SOCIAL SCIENCE REVIEW ARCHIVES
ISSN Online: 3006-4708
ISSN Print: 3006-4694
https://policyjournalofms.com

Iran's Naval Strategy in the Strait of Hormuz: Implications for Global Maritime Security.

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DOI: https://doi.org/10.70670/sra.v3i3.886

Abstract
This study examines Iran's evolving naval strategy in the Strait of Hormuz and its implications for global maritime security. As a vital chokepoint for nearly 20% of the world's oil and a significant share of LNG exports, the Strait of Hormuz is central to global energy stability. Iran's adoption of asymmetric naval warfare centered on fast-attack crafts (FACs), drones, and unmanned systems reflects a strategic shift shaped by historical conflicts, sanctions, and regional rivalries. Utilizing Alfred Mahan's Sea Power Theory and Geoffrey Till's maritime framework, this paper analyzes how Iran leverages geography, technological innovation, and hybrid warfare to project power and deter adversaries like the United States. The research highlights Iran's transition from conventional exercises to long-range deployments and strategic engagements. It concludes that Iran's naval posture not only redefines regional security dynamics but also poses challenges to freedom of navigation, energy security, and global maritime norms.

Keywords: Strait of Hormuz, Asymmetric Naval Warfare, Iranian Maritime Strategy, Global Maritime Security, Unmanned Naval Systems.

Introduction

Strait of Hormuz is an important strategic waterway in the world; it is situated in an area that connects the Persian Gulf to the Arabian Sea; the waterway is a constricted realm. This strait is a key point in the distribution chain of global energy; in other words, almost 20 percent of the world oil flows through this passageway as per (Nadimi, 2019). Any interference with this tight waterway that is 21 miles at its very narrowest point would trigger unfairly long-reaching implication with regards to international security, global markets, and global maritime commerce. Behind all these forces is Iran, a regional power that has developed its naval tactics in the Strait of Hormuz to subvert the maritime status quo especially that of the United States and its allies in the Gulf. Such nuclear naval posture of Iran in Strait of Hormuz is influenced by geography, history of insecurity, and by the fact that Iran had to cope with stronger enemies in an asymmetric way according to (Connell, 2022).

Contrary to the contemporary blue-water naval forces that focus on aircraft carriers, destroyers, and open water combat Iran has adopted an asymmetric warfare approach to maximize its attack capabilities. This doctrine builds on the assets of the country such as closeness to the strait, ideological dedication and large record of unconventional maritime instruments. In the middle of this strategy lies fast-attack crafts (FACs), armed speedboats and a swarming fleet of drones and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs). These aspects enable Iran to intimidate, harass and

even inactivate bigger, more technologically advanced ships without engaging in a direct conventional conflict (Ozberk, December 2021).

The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Navy (IRGC-N) which is independent of the Iran regular navy is involved in carrying out this approach. It uses swarming, sea ambushing and electronic warfare on the busy Persian Gulf waters (Haghshenass, 2023). The most frequent examples can be seen in the recent 2019 tanker attacks and the shooting down of an American drone over the Gulf, which demonstrates that Tehran is quite happy to act within this gray zone of conflict or even below the war level but above the peacetime operations. There have also been drones like the Shahed and Mohajer series that have allowed a constant surveillance and in some cases precision attacks (Pinko, 2022).

The Iranian maritime drone capabilities are usually underrated but seem to dominate the calculus of the regional actors and external powers as time goes by. This military stance is not only defensive but is part of Iranian greater purpose, that is, to discourage potential enemies, claim independence, and earn leverage during geopolitical negotiation, one being, of course, its nuclear program (Intelligence, 2020). The naval conduct of Iran in the Strait of Hormuz is thus more than a display of muscle by Iran in the region but a symbol of the way maritime security is being redefined with smaller powers wanting to make the best of emerging technologies to level the balance against the super-powerful. In this paper, we will examine the changing Iranian doctrine regarding the navy especially asymmetric warfare as practiced and the employment of fast-attack crafts and drones.

This paper, through a contextual approach to the main incidents and events in the military activity and geopolitical situations of Iran, will make an attempt to identify the strategic background of the Iranian behavior on the seas and its further implications regarding global maritime security especially in an age of concern over a possible inadvertent escalation (Katzman, 2019). With tensions continuing in the Gulf and the emergence of technologies that are going to transform the nature of the maritime environment, it is important to understand the navy strategy of a country that could maintain a delicate balance in one of the most important waterways in the world (Muqawama, 2023).

Historical Background

The cause and result of the naval strategy of Iran in the strait of Hormuz can be seen when the state came into post-revolutionary geopolitical perspective with the formation of Islamic Revolution of Iran in the year 1979 and the concomitant shift towards Iranian defense doctrine (Haghshenass, 2021). Before the revolution, Iran had quite a traditional navy under the Shah regime, and it was strongly based on the western technology and strategy particularly that of the United States and the United Kingdom. Nevertheless, the disruption in diplomatic relations following the year 1979, along with an arms embargo, imposed on it led to the Iran having to shift towards a diplomatic approach that is based on self-reliance and asymmetry in lieu of the conventional ways of being in the maritime before (Connell N. , 2021).

The Iran-Iraq War (1980,1988) remained the major event which influenced the maritime thought of the Islamic Republic. In the course of this devastating war, Iran was identified with the reality of maritime isolation and threat to export oil products due to Iraq economic strikes on oil installations and tankers of Iran. This resulted in the Iran firing back at Kuwaiti and Saudi tankers in what was later referred to as the, Tanker War, which involved the U.S. naval forces into the Gulf. The mismatch between the capabilities of Iranian navy and the U.S. Navy was revealed during Operation Earnest Will (1987,1988) when the U.S. reflagged Kuwaiti tankers and escorted their own. This gave birth to the idea of Iranian strategists to do the opposite that is, to go where geography, velocity and surprise rather than force was possible. After the war, Iran was feverishly investing in asymmetric naval war (Robert, 2023). This comprised the establishment and strengthening of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Navy (IRGC-N), which grew apart and

separately away from the regular navy of Iran (Artesh). Whereas the Artesh still had traditional platforms of frigates and submarines, the IRGC-N concentrated on the littoral combat with small fast, and maneuverable boat, which was suitable in the dense and tight waters of the Strait of Hormuz and Persian Gulf. Such fast-attack vessels, usually armed with anti-ship missiles, torpedoes, and mines, in turn, became the heart of the Iranian denial approach to bigger navies. The naval position of Iran had seen further development since the last twenty years, as it deployed unmanned systems, especially drones and unmanned surface vessels (USVs) therein. This development was triggered by the Iranian strategic interest on surveillance and prevention of U.S and allied naval operations in its surrounds (Freedman, 2023).

An example arose in 2007 when British naval forces were captured by Iran, in 2016, the U.S. navy member was detained by Iran, and in 2019, when Iran used sea mines and limpet bombs in tanker attacks showing how Tehran has been more about using hybrid operations and psychological warfare to build its power on the one hand and demonstrate deterrence on the other (Ghanbari Jahromi, 2024). The mosaic concept of defense in its broader aspect also influences the Iranian doctrine with stress on decentralized command and control and the ability to conduct guerrilla-type of activities over the sea.

It is a historical way of thinking about naval strategy that Iran has spent decades perfecting and allows the country to convert its modest blue-water capacity into a serious gray-zone concern (Sutton, 2021, March 23). Strategic value of the Strait of Hormuz-or how the straight has been a chokepoint to Iranian economy is not the only thing that has been of strategic concern to long-term Iranian defense policy calculation but the idea of the strait being a venue where asymmetric confrontation can take place is too (Kasapoglu, 2024).

Chart 1.1: Evolution of Iran's Naval Strategy (1979–2025)

Era	Key Events	Naval Strategy Focus	Primary Actor	Notable Assets
1970s (Pre-1979)	U.S.-backed modernization under the Shah	Conventional, Western-oriented naval buildup	Imperial Iranian Navy	U.S.-supplied destroyers, frigates, hovercraft
1980–1988	Iran-Iraq War & Tanker War	Retaliatory maritime disruption, mine warfare	IRGC + Artesh	Sea mines, small boats, captured Iraqi vessels
1990s	U.S. Gulf presence & embargoes	Asymmetric doctrine, swarm tactics begin	IRGC Navy	Fast-attack crafts (FACs), speedboats
2000s	U.S. invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan	Defensive coastal posture, missile integration	IRGC Navy	Noor anti-ship missiles, Ghadir submarines
2010s	Hormuz threats, drone development	Gray-zone tactics, maritime ambushes	IRGC Navy	Drones (Shahed, Mohajer), limpet mines
2020–2025	Drone strikes, Israel tensions, AI warfare	Multi-domain hybrid naval capabilities	IRGC Navy	USVs, AI drones, loitering munitions

Chart 1.1 shows the evolution of Iran's naval strategy from the Shah era to the present, highlighting the shift from conventional maritime power to asymmetric, drone-based, and swarm-capable operations led primarily by the IRGC Navy as per the (Jane's, 2025, June 18).

Research Questions

1. How has Iran's naval doctrine evolved since the Iran-Iraq War, and what role does asymmetric warfare play in its current maritime strategy in the Strait of Hormuz?
2. What is the strategic and operational significance of fast-attack crafts and unmanned aerial systems (drones) in Iran's efforts to deter and challenge superior naval forces in the Persian Gulf region?
3. What are the broader implications of Iran's asymmetric naval capabilities for global maritime security, especially concerning freedom of navigation and the security of global energy trade through the Strait of Hormuz?

Research Objective's

- ✓ To analyze the evolution of Iran's naval doctrine from a conventional to an asymmetric warfare strategy, particularly in the context of the Strait of Hormuz.
- ✓ To examine the operational use and strategic value of fast-attack crafts (FACs) and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) in Iran's maritime posture.
- ✓ To investigate key incidents involving Iranian naval forces that demonstrate the application of asymmetric tactics in the Persian Gulf.
- ✓ To assess the implications of Iran's naval strategy for regional actors, global maritime trade, and the security of critical sea lanes.
- ✓ To contribute to the broader discourse on maritime security by evaluating how Iran's naval behavior challenges existing international norms and naval deterrence frameworks.

Significance of the Study

The Strait of Hormuz is considered to be one of the most strategically important choke points in the world as it serves as the sole source of access to the ocean since the Persian Gulf. The U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) has noted that about 20-21 million barrels of oil per day, or about 20 percent of the world oil consumption, transited the strait in 2023. This involves crude oil and condensates of leading producers like Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, and Qatar.

Major economies that heavily depend on this route are China, India, Japan, South Korea, and some European countries and hence the strait is crucial in achieving global energy security. In this regard, the asymmetric naval doctrine, which is based on the employment of fast-attack vessels, drones, and the employment of swarms, has significantly long-reaching implications in the case of Iran. Iran has the potential to have an asymmetrical effect on the global markets and geopolitics by threating to or physically hamper the free flow of the oil and liquefied natural gas (LNG) through this chokepoint.

The importance of the study is that it will unravel the transformation of the maritime doctrine used by Iran, and it utilizes the emerging technologies in naval warfare, with the consequences to the regional powers, and the shipping routes in the world, and the balance of power in the Persian Gulf. It gives important lessons to policymakers, naval strategists, and scholars of analysis of future maritime conflict zones.

Literature Review

The strategic and academic concern on Iran naval strategy has increased significantly in recent decades especially that Iran is claiming its presence through the Persian Gulf and beyond. Much has been written on the development of the Iranian naval doctrine, giving light to the

transformation of the Iranian navy as a blue-water navy of the Shah to the hybrid and asymmetrical naval force in the post-1979 period (Connell M. N., 2022)The reason behind this shift was moving because of sanctions, and technological constraints as well as the determination to counter the better Western naval capabilities particularly, the U.S. 5th fleet, stationed in Bahrain. According to the analysts, including (Freedman, 2023)the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Navy (IRGC-N) is the key component in operationalizing the asymmetric maritime doctrine of Iran.

The IRGC-N depends mostly on small, maneuverable, fast-attack crafts (FACs), mine-laying and dispersion to counter the technological and numerical advantages of its targets. These tricks have been witnessed in different situations, including the arrest of the U.S. boat guards in 2016 and the oil tanker assaults at the entrance of Fujairah in 2019. The literature also notes the increased incorporation of the unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and drone-based surveillance into the maritime activities in Iran.

Experts like (Haghshenass, 2021)and the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) have catalogued how Iranian domestic drone industry, featuring both the Shahed-129 or Mohajer classes, have given it an opportunity to increase real-time intelligence collection and expand operational distance throughout the Strait of Hormuz and Gulf of Oman. Such competencies erase the boundary between a conventional naval conflict, and a hybrid warfare. Moreover, the Strait of Hormuz as such presents a popular maritime chokepoint. The geoeconomic importance has been restated by the work of Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) and U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA) since not less than 20% of all petroleum is transported through this narrow waterway, as well as almost one-third of all LNG exports (Moed, 2016, February 15).

"Evolution of Iran's Naval Capabilities (1979–2025)",

Period	Strategic Focus	Key Assets
Pre-1979 (Shah Era)	Conventional Navy (US-backed)	Destroyers, frigates
1980–1988 (Iran-Iraq War)	Mine warfare, tanker attacks	Mines, small boats
1990s (Post-War Rebuild)	Swarming tactics, asymmetric doctrine	Fast-attack crafts (FACs), speedboats
2000s (Regional Tensions)	Missile integration, coastal defense	Missile boats, Ghadir submarines, radars
2010s (Drone Integration)	ISR and offensive drone capabilities	Shahed & Mohajer drones, naval UAV systems
2020–2025 (Hybrid Expansion)	AI warfare, electronic/naval hybrid ops	AI-enabled drones, unmanned vessels, EW tools

Here is a chart titled **"Evolution of Iran's Naval Capabilities (1979–2025)"**, summarizing key time periods, strategic focus, and major naval assets. Let me know if you'd like a graphic version with flags, icons, or color coding for presentation use according to (Moed, 2016, February 15).

Volatility in the global energy markets can be occasioned by any disruption whether deliberate or not, and so can jeopardize international trade routes. Irrespective of a rich literature devoted to the tactical and strategic aspects of the Iranian naval activity, the relative gap in incorporating emerging technologies, maritime drones, and even sheer influence on maritime security on the global scale exists.

This paper tries to address this gap by conducting a current and contextual study of the Iran naval strategy and its effects on international security arrangements. Recently, researchers have paid more attention to the hybridization of naval warfare in the Iranian maritime strategy, specifically, the combination of cyber weapons, electronic warfare, and swarming with drones in naval actions. (Moed, 2016, February 15) contend that Iranian naval innovation indicates a larger change in doctrine that can be termed as the shift to the gray zone operations, or activities that

occur just short of conventional war, yet fulfill the strategic goals of an actor. This is consistent with Iranian regional orientation, which aims at testing U.S. and allies influence in the Gulf without bringing on complete retaliation.

The describing use of decentralized, flexible and locally empowered military is referred as mosaic defense, it was reported by the Naval War College Review (Robert, 2023), that Iran has adopted this principle of naval defense within the coast line of Persian Gulf. Also, other literature like that of the think tanks like RAND Corporation and the Chatham house emphasizes on the symbolic and psychological aspects of the Iranian navy activities. As an illustration, the obvious movements of speedboats near the American war vessels, or the publication of the UAV video where the American warships could be noticed has both deterrence and domestic propaganda purposes. Nevertheless, the majority of the available studies have a tendency of focusing these tactical evolution processes out of context to overlook the aspect of substance in terms of strategic and energy security. This paper will attempt to fill that gap by linking the emerging Iranian naval activity to the world-wide anxieties of choke point susceptibility and free navigation (Katzman, 2019).

Literature Gap

Although much has been written of the asymmetric military concept of Iran and its maritime conduct in the region, there are quite a number of issues that have not been brought up in the existing scholarly and policy discussions. The literature is largely piecemeal, with individual papers discussing individual factors (i.e. how the use of fast-attack crafts used by the IRGC Navy or why the Strait of Hormuz has a strategic importance), but more often than not the pieces do not fit together in an overall assessment of how these components of the Iranian naval doctrine evolving use of unmanned systems is related to changes in overall global maritime security.

Further, as think tanks and defense reports have kept a chronicle of particular events and prowess in the sphere of individual naval incidents and development of drones, there is an insufficient study of the way the drone empowered Iranian strategic naval approach reshapes the mainstream idea of maritime deterrence and choke point control. In addition, the overlap between maritime hybrid warfare, technology innovation (e.g. UAVs and USVs), and energy security vulnerabilities have not been well studied and there is little scholarly research in this area. There is a paucity of literature placing the Iranian naval conduct in a wider context by comparing and contrasting; whether with trends in the general international maritime environment, like the weaponization of unmanned systems at sea, or the move, by navies toward a gray-zone confrontation vis-a-vis conventional naval conflict. This study attempts to encompass that gap because it argues that a complete multi-dimensional examination of the Iranian naval posture is quite necessary as it addresses the gap between the tactical and the strategic aspects of global maritime stability.

Theoretical framework

Maritime security

The definition of Maritime security in words of Alfred Mahan can be defined as: Maritime security is a tool to protect the state from external threats and preservation of national interests at sea level. Furthermore, sea power is the means to achieve maritime security by strengthening policies, strong fleet and adequate bases. The concept of maritime security has remained significant throughout history. Moreover, in recent times it has become more prominent and complex, the rise of globalization and use of sea routes for global trade has marked the sea as an important element of power. Also, natural resources such as fish, gas, minerals and oil make seas an attractive playground for geopolitics or political gains. The notion of maritime security is also significant to deal with transnational threats such maritime terrorism, piracy, theft, human and drug trafficking. In addition to this, the rise of cooperation and alliances has made maritime security a

complex concept due to the involvement of numerous actors and to deal with preparedness is necessary for the states to protect their sovereign rights. All these dynamics have made the concept of maritime security relevant and a hot topic in international relations.

Alfred Mahan and Sea Power Theory

The Sea power theory was initially proposed by Alferd Mahan Thayer and another important figure for the establishment of the theoretical framework of sea power theory is Geoffrey Till. Alferd Mahan proposed the Sea power theory on the basis of which he put a focus on the strengthening of naval power. He argued that Sea Power is the vital source of securing national interests and gaining power. Therefore, he introduced three main elements: Material Strength, Moral Strength and Geographical strength, important factors to achieve sea power. According to his perspective, sea power opens the gate for greater political opportunities, and it is significant to increase naval power. Mahan argued that to acquire sea power a state should treat naval fleet as a separate force instead of a collective force within the army, and also a state should increase its technologic capabilities.

The Alfred Mahan defined the notion of sea power in his research work titled as "The Problem of Asia: its effect upon international politics" highlighting that scrutinizing sea power must be a priority while formulating the foreign and defense policy. Also, the military, economic and diplomatic interactions collectively affect the sea power and maritime gains of a particular state. The practical and strategic implications of Alfred Mahan Sea power concept prominent the expansion of sea power and to achieve this a state should construct maritime infrastructure, ports, expanded communication networks and formation of strong warships. Another theoretical framework is proposed by Till of Comprehensive Maritime Security, includes the other dimension such as climate change, sea pollution and overfishing or lack of resources

Geoffrey Till provides an extensive approach in the theoretical framework of Sea power, he argued that along with the strengthening of naval force the cooperation between states to secure their maritime border is necessary. Therefore, the other building blocks for a state to be a Sea Power is the oversight agencies, alliances, police and law enforcement. Moreover, Till emphasized that collaboration between states is compulsory for the smooth and progressive growth in the domain of maritime security.

Geoffrey added the economic, social and environmental factor to maritime security and argued that these global issues leave an impact on maritime security. Therefore, there is a need for an extensive approach towards the framework of maritime security. To deal with the transnational threats of sea terrorism and drugs trafficking states should increase their surveillance and cooperation between states to deal with it (Ferdy leoracha, 2023).

Research Methodology

This research paper has used the qualitative approach in order to analyze the naval capabilities and strategies of Tehran under the theoretical framework of sea power theory. The secondary resources, which include journal, website articles and reports, think tanks analysis has been analyzed in order to evaluate the naval strategy of Tehran and its impact on the global economy. Descriptive research has been done in order to explain the emphasis of Tehran on unconventional warfare and the use of Strait of Hormuz to create the deterrence in the adversary to avoid any aggressive military action against it.

Discussion and Analysis

The Role of Navy in Managing Maritime Security

The sea power has several dimensions one is the naval forces in order to analyze the naval force the Booth and Groove worked on it. The naval force can be defined as the armed force that is active above the seas and below the seas. The relationship exists between the ranking of the naval force of a particular state and its standing in international order. The hierarchy in

international order this idea is accepted across the globe and naval force strength reinforces this idea. Moreover, the power of naval force enhances state power and global presence.

The Understanding Of The Triangular Model Of Sea Power Proposed By Booth And Groove

Booth use the triangular framework to illustrate the use of sea one is the trade-based use for the mobilization of goods and commodities second one is to target the adversary by military forces and for diplomatic purposes as well. The last one is the use of the sea for the exploitation of resources. The Booth emphasized that the Sea has a very dynamic role, the most significant is the diplomatic and Constabulary mode of action in which state utilize the sea to manage political relations and to deter a state. Moreover, the practical application of this model is underlined in the British and Australian maritime doctrines which utilize the Booth model and divide their naval force role. Along with this division it also provides theoretical boundaries regarding the three levels of naval power usage. For instance, for conducting operation during wars, making allies to deter in order to prevent crisis and to deal with military threats internal and external. The Groove further elucidate the concept of sea power use and role of naval force at sea in managing maritime security, he divides the role into three main domains

1) first the use of sea for military purposes to conduct the operations, sea denial, power projection and sea control.
2) Second one is the use of Gunboat diplomacy which includes the use of flags and
3) lastly for defense purposes to protect the economic, military and national interests or gains.

Fig 1.1 Groove's Model of Sea power

IRAN'S NAVAL CAPABILITIES

Iran naval capabilities have been significantly grown from the past year. The naval force of Tehran is comparatively larger than the other Gulf states and even than the GCC countries as a whole. The shallow water and the narrow lanes of the Strait Hormuz gives Iran a advantage or leverage over the global energy markets (Kajee, 2025). Though the Gulf initially was more invested and focused on increasing the capabilities and number of the air and land forces but due to the realization and the relevance of sea power has changed this trend, it can be observed that Tehran is working to increase its naval capabilities, since the Pahlavi regime and Islamic Republic the naval force improvement and advancement remained an important objective, the imperial

Iranian Navy was built or formed in 1932 initially several setback and failures were faced by their naval force in 1980s.

The modernization of naval force has been done for instance the Tehran naval force is now equipped with, coastal defense cruise missiles, mining, smart submarines and uncrewed underwater vehicles having the drones, Artificial Intelligence system and other weaponries. Also, he joints exercises with the forces of China, Pakistan and India has been made by Tehran (Bahgat, 2025). Moreover, to achieve its political objectives Tehran has invested on the production of weapons in order to strengthen its forces. The Tehran has been involved since very long period of time in backing the Assad regime, as well as other proxies like Hezbollah. Iran has supplied them weapons through shipping and It has built these weapons in its own industry DIO (Iranian defense Industry Organization) and MOFADL (the industrial arm of Ministry of Defense and armed force Logistics). In order to ensure the smooth transfer of ammunition and weapons the IRIN and IRISL has been involved.

Recently, it has been seen that Tehran has reduced the number of its naval exercise, due to the lack of factual evidence. The common conclusion drawn by the scholars is that it is due to the shortage and lack of resources which is the result of the sanctions imposed on Tehran. Though the number of exercises is reduced, IRIN has increased engagement with other states and the long-range deployments. For instance, Iran has done long range deployment in Pacific and Mediterranean Sea as well as in the Sudan. It can analyze that it is the long-term strategy of Tehran as it will increase its influence in the region. The statement of Sayyari reflects the aim of this long-term strategy he argued that "The golden Triangle of Bab al Mandeb, Strait of Hormuz and Malacca are important or significant chokepoints and main point for the concentration of navy. This shift from exercises to the long-range deployment is observed as the long term expanded strategy of Iran as it is reflected in the speeches and statements of Iran's leadership. Sayyari who have states that "Iran's deployment in the Pacific is the preludes to its presence in the Atlantic Ocean. it can be concluded that Iran has reduced its naval exercises to utilize the resources on the deployment which is the part of its great strategy (Harmer, 2013).

TIMELINE	THE NAVAL DEPLOYMENTS AND STRATEGIC ENGAEMENTS
January- March, 2013	Iranian Fleet Deployment and Strategic Engagement with China
December 19,2012	Russian Udaloy Class Destroyer Marshal Shaposhnikov docked at Bandar Abbas.
April 20, 2013	Three Russian Pacific Fleet Vessels docked at Bandar Abbas

FINDINGS

- ✓ Strait of Hormuz is the important choke point for the flow of global trade and the world large number of liquified petroleum and natural gas. Therefore, the narrow lanes of strait of Hormuz gave the leverage to Iran over the global energy market.
- ✓ Tehran forces are equipped with coastal defense cruise missiles, mining, smart submarines and uncrewed underwater vehicles having the drones, Artificial Intelligence system and other weaponries.
- ✓ Iran has shifted its strategy of excessive naval and military exercises to the long-range deployment and strategic engagement approach under which it has done several engagements with Russia and China
- ✓ Under its approach of long-range deployment Tehran aimed to protect its political objective and increased the cloud of its influence by deploying in the Indo-Pacific and Mediterranean Sea as well as in Sudan.

- ✓ Tehran has been focused to build its weapons domestically in order to support its proxies like Hezbollah and Hamas through shipping the weapons with the assistance of DIO (Iranian defense Industry Organization) and MOFADL (the industrial arm of Ministry of Defense and armed force Logistics).

Recommendations

- In order to avoid the military confrontation between Washington and Tehran the GCC and other European states should play the role of mediator and facilitate the negotiation between the two states.
- Also, the existing conflicts in the Middle east which includes Syrian conflict, Israel-Palestine conflict all needs to be sort peacefully and diplomatically instead of opting the militarily solution. Because, military confrontation will cause damage to the states involved in the war as well as destabilize the global economy as strait of Hormuz is vital trade route.
- Moreover, the emphasis on the increasing naval capabilities in order to create deterrence can also manage the risk of war. Therefore, Iran needs to frame its naval deterrence strategy in a way that it will avoid any aggressive and military confrontation.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that the decline of the axis of resistance, downfall of the Assad regime, Hamas and Hezbollah has greatly affected the position of Iran, but Iran's naval credibility cannot be underestimated. Though the US has more advantages in the conventional warfare but in case of unconventional warfare the losses will be faced by both of the states. There is a great difference in the balance of power equation between two states, the strategy of Iran in deterring the states to opt for any aggressive step against US has been quite successful due to the reliance of all major power on the fossil fuels. Despite, the states have been shifting to renewable energy resources, they are still heavily dependent on the non-renewable energy resources. The strait of Hormuz is the significant chokepoint as 20 percent of the global liquified petroleum and $1/5^{th}$ of the global LNG pass through the strait. Therefore, any military confrontation can lead to the global level economic crunch and the significant rise in oil prices.

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