



ABU MUSĀ I . DESCRIPTION

i. Description

Abū Mūsā, situated near 26° north latitude and 55° east longitude, is about two miles long and only a few square miles in area. It rises to a maximum 360 feet in height, consists of coral limestone and volcanic material, is covered with a thin grassy steppe, and lacks a natural growth of trees. This island's location at the end of the Persian Gulf, near the strait of Hormoz, is strategically favorable; it lies nearly halfway between Bandar Lenga (Iran) and Sharja, one of the shaikhdoms of the United Arab Emirates. In the past, due to location and strategic importance, Abū Mūsā, like the small neighboring islands, was repeatedly exposed to the conflict of interest between Iran and the Arab states of the Gulf region.

Lorimer reported that, at the turn of the century, around twenty families from Sharja were settled on the island; and the shaikh of Sharja owned about 150 date palm there. In all, twenty wells supplied water for the palm trees as well as the drinking water for the population, who consisted exclusively of fishermen and pearl divers. Food supplies were shipped in from Iran, particularly from Bandar Lenga. Small iron mining operations, employing up to 100 workers seasonally, were also directed from the mainland (D. Hawley, *The Trucial States*, London, 1970, p. 203). The Arab population has been estimated, since the Iranian takeover, to be about 300-400 people; its occupation is, almost exclusively, fishing. Economic and social living conditions of the island have been improved through the construction of a desalinization plant, cooling equipment, an ice factory, port, and other



infrastructure facilities.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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