

# Iran's Asymmetric Naval Warfare

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## ABOUT THE AUTHORS



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Farzin Nadimi, a Senior Fellow with The Washington Institute, is a Washington-based analyst specializing in the security and defense affairs of Iran and the Persian Gulf region.



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**A**s nuclear negotiations between Iran and the international community enter a more dangerous and uncertain phase, further tensions and confrontations are likely on an often-overlooked front: the vital shipping lanes of the Persian Gulf. Given its natural geographic advantages and deliberate military development, the Islamic Republic effectively holds the Strait of Hormuz -- the world's oil lifeline -- at risk. And despite its overall defensive posture in these waters, Iran could take preemptive action in response to a perceived threat of imminent attack.

In this Policy Focus, Iranian military expert Fariborz Haghshenass outlines what form such action might take given Tehran's efforts to greatly expand the role and capabilities of its unconventional naval forces. In the two decades since the Iran-Iraq War, the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps Navy has been transformed into a highly motivated, well-equipped, and well-financed force, capable of executing its unique doctrine of asymmetric naval warfare against larger naval forces and key regional energy assets alike. Understanding the nature, scope, and likelihood of this threat is a critical facet of both the nuclear issue and Iran's wider regional ambitions.

## THE AUTHOR

**F**arzin Nadimi ([/experts/view/farzin-nadimi](#)) is an expert on the Iranian military who has published widely on the subject. In 2020, he published an [updated and expanded edition of this study](#).

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