Geopolitical Rivalries of Great Powers Centered on South East of Greater Iran and Function of Qajar Dynasty

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Received: 30/11/2010      Accepted: 20/04/2011

Extended Abstract

Introduction
The word Geopolitical Rivalries is older than the words: geopolitics and geopolitical knowledge, and they date back to the period of ancient civilizations and the time of rivalries between powerful states. In modern times, based on colonial, ideological, economic and cultural characteristics, these rivalries can be divided to three periods: a period of 450-years (from late the 15th century to 1945), a period of 45 years (from 1945 to 1990) and the period of recent 20 years (from 1990 to present). Words such as "Greater Iran" "Greater Khorasan", "Greater Sistan" and "Greater Baluchistan" will lead us to a historical period which includes the entire nineteenth century and a part of the twentieth century. The heritage of this period was territorial disintegration and delimitation of new boundaries in the eastern and south-east parts of Iran. These events took place around north, east and south-east of Iran, during the period generally referred to by historians and geographers as the period of "Great Game", which coincided the period of Qajar rule in Iran. This research, with a historical approach, tries to analyze the impact of geopolitical rivalries between Russia and Britain on the south-east corner of Greater Iran and aims at studying geographical contexts and conditions of this region. Finally it will assess the role of the Qajar dynasty and its performance in governing affairs of South East Iran and rivalries geopolitical powers of the time therein.

Methodology
This research in its theoretical foundations is based on traditional Geopolitics approach, because
it is a historical research. Data collection method is based on library works and the study of documentation. In the analysis of materials, in order to evaluate government performance, a model has been created in respect of historical findings and evaluating indexes of the model.

Results and Discussion
In the period of colonial geopolitics, in order to achieve its geopolitical aspirations, each colonial power was busy expanding its territory. Geopolitical spheres of influence of the two great world powers, Russia and Britain, overlapped until the first decades of the nineteenth century and the geographical expanse of what was known then as Persian Empire in Central Asia became the arena for their rivalry, and thus the start of their rivalries was the "Great Game". Iranian territories on the neighborhood of these two world powers became increasingly vulnerable to their game of territorial rearrangement, while the Qajar rule was not able resist the impact of this colonial game on Iranian territories.

The geographical location and natural and human geography conditions of the southeast of Iran paved the way for geopolitical rivalries influences. On the one hand, marginal position, environmental and climatic constraints and also some, geographical impediments such as deserts of southeast made relationship of this region with central government and the mainland difficult, and on the other, this region had the shortest distance to British India and was the gateway to India, and also it was a way for Russian to have access to the coastal waters. In all, these characteristics subjected the southeast of Iran to the Geopolitical rivalries.

The State was the most important actor at the national and local level and it could manage or deal with the influential geopolitical rivalries if it chose to function properly towards the southeast of the Greater Iran during the rivalries of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, it was the Qajar rule that was supposed to play such a role towards the southeast of the Greater Iran.

Conclusion
During geopolitical rivalries of the nineteenth century, Britain and Russia, as the important poles of Great game, made two sides of east and north of Iran as the field for their rivalries and so severed many territories of Iran by border treaties and arbitrations. Because of the Adjacency of the east and south east of Iran with British Indian, the British government disintegrated these historical territories of Iran. Numerous historical documents confirm the role of Britain in imposing the Treaty of Paris, and several border arbitrations. Russia, in the northern wing of Iran, separated many territories too. However, geographic features, including Iran's southeastern marginal position and its adjacency with British India, climatic constraints, environmental and communication difficulties and linguistic, ethnic, religious and cultural differences geopolitical rivalries. These situations needed central government’s more attention, as a national actor, in the south east of the country to minimize transnational actors’ influence on Geopolitical rivalries of the South East. But the Qajar regime, as a traditional and tribal state, suffering from structural weakness had the least awareness of the south east, and its functions (including in the fields of protection, arbitration, solidarity, bureaucracy, etc.) towards the south east was weak. All these
caused the Qajar state to play a passive role during geopolitical rivalries of the 19th and 20th century. The final result was disintegration of the historical territories of Great Iran which made the new boundaries of north, east and south-eastern of Iran.

*Keywords: Great Game, Colonial Geopolitics, South Eastern Iran, The Qajar State.*