

Interview by Bertrand de Lesquen (Marine & Oceans)

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What is the added value of a meeting like the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium?

Indian Ocean Naval Symposium was established following the growth of piracy from the Gulf of Aden to the Indian Ocean basin. When *International Maritime Organization* (IMO) declared 700 miles off the Horn of Africa dangerous for seafaring, the concept of IONS came into existence and it has been continuing as having been led by the Islamic Republic of Iran Navy as its periodical chair having attained some degrees of successes. The added values of this symposium are as following:

1. Increasing environmental awareness of the Indian Ocean littoral states about the security of the Indian Ocean and seas around the maritime areas under their rules.
2. Sharing expert, professional and tactical ideas and opinions of navies of the Indian Ocean littoral states on the ground created by IONS, especially in the Conclaves of Chiefs.
3. Empowering Working Groups and sharing existing capacities.
4. Creating awareness and a constructive competition for capacity building with the aim at reaching maritime collective security.
5. Developing communications through building appropriate communication channels which were nonexistent in advance. This topic has facilitated talks among navies and establishment of appropriate communications.
6. Producing maritime literature in different aspects through speeches, IONSPHERE journal and three working groups.
7. Improving professionalism in navies and increasing security of the Indian Ocean, especially in the northern part of it.

What is your assessment of the Iranian presidency of the IONS?

The Islamic Republic of Iran Navy's chairmanship was different from other iterations. One of the differences was the tenure which increased from 2 to 3 years. This edition had important achievements during which following effective measures have been taken:

1. Holding the second IONS Maritime Security Working Group meeting within the ten-year history of IONS.
2. Originating the zero draft of the Indian Ocean Maritime Security Guidelines and introducing it to other countries based on existing commonalities, security outlook, and potential and existing regional and global interactions and approaches.
3. Holding Initial Planning Conference (IPC) and Final Planning Conference (FPC) of IONS Maritime Exercises (IMEX) in two separate dates.
4. Making preliminary arrangements for conducting IMEX and establishing vessels and forces which was postponed due to outspread of Coronavirus and health and safety requirements.
5. Writing and compiling the IONS Tactical Publication (ITP) remained from the previous CoCs with an approach to having the maximum level of commonalities among IONS

navies, nature of action taken by the IONS member navies and with a look in line with the need for the least educational processes to use and the possibility of upgrading it to new versions.

6. With efforts of our friends in the Indian Navy, compiling and completing of the Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) IONS Working Group Guidelines went forward appropriately and affectively. Moreover, draft of the Maritime Search & Rescue Guidelines was separately promulgated by the Bangladesh Navy.
7. With efforts of our friends in the Royal Australian Navy, Communication Plan (COMPLAN) including communication codes, frequencies and communication instructions for the IONS navies' vessels were written and announced to members.
8. In this edition of IONS, with efforts of all members, especially with the serious activity of IONS Working Groups and with a look to the importance of information sharing in IONS, information sharing and maritime security centers within the IONS region, took actions towards making communications between each other and exchanging inter-memorandums of understanding with an outstanding growth and movement. Therefore, desire of these centers to have communications became obvious more than past. All to this topic happened because of the unity of opinion achieved by consecutive meetings and gatherings of members and it followed the Islamic Republic of Iran Navy strategies to keep its promise to the Chiefs of the IONS navies as to move towards practical measures.
9. With the Islamic Republic of Iran Navy and the Royal Navy of Oman's attention and active interactions, the pre-session meeting for handing over chair of the 7th IONS was held in the best way possible in complete convergence and synergy of members with participants representing 23 countries, reaching expected aims of the chairs of IONS Working Groups and members in due time and also reaching the expected aims to suggest proposals to IONS Chiefs.

Now with regard to reaching convergence and synergy, we hope that the French Navy is able to get enough profit from preliminaries provided and integrated in the 6th edition with a look to its future role in IONS as a part of the countries and people of the region and to bring unity and connection to front operational units at sea to perform announced joint operations, to establish naval task groups and coalitions necessitated to IONS aims that we evaluate it as a big exam for the French Navy.

What does the Indian Ocean (in the broad sense) represent for Iran at the beginning of the 21st century?

The Indian Ocean is very important for the Iranian-Islamic civilization. Second step of the Islamic Revolution of Iran is a civilization making step and one of the important domains of that is maritime civilization. According to the plan, the Islamic Republic of Iran's civilization leap towards sea happens in this era and the Indian Ocean is a very important arena from different aspects including blue economy, civilization talks, cooperation with friends, and counteracting against threats to the Islamic Republic of Iran. In this arena, the Islamic Republic of Iran Navy is the pioneer of this civilization movement and both its security-creating actions and its role to reach maximum collective security are really important. Without a safe Indian Ocean, the Islamic Republic of Iran's maritime security as a littoral state having a civilization leap towards sea is meaningless. The Indian Ocean is the golden gate for the Islamic Republic of Iran's

civilization talks withrest of the world; therefore, in the beginning of the 21st century, a safe Indian Oceanis really important for theIslamic Republic of Iran. It has been a geo-political and geo-strategical domain for the Islamic Republic of Iran and other littoral states and it will be the start of a pathbeing more than ever fundamental in active interactions with the regional nations and the world.

The Indian Oceanis the ring linking West of Asia to its East. Not only its communicational role is important for Asian countries but it is also important for the world. Thus, taking principal conceptions for gaining benefits from countless potentials of the Indian Oceanlike establishing logical, targeted and smart relationships with other beneficiaries in this region can be an effective step in an optimal and peaceful use of the Indian Ocean.



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How is the Iranian Navy present there and what are its main missions?

- The Islamic Republic of Iran has always emphasized on the principle of providing security for maritime domains with collaboration of littorals while respecting their rights. The Islamic Republic of Iran Navy also has based its strategy on the same principle of active collaboration and partnership aimed to provide collective security. The Islamic Republic of Iran Navy's activities in different maritime domains have always been security-creating and there are numerous examples of the Islamic Republic of Iran Navy's positive role in fighting terrorism. The Islamic Republic of Iran Navy also looks forward to completing such a mission in the Indian Ocean basin.
- The Islamic Republic of Iran is a coastal country and has interests and resources located

at sea. Therefore, the Islamic Republic of Iran Navy's presence in the region takes place with following approaches:

1. Establishing maritime security and controlling waters under the rule of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the eastern part of the Strait of Hormuz.
2. Providing the security of the country's SLOCs.
3. Preventing formation of centers of insecurity in adjacent waters.
4. Attaining collective security and stabilizing it for the benefit of the region and the world.
5. Partnership and active interaction in peacemaking and peacekeeping processes.
6. Developing the navy from a world scale navy to a blue water navy.
7. Supporting economic developments of the Islamic Republic of Iran, particularly the second step of revolution.
8. Playing the role of police to establish security and discipline at sea.
9. Simultaneously, partnership or establishment of regional and international coalitions according to agreements obtained.
10. Performing humanitarian assistance role.

What co-operations do you carry out in the Indian Ocean?

The Islamic Republic of Iran Navy's focus of cooperation in the Indian Ocean aimed at reaching collective security and stabilizing it is firmly based on these topics:

1. Information sharing with friend and neighboring navies aimed at increasing environmental awareness.
2. Making ground for conducting exercises with either neighboring countries or other littorals in the Indian Ocean.
3. Conducting mutual visits from ports.
4. Educational, research and sports interactions and cooperation.
5. Providing mutual technical services on demand.
6. Holding and participating in ongoing meetings, performances and gatherings.

What is the relationship between the Iranian Navy and the French Navy?

The relationship between the Islamic Republic of Iran Navy and the French Navy is getting organized and we haven't been able to reach a unanimous and synergetic point of interaction yet which of course it seems attainable. We believe that the French Navy is standing on the wrong side, being the representative of a European country rather than being the representative of nations of the Indian Ocean region. IONS Charter of Business was ratified by all members emphasizing on providing security of the region by its littorals, but joining the French Navy to the naval coalition that Americans has formed as the pivot of mischief, insecurity and terror in the region is one of the matters hindering unanimity and synergy. By doing so, France has violated the IONS Charter of Business. This lack of commitment to the mentioned symposium obligations was from the French side and its repetition in France's tenure for two upcoming years will not have good results for the region. We expect the French Navy to strengthen security arrangements in the region boosting regional convergence. However, in its own nature of presence, the French Navy apparently follows interests contradicting with interests of regional collective security, particularly maritime national

interests of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Hence, if they follow their current approach -while having the possibility of moving towards regional commonalities- and continue on their diverging approach and acting as the representative of the oppressive countries of the region's colonial history instead of representing the governments and nations of the region, it cannot be expected that any kind of interactive relationship would take place and get boosted between France and one of the strongest, most civilized and most important countries of the region i.e. the Islamic Republic of Iran. The Islamic Republic of Iran is a country with the highest levels of geopolitical security in the region and this is very valuable for the region and the world. The discourse and talks between the Islamic Republic of Iran Navy and the French Navy began to form in the ground of IONS and for the time being, no real interactive approach is seen from France and the relationship between the two navies is ongoing in the lowest and the most common condition. Up to present, the French Navy has not responded positively and meaningfully to the interactive approaches of the Islamic Republic of Iran Navy, particularly as they are on the verge of taking over the chair of the 7th IONS. Indeed, if the relationships are not strong, their roots should be sought from the French side.



The frigate Jamaran of the Iranian Navy. Copyright: Iranian Navy.

Presentation of Rear Admiral Dr. Hossein Khanzadi

Rear Admiral Dr. Hossein Khanzadi was born in 1946 in Gorgan, Golestan. He studied Navigation and Ship Command at Imam Khomeini Naval Academy in Nowshahr. In addition, he has completed the Hovercraft Piloting course and he received his master's degree in Maritime Scientific Defense Management from AJA University of Command and Staff. He also has a master's degree in Maritime Warfare Planning from Pakistan and a Ph.D. in Strategic Management (Military) from the Supreme National Defense University of Iran.

Additionally, Rear Admiral Dr. Hossein Khanzadi has accomplished various courses in the radio and tactical communications and he also used to be the pilot and commander of the hovercrafts BH7 and SRN6. He has also played a prominent role in various areas, including International Maritime Law to Artillery Fire Control, Electronic Navigation, Modern Wars, Electronic Wars, Anti-surface Operations, Maritime Planning, Maritime Safety Management, Management of Maintenance and Repair of Ships.

Rear Admiral Dr. Hossein Khanzadi is a faculty member of the Ministry of Science with the rank of Assistant Professor and he has developed his Master's thesis entitled "*Application of Hovercrafts in I.R. Iran Navy's Future Missions Based on Defense Against Threats*". He is also a lecturer in various fields of Maritime Sciences.

Rear Admiral Dr. Hossein Khanzadi is fluent in English and plays an influential role in formulating the Navy Strategic Plans for the 2025 horizon. To date, he has contributed to the compilation and translation of several books, including "*Marine Tactics and Equipment*", "*Using and Navigating Drone KD2R5Q*", and "*Strategic Straits of the World*" and he is working on a number of books on the subjects of "*Hovercrafts*", "*The Geopolitics of the Indian Ocean*", "*The Basics of Maritime Power*", and so on.

Among the responsibilities of the Rear Admiral in the past, the followings can be mentioned:

- Artillery, Sailor, and Telecommunications Officer in the amphibious flotilla of the IRIN
- Artillery, Sailor, and Anti-Submarine Officer in the destroyers flotilla of the IRIN
- Operations Officer, deputy Commander, and Commander of the Hovercraft Squadron of the IRIN
- Director of Education at the Education Department, and
- Deputy of the IRIN Department of Plan & Policy and budget

In 1986, Rear Admiral Dr. Hossein Khanzadi entered Imam Khomeini Naval Academy in Nowshahr and he is the first IRIN Commander who graduated from this academy.

Source : Iran Navy