

Iran, Russia, and China Planning Joint Naval Drill in the Persian Gulf

By Karen Kaya
OE Watch Commentary

The accompanying passages from Iranian, Middle Eastern, and Chinese sources provide insight into the planned joint naval exercise between Iran, Russia and China, scheduled for late 2021 or early 2022. The joint exercise named CHIRU was initially announced by Russia's Ambassador to Tehran in late August.

The passage from *Tasnim News Agency*, an Iranian semi-official news agency, reports that the exercise will feature Russian, Iranian, and Chinese warships and include a diving competition organized by the Iranian Navy in the southeastern port city of Chabahar as part of the International Army Games 2021. This competition will include participants from India, Syria, and Venezuela, in addition to Russia, Iran, and China. The Russian Ambassador is quoted as expressing support for improving relations between Iran and Arab countries in the Persian Gulf, which is reportedly one of the goals of Russia's concept for collective security in the Persian Gulf.

“The Marine Security Belt drills - also known as CHIRU - are intended to be an annual event.”

The passage from *Middle East Eye*, a London-based independently funded online news organization, points out that the exercise, also known as the “Marine Security Belt” drills, were first held in 2019 in the northern part of the Indian Ocean and again in February 2021, but they are now intended to be an annual event. While the official goal of the drills is to ensure international shipping safety and combat piracy, the deepening exchange and cooperation between



Iranian Navy

Source: Mehr News Agency via Wikimedia Commons
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Iran%27s_deputy_navy_commander_said_that_an_Iranian_naval_flotilla_will_start_a_journey_to_the_Atlantic_Ocean_at_the_beginning_of_the_next_Iranian_calendar_year_1398_\(starting_on_March_21\).93.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Iran%27s_deputy_navy_commander_said_that_an_Iranian_naval_flotilla_will_start_a_journey_to_the_Atlantic_Ocean_at_the_beginning_of_the_next_Iranian_calendar_year_1398_(starting_on_March_21).93.jpg) Attribution: CC BY 4.0

the navies of the three countries will have political implications as well. For example, the passage from the *South China Morning Post*, a Hong Kong-based English language newspaper, provides a Chinese perspective of the exercise as a show of Russian and Chinese support for Iran in international affairs. This is echoed in the passage from *Trthaber.com*, a Turkish government news website, which quotes Russia's Ambassador to Iran expressing Moscow's support for Iran's full membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). Iran has held observer status in the SCO since 2005.

Source: “Iran, Russia, China to Hold Joint Naval Drill in Persian Gulf: Envoy,” *Tasnim News Agency* (Iranian semi-official news agency), 23 August 2021. <https://www.tasnimnews.com/en/news/2021/08/23/2559007/iran-russia-china-to-hold-joint-naval-drill-in-persian-gulf-envoy>

Russia's ambassador to Tehran unveiled plans for joint naval drills of his country, Iran, and China in the Persian Gulf in late 2021 and early 2022.... In an interview with Sputnik, Levan Jagaryan said, “In the end of this year or the beginning of the next year (2022), the annual joint naval exercises CHIRU will be held in the Persian Gulf region. Russian, Iranian and Chinese warships are taking part in it... The main aim is to practice actions on ensuring international shipping safety, and combating sea pirates,” the ambassador added.

On the diving competition that the Iranian Navy is holding in the southeastern port city of Chabahar as part of the International Army Games 2021, Jagaryan said, “Along with Russia and Iran, China, India, Syria and Venezuela will take part in it. There are plans to hold a contest between dive teams of these countries' armed forces.”

...The ambassador said that the relations between Iran and Arab counties in the Persian Gulf are becoming warmer. “The United Arab Emirates sent a delegation to Tehran to participate in the ceremony of (Iranian) President (Ebrahim) Raisi's inauguration. Iran and Saudi Arabia launched direct contacts. Russia welcomes dialogue in this strategically important region. This is one of the goals of our concept for collective security in the Persian Gulf, which we are promoting,” the Russian ambassador concluded.

Source: “Iran, Russia and China to hold joint drills in Gulf in late 2021, early 2022,” *Middle East Eye* (a London-based independently funded online news organization), 23 August 2021. <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/iran-russia-china-joint-naval-exercise-gulf>

Iran, Russia and China will hold joint maritime exercises in the Gulf around late 2021 or early 2022, Levan Jagaryan, Russia's ambassador to Tehran, said on Monday.... The RIA news agency reported on Monday that the Marine Security Belt drills - also known as CHIRU - are intended to be an annual event. The drills were first held in 2019 and again in February 2021.

... “Along with Russia and India, China, Iran, Syria and Venezuela will take part in the drills. There are plans to hold a contest between the dive teams of these countries' armed forces. Representatives of the Russian Navy command will arrive at the opening and closing ceremonies of this contest,” he told another Russian state-owned news agency, Sputnik.

Continued: Iran, Russia, and China Planning Joint Naval Drill in the Persian Gulf

Source: “China-Russia-Iran naval drill announcement ‘shows support for Tehran’,” *South China Morning Post* (Hong Kong-based English language newspaper), 24 August 2021. <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3146157/china-russia-iran-naval-drill-announcement-shows-support>

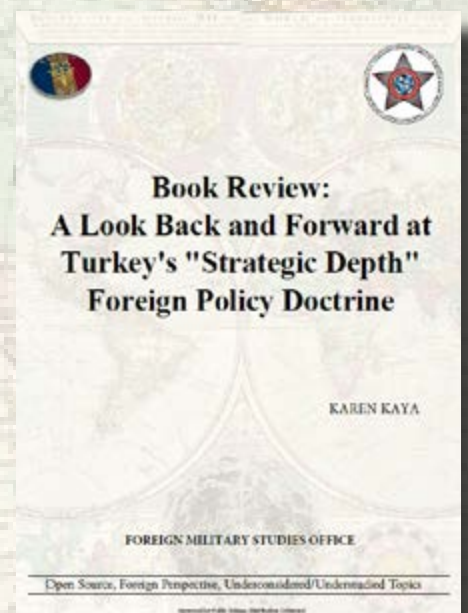
“Annual exercises in Persian Gulf in late 2021 or early 2022 were announced to show support for Iran in international affairs, Chinese observer says.”

Source: “Iran, Rusya ve Çin’den Basra Körfezi’nde tatbikat (Iran, Russia and China [to conduct] military exercise in the Persian Gulf),” *Trthaber.com* (a Turkish government news website), 23 August 2021. <https://www.trthaber.com/haber/dunya/iran-rusya-ve-cinden-basra-korfezinde-tatbikat-603691.html>

Russia announced that it will organize a joint military training exercise with Iran and China in the Persian Gulf. ... The Russian Ambassador noted that the exercise, which would feature war ships from the three countries, mainly aimed to focus on international shipping safety and to combat piracy. Dzhangaryan also noted that “Moscow supports Tehran’s full membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.”

Book Review: A Look Back and Forward at Turkey’s “Strategic Depth” Foreign Policy Doctrine Karen Kaya February 2020

“Strategic Depth (Stratejik Derinlik)” is a Turkish book published in 2001. This was a time when international relations theorists were describing new frameworks of world order and security modalities following the end of the Cold War and bi-polar world. Works such as Francis Fukuyama’s “End of History” and Samuel Huntington’s “Clash of Civilizations” were icons of this intellectual period. It was in this context of a changing international system that Turkish International Relations Professor Ahmet Davutoğlu (who later served as Foreign Minister between 2009-2014 and Prime Minister between 2014-2016) attempted to define Turkey’s position in his book “Strategic Depth.” From around 2002 to 2012, the foreign policy that Davutoğlu outlined in his book was considered the doctrine and roadmap for Turkish foreign policy.



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