



THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PERSIAN GULF IN IRAN– SAUDI ARABIA RELATIONS

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ABSTRACT

By the second half of the 20th century, conflicts between Iran and the Arab states, the political situation in the Middle East, the nature of the states that emerged in this subregion, their foreign policy orientations, as well as the main directions of socio-economic development and evolutionary processes in these countries, attracted significant international attention. This thesis examines the conflicts that have arisen in the Middle East and the measures used to resolve them. Therefore this article is significant and important in the orient field.

This thesis is devoted to analyze the role of the Persian Gulf in Iran–Saudi Arabia relations and its global significance. It also examines regional rivalry during this period and the position of the Gulf states in international affairs. Particular attention is paid to conflicts among Middle Eastern states, including Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Iraq, as well as their international competition.

It should be noted that the relations between Iran and Saudi Arabia have been studied not only by foreign scholars but also by Uzbek researchers. For example, Anvar Nazarov analyzed the foreign policies of Middle Eastern states, especially Saudi–Iranian rivalry and regional security issues.

Ravshan Nazarov studied Islamic civilization, geopolitical processes, and the ideological and political aspects of Iran's relations. Aziz Mo'minov analyzed the regional impact of Iran's and Saudi Arabia's religious policies, while Bakhtiyor Babajanov conducted research on religious and political processes in the Middle East.

First of all, the strategic importance of the Persian Gulf zone in the global economy is explained by its role in supplying fuel and energy resources. This region contains vast reserves of hydrocarbons: approximately 64.9% of proven global oil reserves and about 30% of natural gas reserves are located here. Moreover, the actual volume of hydrocarbon resources, especially gas, remains uncertain, and many deposits in the subregion are still insufficiently explored. New oil and gas fields are discovered almost every year. The Gulf factor influences not only global energy policy but also political developments in the Middle East and the broader Islamic world.¹

¹ A. Alikサンドров " Monarchie persian gulf " Moscow 2000 Pages.6-7

Regarding Saudi Arabia, it represents a group of states where secular and religious power systems are closely interconnected. The 1992 “Basic Law of Governance” is not a constitution in the classical sense. According to its first article, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is a sovereign Arab state whose religion is Islam and whose constitution is the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of the Prophet. Thus, Islam in Saudi Arabia is not only the state religion but also the fundamental law shaping social and political order. This distinguishes Saudi Arabia from other systems, as governance is directly based on Islamic principles.

Apart from Saudi Arabia, the existence of the position of Grand Mufti only in Oman is of particular importance. For the Saudi Kingdom, it is crucial not only to persuade local believers but also the broader Islamic world to adhere to the Sunni traditions of the “Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques.” In Oman, the Sultan promoted the establishment of this highest religious office in order to provide greater legitimacy to his regime.

This contributed to the unification of Oman, historically led by the Ibadi Imam, and the coastal region of Muscat. Here, the ruler exercised not only political authority but also undertook significant religious responsibilities. As in Saudi Arabia, the Grand Mufti, appointed by the head of state, is primarily subordinate to the Sultan and largely serves as an instrument for implementing his will.

The main channel for regulating Islamic institutions and ensuring their loyalty to the state is the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs. In Bahrain, due to the small size of the state and the limited scope of its practical activities, this body has been merged with the Ministry of Justice.

Prominent American experts such as Zbigniew Brzezinski and Richard Murphy have emphasized the strategic importance of the Persian Gulf for the United States. They noted that oil extraction in the Gulf significantly determines global economic prosperity. The region directly affects Arab–Israeli relations, religious extremism, terrorism, and nuclear non-proliferation issues.²

Beginning with Richard Nixon, every U.S. president declared the security and stability of the Persian Gulf a vital interest of Washington. Following the collapse of the bipolar world order, the United States sought to ensure its dominance in the region by containing unfavorable regimes in Iraq and Iran while strengthening multifaceted relations with the six member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council.

The member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council GCC³ are Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Bahrain, and the United Arab Emirates. Among them, Saudi Arabia plays a leading role within the alliance and in broader Arab and Islamic affairs. The Gulf monarchies have become profitable markets for industrialized countries and have achieved unprecedented economic growth over recent decades.⁴

The Gulf subregion has historically been characterized by political instability, shaped by both internal and external factors. During 1970–1988, the bipolar international system influenced security dynamics in the region. Smaller states maneuvered between global powers, although their options were limited by specific political circumstances.

² A. Aliksandrov " Monarchie persian gulf " Moscow 2000 P. 207

³ GCC- Gulf Cooperation Council which is international organization it's task is developing economic and political cooperation among Arabic countries

⁴ A. Aliksandrov " Monarchie persian gulf " Moscow 2000 P. 266

The resource base of the GCC countries is unparalleled worldwide. Saudi Arabia is the undisputed leader, exercising considerable influence within the GCC and the broader Islamic world. Oil revenues have become an effective tool in international politics. Kuwait's oil wealth, for example, not only brought prosperity but also led to Iraq's invasion, demonstrating the geopolitical risks associated with energy resources.

Hydrocarbon reserves have also shaped the leading roles of Abu Dhabi and Dubai within the United Arab Emirates. Qatar's development of one of the world's largest natural gas fields has ensured its long-term economic stability, while Oman increasingly links its future to gas production.

It is important to recognize that hydrocarbons are non-renewable energy resources, which limits the long-term effectiveness of oil and gas economies. Nevertheless, the oil factor has played a decisive role in world economic history. In the early 1970s, within the framework of Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC⁵), Arab states coordinated their actions to secure better control over oil production. Negotiations to revise concession agreements began in Geneva in January

Practical negotiations took place between Saudi Oil Minister Ahmed Zaki Yamani and representatives of Saudi Aramco (formerly ARAMCO). Saudi Arabia initially proposed increasing the producing country's participation from 25% to 50%. In December 1972, a general agreement was signed and later ratified by Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Abu Dhabi. By 1980, Saudi Arabia became the full owner of ARAMCO⁶ shares, establishing complete national control over its hydrocarbon resources.

Political events, including the Arab-Israeli war and the subsequent oil boom, strengthened Pan-Arabism⁷ and radicalized the position of oil-producing states. In 1974, Saudi Arabia increased its capital share in oil operations to 51%, and later to 60%, further consolidating national control over the oil industry. Similarly, in 1974, Kuwait transferred 60% of its oil production and refining capacity into state ownership and acquired 85% of Aminoil⁸ shares

It should be noted that when discussing the modernization processes of this Gulf region, for example, in Saudi Arabia, the country began implementing its first five-year plan for economic and social development in 1970. However, there is another factor relevant to the entire "Arab Six," whose significance is difficult to overestimate: the acceleration of large-scale modernization processes, strongly stimulated by the "oil boom" of the first half of the 1970s.

Modernization is an extremely broad concept. When applied to society and the state, it refers to a transition from the old to the new, corresponding to a particular stage of civilization. Using this general criterion, almost any period of evolutionary development in history—provided that no regression occurs—could be described as a stage of modernization.

At the same time, with regard to the Arab Six, it can be reasonably emphasized that modernization in these countries has been proceeding at a rapid pace, both in comparison with their own previous historical development and in comparison with other regional groups.

⁵ OPEC-the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries which is international organization according to oil which is organized in 1960.

⁶ ARAMCO-between Arab and USA company according to oil presently name of company is Saudi Aramco

⁷ Pan-Arabism-The unification of all Arabic states

⁸ Aminoil-the name of company according to oil

At the same time, the capitals of the “Arab Six” continued to rely on the United States and the United Kingdom as external supporters of ruling dynasties, recognizing that weakening these ties could have serious consequences for monarchical regimes.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study examined the role of the Persian Gulf in relations between Iran and the Arab states, particularly Saudi Arabia. The region’s political nature and foreign policy orientations were carefully analyzed. Special attention was given to the role of the GCC countries and to scholarly research on the topic. Negotiations between oil companies in the Gulf states led to important international agreements regulating oil production and distribution.

The global significance of the Persian Gulf, especially its economic potential and oil factor, was thoroughly examined. Undoubtedly, policymakers consider this region crucial not only for global energy supply but also for addressing challenges such as religious extremism and nuclear non-proliferation. Moreover, the Gulf plays a significant role in supporting the economic prosperity of Western countries, particularly the United States.

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