

From Gulf of Mexico to Persian Gulf

Trump's dangerous game with world map



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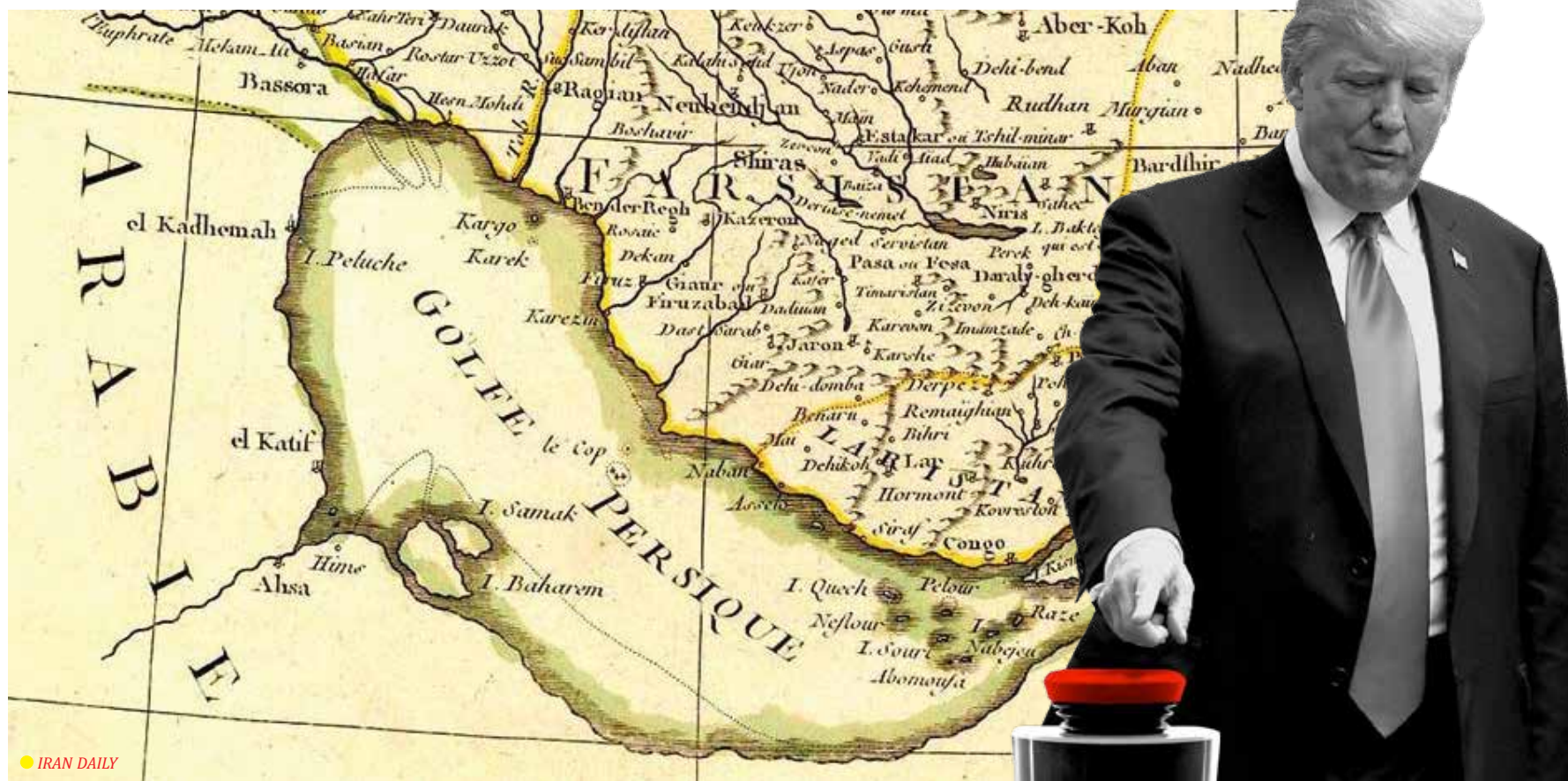
OPINION EXCLUSIVE

Amidst the current regional clamor, where whispers of progress in nuclear negotiations between our country and the United States are heard on one hand, and the White House speaks of halting military attacks on Yemen on the other, a thought-provoking and alarming rumor has been circulated by media outlets with alleged connections to White House insiders, claiming that Donald Trump intends to announce the re-naming of the historic Persian Gulf during his upcoming regional tour.

This news, yet to be officially denied, might at first glance be interpreted merely as a political gesture to appease Arab hosts. However, a deeper, strategic look reveals it as a piece of a more complex puzzle and an indicator of multi-layered objectives in US foreign policy towards the region, and particularly towards our country. Neglecting the dimensions of this identity-based conspiracy could pose significant geopolitical and geostrategic threats to our national interests and territorial integrity, and it is essential to meticulously analyze its roots and consequences with full vigilance.

The name Persian Gulf is deeply rooted in history, and numerous documents and maps, from antiquity to the present day, attest to this undeniable fact. Great geographers like Strabo and Ptolemy referred to this waterway as the "Persian Gulf," and this nomenclature has remained valid and recognized in international forums and official documents, including at the United Nations, up to the modern era. Even in past decades, the official stance of the United States has consistently been based on the use of the name "Persian Gulf" as this name was recognized as the official American term since 1917.

However, since the 1960s, with the rise of Arab nationalism, some countries along the southern shores of this waterway began efforts to substitute it with the fabricated name "Arabian Gulf". These efforts, though never able to undermine the historical and legal legitimacy of the name "Persian Gulf," have always been used as a tool for political pressure and an attempt to distort the region's historical identity. Concurrently, our country's sensitivity to this issue is such that actions such as the removal of the "Persian" suffix from "Gulf" by The Economist magazine or the Louvre Museum have been met with strong diplomatic reactions from our country.



Playing with names, playing with fire

Now, the sudden rumor that the Trump administration is changing the name of the Persian Gulf, especially while sensitive nuclear negotiations are underway and signs of efforts to reduce tensions on some regional fronts are visible, cannot be coincidental or merely an act to appease Arab allies. Rather, it must be analyzed within a broader strategy with multiple objectives.

The timing of this news with the nuclear talks strengthens the speculation that the US administration intends to use this as a psychological and political pressure tactic against our negotiating team. Creating an identity-based controversy and stirring Iranian national sentiments could divert focus from the main issues of the negotiations and poison the atmosphere of the talks. If realized, this action could be seen as a sign of "hostile intent" and negatively impact the negotiation process.

Let us note that Trump's visit to Arab countries in the region, particularly Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Qatar, is undoubtedly aimed at consolidating regional alliances and advancing arms deals. Announcing such a decision on Saudi soil could be seen as a major concession to these countries and an attempt to secure more financial and political support for US regional policies. Previously, in 2010, Andrew Shapiro, then-assistant secretary of state, used the term Arabian Gulf while announcing a major arms sale to Saudi Arabia, indicating the connection of this issue to Washington's econom-

ic and military interests. This incident, given the repeated use of this term by Kurt Campbell, another then-assistant secretary of state, was seen less as a slip of the tongue and more as a sign of a potential policy shift.

Of course, we know that one of the key US objectives has been, and continues to be, advancing the normalization of relations between Arab countries and Israel. Creating a powerful common enemy and fueling identity and historical disputes can pave the way for these countries to move closer to Tel Aviv. In other words, the attempt to change the name of the Persian Gulf not only negatively impacts Arab-Iranian relations but also provides an unexpected opportunity for Israel to connect with the Arab world while simultaneously advancing its Judaization and de-Arabization agenda, particularly concerning Gaza.

Part of bigger puzzle

The Trump administration, like many others, at times resorts to creating foreign crises or controversies to divert public opinion from domestic problems and challenges. Raising such a sensitive issue can divert media and public attention, at least for a while, from other matters. Furthermore, this action could also be a way to gauge the sensitivity and reaction of our country and the Iranian public to an assault on their national identity. A decisive and unified response from the Iranian nation, across all political spectrums and preferences, can send a clear message to the architects of this plot. As in the past, this attempt to tamper with the name "Persian



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Gulf" has been met with a strong and unified reaction from Iranians worldwide, and even Iranian-American organizations with political views vastly different from the Islamic Republic have been united on this issue.

Gulf of Mexico experience

Interestingly, this is not the first time the Trump administration has considered changing established geographical names. Shortly after entering the White House, the US president issued an executive order to change the name "Gulf of Mexico" to "Gulf of America". This action faced widespread negative reaction, and the Associated Press refused to accept the name change, which led to restricted access for AP reporters to White House events. Ultimately, a US federal judge ruled that the administration's action against the Associated Press violated the First Amendment (freedom of speech) and ordered the restrictions to be lifted. This precedent shows that such actions, rather than being rooted in geographical or historical logic, stem from a specific political approach and an attempt to

impose unilateral will.

Persian Gulf, national unity

Failure to confront any attempt to distort the name "Persian Gulf," beyond being a blow to national pride, could have profound geopolitical and geostrategic consequences for our country. Acceptance or silence regarding a name change means disregarding centuries of documented history and international records. In the long term, this could strengthen other countries' claims regarding border and sovereignty issues in the region, particularly concerning our country and the three islands. Any retreat in the face of potential US action would deal a major blow to our national security and regional standing. Although, as history has shown, the issue of the "Persian Gulf" name has always been a unifying factor for Iranians of all political leanings, and even Jason Brodsky of the anti-Iran organization UANI emphasizes that "one thing unites Iranians: ensuring it is called the Persian Gulf." National vigilance against these efforts is essential. The repetition of a fabricated name in media and official documents, even if lacking historical and

legal validity, can gradually lead to its normalization in global public opinion and marginalize authentic historical narratives.

Against identity-based conspiracies

In the face of this complex conspiracy, designed with multiple objectives, adopting a firm, intelligent stance based on historical and legal principles and evidence is vital. This stance must be taken at various levels, from official and active diplomacy in international forums to enlightening global public opinion and strengthening national cohesion.

Let us remember that the "Persian Gulf" is not just a name on a map; it is an inseparable part of our identity, history, culture, and national heritage, and a symbol of our sovereignty and territorial integrity. Any attempt to distort this name is, in fact, an attempt to tarnish this precious identity and heritage. However, in conclusion, one cannot overlook the shortcomings of the country's overseas cultural institutions and their lack of planning and waste of resources in safeguarding the "Persian Gulf" — an issue whose examination requires another opportunity.



Speedboats belonging to the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) sail in the Persian Gulf during a naval exercise.

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