazlan, Ebn-e-Khordadbeh, Masoudi, Estakhri, Ebn-e-Houghal, Moghaddasi, Naser Khosro, Edrisi, Jeihani, Farazi, Birouni, Ebn-e-Jobeir, Yaghout, Ghazvini, Mostofi, Ebn-e-Batouteh, hafez, Sharafoddin Ali Yazdi, Abo-al-Ghazi and ... have called south-Iranian sea with titles like Persian gulf, Persian sea, Persia sea, Bahr-al-Fars, Bahr-e-fars, Sinus Persicus, Mare Persicum, Gulf Persique, persina gulf, and Persis gulf. Investigation of the social, political and economic conditions of PG and its islands from Islam onwards to Portuguese intrusion and expalanition of its ups-and-downs from Safavid age onwards needs a large discussion which is out of the scope of the present research. In the next sentences, authentication of the name of PG is investigated using historical, geographical, Iranian, Greek, Islamic, western and legal documents (Mojtahed Zadeh, 2004).

Iranian references

Persian Gulf has been used for military and commercial reasons from the eighth millennium B.C. according to the present documents. In a manuscript written by Darius the Achaemenid discovered in Egypt which belongs to 505 to 518 B.C. which was discovered while excavating Suez Channel, Persian Gulf has been mentioned in a phrase "Drayeh Tepeh Hecha Parsa Ayee Tee Heni", which means "a sea which passes from Persia". Ancient Iranians called this sea "Parsa Darya" or "Persian Sea". In manuscripts belonging to Darius which were found in Hormoz Strait, a phrase "a sea which originates from Persia River" can be observed. In Hodud-al-Alam book which is the oldest book in Persian language and has been authored about 1000 years ago, we read: "Persian Gulf starts from Persia region, with small width up to Indus River". It can be said that the sea separating Iranian Plateau from Arabian Peninsula has been called Persian Gulf or Persian sea from when mankind started to write and register history and no other name has been given to it in any historical periods (Malek and Nouri, 2003).

Greek references

According to Greekgeographers and historians who lived B.C. like Herodotus (484-425 B.C.), Ketziias (445-380 B.C.), Xenophon (430-352), Straben (63-24 B.C.), Greeks were the first nation who called this sea "Persian" and gave the names "Iran Persia", "Persai", "Pers Police" to Iranian land, which mean Persians' city or country. Nearxous, Macedonian commander also was a cause of the fane of Makran and Persian Sea. He crossed Indus Riverin 326 B.C. under the command of Alexander the Great and travelled through Makran and Persian sea on ship and moved up to its mouth. Hekatiou Heleti who is one of the oldest scientists of Greece and is called "father of geography", used Persian Sea in 475 B.C. In ancient maps, Herodotus and Xenophon have called this sea "persis" which means Persian sea. Claudious petouleh Maos (Batlamious), geographer, map designer and famous mathematician of the second century A.D., has called Persian Gulf as "Persiquus Sinus" in his book titled "the world's geography" and also in his map. Queen Tous Kurosious Roufus, the Roman historian who lived in the early first century A.D., has given the name "Persia Sea" or "Persia bog" to Persian gulf. In addition, southern Iranian waters (Makran sea and Persian gulf) have been called "Mare Persiquum" which means "Persian gulf" in Latin Geographical books. Therefore, historians and geographers of Greece who lived B.C. up to 7th century B.C., i.e. topple of Ilam government and formation of Maad Governemnt and Achaemenid, called Persian gulf and Makran sea "Persian sea". (Mahdavi, 2001).

Islamic references

After occupation of Iran by Arabs in seventh century A.D., no attempt was done in order to change Persian sea's name. Moslem Arabs call Persian gulf "Bahr-al-Farsi" (Persian sea) and this name was respected by Turkish, Iranian and Arab empires which reigned over the area 1200 years later. Islamic researchers like Estakhri, Masoudi, Birouni, Ebn-e-Haghoul, Moghaddasi, Naser Khosro, Al-Taheer Motahar Al-Moghaddasi (Bashari), Abo-Al-Ghasem Ebn Mohammad Ebn Haghoul and ... who studied around this Iranian sea until 15th

century called southern Iranian waters with names like "Bahr-e-Farsi", Al-Bahr-Al-Farsi, Bahr-e-Makran, Al-Khalij-Al-Farsi and Persian gulf. There are even some maps from these authors which show that Indian Ocean has been titled "Al-Bahr-Al-Farsi"(Persian sea). Arab and Islamic Geographers took this name from two ancient civilizations and used it simultaneously. They called Iranian Parsa Sea "Bahr-e-Fars" and called Greek Sinus Periscus "Persian gulf". They even believed that "the two seas" mentioned in Al-Rahman Chapter refers to the very Persian sea and middle sea. Abou Ali Ahmad Ebn Omar who was known as "Ebn-e-Rasteh", in his book titled "Al-Alagh-al-Nafiseh" which was authored in 290 Leunar Hijri, says: But India Ocean goes out from that gulf toward Persian area that it is called Persian gulf.

which means "but a gulf extends outward Indian sea towards persia which is called Persian gulf". As Jorji Zeidan, Arab historian says, Bahr-e-Fars (Persian Gulf) is limited to water which extends around Arab world. He says: Persian sea and all seas that Originate from Arab lands that include Tigris in Iraq until... then all pass from in inter Persian gulf, Arab sea, Adan gulf and red sea and Agbeh gulf so on.

which means : "Persian sea have been called Persian sea long before all seas which encircle Arab lands from Dejleh River discharging point up to Ileh, including what we call Persian gulf and Arab sea and Adan gulf and red sea and Aghabeh gulf(Bavandian, 2004). Mohammad Abdolkarim Sobhi gave the name "Persian gulf" to southern Iranian sea in his book "Elm-al-Kharaet" in maps with Arabic translations (ibid). All maps which have been found from this period emphasize and verify PG name in addition to changes in persian sea name and in inclusion circle of these names circle of inclusion(Abou Ali Ahmad Ebn Omar (Ebn-e-Rasteh), seventh volume)

Western references

Most people who have written about Persian sea and Makran Sea were strangers and especially Englishmen, because they have tried to hide realities and replace correct names with fake names due to their specific situation in the region. However, there have remained some references from them which verify "Persian gulf" name. In 1892, Lord Kerzen Lord Curzon, England foreign minister, refers to Persian Gulf name several times in his book "Iran and the Iran". William Rogers, USA foreign minister, in his report in 1971 on USA foreign politics, has used Persian Gulf name. In different dictionaries published in different languages like German, American, French, and Turkish and in the most famous encyclopedia of the world like Al-Monjed, Persian Gulf has the same name. Today, Bahr-e-Fars (=Persian Gulf) has been put aside in Arab works and Persian Gulf is used instead. One of the most well-known encyclopedias of the world, i.e. Al-Monjed, is strong evidence which uses Persian gulf combination. (Mirfendereski, 2003).

Legal evidence

Documents

There are many legal documents on the originality of PG name which go back to 16th century. During 1507 to 1560, Khalij-al-Farsi (Persian gulf) has been used in all agreements concluded between Iran and Portugal, Spain, Britain, Holland, French, Germany. One of these documents is independence of Kuwait agreement which was concluded between Amir of Kuwait and Britain representatives. This document which has been also signed by Abd-al-Salem Al-Sabah, starts with: An official attended in Persian gulf honorable political respectfully.

UN

UN has announced the name of "Persian gulf" twice up to now. UN considers Persian Gulf's name a new name which has been used instead of Persian sea old name from the beginning of the 20th century. UN Secretariat informed Iranian government in a document released in the 5th of March, 1971 and the note (AD311/GEN) that water between Iran and Arabian countries is called Persian Gulf and this is based on the common code of release of geographical dictionaries and atlases. The second statement was registered at the 10th of August, 1984 and all 22 Arabian countries signed it. This secretariat also apologized to Iranian government due to mistakes committed in using Persian Gulf name (document registered at 26th of June, 1991 in UN) and asked authorities to consider this. Moreover, annual UN conference on coordination of geographical names also emphasizes on Persian Gulf name every year (Malek and nouri, 2003).

Unsubstantial claims

It is several years that Arabs try to change Persian gulf name. The Water strait which separates Iran from Arabia is named "Persian Gulf" according to all historical and geographical and legal evidence and all maps from ancient Greece up to now. Furthermore, Persian gulf or Persian sea have been used in all Arabic maps and scripts which have been published before 1960. The correctness of the above claim can even be verified in part of the old Egyptian national anthem in which Persian gulf has been considered as separator of Arabs and Persians borders: "our borders extend from Persian gulf to White sea". The subject of changing Persian Gulf's name was propounded from the third decade of 20th century after Persian-removing policy designed by the Great

Britain. The main policy of this policy was to develop English lands in the Persian gulf area and the main obstacle ahead of this policy was the Iranian identity which reigned over the area for years (Mojtahedzadeh, 2004).

The phrase "Arabian gulf" was first introduced by a Britain diplomat in the area. Sir Charles Belgerio who was the political representative of Britain state in Persian gulf area for more than 3 decades, published a book on the southern beaches of Persian gulf in 1966 after returning to London and first used the fake title of Arabian Gulf. Charles Belgeriou stated in his book that was titled "the beach of famous thieves" which was formerly given to southern beaches of Persian Gulf that Arabs are interested to call Persian Gulf "Arabian gulf". Immediately after publication of this book, use of the fake name "Arabian gulf" was started in the press and after a while, it became common in the formal corresponding of the Arabian countries. Persian Gulf was replaced by Arabian gulf. Although Iranian government responded to this action at that time and avoided accepting cargos with Arabian gulf name on them, the Britain diplomat had done what he wanted and had familiarized Arabs with a new word. After that, Arabian states at the border of Persian Gulf concentrated their political, diplomatic and commercial advertisements on Arabian gulf name. In another action taken by English press, Times newspaper used Arabian gulf name instead of Persian gulf name in 1962 and after that, some Arab states and The Emirates paid money to foreign reporters and journalists to publish maps with Arabian gulf name on them. Such behaviors were started by figures like Abd-al-Karim Ghasem in Iraq and then by Jamal Abd-al-Naser who was the leader of Arab World National Movement in Egypt. In 1958, brigadier general Abd-al-Karim Ghasem became ruler after a coup in Iraq and after a while he claimed that he was the leader of Arab world. He used stimulation of public feelings with enemy-creating tactic and first called Persian gulf with the fake name "Arabian gulf". Ghasem who wanted to propound Iran as the main enemy of Arabs and attract Arabs attention from Cairo to Baghdad, was defeated. Evidence in Iraq and even in Baghdad University showed that Ghasem did not manage to even attract formal Iraqi figures and academics' attention. Jamal Abd-al-Naser proposed Arabic Unity theory, believed that Arab world extended from Atlantic Ocean to Persian Gulf. After a short term, Pan-Arabism controversy was culminated (during his government, Pan-Arabism ideology was developed in Arab world and Egyptian influence increased in Arab world and many movements started in Arabic countries which ranged from extremist nationalism to conservative Islamism) and in order to cover Arabs defeats from Israel (in June 1967, Arab countries were defeated by Israel. Arabs defeat and losing strategic points in western Palestinian land and western Jordanian river and Gaze Strip and occupation of a part of the two Arab countries (Syria and Egypt) by Israel was so humiliating for Arabs and they never forgot its bitter memory), used Arabian gulf fake name. Naser had two political goals: First, revivification of Arabs' racial prejudices and then confrontation with Iranian Shah who had good relationships with Israeli government. The nationalist Egyptian government, who wanted to strengthen Arab union, asked Bahrain, Qatar, Dubai, Abouzabi, Sharjah and Oman governments to cooperate with united Arabic republic (which was made up of Egypt, Syria and Yamane. Libya later joined the union). Therefore, Arab union Commission first mentioned Arabian Gulf in a formal document in 1963 and Arab Union decided to use this fake name in educational programs of all member countries and formal corresponding (Mahdavi, 2001). In spite of this, Arabs intensions with changing Persian gulf name went beyond this and included oil-rich Khuzestan province and called this province "Arabia". They considered Khuzestan Arabs as a part of Arabic land which had been released from Arabs grip by Reza Shah and supporting England. Arab Lawyers Conference in 11th of December, 1964 called Khuzestan an inseparable part of Arabic land and in 10th of November, 1965, Syrian Baath regime accepted this claim and supported it (Keihan newspaper, 1964).

The philosophy behind Arabian Gulf was Arabian islands, Arabian Khuzestan (Arabia), sovereignty of Hormoz Strait and conversion of Iran into Arab World exrescence. Although Naser's attempts convinced some Arab leaders and made them accompany him, no acceptable result was achieved, because Arab movement was miles distant from reality. Its main reason was lack of integration and cohesion of Arab governments. In fact, a nation which was meant by Naser was nothing but imagination. Ghasem and Naser attempts in Arab world continued after Saddam Hossein came to power in Iraq. Saddam who spent hundreds of million dollars on changing Persian gulf name with the help of several journalists, academics, publishing institutes and mapping centers, intruded Iranian territory after Islamic Revolution. 8-year imposed war which was started with unsubstantial claims like sovereignty of Iraq on Arvand River and calling Khuzestan and several other cities Arabic province ended in Iraq defeat. The practical result of this intrusion was increase in Iranian sensitivity to Persian Gulf's name. After that, Iranians considered using Arabian Gulf name as a kind of conflict with Iran and intrusion to Iranian history. After second Gulf war and intrusion of Iraq into Kuwait in 1991, military influence of USA increased in the area and it did not take much time for Americans to encourage IRI and Arab states struggle. Sharjah and Abouzabi Emirates challenged Iran and propounded unsubstantial claims towards the ownership of The Three Islands (Abou Mousa, Tonb-e-Kouchak, Tonb-e-Bozorg). Sheikh Zayed Ben Soltan Al-e-Nehyan spent hundreds of millions dollars for changing Persian Gulf name and challenging Iranian ownership of the three islands but the passage of time showed that no success would be achieved. Although Cooperation Council changed the name of Persian Gulf countries Cooperation name into Arabian Gulf countries cooperation

council in the 25th summit of Arab countries presidents in Bahrain, (Mirfendereski, 2003 and Iranian Labor news agency (Ilina)), it seems anti-Iranian policies and anti-Persian activities of Arabs will get nowhere because more than half of the Persian gulf and the most strategic and geo-economic points belong to Iran. In fact, as attempts at putting aside or ignoring Iran from security structure of the region is pointless, changing the name of Persian Gulf is also impossible. Arabs have started heavy advertisements in order to change the name of Persian Gulf. They have changed the names of many aviation companies, journals, newspapers, and many other things to the Gulf or Arabian Gulf and this is while Persian Gulf's name has thousands of years of history and ignoring it is considered as humiliation of civilizations which have been proud of it. Application of the fake names like Arabian Gulf instead of Persian gulf, Sheikh Shoaib instead of Lavan island, Gheis instead of Kish and Shat-al-Arab instead of Arvand River stirs struggle among the countries because changing old geographic names is distortion of historical realities and forging the present identities.

Conclusion

The name of Persian Gulf is a historical name and it has been used in historical documents, contracts and corresponding by all tribes and nations, including Persian and Arab, Turkish and Indian, and Europeans. Therefore, PG is the most important petroleum passage of the world and has a close relationship with Iranian civilization. PG is a branch of Indian Ocean which is located on the way of all marine lines east of Adan gulf. PG is a marine way and it has had an outstanding political situation and is the cradle of large civilizations of the region. From centuries ago, elamite used Boushehr port and Khark Island for residence and navigation and government and trading with western Indian and Nile valley. Most Greek historians like Herodotus believe that Babylon residents who provided their needs through Arabia and India transported their goods through PG. Babylon was located close to PG and Dejleh and Forat and linked three Persian, Indian and Asvad (=Black) seas. Furthermore, Herodotus and Strabon emphasize that important commercial centers were located in the region. UN Secretariat informed Iranian government in a document released in the 5th of March, 1971 and the note (AD311/GEN) that water between Iran and Arabian countries is called Persian Gulf and this is based on the common code of release of geographical dictionaries and atlases. The second statement was registered at the 10th of August, 1984 and all 22 Arabian countries signed it. This secretariat also apologized to Iranian government due to mistakes committed in using Persian gulf name (document registered at 26th of June, 1991 in UN) and asked authorities to consider this. Moreover, annual UN conference on coordination of geographical names also emphasizes on Persian Gulf name every year.

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