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*"Jazāyer-e-IRAN  
dar  
Khalīj-e-Fārs"*

*Islands of IRAN  
in  
The Persian Gulf,*

*By*

*General Razm Ara*

MAR 19 1946

Translated by  
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Geographic Names Section

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Islands of Iran in the Persian Gulf

Preface

The kingdom of Iran possesses a coastal line of approximately 1700 Kilometers along her southern frontier, bordered by the Sea of Oman and the Persian Gulf. This section of the country is considered the most free territory of Iran, which links the country with the rest of the world, bringing economic prosperity to the markets.

These coastal lines have, for centuries, been the center of attraction for various nations who have attempted to infiltrate into these areas in order to expand their trade activities. Detailed accounts of the historic conflict in the gulf are positive proofs of the strategic importance of this region. The islands and the shores of this vast gulf have been the battlefield of many bloody wars of aggression.

In order to succeed in their mission these aggressor nations have first infiltrated the islands and after strengthening their positions, they have extended their spearhead toward the shores. The first step of the country, after regaining her strength was always to expel the invaders and marauders from these islands.

It is quite evident, therefore, that these islands occupy very strategic positions, the defense of which is of utmost importance. ATTACH Attaches of European nations on the islands during the 16th century resulted in desolation and complete destruction of these sections. Yet in spite of their conditions, there is no doubt that today these islands are just as important strategically as they were in the past.

In order that we may thoroughly be acquainted with the conditions of these islands between the shores of Shatt al-'Arab and the entrance to the

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gulf, each island's geographic location will be discussed in detail; and, in conclusion, a general summary of their relative importance will be given.

Referring to the map it becomes evident that His Majesty's Government is in the possession of many islands in the Persian Gulf. The most important of these islands, between the mouth of Shatt al-'Arab and the entrance to the gulf are:

1. The Island of Khak and Kharku (Sic Kharg and Khargu)
2. The Island of Sheykh Shoeyb
3. The Island of Hendurabi
4. The Island of Kish (Pa Qis) (See Kish or Qis)
5. The Island of Faru
6. The Island of Siri
7. The Island of Tomb ✓
8. The Island of Qeshm
9. The Island of Mengan
10. The Island of Hormos
11. The Island of Larak

Individual discussion of the islands will (not) be undertaken.

#### CHAPTER I

##### The Islands of Khark and Kharku (Sic Kharg and Khargu)

- |                      |                          |
|----------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Introduction      | 4. Population            |
| 2. Physical Features | 5. Military significance |
| 3. Economic Features |                          |

##### Introduction

Because of the short distance between the southern shores and

Bandar-e-Būshehr, these islands have been used for commercial and military activities for many centuries. When the Dutch invaded the gulf in 1752, they purchased these islands from Mir Naṣīr Khān, but they were expelled by Mir Mehnā in 1766. During this period of occupation, the Dutch expanded their trade activities on the Island of Khārg.

The English occupied these islands during the reign of the Qājār dynasty in order to have a free access to Bandar-e-Būshehr, thus threatening Herat.

There is no additional historical information besides the above statements.

#### Physical Conditions

- a. This island is approximately 35 kilometers from Bandar-e-Rīg.
- b. It is approximately 8 kilometers long and 4 kil. wide.
- c. Lowlands and Highlands.

(1) Highlands - The highest hill among the chain of highlands does not exceed 87 meters. These hills extending from northwest to southeast are known by different names in various sections.

The northern ranges are called Kūh-e-Takht and Kūh-e-DīdehBān, the western range, Kūh-e-Lashgarī, while the southern range is known as Kūh-e-Gardan Shotor.

(2) Rivers - With the exception of a few intermittent streams of flood that originate in the hills during the spring, there are no rivers in the island. The water supply of the inhabitants is limited to a few springs.

(3) The plateau consists of the areas in the west, north-

west and the central plains.

- (4) The coastal regions - The northern and eastern grounds are of clay composition with gentle inclinations, while the beaches on the other two sides of the shore are mountainous with steep inclinations and fissures. The shore lines differ in depth; ships of 1000 tonnage can anchor within one Kilometer of the shore.
- (5) Climate - Typical of the southern regions of Iran, the climate is tropical. However, because of its location, the island benefits from cool northern winds (very severe at times) and its climate is milder than the southern areas of Iran.
- (6) Vegetation consists of tropical plants and palms such as dates, banyans, bananas and citrus fruits. Dates and banyans are found in abundance on the island.

#### Economic Resources

The grain production of the island is very low, and the amount is insufficient to take care of the native requirements. Even dates which constitute a chief item in the native diet is not available in sufficient quantities. There are a few banana trees, but the soil is unfit for its cultivation.

There are approximately 1000 banyan trees the sap of which is used in the production of cauchoric (rubber). Until recently (before the government intervention), the branches and even the trees were felled and used for fuel. The branches of these trees send out numerous aerial roots that grow down to the soil and form preps for additional trees. The fruit is very similar to the fig and is consumed by the native. Since the ground

is very favorable for its cultivation, special attention toward its production will bring remarkable results.

Fishing - There are many varieties of fish in the waters around the island. One special variety, the parrot fish, is particularly desirable. Pearl fishing was flourishing at one time, but it is abandoned now.

Live stock - There are approximately 600 goats and 25 cows on the island.

There is a special variety of stone in the island which is ideal in masonry. The Anglo Iranian Oil Company used a large quantity of the stone in the construction of the buildings in Abadan.

There is also a jetty which accommodates small ships. A narrow gage railway is also built between the jetty and the mountain where stones are quarried.

At the quarry there are several structures and a storehouse used for storage and explosives.

Means of transportation consists of approximately 26 horses and donkeys.

There are still 30 small boats and railroad cars (1 to 10 ton capacity) formerly used in the transportation of rocks, on the island.

#### Population

Population on the island consists of 200 families of approximately 800 people.

The inhabitants are rather muscular and good sportsmen, especially in the seas. There is no malady in the summer, but some types of fever prevail during the winter.

Religion - There are two sects (Shiites and sunites) but there is a close harmony and even intermarriage between the two rival sects.

The sepulchre of Emānsādeh Mohammad Janifah (Sic One of the four chiefs

of the principal Mohamadan sects), a descendant of 'Ali is located in this island visited by the Shiites.

The natives are chiefly engaged in fishing, and they often exchange their catch with wheat and dates in the harbors of Rig and Ganāveh. During the operation of the quarry a number of the inhabitants find employment in the mines.

The main source of food consists of fish and dates. Wheat and rice is imported from the harbors, and the fruit of the banyan is used because of necessity.

The leaves of the banyan tree, as well as fish and date kernels are fed to the livestock in lieu of grass which is scarce on the island.

The Island of Khārg and Khārkū     Fig  
(A scene taken from the sea)

Military significance of the Island of Khārg:

Even though this island is located within 30 Kilometers of the sea, it is within a favorable view of the shores between Bandar Būshehr and Rig. It may, therefore, be considered a stepping stone toward the shore.

However, a point of real military significance is the accessibility of these islands. As mentioned previously, the Island of Khārg is bordered with a range of foothills on the south and west ending abruptly in the shores without the benefit of appropriate landing facilities. On the contrary, the eastern and northern shores are free from such obstacles. Landing of troops can successfully be accomplished in these regions. These landings in the north and west (Sic East) are considered as very sensitive positions which should be defended against any form of aggression.

The mountain peaks of the island, particularly the peaks of Dīdān, Gardan Shotor, and Lashgarī, possess ideal locations for observation posts



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which can be effectively utilized. These positions have extensive views toward the sea and the adjacent shores.

The Island of Khārkū\* (Sic Khārgū):

As it is evident from the map, the island is located northeast of the Khārg\* Island. It is 30 Kilometers from the shores, with an area of approximately  $4\frac{1}{2}$  Kilometers by 700 meters. The island does not possess any highlands, and with the exception of one house, one family and two trees there are no dwellings or vegetation. Landing facilities are excellent in all directions, however, ships cannot anchor near the island except in the area between the Khārg and Khārgū Islands. Even row boats are unable to approach the island because of the shallow waters.

This island has no military significance. The defense characteristics of both islands will be discussed under one heading.

Khānsādeh-e-Mohammad Hanifah (Hanifah) Fig  
In the Island of Khārg

#### General Discussion

From the point of view of defense both islands should be considered collectively. Any defense measure for one of the islands must embody the characteristics of the other.

Since the islands occupy a commanding position with regards to the coastal areas between Būshehr and Rig, the possibilities of attack and defense should be taken into consideration. Both islands will become objects of attention.

Neither island possesses economic significance.

Because of the limited landing beaches, the islands can be defended by a small force.

\* Sic the Islands of Khārg and Khārgū have been misspelled in the text (K for G). In translation the correct names are substituted.

Attack on the islands will be considerably more difficult than its defense.

## CHAPTER II

### The Island of Sheykh Shoeyb

#### Introduction

In spite of the fact there are not many historic documents regarding this island, the existence of various caliber guns around the island proves its historic significance. These guns called the Naderi cannons, must have been brought here during the reign of Nader Shah, for the protection and defense of the island.

#### Geographic Positions and the Physical Features

The eastern corner of the island is 11 Kilometers southwest of Ra's-e-Nakhilū, and south of Bandar Maqām or Maqām.

The island is 24 Kilometers long and 5 Kilometers wide. There is a tower southeast of the island, and a lone round tree beyond the tower, both of which can easily be seen from a distance. There are four small settlements in the valley located in the center of the island.

Conditions of the Coast - The protrusion of the western portion is a jagged sandy beach. It is rugged at approximately 700 meters. There is a layer of slate formation about 6 meters high which begins at the southern shores of the island, and extends westward, until, after 9 Kilometers, it ends at the low sand beach where the village of KORĀT is located. There are, in the village, a few date palms, banana and banyan trees, and a tower. Beyond Korāt the layers of slate extend west and northwest on the shore until they reach a height of 265 meters at 16 Kilometers.

From the Western tip of the northern shores of the island eastward (for  $3\frac{1}{2}$  Kilometers) there is a convenient anchorage. The rest of the shore

until the eastern tip is formed by sheets of stone where are located two sandy gulfs which afford favorable shelters for boats and small barges.

The entire coastline, with the exception of two or three sections, is jagged and rocky, particularly the northern shores.

Lowlands and Highlands - The only highland on the island consists of a hill, almost in the center of the island. The elevation here does not exceed 37 meters. There is, therefore, no protection afforded the island by means of highlands, and the climate is ordinarily better and cooler. With the exception of one valley, in the center of the island, there are no fissures to prevent free movement of transportation vehicles. Most of the shore is rocky, while the remainder is of clay, coral or gypsum composition.

Further toward the center the ground gradually becomes increasingly soft (dirt and clay) suitable for agricultural activities. The maximum ebb and flow does not exceed 263 meters.

Boundaries of the island - The northern boundary of Sheykh Sho'eyb is limited by the sea which varies between 11 and 24 kilometers between points of the island the southern shores of Iran. The southeastern boundary is limited by the Island of Hendarābi. South of the island (200 to 230 kilometers distance) are located the islands of Das and Zirkow (Zerkow) (Zirkaw).

#### The Harbors Facing the Island

West to East, the harbors on the Iranian shores, facing the island are:

Across Ra's is located the harbor of Shatū or Chatū; and with varying distances from Shatū, the rest of the harbor are: Bastin, Maqān, Makhilū and Chirū. There are custom's officials in the village of Shatū and Makhilū.

Harbors and landing beaches - The island does not possess a favorable

harbor. The best facilities are at 2 Kilometers southeast of the shore, between Sheykh and Sho'eyb and the island of Shoṭur (Shuīūr). The northern portions of this area are very dangerous even for large ships, because of the treacherous winds. During the calm waters, ships of 12,000 tonnage can anchor within two Kilometers of the shore.

There are four landing beaches, as follows: West to east, the beach at the extreme west of the island; the beach at the center of the southern shores, southwest of Korat village; the beach located at the extreme east of the island, across the village Lāzh (sic Lāz); and the beach located at the northern shores of the island, 16 Kilometers from the village Lāzh.

During the windless days, ships of 2000 tonnage can anchor within 1500 meters of the beaches at the southern shores of the island; and small boats can easily approach the island until 2 to 3 meters from the shore. Across the northern beaches (from the extreme west of the northern beach) eastward for  $3\frac{1}{2}$  Kilometers, ships of 300 to 500 tons can anchor within 500 meters, and 1000 ton ships can anchor with extreme precaution and familiarity with the waters.

Water depth - The average depth, up to  $1\frac{1}{2}$  Kilometers south of the island, is between 10 and 18 meters; around the eastern cape, up to one Kilometer, it varies between 10 and 30 Kilometers, and between the two islands of Sheykh Sho'eyb and Shoṭur (Shuīūr) the depth varies between  $3\frac{1}{2}$  and  $4\frac{1}{2}$  meters.

Climate - The climate on this island, like other sections in the gulf, is hot and humid. Temperature in the summer rises to 50°C and the yearly rainfall is 6 centimeters. All the wells on the island are fresh and wholesome.

Living Conditions - East to West, the settlements on the island are as follows:

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The settlements of Lās, located with one Kilometer of the extreme eastern portion of the island, is the most important village of the island. Its population is 200; it has one chieftan, one chief of customs, and one civil patrol post (Annīyeh), all under the municipality of Būshehr. The best anchorage of the island is located two Kilometers south of this village.

The village of Lāzeh, located at the northeastern shore of the island, west to Lās, has a population of 25.

The village of Korāt or Kowrāt, located in the southern shores of the island, southwest of Lās, has a population of 70.

The four following islands are located in the valley at the center of the island:

Deh-e-Rīz (population 50), Kūfī (population 30), Deh-e-Kūt (population 29) and Vahleh (population 38).

The village of Da's (See Ra's), located in the extreme west of the island, has a population of 27. Many years ago, the population of this village was between 700 and 900, decreasing since last year, because of the lack of employment which prevented imports, adding to the hardships of natives. The present population does not exceed 460 (contradiction).

Habits and costumes of the people are the same as the Bedowin Arabs.

Live Stock - There are 200 goats and sheep, (3/4 goats), 38 cows, and 25 to 30 donkeys. During the seasons when grass is scarce the food of these animals consists of fish and date-kernel boiled together.

Agriculture - There are numerous wells on the island (2 to 4 per village), all with fresh water. The yearly production of wheat and Barley is 4½ Kharvars\* (dry farming). Although the ground is capable of further production, the physical weakness of the inhabitants is detrimental to

farming. The rest of the islands needs are imported from other sections.

There are approximately 100 to 120 various trees and palms such as dates, bananas and banyans all over the village, the leaves of which are fed to the animals.

Each year a certain amount of dates and wheat is imported from Khorramshahr and Maqan to supplant the native wants.

The natives spend five months a year fishing pearls during special seasons, and earn their living from the sale of their catch. Besides pearl they also sell the shells to the foreign merchants who buy them in order to convert the merchandise into ornaments. Lately, however, the shell market has fallen off considerably. There are heaps of them stored on the island awaiting sale.

Besides the two above mentioned items, there are no commodities available for export on the island. Sheykh Sho'eyb is considered one of the trading centers of pearl.

Communication - Besides a few heads of donkeys and 22 row boats, (large and small) - used for fishing, this island does not possess other means of transportation. There are several ship builders, engaged in the construction of boats but recently, because of the lack of lumber they have been idle.

The buildings, generally constructed from limestones and gypsum blocks, are built as single rooms. There is a castle in the village of Iaz which is used as the headquarters of Amniyeh (civil patrol). A tower is also built adjacent to this castle.

There is also a tower and a small castle in the village of Korat.

The inhabitants converse mostly in Arabic. A few can speak Persian, and, with the exception of one or two the natives are illiterate. Their

chief employment consists of fishing and pearl diving.

With the exception of a few paths that link the village there are no roads in the island. However, as it was mentioned previously, the ground is level enough for any form of vehicular transportation.

Since the island is very close to the Iran shores, it plays an important role in the defense of the areas between 11 and 20 Kilometers (between Nakhilū and Sheyū (Sic Snotū)), and the adjacent shores of Iran. The island is a convenient stepping stone to the shores of the mainland. However, access to all sections of the island is not readily possible. Some sections are rugged and jagged, and the only level landing beaches are in the south and north.

#### Conclusion

The inhabitants of Sheykh Sho'eyb are very capable seamen. But the native resources are considerably limited, and have no economic significance. On the other hand because of its proximity with the mainland it has great military significance. The defense of the island is comparatively easy and infiltration will prove rather difficult and problematic.

### CHAPTER III

#### The Island of Fārū (Sic Fārūr)

##### Introduction

The island is located at 54° 30' East and 26° 17' North. It is 7 Kilometers long (North and South) and 4½ Kilometers wide. The shortest distance from the mainland, at Ra's-e-Būstāneh is 72 Kilometers, and at Ra's-e-Afsheyās (See Fasal-Sheyās (Shiās)) is approximately 33 Kilometers (Sic ?). It is also 30 Kilometers from the northern shores of the gulf.

The island consists of a number of volcanic mountains, spurs of which extend north until within 15 Kilometers of Ra's-e-Bustaneh. In the section

they are in the form of underwater rocks located in shallow waters, while the southern spurs have formed the Island of Nabiyū Fārūr.

The highest altitude on the island is approximately 145 meters.

Several fissures which became flooded during the rain, extend toward the shores. There are two small hamlets (with a few mud huts) one, in the southern shores and the other in the eastern shore. In the southern hamlet there is a lamp post on the roof of one of the houses, where a lamp is lit once in a while.

### 3 - Conditions of the Coast

The shorelines consist of steep inclines or precipices with average height of 10 meters. The slope of the western shore is steeper than the eastern and southern shores. The latter is comparatively level.

In the western shores there are three narrow landing beaches that are more important than the others. The landing beach on the southern shore is comparatively wider, and the beach on the eastern coast is the most significant of the rest. Here is located the eastern village of the island where a few trees are also found.

All of the beaches are located at the mouth of the basins.

### 4 - Depth Conditions and the Anchorages

The sea around the island is very deep, as seen from the deep blue color of the nearby waters. Large steamers can anchor very close to the shore. The depth at 300 meters of the shore exceeds 30 meters on the eastern shores, while at 200 meter distance, in the west, it is 11 meters and at 500 meters it varies between 44 and 73 meters.

Because of rock and sand bottom, anchorage is not practiced.

The first anchorage of the island was discovered by the English ship Krokos (Crocus) in 1929, on the eastern shore of the island at 50 meter



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depth. Another anchorage was found on the south (36 meters deep).

Skippers of steamers usually stay away from the mooring areas. This is because of, first, the sheets of rocks, some of which have emerged above the water surface, second, extreme depth of the sea, third, lack of anchorable bottom, and finally, lack of protection from the winds. Ebb and tide around this island is more pronounced.

It is evident, therefore that this island is not a suitable area for anchorage.

#### 5 - Conditions of the opposite coast in the Mainland

On the coast opposite the island. A series of highlands are seen which are, (on the first level) east to west, Kūh-e-Būstāneh, Kūh-e-Namakēh, Kūh-e-Īmār; on the second level, a little further behind these mountains there is a chain of mountains which extend west to east. The main harbors on the mainland, in this section, are Būstāneh and Moghū. With the exception of several towpaths which lead from the salt marshes, through the highlands, into the interior, there are no main highways in this area.

#### 6 - Climate and Economic Conditions

The climate is very warm and humid, and with the exception of three or four trees in the eastern shores, there is no vegetation besides thorn bushes and saplings. There are just a few abandoned mud huts in the island which are sometimes used as shelters by the fishermen. The total population does not exceed 25 heads - even less in winter. The only available water is from saline water of the wells.

There are quite a number of deers and plenty of fish, in and around the island. The natural resources of the island have not yet been investigated.

There is only one government employee - a customs official on the

island.

Military Significance of the Island. The investigation of the geographic location of the island reveals that, for the following reasons, landing on the island in order to use it as a base has no significance with respect to the mainland:

There are no important harbors and highways on the shores of Iran opposite the island; the island is rather remote from the mainland; it has no economic significance; and provision facilities are nil.

The only significance of the island is the possibility of effective blockade between Bāb-Hormoz and the island of Sheykh Sho'eyb and the harbor of Shāhpūr - and especially between this island and the mainland. Effective blockading is also possible in the south, limited to the firing range and visibility. This action will necessitate ships to use longer routes; and the defense of the island will also be necessary.

Conditions and Highlights of the Defense of the Island are:

Extensive horizontal view from the highlands.

Prevention of landing depends upon the reinforcement of the few limited landing beaches and the adequate defense of other areas. Provision supplies for the troops stationed on the island, whether during war or otherwise will involve many difficult problems.

There are no natural air fields on the island, and it is very difficult to construct adequate landing strips.

The island of Fārū, a section of which is completely of rock composition, is unpopulated and lacks resources and economic significance.

Because of its long distance from the mainland, it lacks military significance.

## CHAPTER IV

### The Island of Kish

#### Introduction

This island has a very detailed historical background. Located on the trade route between Iran, India, Yaman and Mesopotomia, commercial transactions between these countries have, for centuries, been transported via this island. It has, therefore, become a very important trade center of the Persian Gulf. Ruins of the city of Kish and an old mosque still remain in the northern part of the island.

The island had great significance during the wars of Alexander. Noyarkus visited this island, <sup>known</sup> known as Kāntinā.

Many legends are attributed to the name of this island. One of the ancient writers states: "A traveller, by the name of Qeys, was sailing to India, in the company of his pet cat. When his ship anchored at Kish, he came ashore, and soon found out that the inhabitants were greatly annoyed by the multitude of mice which were all over the island. Immediately he went to his ship, and returning with his cat, he let it loose in the kings palace. The cat scattered the mice and brought relief upon the inhabitants. The King rewarded Qeys and asked him to stay, naming the island after him." Islam writers have all mentioned the importance of pearl diving on the island.

In the XIIIth century, the governor of this island ruled over all the island in the gulf and possessed an important navy.

One of the latter 19th century explorers, writes, "There is little agricultural activity in the north coast, and a small number of date palms and fruit trees also exist. However, the interior of the island is mostly sand, and except grass and saplings used as pastures, nothing grows in the region."

Another Islam writer states, "The island is warmer than the interior of a bath house (Sic, i.e., "the climate is hot"), but it is densely populated."

Still another explorer of the 12th century, AD, writes, "Because of the lack of water supply the inhabitants pay no attention to farming. There is only one spring, and drinking water is secured mostly from the rain. This island is an important commercial center located between India, Iran and Mesopotamia. Merchants carry on their barter trade on this island."

Yaqut, the renowned writer who visited this island during the early part of the XIIIth century, states, "The city of Kish is a very beautiful place. It is surrounded by gardens and beautiful edifices. The King of Oman who has a strong navy, resides on this island."

Ebn-e-Mojāver (Ibn-i-Mujāwir) writes, "There are many palm groves in this island. Water comes to surface by mere touch of the ground. An underground spring passes through the center of the Amir's garden. The natives flavor fish with dates, and the several story houses are constructed of mud and straw." According to their writer, the tax revenue of this island was given to the Caliphate at Baghdad.

According to the documents of Zakareyay-e-Qazvini (1275 Hijri) this island was still at the height of its glory until the XIIIth century (Hijri). During the Qajar dynasty the island was presented to 'Ali Khan Qavāmol Molk, by Mas'radīn Shāh in return to the construction of the Tabar Castle in Fārs. 'Ali Khān Qavāmol Molk sold it to Mohāmmad Resā Khān Soṭūt ol Molk. The profits of pearl fishing is great and the climate is very good.

Sa'di also describes his meeting with a successful merchant of Kish

in his book, "Golestan". He writes, "I met a merchant who --- took me to his office in the island of Kish, one night ----". In this passage, Sa'di discusses the trade of Iran and the relationship of the Persian Gulf between the east and the west. The island of Kish was the meeting haven of the merchant, and it had the same significance as Port Sa'id.

On the other hand, the presence of all common parts which are (according to reports) remains of Nader Shah's battleship, support the evidence that the renowned ruler also believed in the strategic position of the island. Therefore, he had placed a certain amount of his equipment at his disposal in this island.

#### Geographic Location and the Natural Features

Beside the islands of Hangan and Qeshm which possess adequate anchorage facilities, the island of Kish is also a suitable place for naval power. Because of its location near the center of the gulf, the ship route of Bushehr, Shahpur, KhorramShahr, Abadan and Basrah on one side, and the other parts of the gulf on the other, the island has gained more importance.

Since there is a constant fresh water supply available on this island it is far superior to the islands of Faru and Hendurabi and other islands.

Its area is approximately 85 square Kilometers; it is an elliptic island, 18 Kilometers long and 7 Kilometers wide; its major axis lies in an east-western direction.

A view of Kish Island and the lighthouse → Fig.

The island of Faru is located 18 Kilometers southeast of Kish, and Bandar Garseh (on the gulf) is 17 Kilometers north, while Hendurabi Island is 26 Kilometers northwest and the sea on the south of the island.

The ground is comparatively level, with gentle slopes, gradually rising toward the center of the island. The highest elevation of the island, located on the southern third, does not exceed 37 Kilometers. The light house is located at this point.

A section of the northern shores is jagged, while there are no serrations in other sections.

The ground along the shores is composed of lime and shells, while the interior of the island is sandy clay which is very suitable for all forms of agriculture.

Since there are no highlands on this island, rivers and fissures or springs do not exist.

The coast has a gradual inclination toward the sea in such a fashion that anchorage is impossible without the aid of jetties. Ships of 2000 tonnage can anchor only at 2 Kilometer distance of the island. However, the shore line on the northeastern shores is deep enough to facilitate anchorage within one kilometer of the shore.

With the exception of a few serrated sections on the shore, row boats can approach the shore on all sides, in order to discharge their passengers.

There are numerous trees on the island which include banyan, hack-berry, dates, and tungoil trees which will be discussed individually, with respect to their fruits and advantages.

#### Climate of Kish

The climate, like the rest of the gulf areas, is very hot during the summer months. Temperature reaches 45°. Thanks to the density of trees in the north, this section is somewhat cooler and more livable. Furthermore, the island, because of level terrain, benefits from the

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ocean winds.

The well water is very pleasant and wholesome. It often attracts cargo boats which depend upon this island for drinking water.

The water wells are 8 to 10 meters deep, and the water is easily accessible. Such wells are found all over the inhabited sections of the island. The most important ones are:

1. The wells known as Mansar in the hamlet of Mīshah, east of the island. Heaps of dirt have been placed around the wells in the form of dams in order to collect fresh water during the winter rains.
2. The well of Safā in the village of Sajan, North of the island.
3. The well known as Bālā, located in the northwest, between the settlements of Deh and Safin (Sic also called Safid). Both villages benefit from its water.

The maximum rainfall is 2 inches.

One of the merchants of the village of Qolā'I (west of the island), called Sheykh Chārki had excavated a running underground spring which was used for irrigation in the village. However, it is now completely dry and no one has been desirous of its renovation.

#### The People

The population consists of mostly Arabs, and a section of Larestani. They are tall, with dark hair, olive skin, but generally slender. Their native tongue is Arabī, but they are also familiar with the Persian.

They belong to the Sunnite sect of Islam religion. Very few are Shiites.

Very few are educated. Some can read the Koran. Most of the merchants are somewhat literate.

They are well built, and have exceptional skill in the water.

Most of the inhabitants are engaged in fishing and pearl diving. In habits and costume they are entirely Arabized, and their clothing consists of mostly, one long shirt.

#### Animals

Cows, sheep, goats and donkeys. Birds - hens, rooster, pigeons and ducks.

#### Political Point of View

The island is under the municipality of Lengeh which is one of the subdivisions of Bushahr. Affairs of the island are, at present, managed by one of the descendants of Sheykh Charki.

#### Banyan Trees on Kish Island ← Fig.

#### Government Agents:

One customs official, one village chief and a civil patrol (Amniyeh).

#### Population

The island was, at one time, densely populated, but there has been a gradual decrease, until at the present time there are approximately 1500.

#### The Main Settlements

The hamlet of Mashah, located northeast of the island, has numerous shops, bazars and edifices such as mosque, caravanserais dwellings and a customs house.

The hamlet of Sajam is located 700 meters northwest of Mashah.

The hamlet known as Deh, 400 meters west of Sajam.

Safin, located northwest of the island is comparatively a large place.

The hamlet of Migh is located west of the island.

In addition to the above settlements, there is a section known as



Jazireh (now in ruins) which is one of the ancient hamlets of Islam, from the 7th century of Hijra. If adequate excavations are carried on, it is possible to unearth documents which will give better information regarding the former inhabitants of the island. Similarly, a place called Qala'i, west of the island, which was once inhabited, is now in ruins. All that is left consists of trees and date palms and agricultural grounds.

As yet, there have not been any modern schools and educational establishments in any of these settlements. There are a few old fashioned schools which are not interesting enough to attract students. Children do not show any interest in these schools.

The communication of the inhabitants with the outside. The communication of the inhabitants is limited to 'Oman (Oman), Bahrein and the northern shores of the gulf.

The buildings, constructed of stone and gypsum, are comparatively sturdy.

There are approximately ten mosques on the island, and the most important one, located in Mashah, is called Masjed-e-Jame'.

Two Kilometers south of the island, there is a light-ship, anchored permanently by the British. Recently the Iranian Admiralty has constructed a light house on top of the highest elevation on the island. The light is motor. Two establishments have also been built here, one for the employees at the light house and the other as a kerosene dump.

#### Communication and Connections

Numerous towpaths link the village, but because of the smooth surface, the island is capable of accommodating any form of transportation vehicles. There are no telephone or telegraph facilities on the island, and the mail

is transported by means of special couriers between Chārak and Bandar Lengeh.

#### Employment

The inhabitants are engaged in fishing and pearl diving, and some farming.

Among the fine arts, the only ones with which the natives are familiar, are pearl culture, and pearl polishing and finishing. There is only one specialist who can build boats on the island. He builds and repairs the boats of the island. The lumber for the construction of these boats is imported from elsewhere.

The number of conscripts in the year 1939 amounted to 200, most of whom were assigned to the Navy. (The year 1939 was the first year of induction to armed forces on this island).

#### Economical Conditions and the Native Resources

Overlooking the sale of pearls which they export each year (as 3rd class merchandise), and import necessary supplies from the outside, the natives also sell a large amount of shells to the exporters who sell them to the foreign manufacturers.

During five months in summer the inhabitants are engaged in pearl diving, and the rest of the year they are busy fishing, farming or transporting merchandise in boats.

The yearly yield of pearl (clear and tinted) is 100,000 Rials, and that of shells is 8000 Rials. The former exportation of pearl was approximately ten times its present amount.

The yield from fishing is just enough for the native requirements. However, a British concern made some investigations before the war in order to establish a fishery establishment on the island. The plans

would have been realized were it not for the declaration of war.

Cultivation of wheat and barley, and vegetables are only sufficient for the native consumption. Fruits and vegetables raised on the island are, melons, watermelons, squash, eggplants, cucumbers, onions and tomatoes.

**Yield of Dates:** There are some 4700 date palms on the island, bearing 12,000 Kiles of dates. The inhabitants consume half of the crop and export the remaining half, importing in exchange, cloth, shoes, lumber for boats, and other necessities. Other fruit trees include: Tungoil tree, the fruits of which are dried up and the oil is rubbed on the bodies of pearl divers in order to prevent them from the salty waters of the ocean.

The "Kanar", "Kahur" and banyan trees are mostly used for fuel. The leaves are used in feeding the animals.

Tobacco, which is not cultivated any longer, constituted, at one time, a part of the exports of the island.

Generally speaking the ground is very productive, and if mechanical irrigation were resorted to by means of pumps, the production of wheat and barley would increase profitably.

The island has a fair supply of livestock and other tamed animals, as itemized in the following table. This table shows very clearly that the products of the island are barely sufficient for the native consumption, and much cannot be expected from them.

**List of the Settlements of Kish Island**

Name of Settlement	Population	Date	Palms	Cows	Livestock Sheep	Goats	Donkeys	Boats
Masbeh	650	1000		30	-	250	40	30
Sajam	100	1500		5	-	60	5	5
Deh	150	300		10	-	80	8	7
Sarfin	550	1800		20	-	150	20	15
Bagh	30	400		5	100	-	6	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>1500</b>	<b>4700</b>		<b>70</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>540</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>59</b>

**Military Significance of Kish Island**

Careful consideration of the conditions of the islands in the gulf will clarify the fact that, with the following reasons, the island has indisputable preference to other islands in the gulf:

1. Convenient anchorages protected from the winds facilitate entry of ships to the island.
2. Because of complete level surface the island affords favorable landing facilities.
3. Compared with other islands it is more livable. Its climate is good and because of its dense trees and fresh water the area is very favorable for camping of troops, and it affords good cover and concealment.

According to the above reasons the island is of considerable military significance. However, its defense, because of extended landing beaches, will necessitate the expense of a larger number of scattered troops, thus facilitating invasion.

This island plays a significant role in the defense and infiltration of the shores between Charak and the Cape of Chir.

**Conclusion**

The island affords excellent anchorage, protected from the winds,

and because of suitable landing facilities which may aid in the formation of a sea base, it possesses a great significance.

The population decreases continuously. Without adequate supervision in the welfare, education and agriculture of the people, the island will soon become a barren land similar to other islands of the gulf.

Steps for the defense of the island, with its significance, should be taken during peace.

#### The Light House

Since a light house was recently erected on the island by the southern Navy, it is essential that we first discuss the necessity, and then the characteristics of the new light houses of the southern shores.

Significance of the Light House. Light house and buoys are very essential for the pilots. It is not sufficient to prepare a harbor only. Ships must be safely directed to their anchorage. Often, at the vicinity of the harbors the ships face grave dangers caused by the land conditions and depth of the sea. Land marks assist a great deal in the guidance of ships during the day. However, they do not provide adequate guidance at other times and in the night, so that the pilots may ascertain the fathom and the elevation of rocks. Therefore, special equipment has been provided at dangerous locations in order to facilitate the entrance of ships to harbor. Among these equipments are included buoys and light houses.

#### Appellation

Apparently there was a small island in the vicinity of Eskanderiyeh (Alexandria), known as Fār. In this island, there was a construction 56 meters high, on top of which a fire was lit which could be seen for 25 miles. Other guides of similar characteristics were later called "Fār" (light house).

The construction of the light house of Fars cost 20880 Kilograms of silver which is equivalent to approximately 10,000,000 Rials of today.

Classification of the lighthouses. Large light houses. These lights can be seen from 15 miles out in the sea. They can be operated by electricity, gas, acetylene or petroleum. Without exception they flash several times per minutes, thus distinguished from each other in accordance with the intervals between the flashes. Characteristics of each light is recorded in special books, made available to the pilots who distinguish them from one another. For example, the light of Bushehr flashes once every five seconds, which means that it remains dark for 5 seconds. Such light houses have to be constructed in large harbors and on land.

Average size light houses: These lights have similar characteristics as the larger lights. The only difference is that they have shorter ranges. They too have to be constructed on land.

The brighter lights and those that float are lit only by means of acetylene gas and kerosene, which are more economical and can be secured everywhere. (Only American buoys are operated by batteries which are more expensive).

These buoys are placed in the entrances of harbors, in Canals, anchorages and other dangerous shallow waters. They are provided with various colored bulbs depending upon the role each lamp plays in the harbor. For instance the western buoys in the Shatt al-Arab are red while the eastern lights are white.

The British seamen have provided the shores of the gulf (at the entrance of the gulf and in the island of Fomb) with lights in order to facilitate the traffic of the merchant vessels. The Navy department has

since taken steps in providing the southern waters with lighthouses. These lights were officially in operation in (Oct. 22-Nov 22), 1931. These buoys are of the latest style, constructed in accordance with the most modernistic methods. They are all similarly constructed, with the exception of the duration of their lights. Below is listed the characteristics of the largest light houses in the south located in Bushahr.

Discussion of the Light of Bushahr. The light house is 28.50 meters high (from top to the waterlevel during the tides). It is located at latitude  $28^{\circ} 56'$  and longitude  $50^{\circ} 48'$ . Its range is 25 nautical mile, at five meters above the water. The lighthouse is operated by means of an electric powerplant between 15 and 18 horsepower (vapor H.P.) The motor is connected to a generator, generating 220-380 (three cycle) volts. One transformer reduces 380 volts to 55 volts which is used in lighting the lamps. There are 1500 watt search lights placed in the center of prisms which magnify the lights sending out parallel beams several times the original intensity. The 1500-watt light of Bushahr, for instance, are magnified to 1,950,000 candles. These lights are placed on wheels operated by means of small motors which regulate the 5 second intervals of flashings. These prisms thus segregate the lights into spirited and unspirited angles creating dark and light spots facing the observer.

(Map of Kish or Qays (Qis))

#### CHAPTER V

##### Small Island in the Persian Gulf

The general conditions of the following islands will be discussed in this chapter.

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- |              |              |
|--------------|--------------|
| 1. Hendürābi | 4. Tonb      |
| 2. Sīrf      | 5. NabīTonb  |
| 3. Būmūsā    | 6. Nabī Fārū |

The Island of Hendürābi

The island of Hendürābi is considered one of the islands formed from the slope of the mountains within 70 Kilometers of Qal'eh Chīrū.

The island consists mainly of low altitude mountains with the minimum level of 31 meters. It is bordered, in the south by means of fissures which create difficulties in approaching the island. There are however, many small landing beaches in the east and northwest.

The island is approximately 9 Kilometers long, and its average width is 4 Kilometers. Its location compared with the neighboring islands and the southern shore, is as follows:

28 Kilometers from Kish Island, 25 Kilometers east of Sheykh Sho'eyb Island, 4 Kilometers from the nearest coast, and 7 Kilometers from Qal'eh Chīrū.

There is very small amount of farming (thanks to the low altitude inside the island) in the island which barely elevates the native requirements.

Drinking water is secured from the wells, 8 to 10 meters deep.

The population is approximately 200 and the inhabitants have similar living conditions and characteristics as the natives of Sheykh Sho'eyb.

Pearl diving has been going on around the island for many years. The diving section is located northeast of the island, in the vicinity of Ra's-e-Mansūr.

The natives earn their living by fishing and pearl diving. A portion of their needs is imported from the coasts of Iran.



The northern landing beach of the island is somewhat protected, but it can only be utilized by smaller boats which anchor within one Kilometer of the island.

#### Military Significance

Because of its proximity to the coast (4 to 7 Kilometers from the Mainland), the island occupies a valuable position from the military point of view. The only thing that reduces its importance is the lack of trunk lines in the southern coasts. Since the coasts of the Mainland are not so significant, the island, with its proximity to these shores, is also insignificant. Yet, it will have a deciding effect upon the defense of the coast and Chir.

#### The Island of SIRI

It is a small island, in the center of the gulf, with a length of 7 and average width of 4.7 Kilometers. It is 55 Kilometers from the island of FARU, 76 Kilometers from Bandar Lengeh, and 102 Kilometers from Shirjah of Arabia.

The island is rather level with maximum elevation of not over 15 meters above sea level.

SIRI, thanks to her location and physical features, is the most improved island among many of the islands in the gulf. It is also better suited for agriculture than any of the rest. One of the Arab chiefs called Khalifah ibn-i-Rashid migrated to this island from <sup>Sharjah</sup> Shirjah (southern coast) with forty of his slaves and people. After settling in the island he excavated enough wells to supply his tribe with fresh water for daily consumption as well as irrigation. Furthermore, with the capitol of this chief and another called Sheykh Sho'eyb the livelihood of this island was procured to a certain extent.

The present population of the island is approximately 150 who have stone houses and even a mosque. The inhabitants are all sunnites. There is a number of the Howleh tribe of Sudan who are engaged in trade between the two shores. There are no government agents on the island. The entire affairs of the island is managed under the supervision of the Sheykh (Chief). Indian merchants visit the island during the pearl season. There is a certain kind of fish in the waters, known as Umm'Aleymū (Sic perhaps Umm'Aylamū which would mean Mother of the Deep Sea) which hinders pearl diving a great deal.

Military Significance: Located between the shores of Iran and Arabia, away from Bab-Hormos, the island has no strategic value.

#### The Island of Būmūsā (Abu Musa)

Būmūsā is located between Lengeh (Iran) and Dawbi (Arabia). Its width and length is approximately  $4\frac{1}{2}$  Kilometers. There is a chain of mountains in the interior of the island, the peaks of which do not exceed 110 meters.

Būmūsā is located 67 Kilometers from Lengeh, 56 Kilometers from Dabi (Sic Dawbi?) and 48 Kilometers east of the island of Sirf.

The inhabitants of the island are descendants of the Bani-A'mām tribe, the chiefs of <sup>QAWASIM</sup> Jawasin (Sic). The population is approximately 100.

The inhabitants live off the proceeds of fishing, pearl diving and farming. There is a bed of clay on the island, and even though it does not have the qualities of the clay deposits of Hormos, much benefit was derived from the soil by a German Company (VonKehas), leased later, to an English Company. There are approximately 20 small boats for pearl diving on the island.

There are several landing beaches around the island, and excellent pastures for the animals in the interior.

Because of its distance from both coasts the island has no defense value.

#### The Island of Tonb

Located 27 Kilometers south of Qeshm, the maximum elevation of the island is 55 meters above the sea level. Most of the communication of Tonb is carried on with the coasts of Oman. The population is approximately 100, and it consists of mostly the races of Arab chiefs. The livelihood of the populace depends upon fishing and pearl diving. Very little farming is done, which is insufficient for native needs.

Drinking water is secured from wells that are somewhat salty.

There is one lighthouse on the island.

#### Nabi Tonb

Located 14.2 Kilometers west of Tonb Island, Nabi Tonb is unpopulated. Its highest elevation is 35 meters above the sea.

#### Nabi Fārū

Nabi Fārū is another deserted island. It is located 15 Kilometers south of Fārū Island in the form of a sheet rock, 37 meters high. Its mean diameter is  $1\frac{1}{2}$  Kilometers.

Map of the Island of Hendūrābi and its location compared with coast and the islands of Shaykh Sho'eyb and Kish

### CHAPTER VI

#### The Island of Qeshm

#### Introduction

A careful investigation of the map of Iran will reveal that the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman are joined together by means of a straight

which reduce the width of the channel still further. These islands are: Qeshm, Hormos, Hengām and Lārak which possess strategic significance because of their locations. Each aggressor, in order to strengthen his foothold in the gulf, has first directed his attention to the occupation of this island (Sic Qeshm). Therefore, this island has more strategic value than the rest of the islands, since it is the largest and more livable than the other three islands.

The island has a historical background. There was a ruler on the island who at one time maintained a land-and-sea force which strengthened his position on the island. The ruins of the island clearly define the story of the past civilization of the island and its various military strongholds in Qeshm, Sūsā, Bāsa'Idū and other important places. These remnants also prove the value of the island from the point of view of economics, military and administration.

There are no historical documents in reference to the early civilization of the island. However, there are inscriptions in the mosque of Gushah (known as Borj), in the interior of the island, which gives evidence of the past history of the island. The mosque was renovated in the year 244 Hijrat (858 AD), and it is believed that it was once a temple of the fire worshippers. These inscriptions also state that on the 26th of Ramasān, 826<sup>H</sup>, the mosque was ruined by an earthquake. Under the auspices of Pathullāh ibn-i-Shams Ullāh ibn-i-Mu'Id ibn-i-Mahmūd, the mosque was repaired in the month of Rajab, 737 Hijrat. This King was a member of the Āl-i-Mahmūd dynasty which ruled the island of Hormos from the time of Portuguese.

The writer wishes to add here, that according to Mojamul Baldān, this mosque existed during the period of Umar ibn-i-Khattāb. Also,

according to these inscriptions, the island was inhabited long before Islam. Even 14 centuries before Islam the island was the center of attraction of Arab warriors.

Still more significant is the remains of a stronghold built by the Portuguese (before the reign of Shah'Abbās the Great) in the hamlet of Qeshm. This castle was equipped with the cannons of that period, which were used to protect and control Bāb-e-Hormos and Bandar'Abbas. These cannons still remain with a major portion of the castle.

The Jetty ; Qal'eh-e-Kāंबरūn

The shores of Bandar'Abbas and  
Qal'eh-e-Kāंबरūn, as seen from  
the sea

Another group of castles, east of Lāft<sup>?</sup> (overlooking it), known as the castles of Nāder, substantiates the view that this island was the object of special attention of warriors and conquerors.

The Island of Qeshm

Among the entire group of islands of the Kingdom of Iran, the island of Qeshm has more significance from the points of view of size, population, buildings (and even from the military point of view), than any other island in the gulf.

It is 180 Kilometers long, with a width varying between 8 and 40 Kilometers. Located in the vicinity of Bāb-e-Hormos, the island is attenuated in a parallel line with the coast on its north (i.e., it is elongated in a northeast and southwest direction). Because of this elongation Arabs call it Jasīrah al-Jawīlah (meaning the Long Island).

The hamlet of Qeshm is located in the northeast corner of the island, near Bandar'Abbas; and the hamlet of Bāsa'Idū is located in the northwest

corner, 55 Kilometers east of Bandar Lengeh.

As one enters the island via the hamlet of Qeshm, after 13 Kilometers he will arrive at the narrowest portion of the island (8 Kilometers), and after 50 Kilometers he will reach the widest section (approximately 40 Kilometers). Beyond this point, however, the width decreases to an average of 10 Kilometers.

The highlands of the island are mostly limestone composition with gorges and ravines, located at varying distances from the shores. Some are very close to the coast, while others are farther away. Table lands and plateaus are formed as a result of these mountains, at one end of which - in the northeast - is located the hamlet of Qeshm (elevation 190 meters) and at the other extreme - northwest - is located the hamlet of Bāsa'Idū (elevation 180 meters). The maximum elevation of the mountains is approximately 450 meters, 35 Kilometers east of Bāsa'Id, known as Kish Kūh which is of salt composition, and the natives call it (salt-cellar".

The comparative location of the island is as follows:

It is 20 Kilometers, from Fūlā to Bandar'Abbās; 20 Kilometers from Qeshm to Hormoz Island; 12 Kilometers from Qeshm to Lārġ Island; 3 Kilometers from Shib-e-Derās to Dengām Island; 31 Kilometers from the extreme southwest of the island to Tonb Island; 61 Kilometers from Bāsa'Idū to Bandar Lengeh; 53 Kilometers from Shib-e-Derās to the cape of Shaykh Mas'ūd on the shores of Oman; and 65 Kilometers to Jazīrat al-Ghanam on the shores of Oman.

Besides the islands located around Qeshm, as mentioned above, there are two uninhabited mounds of earth east of Shib-e-Derās and one west of Bāsa'Idū. The latter island is called "Jangal-e-Daryā'ī" by the natives, because of the number of trees on the island. The leaves of these trees

(the "harā" trees) are fed to the cattle.

[A distant view of the Jetty of Bandar'Abbas]<sup>F.P.</sup> In the vicinity of the island there are also sheets of underground rocks, a section of which originates in the vicinity of the salt mines (south of the island), and after curving around the island, it inclines northwestward, extending toward the vicinity of Bāsa'idū. The widest section of this rock is 15 Kilometers south of the island. Some distance away, throughout the length of the straight of Clarence (called Khūrān by the natives) the sheets of rock are transformed into narrow and separate blocks of stone. These underwater rocks are one to three and a half meters below the surface of the water.

The area of the island is approximately 262 square Kilometers.

Conditions of the coast: The shore line is mostly serrated, and the depth, until Hengām, is such that ships can anchor only within 6 Kilometers of the island. Further approach inland is impossible because of the shallow waters (mostly due to the underwater rocks.). In the vicinity of the southwestern corner of the island, the ships must sail within 8 to 26 Kilometers away from the island.

Similarly in the northern shorelines (almost all along the length of Clarence) the water is so shallow that even motor boats have to move with the utmost caution.

Generally, it is possible to approach the major parts of the island (especially the southern shores) by means of small boats.

Landing characteristics of the island has been itemized in a separate list (Sic see page 45).

There are 3 capes north of the island:

The Cape of Qeshm

The Northern Cape of Lāft

The Cape of Bāsa'idū

In the south is located the cape of Dastagān which has many palm groves. Between this island and the mainland there are numerous marshlands, most of which are covered with forests. These marshlands, generally known as Nowr-e-Kamīr (Sic Khamīr) are 120 Kilometers long, with 7 harbors facing the Iran Mainland, as follows:

Barakeh, Sefīn, Mahtābī, Khamīrpol, Kīchīn, Būstāneh and KhūnehSorkh.

The island has nine large and small harbors facing Iran mainland, as follows:

Qeshm, Dorkehan, Kūhī, Lāft, Kūrān, Chahū, Mamakdān, Bāsa'Idūy-e-Now (better known as Sinku), and Bāsa'Idūy-e-Kohneh.

There are five harbors in the island, facing the sea, the most important of which is Dīrestān which faces the island of Hengām.

During the world war, this harbor was the anchorage of British warships as well as merchant vessels. They had even set up wireless stations, built coal and fuel dumps in the harbor. Another harbor of this section is Karkeh which was selected as the operation center of the petroleum company. Besides the 9 above mentioned harbors there are 10 others on the side facing Nowr-e-Khamīr.

**Climate.** In spite of the tremendous amount of humidity the natives have no recollection of ever experiencing snow. Even rain is very rare on the island. Therefore, there are no rivers in the island, with the exception of a few flood channels (leading toward the sea) that have been formed by occasional rains.

Lack of water has created many hardships. Not only farming has become very impracticable, water, has to be transported from the outside. The in-



habitants have constructed reservoirs where they collect rain water which is used very sparingly.

Because of saline gypsum deposits in the island, the water is not very wholesome. The inhabitants, therefore, take their meals in the morning and at noon in order to digest it during work.

The Shores of Qesha Island ← Fig.

(These stagnant waters are the breeding grounds of the guinea-worm - *Filaria medinensis* - which develops into long worms in different parts of the body. The resulting illness is very painful and recovery takes several months).

The inhabitants suffer a great deal from lack of water, in spite of the highlands and the possibilities of natural reservoirs. However, the existence of wells in some settlements (Lāft is said to have some 366 wells) proves that the situation could be remedied by digging wells to safeguard against dangerous infections and to meet the necessary needs of the populace.

Similarly, planting trees has met with many difficulties, so that the only vegetation consists of date palms and tamarisk trees, found in most of the villages. Banyan trees are also found in more arid sections of the island.

The banyan is a tall, beautiful tree with leaves like those of an orange tree, the fruit of which is red and small. The natives relish the fruit. (See detailed discussion of the tree has been given in a previous chapter).

Even though the climate is hot, it is better and less humid than the climate of Bandar ' Abbas.

The direction of the wind is north and south in winter, and all four

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directions in other seasons.

The ebb and tide takes place every six hours, each day fifteen minutes later than the previous day. Furthermore, during the first and middle periods of the westerly moons the flow of tide increases.

There is also danger from earthquakes on the island, as evident from the old ruins and historical documents.

#### Mines

South of the island is located a salt mine (in the two highest mountains of the island) with excellent white salt. The product is a good source of revenue as an export commodity to the neighboring countries.

According to previous treaties, the Japanese exported salt from the island, until the invasion of China when they began to take advantage of the latter's salt deposits.

Red dirt and lead also exist in the island. However, as yet, there has not been any profits from either.

The most important of the natural resources is petroleum. The British have made numerous investigations and excavations around Kārgēh (in the vicinity of Hengām Island), and several wells were dug (one, 3000 meters deep), but they are now closed. At the present, the areas of Tula and Laft are under investigation. If petroleum were discovered in this section, it will greatly enhance the economic and strategic value of the island and the gulf.

#### Exports and Imports

At the present there are no exports on the island. However, when the oil fields, salt mine and red soil deposits and lead are in operation and fishery establishments are set up, the exports will find important outlets.

Most of the food of the populace, including their animals, consists of fish.

Practically every need of the inhabitants, even dates, will have to be imported. At present, the yearly revenue of customs (in excess of 200,000 Rials) exceeds the imports of the island.

#### Political and Administrative Conditions

The island consists of 30 settlements, listed in a special table (See see pages 46 and 47) with their characteristics. Most of the settlements do not possess any importance at all. The only villages of significance are Qeshm, Kargahān, Lāft, etc.

The population is very near 22,400 and their chief occupations consist of fishing, and boat-taxing. There are 500 large and small boats on the island, some with a capacity of several tons.

Their religion is Islam and their language Persian.

The administration is under a municipality with a mayor, post and telegraph office, and a school, consisting of four grades, in the village of Qeshm.

The customs officials operate in two sections of the island (Qeshm, Sūsā, Dīrestān, Salakh, Dorgahān, Lāft, etc.). In this settlement there are also civil patrols (Amniyeh), wherever custom officials are in operation. Yet, they are not able to cope with all the contraband movements that may take place in various easily accessible shores. They are only able to guard against large illegal shipments.

Most of the population is afflicted with eye ailments, skin diseases, malaria, and mostly suffer from guinea-worms. Cholera and other virulent diseases are contacted from Arabian immigrants. In the years 1326 (Hijri) and 1342 (See 1342) cholera and plague killed a large number of the populace.

Qeshm, with a population of 2000, is one of the largest settlements of the island. An old Portuguese castle still remains in this village. This stronghold is smaller than the castle of Hormos, but has numerous towers. Approximately 15 barrels of old cannons have been sighted in this vicinity. There is evidence of another wall, ten meters away from the present wall.

Besides this old castle there is remains of another very old stronghold in the northern cape of this village (a place called Pūltūn). This consists of a small castle and a pond constructed from stones. It is believed that this edifice was used for the defense of the northern cape of the city.

There are many date groves in Qeshm.

Most of the buildings have wind funnels to admit air into the interior of the houses.

All the inhabitants speak the Persian language.

Most of the population is engaged in boat building but the lumber must be imported from India or Africa. This lumber is so sturdy that the Portuguese constructions still retain their utility.

There are many carpenters on the island who even accept orders from the inhabitants of Bandar ' Abbās.

The produce of this village includes wheat, barley and tobacco. Its climate is better there and preferable to that of Bandar ' Abbās. Their water supply, however, is very scant, and is limited to one well, a remnant of the Portuguese.

#### Communication Line

There are no roads on the island at present. However, the oil company has built some cart trails to take care of the necessary traffic.

Yet, there is evidence of old roads which have disappeared because of disuse. All the villages are inter-linked by means of animal roads and trails only. All of these trails meet in Láft which is located in the north and approximate center of the island. These roads are as follows:

1. The coastal road of Qeshm, Dorgahán, Láft, Júl, Gūrān, Chāhū, Dowlū, Kobār-e-Seyāh, Darreh Kūh, Gūrī, Bāsa'idū.
2. The coastal road of Qeshm, Sūsā, Dīrestān, Šalakh, (Sic. Šalah) Kārgoh, Kāfi, Dastehkūh, Bāsa'id.
3. The interior road of Láft, Kovarzin, Tahbū, Dīrestān.
4. The interior road of Zīmī to Dīrestān which intersects other north and south coastal roads.
5. The interior road of Dorgahán to Sūsā.

The following roads may be considered for light mechanized traffic:

1. Šalah, Dīrestān, Qeshm
2. Šalah, Láft
3. Dorgahán, Láft

In this list must also be included the boats and ships that were mentioned previously.

There is a telephone and telegraph line between Qeshm and Bandar 'Abbas. Telephone communication also exists between Hengan and Qeshm. The British subterranean cable also passes near the island. However, the island does not benefit from it at present.

#### Military Significance of Qeshm Island

Because of its proximity to Bāb-e-Hormos and the Iran Mainland, the island has a very strategic location. The defense of the southern shores of Iran (108 Kilometers away) depends mainly upon effective utilization of this island. Several possible means of attack on the island are discussed

below:

1. In order to have an effective control over Bab-e-Hormoz, it is necessary to hold and protect the island of Qeshm.
2. Because of its proximity to the shores of the mainland, particularly at 108 Kilometers distance (the shores of Howr-Khamir), the island is a stepping stone to Iran shores, and its protection is of utmost importance.
3. Access to this island will greatly facilitate infiltration into the Bandar'Abbās - Kerman Road, or the encirclement of this area via the route between Lār and Ganū.

It is therefore necessary to defend and protect this important base against all intruders. The mountains surrounding the island can provide the defenders with ideal positions overlooking an area of 30 Kilometer radius.

The coastal areas of the island are easily accessible, especially the southern sections at Sūsa, Shib-e-Derās, Dīrestān and Goldān.

Since the southern shores of the gulf are 50 to 60 Kilometers away from the sensitive positions mentioned above, surprise attacks can be very easy and simple.

Conclusion. Together with the group of islands in the entrance of the gulf, the island of Qeshm occupies a very strategic position, necessitating adequate protection and defense of the island. The level plains in the interior of the island can provide excellent sea plane bases.

The straight of Clarence is an excellent location for submarines, and, even Army transport base, which will provide for successful operations in Bab-e-Hormoz whenever occasion may arise.

The island of Qeshm, together with the surrounding islands, is like a

spear, threatening the entrance of the gulf and the Oman Sea. Such a position can be rendered very useful in controlling the traffic in the gulf. It is therefore necessary that:

1. Land, sea and air bases be established on the island.
2. Adequate strongholds and supply dumps be provided for troops, especially in Qeshm and Bāsa'idū villages.
3. The present roads be rendered useful for efficient traffic and other roads be constructed.
4. To improve the economic conditions of the island by operating the mines, and improving the health, education, commerce and agriculture of the island, and thus prevent inhabitants from migration into other sections, and attract other immigrants to the island.
5. Sufficient troops, planes and ships be stationed on the island during peace time so that the men may become well seasoned and accustomed to the climatic conditions.
6. Efficient controlling system be set up to facilitate entrance and centralization of ships in the waters of Clarence.

Finally, with such undertakings, it is hoped to protect the supremacy of the island and, as far as possible to provide adequate defense and protection facilities for other sections of the Persian Gulf as well as the entrances into the country.

Map of the Island of Qeshm and its comparative location.

## CHAPTER VII

### The Island of Hengām

Sequence of the study of Hengām Island is as follows:

1. Introduction
2. Natural Features

Table #1

## CHARACTERISTICS OF COASTAL AREAS SUITABLE FOR LANDING

	Geshm	Sūsā	Dīrestān	Kārgēh	Bāsa' Idū
Anchorage Possibilities	O.K.	O.K.	O.K.	During Calm Waters	O.K.
Depth of Water	5 meters	5 meters	4 meters	3½ meters	13 meters
Anchorage Distance From The Shore	300 meters	200 meters	500 meters	500 meters	Close to shore
Conditions of The Bottom	Favorable	Favorable	Favorable	Favorable	Favorable
Protection Against Wind	Good for Anchorage	Construction of jetty is impossible	Jetties are difficult to build	Impossible	Impossible
Condition of the Shore	Clay & Rock	Sand	Sand & Rock	Sand & Rock	Sand & Rock



Table #2

## SETTLEMENTS IN THE SOUTHERN SHORES, IN THE VICINITY OF THE COAST BETWEEN QESHM AND BASA'IDU

Name of the Settlement	Distance From Qeshm	Population	Resources	Administration	Remarks
Qeshm		2200	Some wheat, barley & animals, (insufficient for the native consumption)	Township; with a mayor, school, customs and civil patrol	Very few trees (dates) Portuguese remains with cannons of the period still exist
Ramshā	5½ Kilometers	Several families	Benefits derived from fishing		Has comparatively large date groves
Yak Korzeh	28				
Sūsā	40	1500	Barley & wheat to the extent of native needs only. Approximately 400 sheep and camel; very few donkeys	Customs & civil patrol	
Hasan	44	Several families			
Shib-E-Derās	55	150			
Dīrestān	54	200	Benefits derived from fishing	Customs and civil patrol	Has a good date grove
Kovarsin	58	30 Families	Fishing and a little wheat		
Toneyow	64	40	Fishing, some wheat & barley.		Has a date grove

Naqqashah	68	30	Fishing, some wheat & barley	Customs and civil patrol	Many date groves
Salakh	79	500	Fishing, some wheat & barley		A large steel smoke stack is located near the oil well, at the coast.
Kārgah	105	25 Families	Fishing, some wheat & barley		Remains of an in-completed jetty
Hamakdān	119	28 Families	Salt		
Kānī	135	Several Families			
Būtmār					
Dastahkūh	170				
Eāsa' Idū	215	600	Fishing, some grains and animals	Customs, civil patrol, and naval patrol	Date groves, banyan trees; ruins of a stone jetty 4 meters wide and 50 meters long, where British battleships anchored during the wars. There are also ruins of the British fuel dumps and construction, together with their machinery.

Table #3

## SETTLEMENTS BETWEEN BASA'IDU AND QESHM, LOCATED IN THE NORTH SHORES OF THE ISLAND OF QESHM

Name of Settlement	Distance from Basa'idu	Population	Resources	Administration	Remarks
Khūrf	8 Kilometers	50 Families	Some produce, and animals	Customs and civil patrol for the exportation of salt	Date groves
Darrehkūh	16	Several families			Has an extensive date grove
Kanār-e-Soyāh	22	Several families			
Dolu	26	Several families			Small date grove
Chāhūy-e-'Olyā	28	Several families			
Chāhūy-e-Soflā	30	Several families	Some produce, and animals		Extensive date groves, and cargo vessels.
Gurā	42	30 families	Some produce, and animals		The "Marine Forest", in the Clarence Strait begins here, and extends to a width of 150 meters.
Jūl	62	30 families	Some produce, and animals		
Kovarsfn	72	30 families	Some produce and approximately 400 cows and camels for native use; 566 fresh and salt water wells.	Customs and civil patrol	Has date groves; is the junction of all the roads in the island remains of Nadeti period including a vast castle with big cannon and 5 small castles. It is the largest hamlet close to the mainland (approx. 2 kilometers). It is believed by the inhabitants that there used to be a connecting bridge between the

island and the marshland at this point. The settlement, in this particular section, is therefore called "Fol" (Bridge)

Allāh Malek	90	Several Families		
Pay Pesht	96	Several Families	A small amount of produce	
Zeynabī	100	Several Families	A small amount of produce	
BonKūh	106	Several Families	A small amount of produce	Small date groves
Kūrī	110	30 Families		Small date groves
Dorkahān	114	300 Families	A small amount of produce and few animals	Small date groves
Fūlā	134	30 Families	A small amount of produce and few animals	Small date groves
Qashm	150	See Table #2		

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3. Economic Features
4. Political and administrative features
5. Military features
6. Conclusion

#### Introduction

Like the rest of the islands in the Persian Gulf, Hengām has been under the domination and influence of various nations at different times. It was, at one time under the Dutch and later under the control of the Portuguese who infiltrated into other islands and parts of the gulf. The latter constructed a castle in this island in order to protect their commercial interests by means of blocking the entrance to Bab-e-Hormoz. The castle was well fortified by cannons, the remains of which are excellent historical evidence of this era.

The Portuguese downfall was brought about after 100 years of domination, when they were driven out of the gulf during the reign of Shah'Abbas the Great, by the help of the British Navy. Thus came a complete deliverance of the islands and the gulf ports from the hands of the Portuguese.

Hence the British succeeded the Portuguese, and began to strengthen and fortify their positions in the sea.

Because of its strategic position, a sea base was established, and approximately 33 buildings were constructed in the northeast section of the island. A jetty (90 meters long and 3 meters wide) was also constructed. These edifices, built to strengthen the naval force, also included a post office, a wireless with several transformers and aerials, making contact with other points on the gulf.

This condition lasted until the year 1934 when the Iran Navy and the power of the Imperial government increased. The British, then, had no

choice but to leave the island; and they established their sea base at the Cape of Ghanan (Ra'sal-Ghanan) and the Gulf of Khushab. (The latter base has similar characteristics as this island, besides a few additional advantages). This island was also released from the British control, later, and it was placed under the protection of the Imperial Navy.

At present there is a naval observation post, built by the Iran government, and a jetty constructed by the British.

[A scene of the New Hengam, taken from the straight between Qeshm and Hengam.] - Fig

The equipment and buildings left by the British include 33 buildings, a jetty and a complete weather station. Without regular repairs and upkeep, the buildings and the jetty will eventually become a mass of ruins.

#### Physical Features

The island of Hengam is located southeast of Qeshm, and south of Shib Deras. The shortest distance from Shib Deras is 3 Kilometers, which forms a strait providing excellent shelter from the sea winds (thanks to the mountains of Qeshm on one side and the highlands of Hengam on the other. The British ships had also selected this section for their anchorage. The island is 98 Kilometers long and 3 to 6 Kilometers wide, with an area of 50 sq. Kilometers and a perimeter of 25 Kilometers.

Hengam is shaped like an incomplete cone, extending northeast to southwest, with its small base toward ShibDeras, widening as it extends southward.

The shores of Hengam are serrated and approach the sea with gentle inclinations. The water, near the shore, is deep enough for easy navigation of the boats, especially in the northeastern shores in the vicinity of Hengam-e-Now (Sic New Hengam), where the water is deep enough (10 to 15

meters for the anchorage of ships near the jetty.

There are numerous low hills of limestone composition on the island. The highest peak is that of Tappeh-e-Matirā (103 meters high).

The climate is warm and humid. The water supply is limited to the reservoirs where the rainwater is preserved for the native consumption. Because of the water conditions, guinea-worm illness prevails in this island also.

The comparative distances of Hengām are: 60 Kilometers from Lārk, 55 Kilometers from Qeshm, 3 Kilometers from Shīb Derās, 50 Kilometers from Jasir al-Ghanam and 58 Kilometers from Cape Sheykh Mas'ūd (Shaykh Mas'ūd).

There are six settlements in the island, two of which are more significant than the rest. These two are Hengām-e-Now and Hengām-e-Kohneh, while the remaining lesser settlements are Mokhābī, Arasī-e-Zey, Būsheh and Qil.

With the exception of Hengām-e-Now, all the villages have numerous trees (dates are more prevalent). There are, in Hengām-e-Kohneh, citrus trees, pomegranates and figs, besides dates.

#### Economic Features

Farming in the island is insufficient, to alleviate the needs of the inhabitants. A certain amount of produce must be imported. Even dates are not quite sufficient, and have to be imported. Fish is more abundant, and constitutes the chief diet of men as well as the animals.

Mines. Salt and lead mines are found on the island, but they have not yet been excavated.

The major occupation of the populace consists of fishing and pearl diving.

In the past the trade relationship of the island was carried on between the Omans and other adjacent harbors. Lately, however, the entire trade of the inhabitants is with the Iranian harbors especially Bandar 'Abbās.

There is one two-ton ship on the island which belongs to one of the merchants.

Buildings of Hengām Island (the Island of Qeshm is on the horizon)

#### Political and Administrative Features

Administration of Hengām is under the township of Qeshm. The headman of the island is appointed by the mayor of Qeshm. Hengām-e-Kohneh is the seat of the island.

There are in Hengām-e-Kohneh, municipal offices, custom-house, post and telegraph, health office and quarantine station, and a professional school with 25 students.

Telephone communication between Qeshm and this island is also used to relay telegraphic messages to other places.

There is a civil patrol station in Hengām-e-Kohneh.

Animal trails in the interior of the island are, like the settlements along the shoreline.

Population. Population of the island was, at one time, between 800 and 1000. However, because of constant immigration the present population does not exceed 300, half of which live in Hengām-e-Now and Hengām-e-Kohneh, and the rest are scattered to other villages.

Military Features. Although the island does not possess any economic significance, its strategic importance, because of its natural features is evident for the following reasons:



1. Since this island occupies 11 Kilometers of the waters of the gulf, and its proximity to Ras al-Kusandam and Bab-e-Hormoz decreases the entrance to the gulf by 11 Kilometers, it will aid tremendously in the effective blockade of Bab-e-Hormoz. As it is popularly known, the Island of Hengam is the key to Bab-e-Hormoz.

2. As a result of the formation of a strait between Hengam and the island of Qeshm, a favorable Marine base is also formed.

3. This island, besides the fact that it protects the adjacent shores, it can also create a great deal of inconvenience to travellers.

4. The island is ideally located with respect to the supply ships that operate in the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman are very similar.

5. The importance that "curious travellers" (fifth columnists) give the island (from the point of view of the occupation of Bab-e-Hormoz), renders more importance to the defense value of this island.

With these in mind, the following facts, regarding the defense value of the island, are worthy of notice:

1. The island is a convenient base for strategic operations. Whoever has control over this island can also gain complete freedom of action in Bab-e-Hormoz.

2. Defense of this island is similar to the general strategy required for the protection of other islands. It is like a stepping stone or a forward echelon for the Island of Qeshm. Its protection and defense, therefore, is of utmost importance. Access to Hengam will also mean eventual access to Qeshm, and, as a result, to the shores of the gulf.

3. Because of its size, it can easily be defended by a small force.

With the above tactical facts in mind, the defense of the island may be considered from two points of view:

1. Long range defense
2. Short range defense

Long range defense consists of preventing "curious travellers" and enemy ships from entering the gulf. This action is possible by means of battleships, airplanes, and mining the waters. Thorough discussion of the defense of this island is not in our field.

Short range defense consists of defending the island proper against approaching forces and the landing of troops. The entire shoreline is easily accessible by landing craft. Therefore dangers from landing should be expected from all sections of the island.

Furthermore it is necessary to defend:

1. Hengām-e-Now, because of the ease with which ships can approach the island; and,
2. Hengām-e-Kohnsh, Mokhābi, and KhonīKey because of their location around the entrance of the island and the strait, and the ease with which encirclement of Hengām and access to the strait and, as a result, access to Jeshm, is possible.

#### Conclusion

As a result of the study of the physical and military features of the island, we conclude that the island possesses a very strategic location at Bāb-e-Hormos, and it is considered a very important place in this strait, regarding the defense of the shores of Iran and Arabia. It is a very important base for naval operations at Bāb-e-Hormos, and can control operations in both seas. Generally, it can be considered the Key to Bāb-e-Hormos. A very convenient base for submarines, and an excellent forward

echelon for naval operations and the defense of the country.

## CHAPTER VIII

### Hormoz

#### Introduction

The Island of Hormoz has a historic fame. Strabon writes, "The Island of Hormoz (ancient Owgrobis) is located in the south in the middle of the sea, 2000 Estads from Kermānyā. The tomb of Ertiras (shaped like a large mound) is located in this island. Sections of barren land, in the center of the island, have become green. Ertiras was the King of this country, and the sea was named after him".

The improvement and progress of the island began in the XIIIth Century. The King of Hormoz conquered Kish and Bahreyn (Bahrain), and the island became a trade market of the gulf for two centuries.

After the Arab conquest, a group of Zoroastrians stayed on the island for 15 years, and, later, they migrated to India. Marcopolo visited the island twice during the latter part of the XIIIth Century. The town of Hormoz, built toward the end of this century, was the most reknowned city of the period, for two centuries. Most of the explorers have written detailed descriptions of this city. Adrik (sp?) refers to the city (in his memoirs), "Hormoz is a city in the center of the sea. It is a reknowned city, the trade expansion of which has become a parable everywhere".

Another explorer also writes, "Hormoz is a harbor, in the middle of the sea, which has no equal throughout the world. Merchants travel between here and all countries of the world in order to exchange their wares. All kinds of merchandise are easily obtainable here."

During the attack of the Portuguese the island had an army of 30,000 men.

Attention of Abukurk (Portuguese) to this island was mostly because of its economic and military significance. As a result of successive battles he was finally able to attain his ideal by conquering the island and controlling its economic activities.

After the conquest of the island, a section by the name of Varūnā was dedicated to the Portuguese for building a castle (1507 AD). After the completion of the castle in 1550, it was besieged by a Turkish general (Pirbeg) for a period of one month. This act, however, was unsuccessful and the general diverted his attention to Qeshm. In 1687, Shāh'Abbās decided to oust the Portuguese, and, on January 29, Emām'Goli Khan prepared to attack the island with the aid of the English Navy. The Portuguese castle was besieged on February 9, and after a period of continued resistance, the Portuguese surrendered to the British on April 23 of the same year.

After the defeat of the Portuguese the city was left in complete ruins. The damage was so great that nothing remains of the old city except a small village with a population of 1200 to 1300 who are employed in the mines of "red dirt" (Iron Oxide).

**Physical Features.** The historic island of Hormos which is also one of the most profitable islands of Iran, is located southeast of Bandar'Abbās, and northeast of Qeshm. The island is  $5\frac{1}{2}$  Kilometers from the shores of Iran, 22 Kilometers from Bandar'Abbās, 18 Kilometers from Qeshm and 18 Kilometers from Lārġ. All approaches to the island reveal mountains with summits characterized by their beautiful colors of red, violet and white.

The northern section of the island is prolonged, and it is shaped somewhat like an oval with a circumference of 6000 meters. Its long axis is  $7\frac{1}{2}$  Kilometers and the short axis is  $5\frac{1}{2}$  Kilometers.

The mountains are mostly of rock composition, and reach an altitude of 430 meters.

The plains of the shores in the north and west of the island are several kilometers wide. There is no drinking water on the island. The entire water supply is imported from Qaba or the neighboring shores.

Temperature rises up to 50°C in summer, and 1°C below zero in winter.

The climate is milder than that of Bandar'Abba and the wind shifts according to the seasonal winds of the gulf. It rains only in winter, and if proper reservoirs are constructed there may be adequate water supply during the year.

The Island of Hormuz, taken from 10 kilometers out in the sea

56-A

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The Inhabitants

The island is scantily populated; however, because of the famous Iron Oxide mines (red soil) approximately 1200 employees are settled there. Besides this number, there are government employees and various workers bringing up the total population to 1500. The entire population of the island depends upon the mine for livelihood. Were the mines closed, no one would remain on the island.

Governmental offices include a customs house, post office, municipality, office of the mines, and a school with 70 pupils. During the heat of summer the entire group of workers migrate to Minab and the shores of the mainland; the only residents of the island, at this time consists of a group of 30 to 40 workers who stay behind in order to guard the mines and the belongings of their fellow workers.

The entire produce and needs of the island is imported.

All the buildings belong to the bureau of mines of the government. The employees live in temporary brick buildings.

Remains of the old city of Hormos is in the north of the island, at the vicinity of the Portuguese castle. A minaret which gives evidence of a mosque, still remains in the city.

#### Coastal Areas

The shores of the island which are fortunately located in the east and south (toward the Sea of Oman), are mountainous, with steep inclinations extending into the sea, under the water. This condition creates dangers with which the sea crafts have to cope during heavy winds and storms. Strong east winds often drive and crush the boats against boulders.

2 (Sic) - The level area: (North and Western sections).

The shore submerges under the sea with a very gentle inclination. The depth, one kilometer from the shore, is 5 to 13 meters. It may be said, therefore, that ships of 10,000 tons capacity can approach within kilometer of the shore; and small barges can unload passengers on the shores in this section.

This level section is the same area where the old city of Hormos and the Portuguese castle, was once located. Its altitude is  $1\frac{1}{2}$  Kilometers.

The harbor. There is no harbor construction in this island. Only a few sections have been prepared for the landing of barges by means of dirt fillings. One ton barges can thus anchor directly in the island proper. Dirt banks have been prepared as substitutes for jetties where boats are loaded with their cargo of dirt.

There are two harbors on the island; one is called Bandar'Abbās which has been established as a port of Bandar'Abbas on the mainland; and the other is Bandar-e-Mināb established as a port of Mināb of the mainland. There is also a place near the mine where smaller boats ordinarily dock.

Besides the above three points there are other sections in the island where small craft can land during the calm sea. In the mountainous section, however, anchoring is limited to two or three localities where landing is possible only during calm days.

Underwater boulders in the northwest and southeast (2 to 3 meters below the surface), necessitate utmost caution in navigation. Persons unfamiliar with these conditions are liable to crash their boats against the stones. Native navigators can easily maneuver around these boulders.

There are abundant fish in the waters near the shore.

A scene of the Portuguese Castle on the Coast of Hormos

58-A



### History of the Portuguese Castle

The ancient city of Hormoz was built during the reign of Ardashir. The town was densely populated.

Albuquerque a well known Portuguese admiral after gaining control over the shores of India, occupied the Island of Hormoz in order to divert the commerce of Iran from the southern ports toward India and to facilitate the navigation of Portuguese merchant ships in these waters. He built a vast castle, in the vicinity of the ancient city, where its remains still stand with the same grandeur which portrays the skill of the builders.

Since the sail boats of the period navigated close to the shores, the construction of the castle was engineered in such a fashion that traffic of the vessels sailing between Hormoz and the shore could be under constant observation.

The castle occupies an area of 130 by 130 meters with four towers, each 12 meters above the ground, and with walls  $3\frac{1}{2}$  meters thick.

The interior of the stronghold had the capacity to house 3000 troops, and it was equipped with housing facilities to provide comfortable living for Europeans in this equatorial region even during summers.

Since water is one of the most important necessities of life in the southern islands, the builders of the castle had made adequate provisions for a constant supply of this precious element. Indeed, the reservoirs were so well constructed that they not only provided cool, wholesome water throughout the year, they were even bomb proof. Rainwater drains into these reservoirs by means of numerous pipes from the roofs of the buildings without any waste whatsoever.

The roofs were constructed in such a fashion that during rainfall regardless of duration, the drainage was sufficient to provide the inhabitants of the castle with daily rations. This drainage was conducted, from the area outside the walls, by means of pipes, into the castle. In this manner the water was freed from dirt and foreign particles before entering the castle.

Each reservoir has two doors in order to facilitate its use. One door is the exit while the other is the entrance. A wide border surrounds the reservoir in the interior so that its entire area can be utilized. Thus, fifty men can draw water at the same time, using only one entrance and one exit.

It is evident from the massive stone columns that the Portuguese had utilized the services of their most capable engineers and the foremost of the Iranian lapidaries, who have left a remarkable sample of the Portuguese art a thousand years old, in Asia.

[The scene of a portion of the Portuguese castle, taken from the interior of Hormoz Island.] ← Fig.

There are also numerous storage rooms in the castle, each erected with special attention, and a construction suitable for the particular item to be stored.

Utmost caution and engineering skill have been used in providing places for cannons. The cannons were transported to various firing positions in the towers, over gentle inclines.

The castle which was constructed prior to the cannons with movable mounts, is one of the best edifices of the period. There are no unspirited angles around the castle, and the feet of the towers that were provided with caponiers were constantly under the enemy fire. Use of cannons as caponiers, in this castle were very advantageous, and all positions were constructed according to complete adherence to military tactical requirements.

Besides its location on the shore, the castle had a commanding view toward the mountains, and in order that the guards of the towers might not be caught unprepared from the mountain side, single towers were erected at various places which provided lookout positions outside the castles. A lone tower has been erected northeast of the castle in order to check the movements in the east of the island.

There are four entrances into the castle: two toward the sea and two toward the island. These entrances facilitate complete defense of the castle externally and internally, so that surprise attacks are impossible. Furthermore, because of its location in unspirited angle, due to numerous curves and turns, and many strong doors, entrance inside the castle is very difficult even though the inhabitants may not show any resistance.

The entrance toward the sea is such that it facilitates anchorage of barges close to the door. Both entrances are located in the interior of two towers which provide excellent shelter for barges. In order to prevent the descending waters from washing away the shores, a

dike had been constructed in the sea about 10 meters from the castle. The dike is now in ruins, and, has resulted in the damage of the castle.

Traffic and communication in the interior of the castle was effected by means of corridors and underground shelters which afforded complete protection even during bombardments.

The construction of the castle is generally from carved stones transported from the bordering mountains. Lime for the construction has been prepared from the fins of fish instead of limestone.

Even though today the castle is in ruins, nevertheless comfortable living is possible in the interior, where there is a temperature difference of approximately 15 to 20 degrees cooler than the outside.

Even the minor details of military significance have not been overlooked in this construction, which can be considered one of the best representations of the castles of the day. It took 30 years to complete the edifice. It afforded complete shelter for the Portuguese for 115 years, during which they ruled the shores of the Persian Gulf, permitting no interference from any other nation.

Two points are evident from the construction of this edifice:

1. To protect the interests of their country, 1000 Kilometers away, the Portuguese endured many hardships.
2. The significance of trade on the Iranian shores which had attracted European merchants to these areas where they underwent many hardships.

Later on, the Dutch and the British gradually infiltrated into the shores.

During the reign of Shah'Abbas the Great, Haman Qoli Khan who was a

member of one of the tribes of Fars, was commissioned to force the Portuguese out of the castle. Esmā Qolī Khān, with the help of the British Navy, was successful in this mission, and destroyed the city and the castle, according to the orders of the Shāh, thus rendering it unlivable. Instead, a commercial harbor was built in Kāmān.

Esmā Qolī Khān encountered many hardships in conquering the island. Since attack from the sea was very difficult, he appointed the English navy to maneuver around the castle from the north, thus attracting the attention of the Portuguese in the castle. On the other hand he led the Iranian navy from the north, in the shadow of the darkness, and landed in the mountainous areas he was well familiar with. The Portuguese had not expected this sudden movement and were completely attracted by the English Navy.

When, in the morning, the Portuguese Commander became aware of the landing of the Iranian troops, he ordered approximately 500 of his men to oust the Iranians from the island. A severe, bloody battle took place at the foot of the mountains. Finally, because of the suitable battlegrounds and the courageous undertakings of the Iranian Infantry, the Portuguese were massacred, and those that remained, retreated toward the castle where they remained in a state of siege for a long time. The Portuguese showed a great amount of resistance against the Iranians. But at last, because of the increasing amount of pressure by the latter and the lack of adequate aid, they surrendered under certain conditions (with the British as the arbitrators), and returned to Portugal.

Esmā Qolī Khān's bravery and knowledge as well as his ability in commanding his men, is a proverb, today, in the harbors.

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Excavations at the foot of the mountains reveals bodies of Iranian and Portuguese soldiers in various positions. Bodies of Portuguese officers are buried in front of the church outside the castle, each tomb bearing a stone with Portuguese signs and inscriptions.

#### The Mine

The iron oxide mine, known as Khak-e-Garnak (Sic, i.e. red dirt) has been in use for many centuries. Even Araks benefited from the soil which is used as dye in painting lumber, steelworks, ships, cloth, etc. Abundance, ease of mining and transportation have given the mine extreme importance in the world markets. Its best feature is its purity (65 to 80%)

The procedure of excavation is extremely easy. Iron oxide is procurable at depths of 10 to 12 meters. After removing the top layer, the mineral is sifted and ground, and exported. Each ton of mineral requires three days of labor, at a cost of 18 Rials. The market price of the ore is 2 Pound sterlings and 15 Shillings, under special contracts, and as high as 13 otherwise.

The present yearly export is 6000 tons, although higher rates of production can be possible. It has been forecasted that the mine can be productive for another 100 years in the present location. Other sections can also be operated under similar conditions.

One of the characteristics of the mine is the lack of need for special mechanical tools. By means of ordinary tools such as shovels and pick axes, the necessary supply can be prepared. Location of the mine is very simple. The brilliant color of the soil and the waters nearby are positive evidences of the presence of the mineral.

There is no limit to the amount of production of iron oxide ore,

except for the labor supply which is very scarce in the heat of summer, when the mine is closed. If living conditions are improved, summer vacation will be minimized.

The Iron Oxide mines are the most profitable of the Iranian mines. Profits are large compared with labor and the extent of trouble. This factor alone has been the cause of the popularity of this island. In peace time it renders great services to the country, while in war, it undertakes the largest task of defending the shores of the mainland. This last point is a great honor for the island of Hormoz.

There are also salt mines in the island, yielding approximately 3000 tons a year - a very easy operation. At present, however, the Chinese mines are in great competition with it, and there are no buyers for the salt of Hormoz.

Military significance of the island. It is evident from the natural features of the island that, because of rocky shores, landing on the southern coast of the island is extremely difficult, while the north and eastern portion of the island are level plains which facilitate landing.

The ground in the north and eastern plains have gentle inclinations toward the sea. The depth of the water, one Kilometer from the shore is 5 to 13 meters. Ships of 10,000 tonnage can, therefore, anchor within one Kilometer of the island.

Furthermore there is no harbor or similar construction on the island.

Thanks to the dirt banks, two sections of the island can benefit from this jetty-like protrusion where barges can anchor directly close to dry land.

Besides the three sections of the island, approachable throughout the year, small barges can approach the shores during calm waters. In

and south of Bandar ' Abbās.

Larak is 12 Kilometers from Qeshm, 20 Kilometers from Hormos, 40 Kilometers from Bandar ' Abbās and 50 Kilometers from the 'Omman (Oman) coast. Ruins of a castle with remains of cannon barrels, relics of the Dutch and portuguese, are still seen on the island.

2. Natural Features. The island of Larak is in reality a mass of highlands emerged from beneath the waters. Its entire surface, therefore, is mountainous, and only in the north and northeast, a strip of level ground can be seen, with a gentle inclination. This strip, between the shore and the highlands, varries between 200 meters and 2 Kilometers depth. In the south, however, the mountains meet the sea.

The mountain is mostly rocky, with summits as follows (maximum altitude approximately 300 meters): Kūh-e-Shākhān, Kūh-e-Mirānī Kūh-e-Sātā Ān, Kūh-e-Bānī.

The latter mountain, located southeast of the island, has a level top (table land) where the remains of several buildings and a reservoir can still be seen. The island has several protrusions in the sea, which are, east to west:

Ashgoft, in the northeast; Ra's-e-Marānī, in the north; Barjū, in the northwest; Sanānī, in the west; and Sandām in the south.

[The entrance (gate) of the Portuguese Castle and the castle above it.] ← Fig.

The only point from where easy approach of the island is possible is at the Cape of Marāneh. Here at 900 meters of the shore, the water is 20 to 25 meters deep.

Ships cannot approach the southern shores because of the rock bottom. During southern storms and wind, ships can take refuge in the northern shores of the island, while, such a refuge is impossible during northern



the mountain regions, except in exceptional times, and during calm sea, landing is possible only in two or three places.

The northern shores of the island, protected from the northern and western winds, affords ample refuge for the ships.

#### Observation Points in the Island

Because of comparatively significant highlands, observation functions on the island are easily accomplished. If two observation posts are provided in the west and northeast, the entire section of the west, northwest and southeast of the island will be placed under their protection. It is believed that in only two towers, to be located in the southeast and northeast, would be sufficient for efficient patrol work.

The south and southeastern portions of the island where anchorage is difficult, do not require additional posts. More effort should be expended in the defense of the north and northwestern sections of the island.

### CHAPTER IX

#### The Island of Larak

1. Introduction
2. Natural Features
3. Economic Point of View
4. Military point of view (importance of defense of the island)
5. Conclusion

#### Introduction

The Island of Larak (approximately oval in shape) is 11 Kilometers long, 7½ Kilometers wide with an approximate circumference of 26 Kilometers. It is located east of Qeshm, southwest of Hormoz and south of Bandar'Abbās.

Larak is 12 Kilometers from Qashm, 20 Kilometers from Hormoz, 40 Kilometers from Bandar'Abbās and 50 Kilometers from the 'Oman (Oman) coast. Ruins of a castle with remains of cannon barrels, relics of the Dutch and Portuguese, are still seen on the island.

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The entrance (gate) of the Portuguese Castle and the castle above it.

The only point from where easy approach of the island is possible is at the Cape of Marāneh. Here at 900 meters of the shore, the water is 20 to 25 meters deep.

Ships cannot approach the southern shores because of the rock bottom. During southern storms and wind, ships can take refuge in the northern shores of the island, while, such a refuge is impossible during northern

winds and storms.

The island has no roads whatsoever. There are two very small settlements as follows:

1. Teyāb, between the protrusion Eshgoft and Marāni, with 30 families (approximately 100 people); they speak a peculiar dialect called Kamsāri.

2. Kūh-e-Bālā, in the mountains, with 30 families (approximately 100 people); their language is Arabic. The religion of both villages is of Sunnite sect.

3. Economic Point of view. Farming is impossible on this island. The inhabitants rely on fishing which is plentiful on the shores of the island. Fish is transported to various ports and sold to passenger ships, and in exchange, they import provisions and dates from Bandar'Abbās, Mināb and Qeshm Island.

There are only 300 date palms in the island at the village of Teyāb.

The water supply is secured from 4 partially mined reservoirs during five months of the year, and a minor percentage is available from 10 wells which have somewhat saline taste.

There are approximately 800 goats and sheep, that are milked for native consumption.

[Scene of one of the Portuguese Castles.] <sup>Fig.</sup> There are very few cows and donkeys; goats and rabbits are found in the mountains.

There are, on the island, 15 one-man boats, two salt mines used mostly for salting the fish.

There is also an iron oxide mine on the island. According to the natives, the product of the mine was being exported. At the present, however, there is no exportation of the ore which is not of a quality as

good as the iron oxide of Hormos.

4. Military point of view. Because of its advance position (at the entrance of the gulf) the island of Lark has a very special significance. With the help of Qeshm Island, the defense of Bandar'Abbās can be effectively executed.

In order to attack Bandar'Abbās and land on its shores, ships must pass between Hormos and the shore, which is  $5\frac{1}{2}$  Kilometers wide. This strait is rather narrow, and large ships cannot cross the channel very freely. They must sail between either of the two straits located between the islands of Lārak and Qeshm. In any case the island of Lārak is situated on the course, and the fire power of the shore together with effective mining of the strait will prevent the passage of ships. The fire power from the shores of Lārak will necessitate ships to sail 20 to 25 Kilometers away from Lārak and take the course between Lārak and the shores of Oman.

Defense of the island. Defense of the island has the same characteristics as the defense of the entrance of the gulf. Three points have to be considered:

1. Long range defense
2. Short range defense (Home defense)
3. Air defense

[Constructions at the iron oxide mines, taken from the top of the ruined castle of the Portuguese.] ← Fig.

1. Long range defense is possible by strengthening the fire power of the shores and the smaller marine units, or discussed previously.

2. Short range defense can be made effective by means of automatic weapons in canyons; centralization of fire power in sections where landing is easier; and establishment of secondary bases and ammunition dumps for emergency operations.

#### Observation

Because of the mountainous feature of the island, observation posts have to be established on the peaks of the mountains, instead of the shores and the lowlands.

There are three ideal locations for observation posts on the island: Kūh-e-Marānī, Kūh-e-Tabā An and Kūh-e-Nabī.

#### Establishment of Anchorages

It has been mentioned previously that the shores of Marānī are of first class importance; ships can anchor directly on the beach.

The eastern and the western beaches, on the other hand, are of second rate importance. Ships cannot anchor in these areas, but can easily land troops on the shores.

The rock bottom of the southern shores does not permit ships to approach the shores.

#### Conclusion

The following facts can be concluded from the discussion of the military significance of the island.

1. Defense of Bandar'Abbās will be more effectively carried on from Larak Island in conjunction with the islands of Hormoz, Qeshm and Hengām.
2. Unless the defense line is established in front of this island, the entire coast will be involved in active warfare.
3. Just as the island facilitates effective defense of the mainland, similarly, its occupation will mean a serious handicap to defensive operations.

## CHAPTER X

### Bahreyn (Bahrein, Bahrayn) Islands

Bahreyn consists of a group of islands, south of the Persian Gulf, in the Gulf of Shalwā (Sic. Salwā, Bahr as-Salwā (al Salwā)), which according to historical documents has always been a part of Iran. Economic conditions on the island are far superior to any other island in the Persian Gulf. A detailed discussion of the features of the island is given below.

#### Introduction

Details of Bahreyn and its contiguous islands

Climate

Ancient relics

Natural resources

Military significance

Bahrein Islands have always been considered one of the wealthiest commercial centers of the gulf. Its natural resources, particularly pearl, have attracted the inhabitants of the nearby areas, thus increasing the population of the island.

According to historical documents, these islands have been a part of the Iran government from ancient times. Tabari writes, "During the reign of the Ashkanids, none of the Arab tribes had the right of settlement in Mesopotamia, with the exception of the descendants of prisoners of war, brought by Nabuchodonosor, from Arabia, and the Arabs of Yaman and the wilderness of Mecca and Hijaz. These Arabs would frequently take refuge in Bahrein, after escaping from hard labor in their own lands.

"In the early part of the IIIrd Century (AD) during the reign of Ardashir Sasanid, there was a king in Bahrein by the name of Satirun who

yielded to Ardashir after a year's siege, and that later appointed his own deputy to the island."

Because of numerous evil doings of the Arabs in the early 4th century, Shapur II lead his troops into sections of Arabia, and particularly Bahrain, putting down the rebellion. In the year 8 of Hijrat, the inhabitants of this island accepted the Moslem religion. During the time of Califates they became unruly again, until one of 'Abd al-Malik-i-Mirwan-al-Hijaj's generals defeated the insurgents and put down the rebellion.

Numerous persons claimed prophetic offices and engaged in many battles with the caliphs. One of the insurgents, called Abusa'id defeated the army of the caliph (year 388), captured the latter's general with a number of his men and killed them all in Bahrain.

From this time on, the dynasty of Qormateyan took possession of the Bahrain area, and even attacked some sections of the Arabian shores. One of the leaders of Qormateyan, called 'Abd Allah had the idea of attacking Mecca, which was later materialized in the year 317, and his followers secured possession of the city.

After the rise to power of the dynasty of Al-e-Bovayyeh, the followers of Qormateyan having lost faith in their leader, Suluk'Ali Ibn-i-Ahmad, cooperated with the former, and Mo'az ad Dowleh (Mu'az and Dawlah) attacked the island and annexed it to the Kingdom (375H).

During the reign of Saljuqeyan dynasty, the governor of the island was under the command of these kings. Helalan also attacked the island in the early XIIIth century. A hundred years later, the onslaught was renewed by Tamerlane. Thus the island was under the Persian domination until the infiltration of the Portuguese.

The Portuguese ruled the island for 40 years (and even built a castle there), until ousted by Shah (Abbas the Great when the Iranian power



was again restored. Toward the end of the Safavid dynasty, the Iranian control over the island or the shores, became languid once more, thus attracting the attention of Nāder Shāh Afshār. After the death of Karīm Khān Zand, conditions in Iran became unsettled and cloudy again. Disorder broke out all along the shores, and Shaykh Ahmad (Shaykh Ahmad) of the 'Atabi tribe took possession of Bahrein. From that time on outside interference and confusion started on the island, continuing even today.

These islands, according to the above historical proofs have always been a part of Iran, like the rest of the islands of the gulf (Sic). Temporary infiltration of foreigners does not disprove the claims of Iran; and the Iranians settled in this island are impatiently looking forward to the day when the flag of their beloved country will fly on the coasts of the island.

#### Discussion of Bahrein and its Contiguous Islands

Bahrein includes many small islands and underwater grounds for pearl fishing, all located at the mouth of Gulf of Shalva (Sic. Salwa). The island proper, called Bahrein, is the largest of the group of islands (43 x 96 Kilometers). It is located 20 miles from the peninsula of Qatar, and 12 miles from Qatif. The northern section of the island is connected to the underwater areas, known as Yarem (Yarim). Khurfiat is located 8 miles northwest of the island and the island of Muharraq is located 8½ miles northwest of Bahrein.

Distance between the extreme end of the southern coast (Ra's al-Barr) and the end of the Gulf of Shalva (Sic. Salwa), where the hamlet of Shalva (Sic. Salwa) is located, is 65 miles.

The highest point on the island is 142 meters above the sea level and the lowest point is 1075 meters (315).

The distance between the anchorage of Bahrein and Bushehr is 361 Kilometers.

The island is located in a north and south direction, with sandy grounds and rugged mountains in certain sections. Jabal Dawkhan, for instance is 124 meters high. The most important town of the island is Man'amah which is also the capital and the municipality of the Sheykh of Bahrein. This town, also called Bahrein, has a shore line, three miles long and a population of 40,000. Two roads connect the city to Shuriyah (12 miles) and Budwiyā (Sic. Būdayyā) (18 miles).

Across Man'amah, on the other side of the strait of the island, is located Muharraq (population 20,000) which is the capital of the island by the same name. This island is 4 miles long and one-half mile wide.

Another island in the group is called Sifra (3 miles by one mile), and another is known as Umm Nāsan, located west of Bahrein. Rest of the islands are unimportant.

The above mentioned islands are known by other names among Arabs. Bahreyn, for instance is called AlḤasā and Awnāl, and was also called Tilus many centuries ago.

Besides the cities just named, there are approximately 100 large and small villages in these islands. The overall area of the island is approximately 320 square Kilometers.

Climate. The climate of the island is very humid and unwholesome.

One of the advantages of the island is the submarine springs which are tapped and piped to the surface by modern means. Consequently, the

water of the island is very wholesome. According to investigations, this water originates in Central Arabia, coming to the surface after 150 miles travel under the ground.

#### Ancient Relics and Discoveries

There are numerous ruins in the desert located on the northern section of the island. Excavations by Dorand, Bent, Daridon and Maki, have resulted in the discovery of earthen jars that are relics of ancient periods. However, there are no written documents, among these finds, to throw light upon the art and science of those periods. Scientists believe that these relics, as it was guessed previously, are not remains of Phenicians. They belong to previous periods.

#### Natural Resources.

The islands have very fertile soil, capable of raising many sheep and cows. Dates, grapes and figs are plentiful. With some improvement in the water supply, the island can be very productive.

White donkeys of the island are very famous.

The most important trade of the island consists of the construction and sale of special sail boats; and the largest income besides oil, is derived from pearl fishing. These pearls are smooth and very brilliant. Oysters are found at depths of 15 to 16 meters along the shores (100 Kilometers long). These pearls, however, are not as white as those of Silan and Japan, but they are harder and preferable. Each year, 20,000 divers and other men with 1000 boats engage in pearl fishing, which yields 1,500,000 per year.

The approximate population of the island is 100,000, consisting mostly of Iranians, some Arabs and some negroes.

Another important source of wealth of these islands is oil which began yielding since 1934, when Americans started drilling operations. Last year the yield of the wells was close to 2 million tons.

There is even a refinery on the island. When the British evacuated Hengan, they transported all their refinery equipment to the island.

Discovery of oil has increased the economic significance of this island.

Military significance of Bahreyn

These islands, because of their long distance from Bab-e-Hormoz, do not play any direct role in the defense of the Iran shores. However, it could be considered a very suitable naval base, with adequately protected anchorages. Similar suitable bases can be prepared for airplanes and submarines that can easily operate in the gulf. Its military significance increases in direct proportion to the increase in economic activity.

Map of the Persian Gulf and the General Features of the Iranian Islands

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## CHAPTER XI

### A General Evaluation of the Islands of the Persian Gulf

In the previous chapters we have discussed individual characteristics of each island. Below a general evaluation will be given in the following order:

1. Economic significance of the islands
2. Living conditions of the inhabitants
3. Military significance of the island
4. Conclusion

### Economic Significance of the Islands

#### Agriculture

Statistics of the population figures show that approximately 26,000 Iranians live on these islands, which occupy a comparatively vast area in the sea. (Including Bahrein Islands, the population of the islands in the gulf is 125,000).

Even though the size of these islands is worthy of consideration they

do not have much economic significance. Lack of fresh water and infertility of soil, have retarded agricultural activities on the islands to such an extent that the inhabitants are forced to import most of their daily needs. The only capable island is Kiah which has more fertile soil than other islands.

#### Mines

Three varieties of mines have been distinguished in our discussion of the general features of the islands.

Iron oxide mines occupy a position of first importance. The world's best deposits are located at Hormoz, where the ore is of a more desirable variety and is easily obtained.

Salt mines, found in most islands, are of the second degree importance, but the competition of Chinese mines have reduced their value.

Oil reserves are considered of third degree importance. The wells in Qeshm were operated for a while, and abandoned later. However, according to available documents there is still oil in the island.

#### Pearl Diving

Shores of the Persian Gulf and the islands of Iran have very convenient locations for pearl diving, famous throughout the centuries. Foreign and domestic merchants have always congregated in these areas during this season, with countless number of boats. The quality of pearl, even though not of the highest, is among the very best in the world. Previous yearly catch used to amount to 500,000 rubles in some years. However, profits have declined recently, mostly because of:

1. The lack of wealthy merchants who can hire necessary workers:
2. Lack of productivity of the shores, because of periodical immigration to the Arabian shores.

Construction of Cargo Boats

Boat construction on the islands was, at one time, famous throughout the



gulf, and even in the Indian Ocean. Inhabitants of these islands especially those of Qashm have great skill in the art of boat building which is a major source of income to these people. The occupation has lost its splendor for sometime, and it may be considered entirely extinct. The main reason for abandoning the trade is lack of sufficient amount of special boat lumber which has to be substituted with lumber of lesser quality imported from Africa or India.

Today, most of the construction materials, such as nails, sails, etc., have to be imported. Since this creates a great deal of handicaps, the inhabitants are almost completely deprived of these imports. Consequently, ship building has become an art of the past which may be revived again by alleviating some of the causes of curtailment.

#### Transportation and Navigation

A point of great interest and astonishment, for travelers, is the degree of seamanship of the islanders. Contrary to the inhabitants of the mainland, these people are quite active in the sea, and are very familiar with the art of navigation. They are well familiar with the conditions of Iranian shores, as well as the shores of Arabia, east Africa, and the Red Sea. During the past centuries, inhabitants of these islands used to transport the products of the Iranian shores to Africa and Arabia, bringing in return, products of the latter countries into Iran. Most of their navigation was carried on by means of very small boats. Names of African towns and the Island of Madagascar were familiar topics to these men. Navigation and cargo transportation was one of the means of the livelihood of the populace.

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Customs and other handicaps have reduced their income considerably.

Fishing

Fish which is one of the most beneficial God-given gifts, plays a very important part in the livelihood of the inhabitants. The catch

is either consumed or exported. In previous years fish exports to India and even Africa were of considerable amounts. There are many sizable and excellent qualities of fish in the gulf. However, lack of special equipment and the decrease in the amount of direct barter has reduced fishing tremendously.

The chief diet of the men, and animals in these islands is made up of fish mostly. Naturally, the idea of animals feeding on fish, sounds very peculiar at first, but a study of the ordinary form of living of these inhabitants will convince the visitor that this is a true fact. Fishing is done mostly close to the shores where the inhabitants are in constant daily struggle for their livelihood.

## 2. Living Conditions, Race and Customs

Population of these islands is not in excess of 25,000, who are of mixed races. The Sea of Oman and the gulf have always been open to free sailing. Mixed nationalities of Arabs, African and Indians have migrated into these areas and have intermingled with each other and the Iranians.

Most of the population is familiar with the Arab customs and forms of living, mostly because they have been influenced by Arabs in their association with the latter on the shores of Arabia. These people are generally slender and tall, with dark complexion, but are generally athletes and strong swimmers. Children are often seen on the shores playing with midget boats, and, even at this young age, they learn to cope with the waves, sometimes losing their lives in such daring games.

These natives are very capable to serve in the naval forces and always reveal special eagerness for such service.

Conversation in most of the islands is very similar to Arabic with occasional dialectic changes here and there. One may conclude that Arabic

is more popular than other languages on the island.

The only religious practice consists of Islam. Inhabitants are either shiites or sunnites.

#### Living Conditions of the Natives

Population of these islands was at one time far more than its present amount. Reasons for the gradual decrease have already been cited in previous chapters. Lack of natural resources has forced the natives to import their daily necessities, and the only manner in which these imports can be paid for is by means of fishing, pearl diving, cargo transportation and boat building. Since production from these forms of employment has, for sometime, been insufficient to pay for imports, the natives have been forced to migrate into other areas. If such conditions are improved and means of livelihood are adequately provided for the previous immigrants will return to their native lands.

#### Military Significance of Islands

In order to emphasize their significance, the history of islands is cited together with their comparative importance in the past and present:

#### Attack upon the Islands --- Their Position During the Present War

Because of their geographic locations, islands have provided excellent bases and shelters for many countries in the past. Nations that possess such advantages have, somewhat been protected from hostile attacks. Even though they may not have had strong Navy's, they, at least, have controlled most of the entrances, thus preventing successful infiltrations.

During conflicts between a country, and an island with a naval strength, the latter usually seemed to have an upper hand in naval warfare. Furthermore, if the island had any allies, the battle was always carried into the enemy's own soil. Even when the enemy reinforcements would arrive, the naval force

of the island would annihilate the new arrivals and prevent them from ever reaching the island. Thus in all the wars of the past, such countries had more favorable positions. No signs of battle remained in their islands, and the inhabitants carried on their normal peacetime life. On the other hand, the soil of the enemy was made the battlefield where countless damages to life and property were encountered.

This condition was altered somewhat, however, by the introduction of airpower.

Tactics employed in trench warfare were such that numerous intrenchments were dug in intervals around castles and other strongholds where large reinforcements were stationed. The function of this force was to check the advance of the enemy and his artillery from coming too close to the castle. Direct artillery fire would impair safety within the castle.

Countries with naval power may thus be compared with these strong castles, and their naval strength to the entrenchments, all utilized to check the enemy's advance. Bombing planes may also be compared to heavy artillery which could endanger the position of defenders in a castle in the absence of adequate opposition. Naval power, which is considered as a forward line of defense of islands, cannot check the advance of the approaching bombers completely. Thus, in the last world war, countries with large naval forces experienced such uneasiness, when bombers appeared for the first time, devastating properties and leaving untold damages in their wake. Yet they were not as effective as the long range bombers of today.

Today's airpower is so strong that bombers can create untold damages in areas far away from their bases. These developments have altered

the former impregnable defense line of the islands tremendously. Inhabitants of an island are no more safe than a soldier in the battlefield. They may expect an attack from the enemy at all hours of the day.

Such attacks bring about untold damages to the production line of the island, reducing the output of weapons and ammunition and facilitating enemy actions via the sea. Of course, it has not yet been proved whether a real blow can actually result from such tactics.

In the wars of today the only salvation of the island countries is to attack the enemy and gain a foothold in his territory closest to the island in order to prevent operation of his air power at closer ranges. The longer the range of planes, the more difficult will be their operations. Furthermore the enemy will have to curtail his activities during winter and bad weather.

However, if the enemy gains a foothold in the island, defensive operations will be very difficult, and vigorous undertakings have to be made.

Methods of protection of the islands. Generally, only those can defend themselves who are thoroughly familiar with tactics of attack. Let us now consider, what the aggressor will have to resort to in order to attack.

An aggressor to the Persian Gulf, can use one of the two following tactics in order to attack the islands of the gulf:

1. By surprise attacks and landings.
2. By means of strong forces, to persuade submission.

If the available forces are utilized efficiently, surprise attacks will be virtually impossible. Even though ships may enter the gulf during the night, landing, either by night or day is difficult on the shores.

### Attack With Force

If the islands are well fortified, and the forces are centralized, the country can maintain a naval force strong enough to defend the islands. Should the aggressor enter the gulf, it would necessitate a strong navy, as well as an air power and a strong landing force (unless he is satisfied with mere occupation of the coast). Furthermore, even though the islands are weak in their defense, their physical features are such that they will engage a large navy in action.

### Entrance to the Persian Gulf.

There are two routes of entry into the Persian Gulf.

1. Direct occupation of the islands, of Bab-e-Hormoz and entry later.
2. The mobilization of forces and the encirclement from the south.

### Mobilization of Forces and Encirclement

Infiltration is possible from an area 50 Kilometers to the south, after stabilizing the forces near the islands. However, this tactic, can be effective only when a surprise attack is made at the same time. But, as it was mentioned previously, such an attack is impossible. With the placement of heavy artillery on the islands of Larak and Hangan, areas within 25 to 50 Kilometers can be placed under effective firing range. This will force the aggressor to stay outside of this range.

It must be kept in mind, however, that in spite of all these preparations and undertakings, few ships may still find their way into the interior. But the entry of just a few ships will not be sufficient aid in his drive for effective aggression. He will still be in danger from the rear - a fact which will cripple the enemy's advance.

### Defense of the Islands Against a Large Force

Several points will have to be considered.

1. Familiarity with air, and the sensitive bombable areas.
2. Approach of ship within firing range, and bombing of strongholds.
3. Maneuver of transport ships and landing of troops.
4. Engaging the shore and infiltrating the island.

Although the islands are mostly small, nevertheless, they create many problems for air navigation. Concealment in the islands, thanks to their mountainous features is very easy, while damaging the harbor will have reverse effect on the aggressor himself. Furthermore, conveniently located rocks reduce the effect of bombardment; and antiaircraft fire, with excellent defilade positions will have effective range.

Landing operations are very difficult in mountainous shores. The act will be especially hard after bombings. On the contrary defilade positions for automatic weapons are available throughout the shores. Besides the limited areas, landing during the night is virtually impossible. Especially because of the unfavorable winds of the gulf, it is very difficult to determine specific time and places of landing.

The following facts regarding the defense of the islands should be considered:

1. Knowledge of the important observation points, and the establishment of communication (first by reconnaissance and later by means of telephone and radio), so that all the islands may have effective communications with each other, and the observation post at the entrance of the strait.
2. Familiarity with the shores, in order to find defilade positions for automatic weapons without any loss of time.
3. Establishment of shelters for troops, weapons, rations and water.



adequate for the need of troops in the island. Such places should be located behind defiles, where cover and concealment is available; and they should be dug 4 meters into the ground, and covered with logs and stones. These shelters must be adjacent to automatic weapons, and should be linked by subterranean routes. The islands are quite capable of providing suitable grounds for such shelters.

4. Emplacement of weapons in several locations in each island, in such a fashion that effective cross-firing may be possible. Secondary positions should also be provided so that the weapons could be shifted around when the need arises.

5. Establishment of intercommunication within the island so that weapons and ammunition could easily be transported from one area to another.

Military significance of the Islands of Iran in the Persian Gulf.

The islands of Iran may be classified into two groups from the point of view of their military significance.

1. The group of islands in Eab-e-Hormoz between the Sea of Oman and the Persian Gulf. These islands, Qeshm, Larak, Hormoz and Hengam, because of their locations, have great military significance.

2. The group of islands in the interior of the gulf, adjacent to the shores. Some of these islands are close to the shores and many are further away. This group does not have as much significance as the other group, and the islands closest to the shore are more significant than those farther away.

Two values may be considered for the islands located at the entrance of the gulf:

1. To control the islands in order to control the gulf.
2. Defense of the shore of Bandar ' Abbās.

Any country desiring occupation of the Persian Gulf must first consider the importance of these islands. It was because of this that the inhabitants of these islands have suffered untold losses in life and property during the past.

It is evident from these discussions that each island has played an important part in the defense of the country. Although from the point of view of economics, commerce, population and administration, the island lacks any significance today, it still retains its former importance from a military point of view; it is therefore essential that the other functions be developed, and steps taken to improve the standards of living of these islands. The less value they have economically the more difficult it will be to carry on defensive military operations on the islands.

4. Conclusion. The southern islands constitute a portion of Iran located in the vast Sea of Fārs (Sic. Persian Gulf). These small scattered sections play very important role in the protection and defense of the country. They are particularly important since the only free exit of the country consists of these waters.

These islands also constitute the first line of defense, necessitating the least amount of force and the most available supply of fire power in order to defend and protect the islands as well as the country itself. Such preparation may take many years since it is impossible to accomplish all at one time.

The islands of Bād-e-dormoz are considered same as the shores of the mainland. The first position of defense of the country is located in these islands.

Just as the greedy eyes of the Portuguese, the Dutch, English and the French were settled in these islands in the past, they still entertain similar desires of possession today.

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