

The Geopolitics of the Strait of Hormuz and the Iran-Oman Relations

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Abstract

The geopolitics of the Strait of Hormuz is one of the main and continuous factors in the Iran-Oman relationship. Iran and Oman are respectively located on the north and south coasts of the Strait. This factor requires them to maintain good-neighborly relations regardless of what happens at the regional or international levels. Iran and Oman assume that there is a close connection between the security of the Strait of Hormuz and their own security. This point strengthens their motivation to maintain a close and friendly relationship. The two countries are aware of the fact that geographical factors are not subject to change. Their geographical proximity via the Strait of Hormuz, Oman's relative remoteness from the Arab world and the geopolitical and geostrategic importance of the Strait have required Iran and Oman to maintain a good, neighborly relationship with one another. On that basis, and despite the fact that Oman has always had close relations with the United States and recently developed its ties with Israel, its friendly relationship with Iran has largely remained intact. This paper seeks to examine the role of the Strait of Hormuz in the relations between Iran and Oman from a historic, economic, strategic and security perspective.

Keywords: Geopolitics, Strait of Hormuz, Indian Ocean, Security, Oil and Gas, Sovereignty Rotation

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Introduction

From a geographic point of view, a strait is a narrow channel that joins two larger adjacent bodies of water in a natural way. The Strait of Hormuz is a maritime channel that joins the Persian Gulf to the Sea of Oman. Iran is located on the north shores of the Strait, and Oman on its south shores. Straits can separate two adjacent landmasses, as the Strait of Dover, which separates Britain from France. In that case, the separation is political rather than geographical. Straits can connect adjacent landmasses as well. Although the Strait of Hormuz separates Iran and Oman, it is at the same time a channel connecting them to each other. This has had a major impact on their relationship.

So far, the Strait of Hormuz and its various, important aspects have been the subject of many books and papers. Ali Asghar Kazemi considers the legal regime of the Strait of Hormuz in his book entitled, *The Legal Aspects of Iran's Sovereignty in the Persian Gulf*. The book entitled, *the Persian Gulf and the Strategic Role of the Strait of Hormuz*, written by M. R. Hafeznia, discusses the natural, political, strategic and geopolitical aspects of the Strait of Hormuz. Hodayoun Elahi allocates a chapter of his book, *the Persian Gulf and its Problems*, to the geographical and legal particularities of the Strait. The book entitled, *the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean in International Politics*, written by Abbas Amiri, contains chapters on the policies of major and regional powers towards the Persian Gulf and the importance of the oil in the region for the world economy (Amiri, 1975). Ruhollah Ramazani, too, in his book, *the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz*, discusses the role



of the Strait in the world economy, the policies of the United States and Russia towards the Persian Gulf and the Strait's crises (Ramezani, 1979). The books, *The Foreign Policy of Iran under the Pahlavi Dynasty* by A. Hooshang Mahdavi, and *Iran's Foreign Policy 1942-1979* by A. Azghandi contain discussions on Iran's role in the suppression of the Dhofar Rebellion rather than the larger Iran-Oman relationship.

In general, the literature on the Strait of Hormuz can be divided into two groups: the first relates to the Persian Gulf, and the second deals with Iran's foreign policy. As to the Iran-Oman relationship, these sources only contain references to the Dhofar War. Thus, the role of the Strait of Hormuz in the Iran-Oman relationship is not discussed in these sources.

Ties between countries are normally subject to political and economic considerations. However, the relations between Iran and Oman are less affected by political considerations compared to other factors. The main question here is which factors affect Iran-Oman ties the most. This paper presumes that the geopolitics of the Strait of Hormuz affects the Iran-Oman relationship more than any other factor. On that basis, this paper aims to assess the geopolitical role of the Strait of Hormuz in the relations between Iran and Oman. It discusses the reasons underlying the importance of the Strait of Hormuz, the role of the Strait in Iran-Oman relations as well as the Strait and sovereignty rotations. It also discusses Iran's regional role in the Strait and the Indian Ocean, Iran and Oman and the problems of the Strait of Hormuz and the Persian Gulf, as well as the security of the Strait. Finally, the cooperation between Iran and Oman in oil and gas projects in the Strait of Hormuz and the feasibility of the construction of a gas-pipeline to transfer the two countries' gas to Asia, especially to India and China, is considered.

I- Geopolitics of the Strait of Hormuz

Geopolitics studies the impact of geographical factors on governments' policies. Governments make policy with due attention



to their own geographical considerations. As Napoleon said, “The policies of governments are inherent in their geography (Duverger, 1972: 66) .” In his words, “if you want to understand the policy of a country, look at its map (Online journal.com, 2009) .” In Barss’ view, politics is based on “the land and the dead”, i.e., geography and history; the second of which depends on the first to a great extent (Duverger, 1972: 67).

Geographical factors are multiple, including the geographical location. The geographical location of any country has an important role in its foreign policy. In Spykman’s view, the geographical location of a country essentially corresponds to its foreign policy (Ezati, 1371: 56). Maurice Duverger argues that “had we transferred France to the Pacific Ocean, it would have lost three-fourths of its importance in the world.” Thus, he argues that three-fourths of France’s importance is due to its geographical location. Though such a presumption is impossible, it demonstrates the importance of geographical location (Duverger, 1972: 77).

Being located adjacent to straits is one of these specific geographical positions. Straits are important from economic, military and strategic points of view as they serve to connect regions. For this reason, straits have been at the center of major powers’ attention ever since ancient times. Admiral Fisher and Philip Colomb refer to the Straits of Hormuz, Malacca, Dover, Gibraltar, Suez, Singapore, and Good Hope as keys to the world (Friedman,1988: 57). Straits are important for transporting merchandise and commodities, especially oil, and their closure triggers crisis in the world economy. Straits are also the shortest way to connect adjacent lands. They affect the national strength and foreign policy of countries and are points of focus in maritime and continental strategies. Straits enable adjacent states to control movements through them and, for this reason, they are of strategic importance (Ezati,1986: 38).

Among the strategic straits in the world, the Strait of Hormuz is of special significance. It is the most important passage point in the



world due to its oil tanker traffic; more than 40% of the world's maritime oil transports pass through this Strait. It is one of the nine key maritime channels in the world (Hoch, 2008). Every day, 15 oil tankers pass through this Strait (Britannica Encyclopedia, 2008). These oil tankers transport an average of 17.4 million barrels of oil to India, China, Japan, Europe and the United States (The Encyclopedia of Earth, 2009). In comparison, the amount of oil passing through the Straits of Malacca and Bab el-Mendeb as well as the Suez Canal is 13, 3.5 and 3.9 million barrels per day, respectively (Cordesman, March 2007). This comparison demonstrates the importance of the Strait of Hormuz.

The large amount of heavy oil tankers and cargo vessels passing through the Strait of Hormuz, its narrowness¹, the existence of so many islands and reefs close to the traffic lanes as well as the concern over the sealing off of the Strait under special circumstances require that the traffic through the Strait be governed by special regulations (Ramazani, 1979: 5). The Convention on the Law of the Sea, adopted in 1982, sets out regulations governing international straits. However, the legal regime of the Strait of Hormuz differs depending on the time period.²

On the other hand, the abovementioned issues require the implementation of Traffic Separation Schemes (TSS) with a view to reducing the risk of collision. This objective is actually achieved through the separation of inbound and outbound traffic lanes and imposition of a speed limit. Out of the 90 RSSs in the world, two are allocated to the Strait of Hormuz, demonstrating the heavy traffic in this body of water. These TSSs consist of three traffic lanes, including one outbound and one inbound, separated by one separation median. The north lane is west-bound and the south lane is east-bound; each of the three lanes is one nautical mile wide. Vessels are prohibited from crossing into each other's way. One of the TSSs governs the traffic in Oman's territorial waters, which passes one mile off the Great Quoin Island. The second TSS governs the shipping lane that



passes close to the greater and lesser Tunb as well as Farur Island. These Iranian three islands separate the inbound and outbound lanes.

Maritime highways passing through territorial waters give rise to the right of supervision over the traffic of international vessels by the concerned littoral states. As to the TSS governing the traffic lane off the Farur and Tunb islands, the Iran has the right to oversee the movement of vessels in accordance with the first principle of the regulations on international shipping, since the traffic lane crosses Iran's territorial waters. In accordance with the third principle of the same regulations, the Iran is entitled to receive a fee as compensation for the maintenance of communication services and navigational signs. Besides, the existence of this TSS enhances the strategic importance of the aforementioned islands. For this reason, the Iran has subjected the traffic of vessels towards these islands to certain restrictions (Doreh,1989:669).

As the other TSS is within Oman's territorial waters, that state is in principle in charge of overseeing it. However, as the Strait of Hormuz is an international strait located between Iran and Oman, the responsibility to defend the Strait and supervising the maritime trade therein is jointly assumed by both the Iran and Oman (Amin, 1981: 35).

II- The Strait of Hormuz in Iran-Oman Ties

The Strait of Hormuz has played connective, economic, strategic, security and military roles between Iran and Oman throughout history: The Strait of Hormuz has maintained its connective importance between Iran and Oman since ancient times. Due to its narrowness, it has been the natural passage for Iranian migration to Oman. Half of the inhabitants of the Musandam Peninsula, the north sector of Oman, are of Iranian descent. They belong to the Shihuh tribe, which consists of two main branches; one Arab and the other Iranian. Oman's Ministry of Information writes in its publication, named *Oman*, "it seems that members of the Iranian branch are of Baluchi descent. However, it is not known when they entered the region. What is



confirmed is that they owned a wider area in the past (*The Ministry of Information and Culture of the Sultanate of Oman*, 1977: 26).” There are signs indicating that the Iranian Shihuhs are probably among the earlier people who resided on the Musandam Peninsula. Their language is Persian, although different from contemporary Persian, just as the Arabic spoken by the Arab Shihuhs is different from present-day Arabic. A considerable part of the inhabitants of the Batinah region are also Iranian, mainly Iranian Baluchis. As Professor Hadi Hassan, the renowned Arab researcher, indicates, most people in Oman are of Iranian descent and born from Persians. Thus, the Arab ethnic groups in these areas were small in number (Hassan, 1972: 102).

The Strait of Hormuz has not only been a channel connecting Iran and Oman to each other. It has also been a passage for the transfer of Iranian culture and civilization to Oman. Iranians built modern cities in Oman as well as developed agriculture and the quanta irrigation system in the country, which is still in use. In the modern era, due to the development in transportation, the Strait of Hormuz has gained a great deal of importance as the point of contact between the transportation systems of the two countries. Bandar Abbas, the most important Iranian sea port bordering the Strait, is connected to two important transportation systems: first, the North-South corridor, which connects Bandar Abbas to Central Asia, and second, the east-west transportation system, or the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) railway. Through these networks, Oman can connect to Central Asia and Europe.

The Iranian economy is dependent on the Strait of Hormuz. Today, the destiny of Iran’s economy is decided by this Strait, as it is its most important artery. Almost 80% of Iranian foreign trade is conducted via the Strait of Hormuz. All of Iran’s oil exports pass through this body of water. Contrary to most Arab states in the region, Iran does not possess oil pipelines for exports. Iraq and Saudi Arabia have oil pipelines and export part of their crude oil thereby. Thus, Iran has a vital interest in the Strait of Hormuz.



Oman does not depend on the Strait in a considerable way. Oman's need for the Strait is limited to its trade with the Persian Gulf littoral states. Oman is the only Persian Gulf country with no major sea ports on the Persian Gulf. Oman's coastline with regards to the Sea of Oman is about 2,000 km, on which it has built several ports. This has made Oman look towards the Indian Ocean since ancient times. Consequently, Oman's influence reached the east coast of Africa, including Zanzibar, and part of Pakistan's Makran shores.³ Nonetheless, the Strait of Hormuz is important for Oman due to its oil and gas reserves. Parts of these reserves are shared between Iran and Oman, requiring cooperation to develop them. This has been one of the factors leading to the good relationship between the two countries.

The Strait has helped enhance Iran and Oman's strategic importance at the global and regional levels. Possessing the northern and southern coasts of the Strait, Iran and Oman are in a position to control it. The Persian Gulf littoral states and industrialized countries' dependence on the Strait has conferred a special role on Iran and Oman in international relations. Of course, given its geopolitical advantages, Iran plays the main role. Iran enjoys a better position in the Strait of Hormuz compared to Oman for the following reasons: 1) it has a much larger territory, 2) it has a sizable population along with influential cultural and religious particularities, 3) it has a longer coastline, 4) it has a qualitatively and quantitatively stronger military might, 5) it has very significant oil and gas reserves, 6) it has advantageous space and topography on the northern coast of the Strait for force deployment and military arrangements, 7) it has contiguous naval power, coupled with unified command in the east, west and within the Strait, 8) it possesses strategically located islands in the Strait, and 9) it possess technical capabilities allowing it to control the Strait.

Conversely, Oman is not in a favorable position in the Strait, i.e., on the Musandam Peninsula, from a strategic perspective. This is



due to the small size of its territory, its mountainous terrain and inappropriate topography, its noncontiguous territory as well as its lack of islands and appropriate coast for operational units. Consequently, it suffers from the inability of setting up a unified command and executing coordinated military and defense operations. Its territory is only fit to establish observatory and eavesdropping posts and the conduct of limited maritime patrols (Hafezina,1992: 471).

The Iranian plateau opens up on the Strait of Hormuz. The Kerman to Bandar Abbas road is one of the main routes connecting the Iranian plateau to the Strait. Defense of Bandar Abbas amounts to defense of Iran's security, as it reduces threats from the south. Iran's control of the Strait helps maintain the contiguousness of Iran's southern coasts. The exclusion of the Strait from Iranian territory would mean making it land-locked, having only access to a closed Persian Gulf. In such a hypothetical situation, the command unification between bases and units deployed in the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman would become very difficult. Thus, the Strait of Hormuz has an essential role in enabling Iran to possess a naval force and strengthening it (Hafezina,1992: 448).

The Strait of Hormuz is also of great importance for defending Oman's Musandam Peninsula. Oman is divided in two northern and southern parts. The northern part, i.e. the Musandam Peninsula, is separated from the southern part by the territory of the United Arab Emirates. This lack of territorial contiguousness has created difficulties for Oman in the fields of territorial security, military operations and the control of the Strait of Hormuz. Especially, the Musandam Peninsula, which is a small, mountainous region with narrow coasts and numerous islands and peninsulas, is difficult to defend. This problem has made Oman dependent on Iran and Western powers for its security.

The strategic position of the Strait of Hormuz has led Iran and Oman to try to control both of its coasts throughout history. Twenty



five centuries ago, the Achaemenid Admiral Scylax believed that every country that dominated three key points would rule the world; Oman, Bahrain and Yemen, which were important for maritime strategies. Iran's maritime strategy for 23 centuries consisted of controlling these three key points, from the 5th century b.c up to the eighteenth century, and dominated them for most of that time period. The Iran policy of dominating the Strait of Hormuz required control over both of its coasts. For this reason, it was necessary to include Oman into Iranian territory, thus embracing the Strait as an internal area. The Iranians sought two economic and military objectives from extending their sovereignty over the Strait of Hormuz. Economically, they aimed to control commercial shipping lanes and, militarily, they sought to confront the maritime powers of the time, i.e., the Greeks, Romans and Ottomans. Cyrus the Great, the founder of the Persian Empire in the 6th century b.c, conquered Oman and set up the famous Falaj underground irrigation system in that country (*Government of the Sultanate of Oman*,1993:18). This irrigation network is called Falaj or Aflaj up until this day. Under the Achaemenids, the Musandam Peninsula belonged to an Iranian named Dara, the son of Bahman. Herodotus knew of Oman as a part of Iran's 14th Satrapi (Pirnia,1989:1474). Under the Parthian dynasty, Oman was part of Iran as well (Eghbal-Ashtiani,1950:16). At this time, when the aggression by the blacks against the Persian Gulf increased, the Parthians deployed troops to Oman and conquered it in full (Taghizadeh,1970:35). Under the Sassanian dynasty (224-651 ce), the Iranian rule over Oman further strengthened. According to Yacoubi and Tabari, Oman, called Mazun at the time, was under Sassanid rule. Shapur I refers to Oman and Mazun as part of his Empire in the Ka'ba Zartosht tablet (Yarshater,1999: 129). Kasra Anoushirvan, the Sassanid King, dispatched a big naval force to conquer the developed and strategic areas in Oman in 542 b.c. His naval forces advanced up to Ras al-Had and conquered these areas.

At a later stage, Anoushirvan restructured the old governing



administration and created a new one under the control of military personnel and land owners with a view to strengthening the historic Iranian rule over the lower coasts of the Persian Gulf. These two social classes were called Asvaran and Marzbanan at the time. They were directly accountable to the governor based in Rustaq, located in inner Oman. Rustaq, still a present day town in Oman, was selected as the center of the Iranian rule in Mazun (Oman) for three reasons: First, Rustaq had relatively easy access to the commercial port of Omana (now Sohar). The main Iranian military base was located close to this port in Damstgard and in the Dama castle near the as-Sib region and oversaw the southern part of the al-Batinah coast; Second, Rustaq was an extended agricultural zone; and Third, Rustaq was located at the center of the region of Shanoua (Wilkinson,1972: 71-73).

Following the collapse of the Sassanid dynasty and the emergence of Islam, the Iranian influence in Oman was maintained. After the Khawarij riots, Khazim ibn Khozeima, who ruled in Khorasan and Ghaenat, departed for the Persian Gulf coasts and recaptured Oman from the Khawarij. After him, another Iranian named Obeid Allah Hamdan Qarmat overthrew the Arab rule in Oman. Nasir Khosraw, the Iranian poet, on his way back from Mecca to Iran, wrote in his travelogue: "An Iranian, following a series of wars, captured Oman and set up his rule there." He also refers to the Safarid rule in Oman (Nasir Khowsro Ghobadiani,1977: 107).

The Buyid dynasty captured Oman in 339 After Hijra (ah) and appointed Ali Ibn Ahmad as the governor of the region. Following a break, Moez al-Dowla of the Buyid recaptured Oman in 355 ah. Their descendants continued efforts to keep Oman within the Iranian orbit. During the rule of the Seljuks in Kerman, Oman was part of Iran. The King Ghavard, aided by the naval forces of the governor of Hormuz, captured Oman and made it pay tribute to Iran (al Husseini,2002: 89). The Seljuks of Kerman's rule over Oman lasted through 583 ah (Khasibi, 1964: 10-11). At the peak of the



Khawrizshahian dynasty, under Sultan Mohammad Khawrizshah, Iranian territory extended to and included Oman (ModaresZanjani, 1959: 340).

Oman was also part of Iran under the Atabekan of Fars. In 641 ah, Amir Shahab al-Din Mahmoud ibn Issa, who had been appointed by Atabek Abu Bakr, died and the rule of Oman was given to his nephew, Rokn al-Din ibn Ahmed, who resided in the port of Qalhat. In the year 670 ah, the Ilkhanids suppressed the riot in Qalhat and Oman and reinstated the rule of the central government in that region (Eghbal Ashtiani, 1986: 392). Under Qotb al-Din Tahamtan, the son of Rokn al-Din Mahmoud, Oman was also under Iranian rule. In general, it continued to be ruled by the Emirs of Hormuz up to 745 ah (Schpuler, 1972: 153-54).

With the Safavids' ascendancy in Iran, Oman was included within Iranian rule once again. In 1030 ah, the Iranian commander Imam Gholi Khan captured Oman. Upon the decline of the Safavids, the Khawarij, who were gaining power in Oman, benefited from the chaos in Iran during Shah Sultan Hossein's rule; ultimately capturing the islands of Qeshm, Larak, Hormuz and Bahrain. However, at the request of Imam Seif Ibn Sultan of Oman, Nadir Shah of Iran dispatched military forces to Oman and suppressed the Khawarij and captured the Musandam Peninsula and Dhofar Province (Shabani, 1990: 412-414). At the time, when clashes between Karim Khan of Zand and the heads of the Qajar tribe raged on, Oman became independent from Iran and, subsequently, Seyed Sultan, Imam of Muscat - benefiting from British support – dominated Qeshm Island, the Gwadar area and the port of Chahbahar in 1208 ah.

At the beginning of Fathali Shah's reign, rule over Bandar Abbas and Hormuz Island was granted to Ibn Ahmad, Imam of Muscat, in return for sixty million rials as annual tribute to the Iranian Government. In 1271 ah, Saeed Khan, Imam of Muscat, successor and son of Ibn Ahmad, claimed rule over Bandar Abbas and Qeshm, instigated by the British. He attacked the Iranian garrison in Bandar



Abbas, expelling Iranian soldiers. Reacting to this event, Moayed ad-Dowla, the ruler of Fars, engaged the invaders and defeated them, expelling them from Bandar Abbas and its dependencies. Seeking friendship by sending gifts to the Iranian court and exercising pressure through the British following his defeat, Saeed Khan could rent Bandar Abbas and Chahbahar from Nasirdin Shah for twenty years in return for an annual payment of 16,000 tomans. Nasirdin Shah, in his Firman in this regard, referred to Saeed Khan as the serf and vassal of the Iranian Government (Shamim, 1990: 239-40).

In the 1970s, Iran assumed a regional role in the Strait of Hormuz and the Indian Ocean. The factors that helped realized this development were as follows: 1) the withdrawal of the British forces from the Persian Gulf in 1971, 2) the increase in the oil price, which made Iran stronger from an economic point of view, 3) the Indo-Pakistan war, which led to the split of Pakistan, 4) the attack against an oil tanker carrying Iranian oil by guerillas supported by South Yemen, near Prim Island, 5) the Dhofar War and Oman's inability to suppress the insurgents, and 6) the Soviet naval build-up in the Indian Ocean,

In line with the new policy, the Shah of Iran stated in 1972, "Three years ago, our imagination did not go beyond the defense of the Persian Gulf. But, today, not only are we compellingly paying attention to the Sea of Oman and the Iranian coasts up to Gwadar, but also, our responsibility is totally modified; because the Sea of Oman is linked to other seas and oceans and there is no border on water. Thus, we must pay attention to parts of the country that we did not in the past, and there are new fronts before us that did not exist before (Mahdavi, 1997: 395)."

Thus, Iran's maritime security concerns went beyond the Strait of Hormuz and were extended to the Indian Ocean. In this respect, the Shah explicitly declared that "from now on, Iran's maritime border lies beyond the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman, i.e., at the Indian Ocean. Thus, the Iranian navy's responsibility does not consist



only of defending Abadan, Khosro-Abad, Bushehr, Hormuz, Bandar Abbas, and even Jask and Chahbahar, but it should protect Iran's security environment, which goes far beyond these locations (Mahdavi, 1997: 430)." The Iranian Minister of Foreign Affairs also stated at the United Nations that, "the maintenance of peace and security in the Indian Ocean is one of the principal pillars of our country's policy ... Iran, by announcing the outlines of its defense strategy, includes the Indian Ocean in the security sphere of the Persian Gulf (Nejati, 1992: 364)."

Iran's new geopolitical role in the Strait of Hormuz and the Indian Ocean led it to intervene in the Dhofar War. The Dhofar insurgency began in 1964 in the province of Dhofar in southern Oman, bordering South Yemen. The Dhofar insurgents, initially supported by China, South Yemen and later the Soviets, controlled two-thirds of the Province by 1969. In 1970, they captured the town of Salalah, the provincial center. In June 1970, they opened up a new front in the Musandam Peninsula in the north of Oman, called "the Democratic Front for the Liberation of the Occupied Arabian Gulf", under Iraqi influence. This Front aimed to overthrow all regimes located between Iraq and Oman. This Front also invited the Iranian people to join them. It was not only dangerous for Oman; it was dangerous for Iran too. This Front's activities jeopardized the security of the Persian Gulf and oil exports via the Strait of Hormuz. Thus, the Iranian Government formally announced that it would not allow this Front to gain power in Oman at all costs. As Arab countries failed or were not in a position to help the Sultan of Oman suppress the insurgency, the Iranian Government decided to help him. In March 1972, an Omani delegation led by Twini bin Shahab, the Sultan's advisor, traveled to Tehran and requested that Iran help them put down the Dhofar rebellion. It led to the conclusion of a confidential agreement between Iran and Oman on Iranian assistance with fighting Dhofari insurgents (Afrasiabi, 1985: 286). This agreement paved the way for the entry of Iranian military hardware



and forces into Oman. Upon the request of the Sultan of Oman, Iranian forces equipped with high-tech helicopters and war ships landed in Salalah on 20 December 1973. Parts of these forces were stationed on the Kuria Muria Islands and, following the evacuation of some of the islands' inhabitants, began constructing military installations. Iranian F-5 fighters patrolled the airspace over the Province of Dhofar and along the South Yemeni borders on a regular basis, using their Thamarit base. Iranian naval forces shelled the Dhofar coast, which was under the insurgents' control.

A major Iranian success was the reopening of the 600-km road connecting Salalah to Muscat in 1974. This strategic road, passing through mountainous and rugged terrain, was an operational base for the rebels. It had been unusable since 1969, as the rebels controlled the strategic point of Thamarit along it (Asadi,2003:207). The road was closed for 4 years and officials had to travel to Dhofar by sea or by air. This fact was a sign indicating the success of the insurgents and bore witness that the Omani Government was unable to connect this province to the rest of the country (Anthony,1975:493).

The rebels belonging to the Front took a heavy toll from the Iranian forces in December 1974. The bad weather and inhospitable environment in Dhofar created certain difficulty for the Iranian forces. The monsoon season from June to December was an impediment in the way of the Iranian military. For example, in the most western part of Dhofar, the region was so rugged and the fighting so difficult that Omani forces and their British supporters had concluded that they would not be able to effectively control the area. Thus, they believed that this region should be left to the rebels (Anthony,1975:495). These difficulties led to the deployment of more Iranian soldiers to Oman. The reinforced Iranian forces managed to liberate Salalah from rebel control in 1974, and ultimately defeated the Front's forces in October 1975 in a final attack. The number of Iranian casualties in the Dhofar War amounted to 25 officers and 186 soldiers (Holiday,1980:1280).



In February 1975, Iran began constructing the 'Damavand Defense Line', which started from Rakhyut and headed towards the north. It was constructed 44 km west of the old Hornbin line, built in early 1974. The defense line aimed to halt the infiltration of rebels from South Yemen into Oman. After driving the rebels out of the region and with the view to display the pacification of the area, Abdolreza Pahlavi, the Shah's brother, went hunting in the region (Fardoost,1991:560). Later, the Shah and Sultan Qaboos arrived in Salalah, the center of the Dhofar Province. Salalah is the birthplace of the Sultan and, for this reason, its liberation was emotionally important for him.

The Iranian forces acted cautiously in Dhofar and did not create troubles for the people living there. They did not pursue any scorched earth policy or resort to violence. Neither did they commit such acts as murder, rape, plunder, etc (Anthony,1975:490-91).

Other than engaging in military operations, the Iranian forces undertook development activities; among them, the building of the 50-km road from Janook to Fiorios and the asphaltting of the strategic 82-km road from Salalah to Thamarit (Iran's Ministry of Foreign Affairs,1977:89). The development of Oman's economic infrastructure also figured in Iran's plans. Iranian officials were of the view that such an approach would help subside popular dissent and opposition to the Omani Government. Iran believed that military power by itself would not guarantee the security of Oman, and that the livelihoods of the Omani people should be improved as well.

Following the suppression of the Dhofar Rebellion, Tehran announced that the Iranian forces would leave Omani territory upon the request of Sultan Qaboos. Although the number of Iranian troops decreased, some of them remained on the ground and were engaged in building radar stands in the Manston base in the northwest of Oman and observing the movement of military equipment in South Yemen. The Iranian forces finally left Oman following the victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979.



III- Iran-Oman and Security Issues

In this section, the Iran-Oman borders in the Strait of Hormuz as well as Oman's positions vis-à-vis the three Iranian islands of Greater and Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa, and the Iran-Iraq war are reviewed. Contrary to other Persian Gulf States, Oman has refrained from adopting hawkish and extremist positions on the Iran-Iraq war and the three islands.

Iran and Oman do not have border or territorial differences. They demarcated their common maritime boundary by signing an agreement on 20 July 1974, which entered into force upon the exchange of instruments of ratification in 1975. In accordance with this agreement, the boundary between the two countries runs for 124.8 nautical miles, from the northern Persian Gulf to the northern Sea of Oman, and has 21 turning points. This boundary line follows the median line of the Strait of Hormuz and is equidistant from the coastal baselines of the two countries' coasts. The only exception to this rule relates to the zone between the Iranian Island of Larak and the Omani Island of Greater Quoin. Agreed upon as coastal baselines, these two islands each have 12 nautical miles of territorial sea (24 nautical miles in total), while they are only 21 nautical miles apart. Thus, the territorial seas of the two countries have an overlap of about 3 nautical miles. The breadth of the shared territorial seas of the two countries runs approximately for 16 nautical miles (29.6 km) (Elahi,2005:53).

Contrary to other delimited portions of maritime boundaries in the Persian Gulf, the baselines for all Iranian and Omani islands in the Strait of Hormuz are laid out. For this reason and in order to observe the 12-mile territorial waters of these islands - and especially the Iranian island of Larak - the referred to overlap occurred and the determination of the median line of this overlapped portion led to the curve of this part of the boundary. The turning point of this boundary line begins in the Persian Gulf and ends in the Sea of Oman. The



final turning points of this border in the two said bodies of water are not determined, which is owing to the non-delimitation of the Oman-UAE boundary line at the two ends of the Iran-Oman border in these bodies of water.

The depth of the water along the boundary line ranges from 31 to 99 meters and the shipping channels for the heavy oil tankers lay to the south side of this boundary line. In Article 2 of the Iran-Oman agreement, the parties committed themselves not to dig oil wells whose distance are less than 125 meters from the boundary line without the prior consent of the other party.

Contrary to some Arab countries which support the UAE's claim over these islands, Oman has not expressed any views on this issue. Nor has any demonstration or disturbance against Iran taken place in that country. Oman's propensity to maintain a friendly relationship with Iran is one of the reasons for this state of affairs. The border and territorial differences between Oman and UAE are another reason for this situation.

Even though Oman has adopted the statements of the GCC on the three islands, its overall approach in the GCC's meetings has been one of moderation. Moreover, these statements are not put to a vote and are pushed through the Council under the influence of Saudi Arabia, which is directed by its differences of view with Iran on many regional and international issues. All in all, Oman's efforts have resulted in moderating some of the statements against Iran. Moreover, Oman has opposed certain proposals made by the Saudis in some of the meetings of the GCC. For example, Oman opposed the Saudi proposal in 1987 that all Council members' diplomatic ties with Iran be severed. In that year and following the killing of Iranian pilgrims in Mecca, Saudi Arabia broke off its diplomatic relations with Iran (Jafari-Valdani, 2005:562-63).

A few months before the start of the Iran-Iraq War, Qays Al Dhavavi, the then Minister of State for External Affairs of Oman, suddenly visited Baghdad. Following this visit, the propaganda war



between the two countries stopped, and their relationship, which was hostile for many years due to Iraq's financial and armament help to the Dhofar Liberation Front, began improving. Following the start of the Iran-Iraq War, Oman declared its neutrality. However, the Omani media, in the way it reported the War, tilted towards and supported the Iraqi regime's positions, as all other Persian Gulf states did. After the shift in the war in favor of Iran and the liberation of Khoramshahr from Iraqi occupation, the Omani Government adjusted its policy and reduced its propaganda against Iran. It tried to show neutrality in an attempt to curry favor with the Iranians.

On the other hand, although Oman adopted the GCC's statements, it tried as indicated earlier to stop the Saudis' hawkish policies and stress the need and importance of avoiding moves that would provoke the Iranians. For example, at the GCC Summit in Muscat in November 1985, the GCC did not fully endorse the Iraqi positions and ostensibly impartially requested that both Iran and Iraq end the war (Naeemi-Arfa, 1991:85). That was for the first time in the history of the GCC that such a position was adopted.

Several reasons led to such an Omani approach: the first lied in the geopolitical reality. In the course of the War, the Omani line of reasoning was that, upon the end of the War, each powerful friend would take its own path, but it should co-exist with Iran; thus, it needed to pursue a conciliatory line with it (Economist, 8 oct. 1988). In other words, the geographical factor, i.e., the relatively long distance separating it from Iraq and its proximity to Iran was among the reasons that led Omani officials to adopt a relatively reasonable and logical stance vis-à-vis Iran. In this respect, Sultan Qaboos said during the Iran-Iraq War that in the long run, he did not see "any option other than peaceful co-existence between Iran and the Persian Gulf states (Naeemi-Arfa, 1991:120)."

Suspicion towards Iraq has been the other factor that played an important role in the relationship between Iran and Oman. This dates back to the active Iraqi support for the Dhofari rebels who opposed



Sultan Qaboos in the late 1960s and early 1970s. It became a serious impediment in the way of the improvement of ties between Iraq and Oman in the years that ensued. In the same episode, Iran had actively helped the Sultan put down the rebellion. Moreover, a major factor that had a negative impact on the ties between Iran and most Persian Gulf states, i.e., that was the perceived way Iran dealt with Shi'a populations, did not play any role in the Iran-Oman relationship. This is because the number of Shi'as in Oman is not considerable; 75% of the Omani population are Ibadis and the rest are Sunnis (the Economist Institute, 1987).

The Dhofar War demonstrated the Iranian resolution to maintain the security of the Strait of Hormuz. Upon the departure of Sultan Qaboos from his visit to Iran, in a joint statement issued on February 6th 1974, the two countries stressed their strong will to cooperate in all fields with a view to maintain the stability and security of the region and the freedom of shipping through the Strait of Hormuz. They declared that they deplored any exercise of influence in this region on the part of foreign powers and considered such efforts as running counter to their interests. The statement further reiterated that the two countries should cooperate and take joint action to prevent any sabotage and disorder that jeopardizes their security. Along this line, the two countries decided to jointly inspect all ships that pass through the Strait of Hormuz. It was also said that Oman authorized Iran to build a naval base on an Omani island in the vicinity of the Strait of Hormuz, probably the Island of Qanam. It was also said that in accordance with an agreement concluded between Iran and Oman in March 1974, the two sides jointly assumed the responsibility for the defense of the Strait of Hormuz and supervising the shipping through it.

Following the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979, Iran's active role in the Strait of Hormuz decreased and Oman became more active in this respect. However, upon the start of the Iran-Iraq War, Iran became aware of the sensitivity of the Strait of Hormuz and



embarked upon reclaiming Iran's historic role therein. On the other side, Oman's military weakness was an obstacle in its efforts to play a significant role in the Strait. In the course of the Iran-Iraq War, Iran repeatedly stated that if its oil exports via the Strait of Hormuz were stopped, it would not allow other countries to use the Strait and would close it. Iran did not follow suit, but it continued to stop and search vessels in the Strait, which meant that Iran was capable of controlling it.

What should be referred to here are the different visions of Iran and Oman about the sources of threats and the strategies for securing the region. In the 1970s, Oman considered the Dhofar rebellion, South Yemen, Iraq and the Soviet Union as sources of threats. In the mid-1970s, the threats from the Dhofar rebellion, South Yemen and Iraq faded away and only the Soviet threat persisted. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the Islamic Revolution in Iran were viewed as threats by Oman. Soon, the Iran-Iraq War was added to the list. The departure of the Soviet troops from Afghanistan, the collapse of the Soviet Union, the end of the Iran-Iraq War and the unification of North and South Yemen made the remaining threats fade away. However, the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq, the occupation of that country and, later, the second Persian Gulf War, replaced the defunct threats. Upon the liberation of Kuwait, the Iraqi threat disappeared. At the present time, domestic dissent as well as old-age pessimism and lack of confidence in Oman by Saudi Arabia and the UAE and their intentions are considered to be a source of threats. In Oman's view, reliance on Western powers, and especially the United States, is the only possible way to maintain its national security – a position that Iran strongly opposes.

Oman is not capable of defending itself – a premise that was proven during the Dhofar rebellion. That rebellion could only come to an end after 10 years and with Iran's help. Thus, under the Shah, Oman relied on Iran for its security. The collapse of the Shah's regime worried Oman more than any other country. Consequently, it



sought a replacement, and its membership in the GCC could be interpreted along this line. Moreover, for the same reason, Oman proposed the establishment of a joint force for maintaining the security of the Strait of Hormuz – a proposal which was rejected by other GCC members.

Oman has consistently doubted that the GCC members could maintain their security solely through cooperation among themselves. This view has been proven to be correct and logical, as confirmed by the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. On the basis of such a premise, Oman began its military cooperation with the United States, which led to the conclusion of a 10-year defense treaty with America in 1980, extended on a regular basis thereafter. In accordance with this treaty, the U.S. received permission to have access to and use Oman's port facilities as well as air and naval bases across the country; especially on strategic islands. In fact, Oman turned into one of the main elements of the American strategic arrangement in the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean (Bon Enfant,2000:408). Oman has put the following bases at the disposal of the United States: 1) the naval and air base on Masirah Island in the Indian Ocean, 2) the as-Sib airbase, close to Muscat in the coastal areas next to the Sea of Oman, 3) the Thamarit airbase in the Dhofar Governorate, close to the Yemeni border, 4) the Salalah base in the center of the Dhofar Governorate, 5) the bases on the Musandam Peninsula near the Strait of Hormuz, and 6) the Muttrah and Riut Bases

On the other hand, Iran as the biggest Persian Gulf littoral state - possessing more than half of the coast of this body of water - believes that a sustained regional security system is dependent on close cooperation among all littoral states. For this reason, Iran believes that any security system in its absence will be untenable and irrational and runs counter to regional solidarity. Along the same line, Iran considered the 6+2 agreement as being against its legitimate and legal interests. For this reason, it expressed its discontent about any intervention by any non-littoral state in the Persian Gulf and its



security. The disagreement expressed by Iran was one of the reasons that led to the defeat of the Damascus Declaration (Jafari-Valdani,2008:72).

On the same basis, Iran strongly opposes the military presence of the U.S. and any other major extra-regional power in the region. Tehran believes that the U.S. military forces are not only an obstacle to the maintenance of peace and security in the region, but also one of the elements of insecurity in the Persian Gulf. In the course of the Iran-Iraq War, U.S. forces expanded the war across the Persian Gulf by attacking Iranian oil platforms and ships, jeopardizing the security of the whole region. Some of these operations were conducted from American bases in Oman.

During the Iran-Iraq War, Oman allowed the U.S. and Britain to use its territory and airspace for refueling, cargo loading and deploying reconnaissance aircraft. The U.S. was also permitted to fly its reconnaissance aircraft and conduct air control from Omani territory within the framework of Operation Akhoundak. These facilities were put at the U.S. disposal in conjunction with the American attack on Iranian oil platforms in the Persian Gulf. During the Iran-Iraq War, Oman provided 950 soldiers to the U.S. for participation in the Joint Arab Task Force. Moreover, Oman permitted the U.S. to use the Misirah Base to conduct the military operation Tabas on April 25th 1980, which was aimed at rescuing American hostages in Iran. This operation was approved in a special meeting of the U.S. National Security Council on April 11th 1980. At the time of Operation Tabas, Brzezinski said that, “the time has come to incise the abscess (Taremi, Autumn2002:155).” However, this operation ended in a disgraceful defeat.

As the Iran-Oman relationship is affected by geographical factors more than any other factors, the close U.S.-Oman ties have not affected it in a considerable way. Moreover, Oman has established a closer relationship with Israel in recent years. While Iran severed ties with Egypt due its peace treaty with Israel - relations that are yet to be



restored - in the case of Oman, Tehran has chosen to overlook Muscat's relations with Israel (Asadi,2003:490). Israeli leaders have had certain plans for the Persian Gulf region for a long period of time. Some of the members of the Knesset demanded the inclusion of some of the coasts of the Persian Gulf in "Greater Israel". Likud Party member Tesvi Slova discussed the historic claim of Israel over the Persian Gulf region in a 1970 study entitled, "*A Big Land, A Big Nation* (EL-Essawy, Summer 1999)." Now, Israel has been able to be present at the Strait of Hormuz through its relations with Oman.

Oman was the only Arab state of the Persian Gulf region that refrained from suspending its relations with Egypt following the signing of the Camp David Accords between Cairo and Tel Aviv in 1979. Following the signing of the Gaza-Jericho Agreement between the Palestinians and Israelis as well as the Jordan-Israel peace agreement in 1994, bilateral contacts between Israel and Oman were established and high-ranking Israeli officials visited Oman. In December 1994, a high-ranking Israeli delegation led by the then Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin visited Oman. In early 1996, Shimon Peres, the then Israeli Prime Minister, travelled to Muscat. An Omani delegation also participated in Rabin's funeral ceremony (Jafari Valdani, 2008:211).

Oman was the first Persian Gulf state that established diplomatic contacts with Israel, in October 1995. In the relevant decision making process, Oman enjoyed more leeway compared to other regional states, as Palestinians are not residing in Oman. Upon the establishment of diplomatic contacts between Muscat and Tel Aviv, an agreement was signed by the two parties that provided for the opening of respective Israeli and Omani commercial representative offices. Oman and Israel began their economic relations following the inauguration of the Israeli trade representation in Oman. The first Israeli trade delegation visited Muscat in July 1996 and the Oman publically authorized Omani businessmen and the country's private sector to establish a trade relationship with Israel.



Yousef Ben Alavi, the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Oman, stated in this respect that “in the Arab countries of the Persian Gulf the businessmen of the private sector do business, not the governments.” He also said that the general Arab call for a slowdown in the normalization process with Israel is useless, and that all Arabs should adopt a positive approach vis-à-vis the peace process with Israel (Jafari Valdani, 2008:213). The geopolitics of the region is thus transformed and the roles of its actors have changed. Therefore, Israel’s strategy of setting up close relations with its periphery to counter its hostile vicinity turned from laying siege on the Arabs into laying siege on Iran. Shimon Peres, the former Israeli Prime Minister, said that “Israel is not threatened by any country except Iran, and the Iranian Government is the biggest threat against the security and existence of Israel (Ettela'at Newspaper, 20 February 1995).” Yitzhak Rabin also said that “in the case of a probable war, Israel fears Iran (Ettela'at Newspaper, 1 September 1997).” On the basis of such an approach, Israel is trying to lay siege on the Islamic Republic of Iran by infiltrating Turkey and Northern Iraq in the west, the Republic of Azerbaijan and Central Asia in the north and the Persian Gulf states, especially Oman, in the south.

IV. Oil and Gas Cooperation in the Strait of Hormuz

Iran and Oman can cooperate with one another in the field of oil and gas. The two countries are among the world’s producers and exporters of oil. Oman’s oil production and export is less than that of Iran. However, the two countries’ economies largely depend on oil income and get affected by any increase or decrease in crude prices. For example, the increase in oil prices during the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait left noticeable imprints on Oman’s economy. Following the decrease in oil prices, Oman’s economy suffered to the point that Oman’s Development Council and the Ministry of Economy were obliged to take certain decisions to readjust development plans and choose different options. Thus, Iran and Oman’s cooperation in the



oil sector is necessary and in the interest of the two countries.

On the other side, some of the oil fields in the Strait of Hormuz are shared by the two countries. One of them is the Hengam oil field. This field is located in the Strait of Hormuz, of which 80% belongs to Iran and the rest to Oman. It was discovered in 1975. The amount of oil in this field is estimated to be 700 million barrels, while it holds 2 trillion cubic meters of natural gas. Oman has begun exploiting this field since 2009, and extracted 3 million barrels of crude in a single year. Iran has yet to begin exploiting this field (*Late Exploitation of the Hengam Oil Field*, 20 February 1995).

Moreover, Iran and Oman cooperate on the exploiting of the Kish gas field. The gas reserves of this field amount to 48 trillion cubic meters and are equivalent in volume to Phase 4 of the South Pars gas field. The two countries have agreed to develop the Kish gas field in three phases (one phase on land and the two other phases at sea) and carry it out in 4 years. It has also been agreed that a 200-km underwater gas pipeline be constructed to take the gas to Oman (The Islamic Republic News Agency, 21 April 2008).

The construction of pipelines could be another field for bilateral cooperation between Iran and Oman. Both countries possess own gas reserves. In 2005, Iran's gas reserves were estimated to be 15% of the world's gas reserves. Only Russia has bigger gas reserves, with 35.5% of the world total (The Ministry of Oil, 2005:56). In 2005, Oman possessed a mere 0.6% of the world's gas reserves (The Ministry of Energy, 2005:439). In recent years, natural gas consumption has increased around the world due to environmental concerns. 50 years ago, only 17 countries consumed natural gas. In 2009, more than 90 countries consumed this product. These days, many countries pay attention to gas as a replacement for oil in their developmental planning. Asian countries are one of the main markets for gas exports. There are several plans for transporting Iran and Oman's gas to these countries. Among them, the following are the most noticeable:



Oman-India Gas Pipeline: This underwater gas pipeline would transfer gas from Oman to India. India needs 250 million cubic meters of gas per day, out of which only 60 million cubic meters are produced domestically. The initial feasibility study by Oman indicates that the construction of this pipeline could be possible at a depth of 1200 meters. However, experts believe that the construction of the pipeline at that depth puts a great deal of pressure thereon and makes it vulnerable in the face of sea currents and storms, which casts doubts on it from an economic point of view. Moreover, India does not want to choose between Iran and Oman, and prefers to procure the gas it needs from both countries as diversity of sources provides further security (Jafari Valdani, 2003:165-66).

Iranian Gas Pipeline to India: This pipeline would be 2600 km long and cost 7.5 billion U.S. dollars (*A Glance at the Regional Impact of Iran-India Gas Pipeline*, 30 August 2005). It would be one of the longest pipelines in the world and transfer 60 million cubic meters of gas in the first year of its operation and 90 and 120 million in the second and third years, respectively. A memorandum of understanding on a feasibility study of this pipeline has been signed between the two countries.

China, given its growing need for gas, has undertaken some negotiations with India, and is considering participation in this project. The construction of this pipeline would not only could turn the hostile competition between these two major Asian countries into tactical unity, but could also help realize the dream of establishing an Asian energy network, covering China and Central Asia. It is natural that Iran should play the main role in such a network. However, the shadowy presence of an uninvited, but very influential actor, i.e., the United States, has dimmed the perspective of a final breakthrough for this huge project (The Ettela'at Rahbordi, September 2006).

Iran-Pakistan Gas Pipeline: This pipeline would be 1800 km long and cost 4-4.5 billion U.S. dollars. It would transfer 40 million cubic meters of natural gas from Iran to Pakistan and thereby to



India. A memorandum of understanding has already been signed between the two countries. This pipeline, which is dubbed ‘the peace pipeline’, may help build peace between Pakistan and India, even though - here too - differences between these two countries has impeded progress.

The construction of several gas pipelines from the Persian Gulf to India and Pakistan would not be logical due to their heavy cost. The best way forward is the proposal made by the Pakistani Prime Minister, who said that these plans should be carried out at the regional level, in a way that Iran and Oman can both take part. On the other side, in the case of an improvement in the Pakistan-India relationship, one pipeline could serve both countries. Therefore, cooperation among Iran, Pakistan, India and Oman is in the interest of everyone. A pipeline could take the Omani gas from the Strait of Hormuz via Bandar Abbas and link up to the Iran-Pakistan pipeline. This is the best way for transferring Omani gas to Asian markets.

Conclusion

Historic relics and documents show that from the dawn of history, Iranians have paid special attention to the Strait of Hormuz. For several centuries, Oman was a part of Iranian territory and the Strait served as the route between them. In the view of Standish, the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz were Iran’s internal seas (Standish,1998). The Strait plays an important role for Iran and Oman from an economic, strategic, security and military perspective. It is the main artery for Iranian trade. All of the Iranian’s oil exports and 80% of its foreign trade are carried out through this Strait. The Strait of Hormuz is the only way for Oman to conduct business with the Persian Gulf states.

The Strait has made Iran and Oman more important in the region and across the globe. Around 40% of the worlds’ maritime oil transports pass through this Strait. Thus, it plays a key role in the security of Iran, Oman as well as the industrialized nations.



Responsibility for the defense of the Strait and supervision of the shipping lanes in the area fall jointly on Iran and Oman's shoulders, in accordance with the agreement signed in 1974. The Strait of Hormuz possesses oil and gas reserves that are shared by Iran and Oman. Moreover, Iran and Oman, especially the former, have considerable gas reserves. Therefore, the exploitation of the oil and gas fields in the Strait of Hormuz, and the transportation of the gas of the two countries to Pakistan, India and China could help realize the dream of establishing an Asian energy network.

Notes

1. The width of the Strait is different at different points. It is, however, 38.9 km wide at its narrowest, between the Great Quoin Island of Oman and the Larak Island of Iran, where the shipping lanes are located.
2. The legal regime of the Strait of Hormuz depends on the time. During peace time, international maritime regulations, including the Convention on the Law of the Sea, apply. However, at war time, especially when a littoral state is one of the parties to the war, the peace time laws are suspended and the legal regime of the Strait would be subject to war time rules. For more information see: A. A. Kazemi, *the Legal Dimensions of Iran's Sovereignty in the Persian Gulf*, the Institute for Political and International Studies, 1368 (1989), pp. 119-127 and - Mark J. Valencia, "U. S. Hypocrisy in The Strait of Hormuz", Policy Forum Online, Nautilus Institute, <http://www.nautilus.org/fora/security.o.8213.Valencia.ht>, 1. 2010/01/27
3. In 1958, Sultan Saeed Ben Teimour sold Gowader, which was part of Oman, to Pakistan for 3 million pounds

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