



Iran, China, and Russia Plan Joint Naval Drills in Indian Ocean



"Hossein Khanzadi," Tasnim News Agency.
Source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Hossein_Khanzadi.jpg, CC BY 4.0

OE Watch Commentary: The accompanying excerpts discuss planned naval exercises between Iran, China, and Russia in the Indian Ocean. As the first excerpt from the Iran's *Tehran Times* notes, the exercises were announced by the Iranian Naval Commander Rear Admiral Hossein Khanzadi on 27 November, when Khanzadi noted that the initial planning for the drills had been carried out and the three countries were "scheduled to conduct a tripartite military exercise in the north Indian Ocean in the near future." The announcement came as Rear Admiral Khanzadi also announced that a new Mowj-class (Wave-class) destroyer called the Dena would join the Iranian Navy in early 2020. In the second passage from the Iran's *Fars News Agency*, Khanzadi noted the exercise would be code-named Marine Security Belt and would begin on 27 December. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov states in the third excerpt from the Russian News site *TASS* that "Russia, China and Iran intend to train anti-terrorism and anti-piracy efforts."

The excerpt from the *South China Morning Post* points out "Major General Mohammad Baqeri, Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces, was in Beijing for a three-day visit in early September and agreed that the two countries would have more visits with senior military officials and advance cooperation in training." The last military drills between China and Iran took place in June 2017 in the Strait of Hormuz in the Persian Gulf. Furthermore, the article asserts that "China still accounts for more than half of Iran's oil exports." The fifth passage from *Al-Monitor* discusses limits under which the Chinese-Iranian relationship is developing. The Chinese Navy is limiting its participation to only non-combatant forces in the naval drills, as it wants to "make clear its desire not to be drawn into Middle East conflicts."

The final excerpt from the Iranian *Mehr News Agency* offers the Iranian perspective of the significance behind the naval exercises. Rear Admiral Hossein Khanzadi stated that the naval drills between Russia, China, and Iran show, "these three countries have reached a meaningful strategic point in their relations," and that the three states have respect for each nation's non-shared national interests. The Rear Admiral also said military exercises between states, "indicates a remarkable expansion of cooperation." **End OE Watch Commentary (Fesen)**

"These three countries have reached a meaningful strategic point in their relations, with regard to their shared and non-shared interests, and by non-shared I mean the respect we have for one another's national interests."

Source: "Navy chief: New homegrown destroyer to join Iran navy soon," *Tehran Times*, 27 November 2019. <https://www.tehrantimes.com/news/442431/Navy-chief-New-homegrown-destroyer-to-join-Iran-navy-soon>

...Khanzadi said Dena, which has been designed and manufactured by domestic military experts, will join the navy's fleet in the Iranian month of Bahman (January 1, 2020 – February 19), Tasnim reported....The commander said Dena is a new Mowj-class (Wave-class) destroyer similar to the Jamaran and the Sahand destroyers.

Khanzadi also said the naval forces of Iran, China and Russia are scheduled to conduct a tripartite military exercise in the north Indian Ocean in the near future. ...naval drills will be carried out after this one, all of which are considered as an exercise for the upcoming Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) conference in late February to boost convergence among naval forces in order to settle security in the north Indian Ocean...



Continued: Iran, China, and Russia Plan Joint Naval Drills in Indian Ocean

Source: “Commander: Iran, Russia, China to Stage Joint Naval Drills on December 27,” *Fars News*, 3 December 2019. <https://en.farsnews.com/newstext.aspx?nn=13980912001131>

“The joint drills of Iran, China and Russia codenamed Marine Security Belt will be staged on December 27,” Rear Admiral Khanzadi said...

Source: “Iran, Russia, China to hold joint naval drills in Indian Ocean soon,” *TASS*, 27 November 2019. <https://tass.com/defense/1093609>

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said on October 2 that during the upcoming exercises, Russia, China and Iran are intended to train anti-terrorism and anti-piracy efforts.

Source: Zhuang Pinghui, “China, Russia, Iran ‘plan joint naval drill in international waters,’” *South China Morning Post*, 21 September 2019. <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3029819/china-russia-iran-plan-joint-naval-drill-international-waters>

Two years ago China and Iran conducted a joint naval exercise near the Strait of Hormuz in the Persian Gulf... Major General Mohammad Baqeri, Chief of Staff of the Iranian Armed Forces, was in Beijing for a three-day visit earlier this month and agreed that the two countries would have more visits with senior military officials and advance cooperation in training.... China still accounts for more than half of Iran’s oil exports...

Source: Mohsen Shariatinia, “Tehran welcomes China’s presence in Middle East,” *Al-Monitor*, 14 November 2019. <https://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2019/11/iran-welcome-china-presence-middle-east.html>

China is expected to limit its involvement in the planned joint naval drill with Iran and Russia to noncombat forces, making clear its desire not to be drawn into Middle East conflicts.

Source: “Iran’s joint wargame with Russia, China delivers message to world,” *Mehr News*, 27 November 2019. <https://en.mehrnews.com/news/152759/Iran-s-joint-wargame-with-Russia-China-delivers-message-to-world>

“A joint wargame between several countries, whether on land, at sea or in the air, indicates a remarkable expansion of cooperation among them,” he noted.

... “these three countries have reached a meaningful strategic point in their relations, with regard to their shared and non-shared interests, and by non-shared I mean the respect we have for one another’s national interests.”

Compendium of Central Asian Military and Security Activity

By Matthew Stein

Since Central Asian states gained independence in 1991, new regional military and security alliances have been created (some of which are Russian-led), new military partnerships with non-NATO countries have been established, a number of joint military exercises have been conducted, over a dozen high-profile incidents of violence and civil unrest have taken place, and military installations have been used by foreign militaries. While this activity gained attention, it has not been collectively compiled. A compilation of this activity can serve as a guide for current and future military and security involvement in Central Asia.

<https://community.apan.org/wg/tradoc-g2/fmso/m/fmso-monographs/194880>

