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INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY STUDY

Series A

LIMITS IN THE SEAS

No. 25

*CONTINENTAL SHELF BOUNDARY: IRAN-QATAR*

The Geographer  
Office of the Geographer  
Directorate for Functional Research  
Bureau of Intelligence and Research

## CONTINENTAL SHELF BOUNDARY: IRAN-QATAR

The Governments of Iran and Qatar signed an Agreement on September 20, 1969, dividing their respective continental shelves in the Persian Gulf. Instruments of ratification were exchanged and the Agreement came into force on May 10, 1970.

Neither country is a party to the 1958 Geneva Convention on the Continental Shelf; however, the two countries have adopted the principle of limited national jurisdiction over the offshore domain of submerged land in general proclamations which give no precise definition to the shelf. The proclamations are:

Iran: Law of June 19, 1955  
Qatar: Proclamation of June 8, 1949

The Agreement on the Delimitation of the Continental Shelf set forth the following principles:

The Imperial Government of Iran and the Government of Qatar, desiring to delimit the demarcation line between the zones of the continental shelf, in accordance with international law and the law of sovereignty in a just, equitable and exact manner, have agreed on the following provisions:

### Article 1

The demarcation line separating the territory of Iran on the one hand and that of Qatar on the other merges with the geodesic line linking the following points:

Point (1) is the one located at the extreme western part of the most western zone of the demarcation line north of the continental shelf belonging to Qatar and which is linked to point (2) below at an angle of 278° 14' 27" by a geodesic demarcation line.

<u>Latitude</u>	<u>Longitude</u>
Point (2) 27° 0' 35"	51° 23'
" (3) 26° 56' 20"	51° 44' 50"
" (4) 26° 33' 25"	52° 12' 10"
" (5) 26° 06' 20"	52° 42' 30"
" (6) 25° 31' 50"	52° 02' 05"

### Article 2

If a single petroleum geological structure, a single petroleum field, or any single geological structure or single field of other minerals extends to the other side of the demarcation line specified in Article 1 of the present agreement, and if the part of the structure or field which is located on one side of the demarcation line is such that it could be exploited by oblique drillings from the other side, then in this case:

A--In no areas located on both sides of the demarcation line as stated in Article 1 can wells whose exploitation area is at least 125 meters from the said demarcation line be drilled, except on agreement of the parties concerned.

B--The two parties will make efforts to come to an agreement on ways to standardize operations or for unifying them on both sides of the demarcation line.

### Article 3

The said demarcation line provided in the present agreement is determined on the British Navy map No. 28370, attached to the present agreement.

The said map has been made in two copies and has been signed by representatives of the two parties. Each of the two parties has a map at its disposal.

### Article 4

None of the provisions of the present agreement will have effect on the surface waters or air space of any party of the continental shelf.

### Article 5

A. The present agreement will be ratified and the instruments of ratification will be exchanged as quickly as possible in Doha (Qatar).

B. The present agreement will be implemented beginning with the date of the instruments of ratification.

In order to authenticate the above provisions, the signatories below, having full authority from the Imperial Government of Iran and the Government of Qatar, have signed the present agreement.

The present agreement was made in Doha (Qatar) on 29 Chahrivar 1348 (9 Radjab 1389 -- 20 September 1969) in Persian, Arabic, and English, all copies being equal and authentic.

### ANALYSIS

The Iran-Qatar continental shelf boundary (CSB) is based on the equidistance principle with the exception that the presence of all islands in the Persian Gulf was disregarded. The turning points on the CSB are all equidistant from the mainland of the two countries. U.S. Naval Oceanographic Chart H.O. 3660 (2nd edition, November 17, 1958; Revised 8/19/68) was used in plotting the CSB agreement.

The CSB is delimited except for the segment from Point 1 to Point 2. The Iran-Qatar Agreement makes reference to an azimuth of 278° 14' 27" from Point 2 upon which Point 1 will mark the termination in a west-northwesterly direction of the CSB. The location of Point 1 is indefinite because there is a question of where a potential Bahrain-Qatar CSB would intersect the Iran-Qatar CSB. At this time, the territorial dispute between Bahrain and Qatar concerning some islands between the two countries has delayed the negotiations of a CSB agreement between the two states. Also, the establishment of a Bahrain-Iran CSB will be required to complete the CSB delimitation in the area.

The delimited portion of the Iran-Qatar CSB has a length of 131 nautical miles, with an average distance between the 5 demarcated points of 32.75 nautical miles. The depths at the CSB turning points range from 15 to 41 fathoms, with the average depth being 30.8 fathoms.

The northern terminus of the delimited portion of the CSB is Point 2 and it is located 30.5 nautical miles from the Bahrain-Saudi Arabia CSB. Points 2 through 6 are connected by straight line segments. Point 6 marks the southern terminus of the CSB and this Point also coincides with Point A which marks the seaward extent of the Abu Dhabi-Qatar CSB.

Physical Characteristics of the Iran-Qatar  
Continental Shelf Boundary

CSB Point	Distance between Points	Water Depth	Iran Territory	Distance, Land to CSB Point	Qatar Territory
	(nautical miles)	(fathoms)		(nautical miles)	
1	unknown	unknown	--	unknown	--
2	19.5	40	Mainland	(50)	Ra's Rakan
3	34.0	41	Ra's-e Nāy Band	(52)	Ra's Rakan
4	38.5	28	Tabin *	(50)	Ras Laffān
5	39.0	30	Ra's-e-Nakhīlū	(61)	Ras Laffān
6		15	Sar-e Chīrū	(79)	Ra's Abū al Mūshat

\* Tabin is the only Iranian point shown on the map. See U.S. Naval Oceanographic Chart H.O. 3647 for the following Iranian points whose coordinates are:

Mainland	27° 48' N.	51° 38' E.
Ra's-e Nāy Band	27° 23' N.	52° 38' E.
Tabīn	27° 12' N.	52° 48' E.
Ra's-e-Nakhīlū	26° 50' N.	53° 30' E.
Sar-e Chīru	26° 32' N.	53° 45' E.