**International Academic Institute for Science and Technology**

International Academic Journal of Social Sciences Vol. 4, No. 1, 2017, pp. 131-144.

ISSN 2454-3918

**International Academic Journal of Social Sciences**

www.iaiest.com

# The Role of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council in the United Arab Emirates Dispute with Iran over Three Islands Issue

Morteza Khazayi[a] , Forouzan Lotfi[b]

[a,b] *MA in International Law, Islamic Azad University, Kermanshah, Iran*

## Abstract

The relation between Iran and the Arab states of the region has undergone a lot of ups and downs throughout the history and the outbreak of war has helped the intensification of the conflict. According to historical documents, three islands of Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa in the Persian Gulf have always been governed by Iran and this can be proved by firm legal arguments. According to certain rules of international law, such as the succession of states, the law of treaties, the United Arab Emirates has no claim over the three islands. Meanwhile, the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council has a biased position toward the United Arab Emirates as an Arabic member of the council regarding Iran and adopted a dual approach with doubt on Iran. Cooperation Council also has to avoid serious challenges with Iran to maintain security in the region, on the other hand; it apparently does not have trust and confidence in Iran's intentions. This can be related to Iraq's expellee from Kuwait where the issue of the three islands was offered and exacerbated by the Emirates and provided the substrate for further disputes between Tehran and the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council although, other regional and trans-regional issues have influenced the trends of differences. This article tries to examine and analyze the historical and legal contexts of this issue and the policy making of the Persian Gulf Council regarding it.

**Keywords:** Iran, United Arab Emirates, the Persian Gulf, the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council.

### 1. Introduction

Since the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council was formed after the Islamic revolution (eight months after the Iran-Iraq war), There is always the question of why Iran has not been invited to join the Council although it has the largest beach in the northern Persian Gulf. There was an optimistic response that Iran-Iraq war prevented the two countries to be invited to join the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council. And in a pessimistic way, Saudi Arabia along with 5 other smaller countries have the opportunity to come together in the absence of other two powers of strategic Persian Gulf area (Iraq and Iran) and form an organization in the form and shape of regional organizations to address regional challenges. The Iraqi invasion of Kuwait provided an excuse for more and longer presence of regional powers in Arabic and Islamic coastal countries of the Persian Gulf and security was dependent on the presence of foreigners rather than

provided by coastal states. And after the expulsion of Iraq from Kuwait, their hostility reached to the extent that Iraq's accession to the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council was impossible although Iran has an opportunity to become a member of the Cooperation Council which unfortunately did not materialize. Since Iran's Logging to the Cooperation Council would make Baghdad an opportunity not a threat and seeks to comply with the regional countries and in this case, the pretext for America to attack Iraq and make insecurity in the region was abolished. And now the question of the three islands by the United Arab Emirates has made the islands one of the hotbeds of crisis between Iran and the UAE in the geopolitical and geo-economic Persian Gulf region. With the Provoke of some Arab and Western governments in the region, there was more complexity and more stress. Since the Persian Gulf has experienced two wars with disaster during the past two decades that resulted in the destruction of economic infrastructure and killed hundreds of thousands of Muslim states, in this paper, the following questions are to be answered: What is the role of the United Arab Emirates in the Persian Gulf Council dispute with Iran over three islands' issue? What is the historical background of United Arab Emirates' disagreement over the three islands? And what is the effect of the position of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council regarding three islands on the exacerbation of disagreements between the two countries?

To prove or disprove, Iran's historical and legal ownership issue is examined and on the islands in question and the origins of the dispute the facts about the genesis of the rule (the country) in Iran and the United Arab Emirates and the transformation of Arabic- Iranian society of the Persian Gulf should be noticed and the policy of the Persian Gulf as the independent variable and the three islands as dependent variable should be examined. and we have attempted to gather the required information as far as we can by using library study to have a fair analysis. And it is tried to prove or disprove the hypothesis that Persian Gulf Cooperation Council as an influential ally of the United Arabic Emirate a major role in the escalation of conflicts and tensions with the Islamic Republic of Iran.

## 2. Iran’s Reasons for the ownership of three islands

### 2.1 Historical perspectives

At the time of Styag the Median Empire, many territories have been under the rule of Iran such as the satraps in Nigyana that included Kerman beaches (Karmania) and the islands of the Persian Gulf.

With the rise of the dynasty of Achaemenid, other territories also added to Iran in addition to Median Empire lands. The fourth Satrapy of Achaemenid is in Nigyana, even though it appears that in this course karmania has become a satrapy settler. Mr. Dyakanvf the famous Russian historian says that the fourteenth satrapy included Sargartyan, Sarygnan, Tamanayyan, Outi, Mickey and the Persian Gulf Islanders which has given 600 Silver Talant tributes to the central government annually. Besides, he introduced the twentieth Satrapy as the Satrapy of Saudi Arabia that didn't pay any taxes but accepted Iran's rulers During the Parthian period also this domination over the Persian Gulf and its islands continues and even the monopoly of Persian Gulf has provided the cost of the war with the Romans.

In the Sassanian period, this rule has continued, so that the Arabs named Shapur II "Zolaktaf" because of their punishment by him. Anyway, the advent of Islam and attacking the lands of the Persian Gulf caused the extinction of the Sassanid kings.

Iranian kings' rule over the Persian Gulf and its islands have continued in the post-Islamic period although it was facing rebellion and independence at times because of the shortcomings and weaknesses of the central government. What is certain is that during the Prince Buwayhid Iran has had sovereignty over the Persian Gulf and some of its southern coast such as historical Oman and the Sultanate of Oman have been considered as the lieutenant governor of Iran's rulers. With a look at the historical Oman, we will find exactly that these islands (three) along with other islands have been under the authority of Iran. Although because of the scientific movement and the beginning of the Renaissance and economically important regions in the world In the Safavid dynasty, our islands in the Persian Gulf are occupied by the

Portuguese but then after about one and a half centuries, there is a restoration of sovereignty of these islands and areas. During Afsharieh period we have had four expeditions to the Persian Gulf and some historians call Ras al-Khaimah due to the name of the ample tents in this area. Unfortunately since the reign of Zandieh, Iran is mired in a whirlpool of self-determination, killings and looting because of local unrest, the growing weakness of the central government undermined the rule over the Persian Gulf and its islands until finally و England in the late Qajar period occupied the three islands and nullified our sovereignty.

What is certain is that for 22 centuries not only these islands, but all the islands and the southern coast of the Persian Gulf, including Oman, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain and the eastern coast of Saudi was under Iran's rule. Among the historic monuments in the island of Abu Musa, the Nader fort and docks, defense facilities, Karvansara and Karimkhani market can be mentioned.

**2-2-Iranian islands' Name**

Iranian islands in the Persian Gulf generally have Persian names, and these names have been attributed centuries ago and sometimes they have been given some changes. All names have long histories and historical roots. Names of villages in many parts of the Persian Gulf and its islands are Persian names, words, and terms of ancient Pahlavi. Most of the islands in the Persian Gulf have Persian names: Sori., Laft, Kish, Tumbs Mar, Tumb rasi, Aval.

Tunb includes two islands (Big Tunb) and (Small Tunb).Tunb islands are called Tumb Mar, Tumb Bar, Tal Mar and Maru and the islands of the small Tunb are called Nabio Tunb Bani Tunb. The word Tunb or Tunbu is called hill and ridge in Persian culture and this name is quite Persian. These islands are called (Tunb Mar= Tunb snake)) because a significant number of snakes live in the waters around the island as well as in the islands themselves.

Abu Musa Island's name derives from the meaning of two words (Baba) and (Babu). Baba is a Persian name and means granddad, grandfather, father and an old man. Babu also is the root of Bab and is derived from Baba. People believe that the original name of Abu Musa island was Baba Musa and Baba has gradually become Babu and the island was called Baba Musa, Babu Musa, and Abu Musa. Arabs put Hamza over Babu and turned the Persian words Babu and Bu into Arabic word Abavi means to become father, fatherhood, nurturing and feeding and called the island Abu Musa as the called Busher port as Abu Shahr. Ithe map that was distributed in the United Nations Security Council (dated 26 December 1971).

this island has been mentioned as (BAMUSA () IRAN) . What is certain is that the name of the island of Abu Musa is Bumusa originally and Arabic Emirates claims on the island and thus assigning land to the Arabs is unacceptable and illogical based on documents.

**2-3 Maps and Iranian sovereignty over the three islands**

Great Britain government official and semi-official map is available, all of which Confirm the sovereignty of Iran over the islands. The first and oldest of them is the French government's official map in 1760s and the rest from then on were owned by the Great Britain government. Iran's sovereignty over the Persian Gulf islands and the southern edge of the Persian Gulf (at the time) was so obvious and the zone of this strong historical dominance was so great that in Nasser al-Din Shah or Fath Ali Shah period, Iran signed contracts with the Sultan of Muscat and in which they rent Bahrain, Bandar Abbas or areas in the north or south of the Persian Gulf for a while, but the rent is based on a formal contract and does not mean their dominance. In another plan by the Navy in Great Britain traced in 1881, Tunb and Abu Musa islands are painted in Colors of Iran like Qeshm, Kish, and Siri. In this map, southern islands of the Persian Gulf an Arabic territories are shown in a different color. In 1881, a map of the UK Department of the Navy was offered to Naser -Aldin Shah in Tehran by the Chief Minister of the country which shows the island of Abu Musa, Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb, and Siri in color of Iran. Iran claim was strengthened in the book

"Iran and the Iranian case" by Lord Curzon in 1892. In this book, a map published by the Royal Geographical Society (England) has been prepared under the supervision of Lord Curzon. The map also shows the islands as Iran's attachment. In a Colored map of Persian Gulf made by Captain JB Proxy ordered by the East India Company n 1830, the islands of Tunb and Abu Musa clearly marked with the colors of the Iranian coast. The importance of this map is that its designer had 12 years experience in mapping the Persian Gulf waters. Maps have also been drawn by the government of Tsarist Russia and the Soviet Union. In Volume XV of the largest encyclopedia published in 1909 by the Government Printing in Moscow, in the map attached to it Tunb and Abu Musa islands are drawn with the Iran's mainland color. The other colored map of Iran in the World Atlas (Atlas Mira) which was drawn by the order of the Council of Ministers of the USSR in Russian and English in 1967 can be noted. Tunb and Abu Musa islands' names are clearly seen on the map along with Iran's name. Iran also published a map of the Persian Gulf in 1967 in the Security Council which was appeared on the occasion of the fiftieth year of the October Revolution in the Soviet Union. These maps in which the islands in the Strait of Hormuz are mentioned as Iranian islands and Iran's name is under each of them were published in an atlas. This map was distributed as a document in the United Nations Union.

**2-4 Britain's Documents**

India- Britain Government's secret letters to the Sheikh of Sharjah in the summer of 1903 in which they are publicly and officially ordered to occupy Tunb and Abu Musa islands and raise their flag in the Islands when the total official documents of Great Britain and retaking the islands by Iran is done with Great Britain agreement and UAE consent, Which international arbitration ignores these determined and obvious facts and votes on the rejection of Iran's rights?

Mr. Dambron, Head of Customs ports of the Persian Gulf, in its report to the Ministry of Customs and post office declares that Sheikh Ras al-Khaimah claims the ownership of the islands of Abu Musa and Sheikh Sharjah also has such claims. In a response to the report, the British embassy in a letter to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 28, Rabi al-Awal, 1323 AH writes: His Excellency, The Most Holy states with high respects that: Not long ago we remarked by Mr. Muten Al-Mulk to yours friendly that appears to say: Sheikh of Sharjah want to stablish some of the buildings on the Tumbes island and we demanded them for leaving. The aforesaid (Mayjerkaks) personally went to the island to ascertain whether this report which has been given to your Excellency, the Most Honorable by Daryabeigi is true or not and it turned out that's not true at all. The important thing in these two letters is the fact that Iran protests against sheikhs' flag in its territory and the Great Britain as the head of sheikhs in foreign affairs denies it. What is important is the fact that if the Great Britain did not accept Iran's claim to the ownership of the islands at that time and possession of the islands from the Arabs has had a previous history Why It's that the Great Britain has answered them in a letter that has no legal value in their view and secondly complain of the Iranian authorities with a slander tone to put the Great Britain on the subject of the herd. The Great Britain at the height of his navy power at that point would claim as explicitly as the next years that the islands belonged to the Sheikh of Sharjah and any military action of Iran will lead to military intervention of the Great Britain as they frequently do it in later years. Great Britain also claimed that the legitimacy of the Interior Qasim was on the Sheikh of Sharjah and Ras Al Khaimah's behalf and they were government lieutenant on Sheikh's behalf not Iran While the English have stated the contrary. It is interesting to know that someone like Lord Curzon, the lieutenant governor of India and Denise Wright the ambassador to Great Britain in Tehran have acknowledged this point. Sir Denys Wright ambassador to Great Britain in Tehran in support of the ownership of three islands to Iran and Ghasemi sheikhs' lieutenant governors pointed out: Since 1880 there were frequent disputes over the ownership of the four small islands between Iran and Britain. These islands consisted of large and small Tunb, Abu Musa and Siri all around the Strait of Hormuz between two shores of the Persian Gulf. Since the Ghasemi sheikhs as Bandar Lengeh rulers paid taxes to Iran, there was no dispute about the islands and they were generally considered to belong to

Iran. But following the conflict and struggle among the Ghasemi tribe and assigning an Iranian ruler to Bandar Lengeh, Arab sheikhs rebelled from the other side of the Gulf and the United Kingdom also supported their claims and declared that the islands were their father's land and their ruling is now the responsibility of the Ras Al Khaimah Ghasemi and Sharjah sheikhs And concluded that the exercise of the right of ownership on them by the Lengeh ruler is not due to his government rights but as his Sheikh Qassim's role.

Iranians believed that even though the islanders were Arab, they confirmed Iranian property rights by paying their taxes and what the Iranians had one day couldn't be Arabs' property suddenly.

**2-5 Verifying Iran's ownership of the islands by the British ambassadors in Iran**

As England comes closer to the time of its withdrawal from the Persian Gulf, the emphasis was more on resolving the issue of Islands and in this regard, it didn't refuse even from telling some truths that were stated untruly sometime.

Aalam in his book cites examples such as these: "This afternoon Sir Dennis Wright came to see me. He completely confided to me that the Tunb islands will be given to Iran certainly. English have warned Sheikh Ras al-Khaimah that these islands are located on the dividing Iranian line in the Persian Gulf and if he doesn't achieve an agreement with us (Iran), we will get them by law and if necessary by force ". It is interesting to note that England which supported the Ras Al Khaimah sovereignty over the Tunb islands during at least one century, it even threaten Ras al-Khaimah's Sheikh by force to give back the Islands. On page 105 of his book about his meeting with Michael Stewart the British ambassador to Iran Aalam explained: "I mentioned to him I must inform you that the English occupied the islands illegally and have surrendered them as a destroyed inheritance to the sheikh of Sharjah and Ras Al Khaimah and the British government supports the sheikhs against Iran we do not understand the meaning of this policy Iran is preparing itself to be the sole sponsor of Emirates as soon as the English leave it. Stewart pondered for a while and then replied, you are quite right in your remarks, and the Great Britain cannot simply ignore the concerns of the Arab world, but I say to you in good faith that I believe it's our duty to return the islands to Iran.

Doctor Houshang Mahdavi writes: "the aforementioned Negotiations of 30 Aban, 1350 were began with Los Srylyam, the Great Britain representor And finally led to an agreement between Iran and Sharjah on Abu Musa islands division. But about the Greater Tunb and Lesser Tunb islands the Governments (Iran and the UK) did not require the consent of Sheikh Ras al-Khaimah. So, Iran was supposed to occupy two islands as soon as the British forces leave them. But Iran was willing to do this before the evacuation of British forces in their presence and finally landed on the islands the day before the departure of the English. What is important is that the debate about the ownership of the islands of Greater Tunb and Lesser Tunb between Iran and Britain was so obvious for Great Britain that even they do not consider it necessary to discuss and deal with Sheikh Ras al-Khaimah about an agreement. Iraj Afshar mentioned a sentence in his book from Sheikh Saqar for the Sheikh of Sharjah to verify the ownership of Iran: After docking of the Iranian navy at the edge of the island of Abu Musa, Sheikh Saqar, brother of Sheikh of Sharjah, came with a group of residents of the island of Abu Musa along with many happy Iranian naval units During his historic speech said: "I express on the behalf of myself and Sheikh Khalid and all the inhabitants of the island that we have integrity for eighty years. Now, after eighty years we deliver it to you and we again declare our connection with the great homeland.

**2-6 verifying the ownership of the islands in the words of Great Britain representative in the Security Council**

By restoring our sovereignty over the three islands, some Arabic countries complain to the United Nations and the Security Council. The Security Council on December 9, 1971 asked the representatives of Algeria, Iraq, Libya, Yemen, Iran, Kuwait and the UAE to participate in the discussion. Great Britain's

representative said at the meeting that his government announced in 1971 that the contracts between Great Britain and Qatar, Bahrain and seven governments will end and this country withdraw its forces by the end of 1971. He said his government was concerned about the stability and security of the region and called for resolving territorial disputes between Arab states and Iran. He said about the conflicting claims that Abu Musa Island with 800 inhabitants was ruled by Sheikh of Sharjah, (Note, he did not use the word governance but benefited from the rule Word, no use of it reflects the fact that Sharjah does not have sovereignty over the island but due to the Great Britain's delegation of the island to that Sheikh inhabitant it just run it.)

**2-7 Iran's strong position in Abu Musa**

There is a subtle point in the agreement between Iran and Sharjah in 1971 on the island of Abu Musa that proves our rule and ownership of the island: At the beginning of the notes Parties reminded that none of them forgone their claims on Abu Musa and did not recognize the claim of the other side. Then, notes set out the arrangements in 6 paragraphs that consisted of deploying Iranian combat troops in Abu Musa, qualification of Iran and Sharjah parties in the island, Stablishing flags on the Sharjah police station remained in the area where the Iranian troops are not deployed, recognition of the territorial sea within 12 nautical miles to the island by the parties, oil extraction from Abu Musa and bed and subsoil of the territorial waters and revenue sharing arrangements, equal rights of citizens of Iran and Sharjah on fishing in the territorial waters of Abu Musa and finally the grant agreement. Following this memorandum, Foreign Minister of Iran Abbas Ali Khalatbari On November 25, 1971 wrote a letter to Sir Daglas Hume the Foreign Minister of Great Britain that contains an important point that is the agreement arrangements will not be a barrier to take any action on Abu Musa, which according to Iran would be necessary to secure the island or Iranian forces. Minister of Foreign Affairs of Great Britain in another letter to the Iranian Foreign Minister informed that the above-mentioned matters was communicated and explained to the Sheikh of Sharjah.

So if the Iranian government currently resorts to some measures on the basis of the agreement about Abu Musa for maintaining Abu Musa's security, these measures will not be out of the agreements. . It is also important to note that the Memorandum referred to the establishment of Iranian military forces and the deployment of Sharjah Flag on the police station and given that the armed forces (army) are a manifestation of the exercise of state authority in terms of international law and police doesn't have such a legal role, therefore, the strength of the Iranian government in this memorandum is completely obvious and the Sheikh of Sharjah are well-informed and satisfied that external security of the island is the responsibility of Iran.

**3- Surveying the United Arab Emirates evidences**

**3-1 Seize priority**

Great Britain argued that the aforementioned (Sheikh of Sharjah) has just installed their flag in the islands still not officially in the possession of any of the states. This claim is so baseless that it becomes amazing. How many state borders except Iran reached near Tunb and Abu Musa at that date which officially didn't take possession of the islands? On the other hand, the Great Britain has ignored the fact that the Sheikh of Sharjah's was not considered as a government on that date but a tribal chief of Iranian origin under the protectorate of the Great Britain and Sharjah was a tribal entity not a land. Hey Rupert the head of the political representatives of Great Britain in the Persian Gulf also says: "Before the advent of oil, deserts sidelines of Persian Gulf countries was very similar to the high seas for many reasons:

«Bedouins and camels travelled in the valley, although tribal areas were vague there wasn't any indication of the strong state authority outside the harbors and oases».

**3-2 The Arab population of the islands**

First, it must be recognized that the indigenous inhabitants of the islands are a mix of the people of Iranian origin and the people of Sudan and Bani Yas tribes. Great Britain and the United Arab Emirates should know that the Iranians were the first inhabitants of these areas. Groups of the original inhabitants of different parts of the southern coast of the Persian Gulf have kept their signs of Iranian origin. Apart from Mesopotamia that two thousand years of the last 25th century, since the mid-6th century BC to the mid-18th century, except for the first two centuries of the Abbasid caliphate was belonging to Iran and most of its people are originally Iranian. The other two areas where are the focus of Iranian people are on the Arabic banks of the Persian Gulf include the Musandam Peninsula located in the southern part of the Strait of Hormuz - Northern Oman and Bahrain with its the ancient geographical definition included the northwestern part of Qatar Peninsula and the provinces of Hsa' and Qatif of Saudi Arabia in addition to the archipelago of Bahrain. During the Achaemenid Darius period, the Persians developed the southern Persian Gulf and brought canals there. Sassanid created two semi-independent states in Oman (old Mason) and Arabic (First Kohan). Now, ancient Iranians and Iranian immigrants of various periods live in the southern half of Iraq in Kuwait and the provinces of Hsa' and Qatif, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Dubai, Sharjah, Oman, Umm Al Quwain and Ras Al Khaimah. If the possible Arabic origin of indigenous inhabitants of Tunb and Abu Musa islands is the reason for the ownership of the islands in the Iranian living areas mentioned above what decision must be implemented.

**3-3 The lower level of Abu Musa in the Persian Gulf Midline**

The beach on the Saudi Arabia side is very shallow with a large number of small islands, when tides, sandy terraces and coral reefs come out even up to 20 miles off the coast. Proximal line from which the territorial sea width is measured is usually a sign of low tide so; the Arabic states are in a better position than Iran. Because Iran has a far deeper and modest island beaches accordingly; Emirates and South sheikhs of Abu Musa consider it below the Persian Gulf midline and therefore have a claim to it. However, if the fair line is accepted as as an indicator of the ownership of the islands from both sides Emirates claims on the ownership is under question because the two Tunb islands in the Persian Gulf are located above the midline. Besides, the median line has not been accepted as a universal rule of customary international law and is not applicable in all seas. In Persian Gulf, median line is used in some cases as a practical criterion and not a customary rule. Abu Musa island is slightly lower than the middle line to the south of the Persian Gulf, so it cannot be covered by this provision, because Iran puts the bases of the arguments on the other documentary evidence and if regardless of those fundamentals, the standard median line used as a legal norm in the case, so England must grant to the recent government the Channel Islands, such as Gueznezy, Jersey as well as small islands Mynkueye Akrehukeh that recently was a matter of dispute between France and the UK, and the International Court of Justice in 1953 transferred them to England Which are much lower than the Mansh's midline and near the coast of France or Greece transfer many of Aegean Islands (including the islands of Rhodes, Samos, Chios, Mytylyny, Lemnos and many others) that were very close to the Turkey to this government. Or Greece transfer many of Aegean Islands (including the islands of Rhodes, Samos, Chios, Mytylyny, Lemnos and many others) that were very close to the Turkey to this government. It should be noted that the Great Britain, in July 1939, Hora islands which are connected to the Qatar peninsulas and almost have a far more distance from the main island of Bahrain, and necessarily on the Qatar midline has given to Qatar in the particular circumstances. Particular circumstances and historical factors hinder the decision of the middle line. The particular circumstances and historical considerations on the island of Abu Musa is known, the use of median line in the delimitation of the continental shelf in the Sea neighboring states was more extensive, but even here, the application of the median line is a legal aspect of the contract and historical considerations and principles of justice and fairness (e.g. delimitation of the continental shelf in the North Sea in Germany) must be considered. Basically, in the 1982 Convention on the Law of the Sea median line a setback in terms of the generalized use of it can be seen. As for the historical claims, normally theorem proving and

providing evidence of the historical elements claimed is the responsibility of the complainant. Accordingly, UAE must prove that it has a history dating back more than we had in the islands, otherwise; 2500 years ruling over the islands is the best proof of our historical ownership on the islands that is in accordance with the rules of international law as well.

**3-4 Communications between the sheikhs of Bandar Lengeh and Ras Al Khaimah**

United Arab Emirates has offered the communications between the Lengeh sheikhs and the southern coast of the Persian Gulf as a proof for the ownership of the islands. The First letter is a complaint of Sheikh Sultan Bin Saqar to Persian Gulf Balyouz. Sheikh provisions complaint is that the people of Dubai have taken their livestock to the island of Abu Musa. Hashr ibn Maktoum, Ruler of Dubai, protested that the islands belonged to the sea and they don't have any owner. Sheikh at the end of the letter says: From our ancestral time Tunb and Abu Musa belonged to us. The second letter is dated 12 Ramadan, 1288 AH (November 1871) and signed by the ruling Khalifa bin Saeed addressed to the ruler of Ras Al Khaimah, Sheikh Hamid bin Abdullah bin Sultan. In this letter, Ras al-Khaimah ruler has complained of the Al Busmyt tribe for going to Tunb. The third letter is of Ali Ben Khalifa (the victim at the hands of Sheikh Ghozayb) on 13 Muharram 1292 (1878 AD). Apparently, the audience (Sheikh Hamid) had complained that Al Busmyt take their animals into Tunb islands and destroy the land. Lengeh ruler says: "We know that Tunb islands are Oman Ghasemis' property and we don't have any thing there, but because we did not distinguish between the peasants they were allowed to go there." And the fourth letter is from Yusuf bin Muhammad to Hamid bin Abdullah dated AH 1301 Jomādā which talks about Haj Abolghasem, Baluz officer of Great Britain in the Persian Gulf, entrance to Lengeh and Tunb island discussions. And addressed the Oman Qasim that the islands are yours and we ignored it to satisfy you. There isn't such a matter as me and you between us and now that you do not like we ignore it and God willing we will stop Al Busmyt that go there for the grass. The fifth letter of complaint is from Haji Abul Hamid bin Abdullah about the coming of Al Busmyt tribes' men to the island of Tunb and taking their livestock and destroying forages. In the sixth and seventh letters there are letters which are written to Colonel Bailey Sahib (Persian Gulf Balyouz) by a person named Muhammad Abdul Rahman And says that the ruler of Ras Al-Khaimah claims sovereignty, and we are allowed to take our livestock to the islands. In eighth, ninth, and tenth letters, there are Mohammed Abdul Rahman the ruler of Dubai's letters to protest the entry of the Sheikh of Sharjah to the island for feeding their livestock. Three of these letters are addressed to Persian Gulf Balyouz by a person named Muhammad Abdul Rahman and says that the ruler of Ras Al Khaimah claims sovereignty of the island and doesn't allow the feeding of their livestock. From the Ten Letters, the first one from of Haji Sultan bin Saqar and the forth from Haji Abul Ghasem and five recent letters from Mohammed Abdulrahman can not have absolute authority against Iran. Three of the letters are addressed to Persian Gulf Balyouz and the other three to the Hashr bin Maktoum the Dubai Sheikh. Sultan bin Saqar letter was written in 1281 AH, Mohammad Abdul Rahman letters in 1288 AH and Haji Abul Ghasem letters in 1298 AH. And all of this is a clear indication that the claim of the ownership of Abu Musa and Tunb has been rejected by anyone and Sheikh Dubai's claim and other claims were absurd and nonsense. It is also noteworthy that in a letter of Mohammad Abdul Rahman, ruler of Ras Al Khaimah and in another Ruler of Sharjah claimed the ownership of the islands. (Contradiction) on the date in which the letters were written, Ras Al Khaimah was separated from Sharjah and each of them had independent sheikhs and anyway, the justification of this difference is not clear to us. Letters No. 2, 3 and 4 are noteworthy. Apparently these three letters are those which are provided by the Government of Great Britain in 1887 to the time of the dispute over the islands. In other words, the claims of the sheikhs are based on the same three letters completely. The three letters are exclusively about Tunb and the name of Abu Musa is not mentioned in them. The letters say that the islands were controlled by Oman Qasim, Something that did not comply neither with the historical documents nor the Great Britain claim.

Furthermore, in none of the letters there is any reference to Iran and the rejection of the ownership of the islands by Iran.

**3-4 The time passing principle**

One of the bases of the UAE legal claims is that since the date of the seizure of the Tunb and Abu Musa islands has elapsed and during this period, rulers established buildings and structures and had officials and representatives there, the island's issue should be a matter of time passing principle. Normally in international law, if the unilateral claim does not meet the objection provides to the creation of custom. In fact, when there are no objections to the claim of sovereignty of a country over a sea zone or a waterway, this silence implied consent of a norm accepted by tradition and it is said there is «opinio joris».

What Emirate does not pay attention to is that according to international standards the time passing principle is acceptable and proved when the possession or occupation will be continued without interruption, confusion and protest, While; Iran began to protest since the occupation of the islands and the protest was repeated every year. Emirates forced not only the Iran government but also the Great Britain to negotiate the issue with Iranian (dispersed in possession) but actually tried several times to withdraw Islands. Emirates flag was pulled down from these Islands (discontinuity in possession) and even at the end of 1934, the Greater Tunb island was returned to Iran. Here we speak of the Emirates of Sharjah and Ras Al Khaimah duress of these islands, forcible seizure of a government that has published tens of maps on Iran's ownership of the islands.

**3-5 The imposition of the memorandum of understanding in November 1971**

In a letter dated 27 October 1992 to the United Nations Emiratis claimed that Iran has imposed the above mentioned memorandum on them while they didn't mind the point that Iran does not have anything to do with Sharjah and is it didn't have any negotiation. Sharjah was the protégé of the Great Britain on that date and it didn't have any right to communicate, negotiate, and contract with any government except the Great Britain government. Foreign relations and defense of Sharjah homeland was under the Great Britain's authority and that is why Iran had to negotiate with the Great Britain and no one else. It is interesting to say that the memorandum was imposed by powerful Britain to Iran which was a weaker government.

**4. Persian Gulf Cooperation Council**

The idea of Persian Gulf cooperation Council was Iran's suggestion in 1351solar (1972), but other countries of the Persian Gulf , i.e. Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrein, United Arab Emirates, and Oman that saw Iran as a powerful country didn't have any tendency to assemble in an organization that intensifies Iran's dominance. Especially Iraq's permeation among the elites and ruling elite of Persian Gulf Arab countries was undeniable in that time. In the year 1360 (1981) and after the Islamic revolution in Iran, this time six countries in the South of the Persian Gulf formed the Cooperation Council without Iran and Iraq. In the seventeenth session of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council in 1375 (1996), the tone of the Council became extremely harsh and the occupation of the islands by Iran was discussed. This indicates the Emirate's wide efforts to bring the matter to the regional level through the Arab summit by the members of the Damascus Declaration to an Arabic level. From 1371 to 1376 (1992 to 1997), Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati visited the Emirates twice, and the UAE authorities promised to travel to Tehran and to continue talks to resolve disagreements, but in practice they refused to travel. Iran's election on May 1376 (22 May 1997) and electing Mr. Khatami as the president has changed Iran's foreign policy in the region. Some experts consider such changes not in content but also in the use of new vocabulary and different methods of the past, such as the emphasis on detent and peaceful coexistence and some assess the changes made in foreign policy by the content and strikingly different from the last. The United Arab Emirates' s foreign minister's understanding after meeting with the president of Iran on

the sidelines of a summit of Islamic countries in the framework of the Islamic Conference in Tehran on December 76 (December 97) was that that Iran's new authorities are ready to negotiate and compromise on the islands. Subsequently, Kamal Kharrazi, the Iranian foreign minister traveled twice to UAE and Abu Dhabi promised twice to respond trips that were never carried out.

**4.1 Persian Gulf Council position**

Persian Gulf Cooperation Council is a regional treaty that like as any other political, military and economic treaty is based on a set of common interests between its members. This does not mean that no difference exists between the members of regional treaty of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council. But the common interests affected the difference between its members, because the Member States assume regional cooperation as the most effective and useful way to achieve common interests and reach security. The council has been formed of six Arabic countries including the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Qatar and Kuwait. The position that Cooperation Council adopted in the case of the three islands in the Council's website under the heading "مساعده قضيه الجزر الثلاث المُحتّله التابعه لدوله الامارات " is as follow: "since 1992, the issue of the three islands was raised (Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa) that is United Arab Emirates' subordination . Consistent views were introduced by the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council and the Council of Ministers on the Supporting of the United Arab Emirates' position on the islands and Iran was called on to end its occupation. Iran should directly negotiate with the Government of the United Arab Emirates over the three islands or this matter should be referred to the International Court to resolve the case. The most important measures in this regard by the Cooperation Council is the action of Foreign Ministers Council of Seventy-one meeting that was held in Jeddah on 3 July 1999, and tripartite committee of foreign ministers of Saudi Arabia, Oman and Qatar together with the Secretary General of the Cooperation Council was formed to negotiate directly with Tehran. Cooperation Council expected that Iran would welcome the committee to seriously take action to solve the case of the three islands. However, Iran has refused to negotiate. As a result, the cooperation wanted the regional institutions and the international community to persuade Iran to accept peaceful ways by the United Arab Emirates to solve the case.

With an overview of the resolutions issued at the meeting of the heads in the clause related to Iran, the views of the Cooperation Council of Iran can be partly understood.

In the eighth session, the Supreme Council blamed Iran for the Mecca incident and the heads of the GCC condemned missile attacks which led to the disruption of security and consistency in Kuwait the attack on the embassy of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. But at the eleventh meeting of leaders that was formed after the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq, the GCC countries shifted positions called for warm and friendly relations with Tehran and expressed their desire for broad-based economic development. Notably, a few months after the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq, on the sidelines of the annual UN General Assembly, at the Iranian mission to the UN, foreign ministers of the six GCC member states met with Iranian Foreign Minister. Similarly, such a position was adopted also in the twelfth summit that was held in Kuwait and took up positions against Iraq. At the summit, according to Sheikh Khalifa Bin Mohammad Al Thani, the Emir of Qatar's report to continue contacts and relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran, leaders of the Council re-emphasized the rapprochement. In the thirteenth meeting, the Cooperation Council expressed disagreement with Iran under the pretext of occupation of the three islands of Abu Musa, Greater Tunb and Lesser Tunb and accused Iran of occupying three islands and urged Tehran to refrain from violating the sovereignty and integrity of the territory of the United Arab Emirates. In this meeting, with UAE President Sheikh Zeyd remarks in conjunction with the Islamic Republic of Iran's actions in Abu Musa Island and continuing the occupation of the islands of Greater Tunb and Lesser discussion about the islands began. In the fourteenth summit, Iran was asked to accept negotiations although the previous claims were reiterated and Iran didn't want to negotiate and the case was referred to the International Court. At the sixteenth session, the Supreme Council with the repetition of the former claims announced

that Iran has not responded to the honest and repeated invitation by the United Arabic Emirates to negotiate and while expressing regret, Iran will be asked to agree to refer the issue to the International Court. In the seventeenth meeting, the leaders asked Iran to dismantle all facilities on the island of Abu Musa and to reply the invitation of the Cooperation Council, members of the Damascus statement and Arab League for the peaceful settlement of the issue of the occupied islands and respect the principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations and the Organization of the Islamic Conference and neighborly. In the eighteenth meeting, Iranian President Mohammad Khatami expressed interest to meet the Emir of the UAE and he expressed pleasure to welcome President to visit the UAE. Nineteenth Session welcomed the proposed talks between the two sides that was introduced by Kofi Annan and urged UN Secretary-General to continue his efforts and urged Iran to comply the proposals of the Secretary-General to establish security in the region. In the twentieth meeting, a committee of three persons, the foreign ministers of Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Oman in addition to the Secretary General of the Cooperation Council was formed to provide preliminary negotiations with Iran on the three islands. In the twenty-first session, the Supreme Council adopted a firm stance regarding the three islands and was extremely upset because Iran refused to negotiate with the triple committee and announced that no power other than the power and domination of Emirates is recognizable and acceptable and this includes the power of the land, territorial waters and the commercial area of the islands. . In the twenty-second session, while supporting the claims of the United Arab Emirates, Iran's claim was announced as illegal and Iran was called on to accept to send the case to the International Court. In the twenty-third session, it was announced that by solving the issue of the three islands, Tehran's relations with the GCC will be heated. In the twenty-sixth session, on the eve of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council, reiterated the claims in the past Summits and regretted about Iran's lack of interest to solve the problem, and stressed on adopting peaceful solutions to restore the United Arabic Emirates' rights. While each of the six Persian Gulf Cooperation Council member countries, even the United Arabic Emirates have good bilateral relations with Iran. Whenever Summits are held, and the issue of the three islands is proposed as stereotypes in all resolutions at the end of them. Hussein Jaber Ansari also in a reaction to the final statement of the thirty-third summit of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council in Riyadh stated the islands of Abu Musa, Greater Tunb and Lesser Tunb as an integral part of Iranian territory and emphasized: Repeat unsubstantiated claims do not affect the territorial integrity of the Islamic Republic of Iran and is considered a non-constructive position. He added that the Islamic Republic of Iran decisively rejects any irresponsible remarks about his integrity, and we place amity peaceful relations based on non-interference in internal affairs, respect for sovereignty and mutual respect with our neighbors in our own policy priorities and express our readiness to expand and deepen the friendly relations based on the above principles and to tackle common threats and problems of the region, including terrorism. UAE Foreign Minister expressed his gratitude in a press conference with his Turkish counterpart in Ankara of Turkey for supporting the UAE's position on the three Iranian islands. Bin Zayed Al Nahyan said UAE Foreign Minister: We support Turkey in the face of a coup. While stating that there coordination between Persian Gulf Cooperation Council countries and Turkey on the regional challenges, he said: We thank Turkey's support of the United Arabic Emirates for retaking the three Iranian islands. First Vice President stressed the fact that the final statement of the meeting between the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council and Turkey is openly anti-Iranian and said: We do not accept anyone to say the wrong things about the territorial integrity of Iran. As well as in the thirty -third session of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council summit in Manama, they agreed on a security agreement and creating a unified military base of the member states . The unity plan presented by Saudi Arabia was not investigated at the meeting. GCC states declared their support for Bahrain's crackdown on protests in this meeting once again and condemned what was called terrorist activities in this country. In this statement, Bahraini government and its security services were praised for dealing with such incidents, and Manama efforts to maintain national unity and strengthen security and stability was honored. GCC also approved

the decisions of Joint Defense Assembly and welcomed the joint defense agreement. Persian Gulf Cooperation Council leaders also called for quick and practical international action to resolve the crisis in Syria and once again announced their support for the "Syrian National Coalition opposition". Persian Gulf Cooperation Council states repeated its claims of Iranian interference in the affairs of member states and called on Tehran to stop immediately what is called interventionist measures and policies and increases tension in the area, Cooperation Council member states also called on Iran to respect the principles of good neighborliness and try to solve differences with neighboring countries by peaceful methods and without the use of any threat and force. Persian Gulf Cooperation Council statement on Iran's interference in these countries' internal affairs issued when Iran has repeatedly stated that based on the principles of its foreign policy does not interfere in the internal affairs of any country. While, the Saudi government intervened openly in the internal affairs of Bahrain, Syria, and so on, and even attempted to send its troops to Bahrain to crush the protests, but the council's members never protested against it. In this statement once again the claims of the sovereignty of the United Arab Emirates on Iran's three islands are emphasized. These allegations are raised in the time that Islamic Republic of Iran has repeatedly insisted on the three Iranian islands' belonging to its territory and considered them as an integral part of Iranian territory. And at the same time, it stressed on solving the existing misunderstandings between Iran and the United Arab Emirates. GCC stated in his closing statement the threat of Iran's peaceful nuclear program and called on Iran to fully cooperate with the International Atomic Energy Agency. In the statement of the thirty-seventh summit, the heads of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council countries reiterated their determination to promote security and defense systems. It is noted in the statement that Iran needs to stop what is called the interference in internal affairs of the Persian Gulf Arabic countries, by justifying the Saudi Arabia's incompetence in carrying out the hajj and to protect pilgrims' life, they condemned what would be called politicizing the Hajj by Iran. They called on Iran to concede its three islands in the interests of the United Arabic Emirates and called on Iran to change its policy in the region and be committed to the principles of international law. At present, the major challenges of Cooperation Council with Iran are as follow:

Iran's acquisition of nuclear weapons

2. Three islands

3. Iranian interference in Iraq and neighbouring countries

The above statements indicate the naivety of its participants with every incentive.

**5. Conclusion**

Studies carried out on the ownership of the islands of Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa ownership shows that from ancient times the islands as well as many other areas were governed under the rule of Iran. Before the twentieth century, among the eighties and several islands of the Persian Gulf and Sea of Oman there isn't any recorded and independent history for the islands of this navy blue sea except for the islands of Hormuz and Kish in the Persian Gulf and the other two islands in the Sea of Oman. Historical Geography of Persian Gulf islands were connected in some way with the larger and developed islands as historical geography of Lavan, Hendurabi, Siri, Abu Musa, Tunb and small nearby islands has been associated with the Kish circumstances as Lark followed the development of Hormuz and Qeshm. So, it is difficult to assess the Lesser Tunb, the greater Tunb and Abu Musa islands before the twentieth century due to the lack of independent historical sources and this complex must be examined with the whole area and more developed Islands and it has caused some controversies. In the meantime, the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council has taken a dual manner with hesitation against Iran. This dual position is due to the following factors:

1-Persian Gulf cooperation council has to be with Iran and avoids serious challenges in order to maintain the regional security. But apparently has no confidence in Iran's intentions and evaluates Iran as an expansionist and Shiite country who thought of Shia Crescent and wants to dominate the region. On the

sidelines of the sixty-first session of the UN General Assembly in New York, the Secretary General of the Cooperation Council along with PGCC foreign ministers of member countries met with Condoleezza Rice and subsequently, Rice traveled to the region and also met with Saudi officials in Cairo, foreign ministers of Egypt, Jordan, the GCC Secretary-General of the Council and Foreign Ministers of the six countries and Iran was one of the main topics of the talks. So, based on this background, certainly talks in which Condoleezza Rice is present as America's Secretary of State will not be without bias against Iran.

2-Although according to historical documents, the ownership of the islands has been resolved for disinterested experts and the Iranian, but the government of Emirates assume it as their right as well. It always throws a shadow over Cooperation Council decisions and is reflected in recent years in all resolutions and summits of heads of states and foreign ministers. The English separated Bahrain from Iran and transferred three islands to Iran and hoisted Sharjah's flag on a small part of the island of Abu Musa and planted enmity seeds in the following years so that the UAE has always focused on the three islands and considered them as their own right. In the final session of the conference "NATO and the greater Middle East" that was held in Qatar in November 2005, Abdul Rahman al-Attiyah, secretary general of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council called the ownership of three islands as one of the most important political challenges of Iran and the Persian Gulf's boundary countries.

However, it is hoped that with the wisdom and foresight of the two sides, we see the warming of relations, increased friendship, cooperation and solving the problems and ambiguities in the future. And finally, with the following strategies act effectively towards the realization of improved relations as soon as possible:

The Islamic Republic of Iran's policy is based on the principles of good neighborliness, mutual respect and non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries and it is expected that instead of the repetitive and unfounded accusations, Persian Gulf Cooperation Council stops intervention in the internal affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran including attempts by some members for sectarian seduction.

Instead of trying to politicize the Hajj by the Islamic Republic of Iran, Persian Gulf Cooperation Council must sentence Saudi action in blocking the dispatch of Iranian pilgrims last year.

Regarding Iran's ownership of three islands, it should respect and refrain from expressing unfounded and undocumented reasons and try to establish security and solve problems in the area.

**References**

Azghandi, A.R., 1996. 13,571,320 Foreign Affairs of Iran, Tehran, Ghomes publication.

Afshar Sistani, I., 1995. Abu Musa and Greater Tunb and Lesser Tunb Islands, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Press.

Jaafari Weldani, A., 1995. Changes in Geopolitical Borders and its role in the Persian Gulf, Ghomes publication.

Jaafari Weldani, A., 1988. The history of Iran-Iraq border disputes, Political and International Studies Office.

Drisdel, Alasdyr, H. Blake, Gerald, 1990. The political geography of the Middle East and North Africa, the translation of Mir Heydar Mohajerani, Political and International Studies Office.

Wright, Dennis, 1967. The British in Iran, Translated by Gholam Hossein Souri Afshar, Donya publications.

Shahabi, Saif al Reza, 2007. Views of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council, Information Publication.

Aalam, A., 1371. My Interview with King, Volume I, published by the New Deal.

Kazemi, Ali Asghar, 1986, the rights of ownership in the Persian Gulf, the Office of Political and International Studies.

Mujtahidzade, Piruz, in 1994, important developments in the past year in the geopolitical world, Economic and Political Information Issue 5 and 6.

Mujtahidzade, Piruz, 1994. Countries and Borders in geopolitical Persian Gulf , translation and adjustment by Hamid Reza Malek Mohammad Nouri, the State Department's Institute Press.

Mujtahidzade, Piruz, Zahra Ahmdypur and Tahmures Heydari, 2012. Explaining the views of the United Arabic Emirates over the three islands of Iran since 1992, Geopolitics Quarterly, Issue One.

Mujtahidzade, Piruz, 1994. "Iranian in the Persian Gulf," Political and Economic Information, year 8, seventh and eighth issues.

Movafagh Yasaghi, M.R., 1999. Iran's ownership of the islands, Alef publication.

Naimi Arfa, February, 1989. The Persian Gulf Cooperation Council's behavior towards the Islamic Republc of Iran, Tehran, Institute for Political and International Studies.

Noorbakhsh, H., 1983. The Persian Gulf and the Iranian islands, Senate Library.

Noorbakhsh, H., 1992. Abu Mosa Islands, Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb, Monthly Galaxy No. 23.

Houshang Mahdavi, A., 1999. The history of Iran's foreign relations, Moalef publication.

Kayhan newspaper, Mehr 18, 1995.

Kayhan newspaper, Azar 22, 1971.

Sariolghalam, M.; Iran’s Foreign Policy and U.S. - Iranian Relations, Policy Brief, Washington, Middle East Institute, Feb. 5, 2001. P. 1.1- Afrasiabi, L. K; Dialogue among Civilizations and Iran’s Foreign Policy; www.Payvand.com/news/01/jan/1165.html, Jan. 31, 2001.

United Arab Emirates: Review 2000; Middle East Review World of Information; Sep. 28, 2000.