

## Colonial Roots of the Persian Gulf Sheikhdoms' Action in Front of the Imposed War

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### Abstract

Evaluating the role of some Western-affiliated factors in the imposed war, especially the colonial identities of the Persian Gulf, in the formation and continuation of this war, reflects the inadequacies caused by the British colonial heritage in the periphery of Iran. The slogan of independence from the East and the West and the sheiks' reaction to the Persian Gulf region showed their reliance on supra-regional powers. The formation background of these colonial identities back to the weakness of the central authorities of the Islamic world in the 19 AD/13 AH century. Therefore, the survival continuity of these sheikhdoms formed based on the weak conditions of the Islamic world depends on the continuation of the same conditions. It is the behaviorology principle of some of Iran's neighbors in response to the independence and freedom slogans of the Islamic Revolution. Hence, the behavior and performance of the Persian Gulf sheikhdoms during the imposed war indicated their connection with Western colonialism. By examining historical documents, library studies, and analytical methods, the present study aimed to answer the fundamental question of 'what role did the colonial identity of the Persian Gulf sheikhdoms play in their behavior and action in the front of the imposed war?' The requirements arising from the colonial conditions in the contract of 1820 AD / 1235 AH, the continued formation of affiliated sheikhdoms, including Kuwait, in Iraq's relationship with the Persian Gulf, the sheikhdoms' economic and political dependence on Western nations played a decisive role in their policy toward the imposed war. These colonial conditions caused these sheikhdoms, with the direct and indirect support of Saddam Hussein, to practically expand the scope of conflict and insecurity in the Persian Gulf region.

**Keywords:** Imposed War, Iran, Iraq, Colonialism, Persian Gulf Sheikhdoms.

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### Introduction

The Iran-Iraq war was rooted in border issues, regional developments, and global politics; this conflict was due to uncertainty at the borders and Saddam Hussein's exploitation of the situation in Iran. The victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran had crucial effects, such as fundamental changes in the countries' policy in the region and the policy of the United States in the Persian Gulf, the fear of the regional governments from the export of revolutionary ideology and the consequent threat to their monarchical political system. On the other hand, the concern of the United States necessitated the exigence to prevent the finding power of revolutionary Iran in the front of the monarchical regime's security of the Persian Gulf.

The direct and indirect effects of the war on the Persian Gulf situation and grounding the gap strengthen between Iran and the Arab sheikdoms were rooted in the apparent conflict between the colonial policy of the sheikdoms and the anti-colonial policy and slogans of the Islamic Revolution. The competition prompted sheiks to help Iraq confront the illusion of an Iranian threat during the eight-year war. Sheiks believed that ending the war where Iran had military-politically superiority was considered surrender to the Islamic Revolution. This matter led to political developments and the behavior of Persian Gulf sheiks towards revolutionary Iran.

So, far, no comprehensive research has been done on the political-military developments in the Persian Gulf region during the imposed war. The importance of the Persian Gulf in Iran's foreign relations and the historical significance of the eight-year war require evaluating the historical roots of the relationship between the war and the historical conditions of this region and presenting the historical process of the actors' developments of this region in the war. The data is collected from historical sources with analytical and library methods and gathered from first-hand sources and research. After studying and reviewing the authorities, we took notes on the necessary materials. Then, we concluded by historical analysis on different theories on a subject. The questioned geographical area is the Persian Gulf, which traditionally includes the waters between the Iranian plateau and the Arabian Peninsula. Still, the place territory in question is the Arab sheikdoms and the waters of the Persian Gulf from Hormuz Strait to the Arvand mouth from 1980 to 1988 AD / 1358 to 1367 SH.

### 1. Research Background

Persian Gulf developments in the Iran-Iraq war have been extensively studied in historical research. Access to a comprehensive study requires a thorough review and investigation of various documents and sources. Fewer Persian studies have comprehensively examined the impact of war on Persian Gulf issues. Most of the data is in unpublished manuscripts. The book "A Journey into War (Beginning

to End)" by Muhammad Droudian is about the general situation in the Persian Gulf during the imposed war. The book "Geography of Sustainable Sacred Defense Operations" by Pourahmad and "Soviet Strategy in the Persian Gulf Region" by Babak Naderpour do not analyze the subject of the Persian Gulf sheikhdoms; they generally refer to the Persian Gulf during the war. Anthony Cordesman's book "Lessons from Modern Warfare" examines the evolution of war in general. Mahmoud Yazdanfam's book "Fiftieth Day of War Book, Escort of Oil Tankers" researches the Persian Gulf developments and Iran's foreign relations. The author has a macro view on the subject of war. There are significant shortcomings in this book regarding the political situation in the Persian Gulf during the war and the general trend of regional and international issues.

Velayati in the book "Political History of the Iran-Iraq Imposed War" and Seif Al-Reza Shahabi in "Perspectives of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council" and the book "Persian Gulf Cooperation Council" by Ali Asghar Ghasemi Naraghi provide general and scattered information to researchers. The "Secret Case" by Pierre Salinger and Eric Laurent examines the events of the Persian Gulf War from a journalistic perspective, and Avigdor Hassel Korn's book "Endless Storm" examines the consequences of the Iran-Iraq war and its impact on Saddam's decision to attack Kuwait.

No independent research has been done on this subject, and most studies have examined the onset of war and military operations or a brief period of war. The distinguishing feature of the present article is in the approach focused on finding the colonial roots of the imposed war and paying attention to the colonial issues arising from British policies in the 19<sup>th</sup> century AD / 13<sup>th</sup> AH and its role in the emergence and continuation of the regional problems in the Islamic world. In this article, the issue of the eight-year Iran-Iraq war was considered as a historical example. Examination of historical causes and contexts of the imposed war, no works published, have studied the role and impact of policies and the legacy of colonialism in this regard.

We will examine the colonial roots of the Persian Gulf sheikhdoms' identity and survey the critical causes and factors in the behaviorology and performance of the Persian Gulf sheikhdoms in front of the imposed war of Iraq against Iran.

## **2. The Formation Process of Political Identities on the Southern Shores of the Persian Gulf**

The Arab countries of the southern Persian Gulf after the First World War and the collapse of the Ottoman Empire established, compared with many countries in the region, lack outstanding components and vital elements from national identity and historical background. According to historical sources, a brief history of the Persian Gulf sheikhdoms, especially the two sheikhdoms of the United Arab

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Emirates and Kuwait, results from the British colonial period developments in West Asia. It means that with the advent of the new era and the technical superiority of Europe, the centers of power and wealth gradually transferred to this region, and the Islamic world was far from historical capabilities such as the power of global and continued influence of the area. This apparent weakness disrupted the Islamic lands integration and the exploitation of European states, especially the United Kingdom, by these conditions (Ghasemian, 2020 AD/1399 SH: 84-87).

Contract 1820 AD/1235 AH, which many scholars in the history of the Persian Gulf region have paid less attention to, is considered the first contract of British political representatives in the disintegration of Islamic lands and the first factor in the formation of the Persian Gulf sheikdoms (Ghasemian, 2008 AD/1387 SH: 141-143).

This agreement had contents that its implementation guaranteed the continuation of the weakness and dependence of the powers of the Islamic world on Europe.

As a result, a deep connection formed between Britain as a representation of the Christian world and Europe with fake identities in the heart of the Islamic world and the periphery of the two central powers of the Islamic world, namely Iran and the Ottoman Empire (Elahi, 1986 AD/1365 SH: 116-119; Imami, 1993 AD/1372 SH: 32-38).

Regarding the content of the 1820 contract, the Saudis, after two extinctions by Iranian and Ottoman forces between 1811 and 1870, within the acceptance of contract content while the Saudi fugitives in Kuwait were refugees from the British political representative Shakespeare could be re-positioned in the Arabian Peninsula in 1902 by the help of the British (Ghasemian, 2020 AD/1399 SH: 89).

It means that Al-Saud has an essential contradiction with the unified interests of the Islamic world. Then, any re-empowerment of the Islamic was an alarm for the dependent structures to Western power that are opposed to the Muslims' interests. It means sheikdoms' identity conflicts with the general interests of the Islamic world. The dependent sheiks saw their survival in a substantial contradiction with the Muslims' interests and the continuing weakness and dependence of the Islamic world on the colonial powers. These marginalized and dependent identities could not influence the Islamic world. Still, the discovery of oil in the 1920 AD/1299 SH and 1950 AD/1329 SH caused the beginning of a new era in Britain's relations with the Muslim world. Apart from the economic benefits of oil, the position of these false identities in the future developments of the Islamic world becomes apparent by evaluating the content of the sheikdom-sponsored contract. Hence, the conflicting identities of affiliated sheikdoms caused many changes in the Islamic world over the past few decades. This effect appeared in two different ways and

two distinct periods. In this regard, the main goal of Britain in establishing the Persian Gulf sheikhdoms was the economic impact on the two powers of the Islamic world, namely Iran and the Ottoman Empire (Ghasemian, 2020 AD/1399 SH: 31-35).

The role of the UAE was debilitating the economic and commercial power of the ports of southern Iran and the Sultanate of Oman, which did it right. During the last years of the Qajar era, many prominent Iranian merchants migrated to Dubai, Abu Dhabi, and Sharjah under the direct support of the British naval security system and a large fleet. The establishment of the Bahrain-UAE line of communication with India and Europe destroyed the Persian Gulf-Oman trade line to the East and West, and the steamship performed this task well. The British, about Kuwait and Bahrain, with the concentrating Iraq trade and the Ottoman West in Kuwait, while the historical power of Basra and Khuzestan ports is declining in East and West trade, created a geographical bottleneck for any political power in Iraq (Jafari Valdani, 1992 AD/1371 SH: 16-18; Ghasemian, 2008 AD/1387 SH: 406-408).

### **3. Britain Withdraws from the Persian Gulf and Western Policy in Maintaining Dependent Sheikhdoms**

In a report describing the dangers of communism for the United States, Dr. Truman advised the US government to deploy allied forces in the Free Zones (Western Bloc and its environs) to confronting the communism influence. Also, prevent the former Soviet Union from gaining access to the free world by building a fence around the Eastern Bloc (Elahi, 1986 AD/1365 SH: 115).

In his 1947 speech, then-President Truman declared that the United States should financially support the countries at risk of communism (Imami, 1993 AD/1372 SH: 34).

With the proclamation of Truman and the growing commitment of the US government to the balance of power in the Middle East, the hostility and traditional rivalry between the former Soviet Union and the United Kingdom became hostility to the Soviet Union and the United States (Zakeri Marvast, 2008 AD/1387 SH: 24).

Following the fall of the Suez Canal in 1956 and the 1958 coup in Iraq, and the growth of leftist movements, then-President Eisenhower proposed his theory in this regard (Imami, 1993 AD/1372 SH: 36).

After criticizing Soviet policy in the Middle East, Eisenhower wanted Congress to grant economic and military assistance to all or some countries in the region who wished to do so if those countries allowed the US armed forces to use their territory in return (Chomsky, 2016 AD/1395 SH: 12).

Eisenhower's proposal reinforced the theory that the coastal states of the Persian Gulf should fill any gaps themselves and protect their security (Ghasemian, 2020 AD/1399 SH: 96-98).

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Therefore, they accepted the Nixon proposal. According to this theory, in the Persian Gulf region, two affiliated semi-independent regimes with economic power and human resources, namely the Pahlavi government as a "Military Pillar" and the government of Al-Saud as a "Financial Pillar and Support" to protect the dependent sheikdoms from communism influence have played a role. It means aligning seemingly independent states in line with Western colonial policies. The choice of two semi-dependent regimes in Iran and Saudi Arabia to maintain fake and dependent identities was accompanied by solid reasons.

Iran had the most extensive coastline with the Persian Gulf, the most populous country, with a dependent and trained Western army. As the largest producer and supplier of oil to Europe and the United States, Saudi Arabia had considerable financial power with substantial political influence among the sheiks of the Persian Gulf. These Pahlavi and Saudi regimes had close relations with the United States (Elahi, 1986 AD/1365: 65).

Iran would have a more authentic place in this theory because of its more outstanding military capabilities than Saudi Arabia, its location between the Persian Gulf and the former Soviet Union, and more appropriate geopolitical contexts. Therefore, as a "Regional Gendarme or Police," this country should play a key role in preserving the colonial heritage and a critical factor in preventing the formation of independent identities based on national and Islamic interests in West Asia (Asadian, 2002 AD/1381 SH: 31).

Part of the Cold War was the Soviet-American rivalry in confronting independent identities in the Islamic world and revealed one of these contexts of rivalry in Oman. The separatist movement of the People's Front for the liberation of Dhofar, which sought freedom from colonial influence, was eliminated in several operations in 1353-55 (Halliday, 1981 AD/1360 SH: 176-214).

The process of turning Afghanistan into a communist country in 1978 AD/1357 SH was faced with a strong reaction from the United States and the region's countries (Zakeri Marvast, 2008 AD/1387 SH: 78; Vosoughi, 2005 AD/1384 SH: 456-457).

The new American regional approach involved combating Soviet expansionism. In response to the US demands to protect its interests in the Persian Gulf region, Iran demanded increased US military advisers to train the Iran army and more authority to purchase military equipment and US avoidance of interfering in Iran's domestic politics. The United States agreed to all of the Shah's demands. At a critical historical moment, the Pahlavi government placed the Iranian nation as the provider of colonial interests in the Persian Gulf, a region that Iranians have always considered part of their historical identity. The happen was not even at the height of the weakness and rhetoric of the Qajar government. The agreement to apart from Bahrain was the

culmination of an alliance with foreign interests by an Iranian government that was unprecedented in Iranian history. Richard Holmes, the then US Ambassador to Tehran at the National Defense University in February 1976 AD/1354 SH, described the Persian Gulf region as a vital region for the West and all countries of the world. He added that this region's stability and security are among the most critical priorities of American foreign policy (Rubin, 1984 AD/1363 SH: 135).

As part of the historical identity of the Iranians, the Persian Gulf has become part of the colonial identity and West interests, and the king of Iran, Willingly or unwillingly, supplied the goods of colonialism and preserved these interests. While the Persian Gulf had increasing importance and played a vital role in providing energy for the sustainability of the world's industrial life, and was known as a geopolitical and geostrategic region (Mahdavi, 1997 AD/1376 SH: 268-269).

In any way, the governments of non-national and against their nation's interests, namely the Ba'athist regime in Iraq and Al Saud in Saudi Arabia, wanted to play a role in this ostensibly serving civilization. However, Iraq, realizing the extensive damage caused by the British colonial policy in creating a rift between Iraq and Kuwait, sometimes warn the end of the British mechanism of the Persian Gulf sheikhdoms (Mojtahedzadeh, 2002 AD/1381 SH:195).

While stimulating geostrategic competition in the region, this situation caused regional power such as Saudi Arabia to think about getting rid of the geostrategic impasse. According to Saudi Arabia and its Western allies, this strait derived from Iran's proxy dominance over the Strait of Hormuz. However, Saudi Arabia was heavily dependent on the channel's security (ibid: 195-196).

#### **4. The Kuwait Sheikdom and the Geographical Strait for Iraq**

Regarding the natural borders in the Persian Gulf, Iraq has been unfavorable compared to all the coastal countries in the region, including Oman and Bahrain. It has always sought to get out of this situation. The annexation of Kuwait or at least the sovereignty acquisition over Khorramshahr and Abadan or Bubiyan and Warbah islands have been proposed to solve this problem. Iraqi leaders saw the achievement of one of the regions of Khuzestan and Kuwait as a solution to the geopolitical problem of overcoming the status quo. Several attempts to occupy Kuwait in 1961 AD/1340 SH with British intervention were unsuccessful, and the West's reaction prevented serious action against Kuwait. From its formation, especially after independence, Iraq has claimed sovereignty over Kuwait and Iran's land and sea borders in the southwest. Even if ideologically, Iraq considered the Persian Gulf countries as allies and subjects of imperialism and at the time of independence of the Iraqi emirates were

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willing to manipulate and interfere in the internal affairs of these countries, they all have historical backgrounds and, most importantly, geographical and geographical causes. The cause is the political and geographical bottleneck of Iraq (Seifzadeh, 2000 AD/1379 SH: 268).

Iraq can only reach the Persian Gulf via Iran and Kuwait. Basra and Umm al-Qasr ports are in a geographical and security strait with the demarcation of the borders along the Talug line. Umm al-Qasr is surrounded by the islands of Warbah and Bubiyan in Kuwait. With their historical background, the Iraqi people consider themselves the inheritors of world civilization and now have to get permission to cross the waters of Kuwait, which is controlled by the Western countries, to reach the outside world. Part of the influence and strengthening of extremist nationalism in Iraq during the Ba'ath party's existence was the imposition of colonial policies on the Iraqi people. Like the happen was imposed on the Germans after World War I and caused the rise of Nazism. British colonial policy caused some irrational deviation for some Iraqi officials. Under the pretext of imposing a geographical bottleneck on British colonial heritage in the Persian Gulf, they pursued an aggressive policy to the detriment of neighboring countries (Ghasemian, 2020 AD/1399 SH: 141-143; 2009 AD/1388 SH: 329-336; 2011 AD/1390 SH: 495-510).

At the same time, all the Arab rulers of the Persian Gulf region were dependent on the West and regarded any change in the status quo as a field of disruption of their dependent identity. There was this situation from North Africa to the Persian Gulf. Most countries were led by affiliated governments that recognized the British heritage (Jafari Valdani 1992 AD/1371 SH: 13; Seifzadeh, 2000 AD/1379 SH: 267-268).

Iraqi leaders offered another way out of the impasse in claiming absolute sovereignty over the Arvand River and part of Khuzestan; the fulfillment depended on the strength of Iran's central government. Fear of an Iranian reaction caused the return of Iraqi governments to the issue of Kuwait. In 1951, the Iraqi government blocked the make border with Kuwait, claiming ownership of the Warbah island. In 1954 AD/1333 SH, during negotiations to divert the Arvand River to Kuwait, Iraq demanded four square kilometers of the Kuwaiti Sabah estuary west of the island of Warbah and Bubiyan (ibid:191). This issue led to conflicts between Al-Sabah and Abdul Karim Qasim and the Ba'ath party (Jafari Valdani, 1989 AD/1368 SH: 288).

According to Abdul Karim Qasim, Kuwait was part of Iraq. Therefore, at the request of Sheikh Abdullah Salim Ale Sabah, Emir of Kuwait, on July 1, 1961, British troops entered Kuwait. The Arab League convened a meeting and Kuwait's application for membership in the Arab League was quickly considered and accepted (Parsa Doust, 1990 AD/1369 SH: 204).



This plan was adopted to maintain the status quo regarding the British request and with the direct support of the dependent states, including Al Saud and the Egyptian government. Kuwait refused to cede the two islands at the insistence of Britain, which saw any concessions to Iran and Iraq in the Persian Gulf as a stroke to its interests. All regional powers played a role in the colonial land; increasing hostility and border disputes regarding the decisions of England in the 19/13 century had an impact on neighborly relations in the 20th century (Jafari Valdani, 1989 AD/1368 SH: 214).

In Kuwait, Sheikh Al-Sabah tried to defuse the Iraqi threat by diverting Iraq's attention to Iran's borders. It was the most critical reason for Kuwait's comprehensive support for Saddam during the eight-year war with Iran. Iraq's expansionist claims mainly were within the Gulf Coast. Border clashes with Iran intensified in 1971 AD/1350 SH, and the restoration of Iranian sovereignty over the three islands, which resulted from the encroachment of Western sheiks on Iran's borders, intensified differences. In December 1971 AD/ Azar 1350 SH, several border clashes took place between Iran and Iraq (Jafari Valdani, 1992 AD/1371 SH: 44) .

Thus, the first direct effect of the formation of sheikhdoms in the future developments of the Islamic world appeared. The establishment of the seven sheikhdoms emirates of the United Arab Emirates and the installing the fake Sharjah and Ras al-Khaimah flags on the Iranian islands caused the essential Iranian-Arab disputes under the direct leadership of the United Kingdom.

Consequently, in connection with the geographical strait of Iraq, according to the establishment of the Kuwait sheikhdom, it affected the relations between Iran and Iraq (Ghasemian, 2011 AD/1390 SH: 480-516).

The combination of the two phenomena of the 19th-20th /13th-14th centuries caused the creation of a new mechanism in the relations between Muslim states. They included establishing affiliated sheikhdoms in the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Peninsula as the territories around the central core of the Islamic world in West Asia in the 19th century. Then, the establishment of modern and semi-independent governments in the major countries of the Islamic world (Iran, Iraq, Egypt, Turkey, etc.).

The common denominator of both the 19th and 20th-century phenomena was a sense of Western superiority. However, the recent phenomenon was formed in the heart of traditional lands with a conventional identity, economic power, and significant human resources, and tried to dismantle the mechanism of conventional colonialism in the 19th century.

The alignment of the political identities interests of the 19th century and the new identities of the 20th century prevented the emergence of fundamental differences and disturbances in the status

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quo unless a revolutionary movement changes the basis of this colonial mechanism and contrary to the public interests of the Islamic world (Ghasemian, 2009 AD/1388 SH: 341-348; 2008 AD/1387 SH: 407-410).

### 5. The Islamic Revolution and the Collapse of the Colonial Mechanism in the Persian Gulf

The consequences of the fall of the Shah in the Persian Gulf and the region were far-reaching and detrimental to the United States. According to Brzezinski, Iran is the biggest defeat of the Carter administration. Regardless of its influence on the Camp David peace and the normalization of relations with China and its firm stance against the Soviet Union, the overthrow of the Shah was considered strategically catastrophic for the United States and Carter himself (Brzezinski, 2000 AD/1379 SH: 496).

Following the victory of the Islamic Revolution, Iran's foreign policy in the region and the world underwent a fundamental change. The real fear of the Islamic wave spread everywhere in the area. This wave could seriously threaten the region's stability and the western oil reservoirs (Tirman, 1994 AD/1373 SH: 161).

Thus, the revolution at the most critical Western base in the Persian Gulf upset the balance of power and announced the main framework of Iran's foreign policy; consequently, they proposed a new pole based on the dominant political ideology in the contemporary world.

The Islamic Revolution caused the revelation of the true identity of the Islamic world and Iran and the political, cultural, and economic conflict between the genuine interests of Muslims and affiliated political identities as the provider of Western interests in the region. Such a transformation began during the return and reliance on Islamic and Iranian identity and confrontation with the pro-Western current. The significance of this development was related to the Persian Gulf and its future impact on the colonial search mechanism.

The common interests and characteristics of the Iranian Shia and the coastal settlers, who had less interest in the new Western instrument, gave rise to a kind of essential conflict between the revolutionary system in Iran and the political structures governing the Arab sheikdoms. This process has added to Western concerns about disrupting their vital interests in the region. The most important consequences of the Islamic Revolution of Iran were the questioning of the legitimacy of the ruling regimes in the Persian Gulf countries. Reducing the legitimacy of the ruling governments in the Arab countries of the Persian Gulf as a legacy of old and new colonialism meant reducing their domestic and foreign political authority and their regional and global supporters (Asadian, 2002 AD/1381 SH: 48).

The Islamic Revolution had a great reflection outside the borders of Iran, and it was Islam's victory (Kadivar, 1994 AD/1373 SH: 9).The

achievement of the Islamic Revolution ended the apparent and practical dependence on the United States. The revolution had a religious nature, and the slogan of neither Eastern nor Western was the basis of foreign relations (Kayhan newspaper, 9/1/1982 AD/1361/6/10 SH: 4).

The spiritual and popular characteristics of the Iranian revolution and the fall of the Shah's regime as a strategic ally of the United States and the West caused the Iranian revolution to be analyzed based on the four concepts of religion, people, and the nature of the fall of the Shah and the impact on American interests. Therefore, rebuilt Iran's foreign relations foundation (Khomeini, 1989 AD/1368 SH: 4, 249).

The Islamic Revolution worried the West and Communism equally. The reaction of the region's people and the demonstrations in Khartoum, Cairo, Tripoli, and the slogans of death to the Shah and end to Sadat showed a new uprising (Tirman, 1994 AD/1373 SH: 161).

The revolution put the support of liberation movements on its foreign policy agenda (Bashiri, 1383: 453; Halliday, 1981 AD/1360 SH: 326) and crystallized as a model in activities (Droudian, 1997 AD/1376 SH: 743; Thani Nejad, 1994 AD/1373 SH: 215).

Before 1979, Iran and Saudi Arabia, the two political and financial pillars, were regional stability, and the balance in the Peninsula and the Persian Gulf region was one of the common interests of Iran and Saudi Arabia. It led to normal relations between the two countries, although there was rivalry and fear between them. The Islamic Revolution victory revived the hope of restoring the greatness of the past and liberation from the domination of the dominating powers (Ebrahimifar, 1999 AD/1378 SH: 43; Droudian, 1997 AD/1376 SH: 1, 732).

Reducing the legitimacy of the regimes governing the Arab states of the Persian Gulf meant reducing the authority of these countries to create security. The common religious and ethnic interests and characteristics between the Iran Shias and the Shias of these countries add to the concerns. In Iraq and Bahrain, Shias make up about 60% of the total population of these countries (Asadian, 2002 AD/1381 SH: 48).

The sheiks and rulers of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman, and the United Arab Emirates, along with Israel, became the Western military and strategic base in the region with a variety of reinforced equipment (Buye, 2011 AD/1390 SH: 47; Brzezinski, 1983 AD/1362 SH: 191-192).

Since the 1980s, Saudi Arabia has become one of the mainstays of US foreign policy in the Middle East, and a variety of military equipment from artillery, tanks, armor, aircraft, radar, missile systems, and warships is given to the sheiks (Sohrabi, 1990 AD/1369 SH: 340-341).

## 6. The Occurrence of War and the Colonial Interests of the Persian Gulf Sheiks

From 1979-1980 AD/1357-1359 SH, the political and military situation in Iran and the Persian Gulf region caused Saddam to achieve easier his goals. At the same time, the Arabs needed Iraq to contain the Islamic Revolution and to spread moderation in the area. In return, Iraq needed the diplomatic and economic support of the Arabs to carry out its actions against Iran and advance its goals of gaining leadership in the region (Freulich and Levy, 2011 AD/1390 SH: 127).

It caused the temporary resolution of the issue of Kuwait and the precaution in the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council on how to deal with Iran and interact with Iraq. The council had two negative and cautious tendencies. Saudi Arabia and Kuwait favored intensity of action to keep Iran and Iraq involved in the war. The UAE and Oman favored maintaining minimal relations and not blocking all avenues of confrontation with Iran. Of course, these two countries also supported the united positions of the council in the continuous condemnation of Iran during the imposed war (Yazdanfam and Jamshidi, 2002 AD/1381 SH: 29, 52).

The role of colonial policies in the emergence of differences and lack of convergence and cooperation within the region during the imposed war was significant. Some sheiks even spent millions of dollars to show that peace and reconciliation plans in the area were ineffective. It meant the necessity of continuing security unrest to save the lives of the sheiks and especially the Ale Saud (Ghasemian, 2020 AD/1399 SH: 142; Ebrahimifar, 1999 AD/1378 SH: 385).

The purpose of establishing the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council in 1981 was economic, cultural, political, and social cooperation between the members. But from the first, there was no symmetry between the members' demands, which caused this so-called regional organization not to play an essential role in the Persian Gulf. The council was created to counter the illusion of the Islamic Republic's danger (Borono, 1985 AD/1364 SH: 45).

To guarantee future developments towards Iran, the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council declared that the council is not an alliance against a country and is merely a covenant (Olivia, 1387 AD/1366 SH: 118).

With the change of the war scene and the beginning of a new phase, the Kuwaiti government became more determined to support the Iraqi regime and, in addition to increasing its material and financial assistance to Iraq, called for peace and a ceasefire. The amount of financial aid to Iraq was increased. Obstacles to Kuwait's financial aid to Iraq in late 1982 due to the need for the Kuwaiti parliament to approve the help were removed by shifting the balance

of power on the fronts to the detriment of Iraq. Thus, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, in support of Iraq, pursued a concerted diplomatic effort. However, the sheikhdoms have no historical identity components (Ghasemian, 2008 AD/1387 SH: 393-395; 407-409).

While the monarchies of the Arab Gulf countries were concluding reciprocal security agreements in the summer of 1979 (Freulich and Levy, 2011 AD/1390 SH: 127; Droudian, 1997 AD/1376 SH: 1, 306), Saddam, because of the need for practical assistance, defended the sheikhs' positions and, along with the Saudis, played a prominent role in countering the threat of the Iranian revolution (Roshandel and Seifzadeh, 2003 AD/1382 SH: 81).

Simultaneously the Eight-Year War, the West realized the colonial identity of the sheiks of the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia. Still, the two non-colonial countries of Iran and Iraq, which were capable of independence based on their indigenous and national identities, were seen as opposing the life of colonial identities.

Hence, they tried to maintain the status quo, the balance of power between the two sides, and weaken Iran and Iraq during the war. The sheiks wanted to continue the fight, but these public efforts to weaken the Iranian people's revolution could harm the general opinion of the sheikhdom residents and create a kind of discontent among the masses living in the region. Scholars refer to this issue with terms such as the uncertain situation for the sheiks of the Persian Gulf (Cordesman, 2003 AD/1382SH: 570-572).

Although they had an apparent inclination towards Iraq in the imposed war, they were always afraid that the victory of one side would lead to the superiority of the other side in the Persian Gulf region. So, they took advantage of every opportunity. At the 11th Arab Summit, the Emir of Kuwait called for a common strategy to stay out of international conflicts. In February 1981, the Riyadh Summit paved the way for the formulation of the organizational structure and objectives of the Cooperation Council with the participation of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait, Oman, and the United Arab Emirates (Naimi, 1991 AD/1370 SH: 31).

Saudi Arabia and Kuwait provided the most financial, intelligence, and military support to Saddam during the eight-year war. This aid was often offered in the shadow of the fake Western alliance for the sheikhdoms in the form of the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council. Other Arab countries, although not members of the council, nevertheless moved alongside member states to provide political and economic support to Iraq during the war. Saudi Arabia allowed US vessels and aircraft fleets to refuel in its waters. Bahrain provided medical and fire services during the attack on the USS Stark and its repair after being hit. American helicopters typically used Bahraini soil for training and loading. Bahrain had allowed US fleets to load

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continuously. At the height of the US deployment in the region, a supply ship was unloaded every week and unloaded several US Air Force planes in Bahrain each day. Bahrain de facto accepted the deployment of American forces on its territory and leased several large platforms for the deployment of American troops (Cordesman, 2003: 571, 671-763).

This direct and indirect access and assistance of the council were reinforced simultaneously as Saddam's dissatisfaction with the bits of help. Until the recapture of Khorramshahr in May 1982/Khordad 1361, members of the Cooperation Council had no comment on the end of the war. Without mentioning the withdrawal of Iraqi forces from the occupied territories, they emphasized the necessity to increase efforts to find a final solution to the conflict. The council tried to link the war and the revolution's victory to the threats of the Arab nation (Naimi, 1991 AD/1370 SH: 86).

### **7. Recapture of Khorramshahr and Direct Entry of Sheiks into the War in the Persian Gulf**

Following a created calm in the war that followed the conquest of Khorramshahr and Saddam's demands for peace, the army and IRGC forces decided to launch an offensive and demonstrate their power to Saddam. Therefore, carried out the Ramadan operation to strike the Iraqi positions on July 13, 1982 AD/ Tir 22, 1361 SH, to capture the Basra.

The goal was to separate Iraq from the Persian Gulf completely, and it was imperative in the battle. Ramadan operations changed the war process in the following years in the form of a serious entry into the sea and an attempt for tactical and armor superiority (Cordesman and Wagner: 1994 AD/1373 SH: 2, 214; Zakeri Marvast, 2008 AD/1387 SH: 78).

Late autumn 1361, the leaders of the sheiks, while expressing concern, declared that the developments of the war are dangerous for the security of the Arab world and called for a change in the situation (Ghasemi Naraghi, 1999 AD/1378 SH: 135).

In March 1981 AD/Isfand 1359 SH, the declaration of neutrality by the countries south of the Persian Gulf prevented Iran from invading their territory. Still, they wanted to carry on their help in Iraq. In practice, they increasingly provided Saddam with military equipment and financial resources to strengthen his military machine (Cordesman, 2003 AD/1382 SH: 571).

In addition to Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, which openly provided financial support and equipment to Saddam, the United Arab Emirates, Sheikh Bahrain, and Qatar indirectly offered assistance to the country (Qasimian, 2020 AD/1399 SH: 143-146).

With the spread of the war to the Persian Gulf waters by Iraq and attacked oil facilities and ships bound for Iranian ports, the council's

member states felt that there was no threat to the region's security in the no-go zone declared by Iraq (Islamic Republic News Agency, 1987 AD/ 1366 SH: 6).

Kuwait maintained a neutral position in the official and public places less than before in the periods after Iran's victory in the conquest of Khorramshahr and the defeat of the siege of Abadan. Sometimes, in interviews and comments, they acknowledged their help to the Iraqi regime or were trying to justify their support for Iraq (Mousavi, 2004 AD/1383 SH: 91).

Officials of this country on various occasions implicitly and explicitly reiterated their support for Iraq (Islami, 1990 AD/1369 SH: 264-268; Asadi, 2008 AD/1387 SH: 63).

Sheikh Saad Abdul Salem Al-Sabah, Crown Prince and Prime Minister of Kuwait, stated that "Iraq should not be left alone in this war. Invading Iraqi territory is considered an invasion of the Arab world" (Jomhuri Eslami newspaper, July 21 1987 AD/Tir 30, 1366 SH: 3; Zakeri Marvast, 2008 AD/1387 SH: 63).

Kuwait's ambassador to the United States, Massoud Nasser al-Sabah, called for the implementation of the Arab Defense Pact and the prevention of arms exports to Iran to prevent a crisis in the Persian Gulf and praised the Security Council's arms and oil sanctions on Iran (Islami, 1990 AD/1369 SH: 269). Saudi Arabia did the first military action of the council members against Iran (al-Khalij, 1/16/1982 AD/1360/10/26 SH: 1).

The process of transferring goods and weapons from Kuwaiti ports to Iraq intensified. In one year, 6 million tons of goods and weapons were unloaded from Kuwaiti docks to Iraq. One of the Kuwaiti government's main pillars for Iraq was economic, financial, and logistical assistance. In contrast, the Ba'athist government was in an unfavorable situation due to the continuation of the war. The economic crisis in Iraq was inevitable as the cost of war and oil prices plummeted (Islami, 1990 AD/1369 SH: 269).

Under these circumstances, he continued the war only with the military and financial assistance of the Iraqi sheiks. Only the Ale Saud in Saudi Arabia and the Ale Sabah in Kuwait had open support for Iraq during the first war. They launched their propaganda machine against the Iranian revolutionaries.

Kuwait considered it necessary for the Iraqi authorities to divert attention to Khuzestan and tempt and persuade the Iraqis to dominate and abandon their historical claim to Kuwait to survive. Ale Saud saw revolutionary Iran politically, economically, and religiously as opposed to its colonial identity. Subsequently, under pressure from Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, other Arab sheiks secretly act against Iran, all in the Arab League or the Gulf Cooperation Council. However, diplomatic action can sometimes be more effective than a military operation on the ground. During the war, the countries bordering the

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Persian Gulf played the most diplomatic role in strengthening morale, attracting international support, and further weakening Iran (Ghasemian, 2020 AD/1399 SH: 143-144).

Therefore, following Kuwait, other Council countries also announced that they had strengthened their reconnaissance military activities to end the aggression. Diplomatically, the council member sought to condemn the attacks by Iran and sent an Arab League delegation to Japan to urge the country to cut its economic ties with Iran. Saudi Arabia secretly allowed military equipment to pass through its territory to Iraq, increased oil exports, established a pipeline from Al-Zubayr in Iraq to the port of Yanbu, and deployed AWACS warning aircraft to Iraq. Numerous actions of the sheiks demonstrated their hostile stance in support of Iraq and the threat to the security of Iranian shipping lanes in the Persian Gulf (Mousavi, 2004 AD/1383 SH: 85-87). Since the beginning of 1983, the annual financial assistance of the Persian Gulf countries to Iraq has been fifteen billion dollars (Kuzichkin, 1997 AD/1376 SH: 49-51).

After the changes made in the battlefield and the conquest of Khorramshahr, the Iranian forces threatened Basra during the Ramadan operation, the decision-making process of the regional governments also changed (ibid: 52). The Emir of Kuwait, not in the Cooperation Council but the Persian Gulf countries in the Arab League and the United Nations, tried to further weaken Iran in the Persian Gulf region and put pressure on Iran. Nevertheless, their official statements always wanted to show themselves as defenders of the Muslims' rights and benevolence on both sides of the war (Asadi, 2008 AD/1387 SH: 113).

The imposed war exposed the colonial policies of the Persian Gulf sheikdoms regarding the politicization of the Tri-Island issue and the symbolism of the Iranian-Arab conflict in the Persian Gulf region (Schofield, 1997 AD/1376 SH: 148-150).

With the end of the war, this issue remained as one of the most important symbols of the conflict between the legacy of British colonialism and revolutionary Iran.

Thus, the war was the field of many regional problems in West Asia over the past few decades, derived from historical issues arising from the colonialism's emergence and antagonistic role, especially British colonialism. One of the most critical colonial tools for the continued presence of Western countries in West Asia and other parts of the world has been to create obstacles to the empowerment of nations that have sufficient opportunities for empowerment and independence. It has been the case with Iran, Iraq, and other countries around the Persian Gulf over the past two hundred years. Meanwhile, the sheiks of the Persian Gulf region, which did not have the minimum necessary facilities to gain relative independence throughout their history, have been of particular interest to Western



countries. Based on a colonial identity, the sheiks of the southern coasts of the Persian Gulf consider the continuation of their life as the continuation of insecurity and unrest within the axis countries of West Asia and the continuation of maintaining their dependence. Understanding this dependence during the eight-year Iran-Iraq war, they played their role in securing the interests of Western countries (Ghasemian, 2020 AD/1399 SH: 163-167).

### Conclusion

The Iran-Iraq dispute over Arvand played a direct and essential role in the outbreak of the war. But the historical legacy of colonialism in the Persian Gulf, which manifested itself in the formation of the sheikhdoms, caused significant developments during the war. Kuwait's exceptional geographical location for Iraq's entrance and its access to the Persian Gulf was an intolerable issue for the newly established country of Iraq, especially its millions, given the ancient history of Mesopotamian relations with the Persian Gulf.

The leaders of Iraq saw the achievement of the Khuzestan and Kuwait as the solution to their country's geopolitical problem. On the other hand, the victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran and the fall of the Pahlavi government caused fundamental changes in the countries' politics of the Persian Gulf region. Saddam Hussein's expansionism had potential effects on the developments in this region.

The Persian Gulf, which has played an important role in Iran's regional policies, witnessed extensive developments in various political, economic, and military fields after the Islamic Revolution in Iran. The Islamic Revolution shattered all Western colonial equations in the Persian Gulf, and it was a significant blow to the United States. To contain Iran, they realized that Iraq was thought to have the military and political power to counter the Iranian revolution.

The war mobilized the sheiks of the region, and these countries, on the one hand, helped Iraq a lot, and on the other hand, the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council emerged as one of the results of the war, which is still active. The Iran-Iraq war was one of the essential factors in accelerating the alliance between the sheiks and strengthening the Arab-led Cooperation Council.

Subsequently, due to the false propaganda of Iranophobia, the Arab sheiks in the Persian Gulf became frightened, and the Western propaganda machine significantly intensified this fear. As a result, aid from Arab countries and Western intelligence and equipment aid to Iraq strengthened. Although Iran and Iraq were the most critical countries in the Persian Gulf, they were not present in the most crucial political union between the countries of this region, namely the Persian Gulf Cooperation Council. The most critical factor in the

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conservatism of the countries in the southern part of the Persian Gulf has been the fear of the two countries gaining power.

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