



AN ANALYTICAL INTELLIGENCE WIRE PREPARED BY THE STUDENTS  
OF EMBRY-RIDDLE AERONAUTICAL UNIVERSITY IN PRESCOTT,  
ARIZONA

**Eagle Eye 334 | April 26, 2019**

In This Issue

IRAN: Naval Forces Capable of Laying almost 2200 Mines in the Strait of Hormuz	2
ISRAEL: Netanyahu Opposition Will Likely Continue Developing Political Influence Despite Election Loss	9
LATIN AMERICA: New Leadership Could Indicate a Regional Shift to the Right	11
MALI: UN Withdrawal Likely to Worsen Conflict	13



## IRAN: Naval Forces Capable of Laying almost 2200 Mines in the Strait of Hormuz

### Scope Note

This product will attempt to collect order of battle data for Islamic Republic of Iran Navy (IRIN) and the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps Navy (IRGCN) vessels in the Persian Gulf and Sea of Oman. This product will then use this data to assess Iranian mine laying capabilities in the Strait of Hormuz. The piece will assess multiple scenarios for mine laying and assess each scenarios potential for success.

### The Strait of Hormuz

The Strait of Hormuz, a strategic waterway between Iran and the Arabian Peninsula, connects the Persian Gulf to the Indian Ocean. Current estimates suggest that approximately 20 percent of the world's daily oil demand passes through the Strait. Tehran frequently threatens closure of the Strait and has attempted to use naval mines to restrict Persian Gulf oil shipping in the past.

Despite Tehran's threats to close the Strait, Iran would endure significant economic hardships in the event of strait closure, as their economy depends heavily on oil exports. Should US oil sanctions against Iran come into full force, as it will in mid-May of 2019, Tehran may close the strait, as the denial of their oil exports would negate any negative impact of strait closure on their economy, and would likely raise oil prices, increasing their profit on oil exported through pipelines.

### Iranian Order of Battle:

Imagery analysis of 7 Iranian naval sites in the Sea of Oman and the Persian Gulf indicate the following order of battle data for Iranian naval forces. See figure 1.

Tehran concentrates most large Iranian naval vessels are in Bandar Abbas, along with the majority of Iranian subsurface vessels. Tehran concentrates their mine capable small boats in Assaloyeh, Bandar e Bushehr, and Bandar e Mashahr. Because of this, Iran appears to have the majority of its mine capable vessels in the north, not near Hormuz. For more in-depth distribution of Iranian mine-capable forces, see graphic 1.

Ashoora Type Boats	30
Bandar Abbas Class Resupply Ship	1
Bladerunner Fast Attack Craft	5
Boghammar Fast Attack Craft	20
C-14 Missile Boat	4
Combattante II Patrol Boat	7
Delvar Transport Ship	4
Fateh Submarine	0
Ghadir Submarine	9
Hendijan Transport Ship	6
Houdong Missile Boat	5
Kashdom Fast attack Craft	10
Kharg Resupply Ship	1
Kilo Submarine	3
Kuch Fast Attack Craft	3
MK-13 Missile Boat	5
MK-3 Patrol Boat	1
Peykaap Missile Boat	5
PGM-71 Patrol Boat	1
Safir Transport Ship	3
Tarlan Fast Attack Craft	8
TIR Missile Boat	4
Unidentified Small Boat	211
Unidentified medium Boat	14
Vosper Frigate	3
Hengham Amphibious Dock	2

Figure 1: Iranian Naval Order of Battle

**Likely Scenarios for Iranian Mine laying:**

Iranian mine laying operations depend less on how many mines Tehran has, and dependent more on how many Mines the navy could lay prior to adversary detection of activity. Therefore, scenarios vary depending on the likelihood of detection.

**Scenario 1:** In scenario 1, Tehran will attempt to use its submarine fleet to lay mines overnight. This scenario has the greatest chance of success as GEOINT will have difficulty detecting Iranian submarine departure during the night. In the strait, nighttime lasts between 8 and 12 hours. This estimate will use a 10-hour time frame to estimate mine laying totals. For a chronology of submarine mine laying operations, see graphic 2

In this scenario, 3 Iranian KILO-Class vessels would depart Bandar Abbas with 24 mines each. It would take the vessels 1 hour to reach the narrow shipping channel at the mouth of the strait. The KILO-Class submarines would then take 1 hour to return and 1 hour to reload. Using these estimates, The KILO-Class submarines could perform 4 mine laying sorties each, totaling 288 mines.

While the KILO-Class submarines depart, the FATEH-Class submarine, which ONI estimates is operational, will depart from Bandar Abbas with 8 mines. The Fateh requires 85 minutes to arrive at the minefield. For the purposes of this estimate, the Fateh will require 30 minutes to reload ordinance at Bandar Abbas. Using these estimates, The FATEH-Class submarine could lay 24 mines across 3 sorties. Imagery has not confirmed the operational status of the Fateh, therefore, it possibly could not partake in the operation.

Lastly, the GHADIR-Class submarines will leave Bandar Abbas at the beginning of the operation and arrive at the minefield 110 minutes later. This estimate assumes that the GHADIR-Class can carry 2 mines. If the GHASIR-Class requires 20 minutes to reload 2 mines, then the GHADIR-Class Submarines could perform 3 mine laying sorties. ONI estimates that Tehran possesses 14 GHADIR-Class submarines, and imagery confirms the existence of 9, if Tehran uses 9-14 subs, naval forces could lay 54-84 mines. In total, Tehran could lay 342-396 mines in the strait of Hormuz.

**Scenario 2:** In scenario 2, Iranian submarines will continue to lay mines as they did in scenario 1. The Iranian Navy will also use mine-capable surface ships to transit the Persian Gulf, lay the first round of mines in the strait, and perform additional sorties by resupplying at Bandar Abbas. This estimate will use a 10-hour time frame to estimate mine laying totals. Adversaries have a greater chance of detecting this course of action, as it includes the large-scale deployment of surface assets to the strait. As satellites can see these assets, and civilian vessels may run into these assets, they are more difficult to conceal. Additionally, by mobilizing a larger number of personnel, HUMINT likely detect these actions more effectively.

During this Scenario, Tehran would likely only mobilize smaller naval vessels to mitigate the destruction to their navy, should the adversary discover operations. Because of this, it would not likely deploy the VOSPER-Class, as it constitutes a large portion of Iran's large surface combatants. Additionally, experts do not know if the Peykaap and MK-13 missile boats can lay mines. This means that the Iranian Navy could lay mines from its fleet of small boats and

medium sized patrol boats. In this Scenario, the navy could lay between 1,363 and 1,772 mines. For a more in-depth explanation of mine laying estimates, see appendix 1.

For information regarding ship capabilities used in this estimate, see appendix 2.

**Scenario 3:** In this Scenario, Iranian naval officers would commandeer civilian and commercial vessels for use in mine laying. This scenario is a high impact, low probability scenario, as Tehran could lay most, if not all, of their 2000 total mines. However, the probability of detection is high.

### **High Impact, Low Probability Analysis for Scenario 3**

**Scenario:** Iranian IRGC officers commandeer commercial vessels returning to civilian harbors at the conclusion of the work day. After dark, Iranian crews would pilot the commercial vessels to Bandar Abbas, where IRIN crews would fit them with mines. These vessels would perform mine laying sorties during the night and return to their ports of origin at the conclusion of the operation. Due to the lack of armaments on the commercial vessels, combat capable surface vessels would likely screen the mine laying fleet.

**Impact:** Currently, no accurate estimates exist for the number of commercial vessels in the Bandar Abbas area of the Persian Gulf, nor for how many crews the Iranian naval forces can spare to pilot the commercial vessels. Because submarine and surface vessels can already lay roughly 1772 mines, use of commercial vessels could almost certainly lay the rest of Iran's 2000 mine inventory. However, utilization of commercial vessels does not confer a large increase in mines compared to the risks associated, as their confiscation would only contribute another 228 mines to the operation. Adversary HUMINT and SIGINT could likely detect this scenario, as many Iranian civilians would know about of the vessel conscription, and therefore the operation. Should a single Iranian fisherman take to social media to complain about the confiscation or should Iranian commercial vessels radio warnings of confiscation to one another, the operation would be detected.

**Motivations for Adopting:** Three potential motivators could cause Tehran to use this tactic in mine laying. First, If Tehran believed that it could not remain undetected for the full 10-hour operation, it would likely use commercial boats as a means of laying mines faster. Secondly, Tehran could use civilian vessels as a means of misdirecting adversary intelligence. Should the navy keep their military vessels in port, it could lead intelligence services to believe that the Iranian Navy is not engaging in operations, while it is using commercial vessels to lay mines. Lastly, Tehran would likely choose to use commercial vessels if their naval forces were performing other tasks. These commitments could include harassment of merchant shipping, naval exercises, or surprise offensives on adversary naval bases.

**Avenues to Success:** In this case, Iranian success does not dependent on Iranian actions, but on adversary intelligence's capabilities to detect this scenario. If adversary intelligence does not collect adequate GEOINT on civilian harbors, or if intelligence is not monitoring radio or social media traffic, then the action could go undetected.

## Indicators:

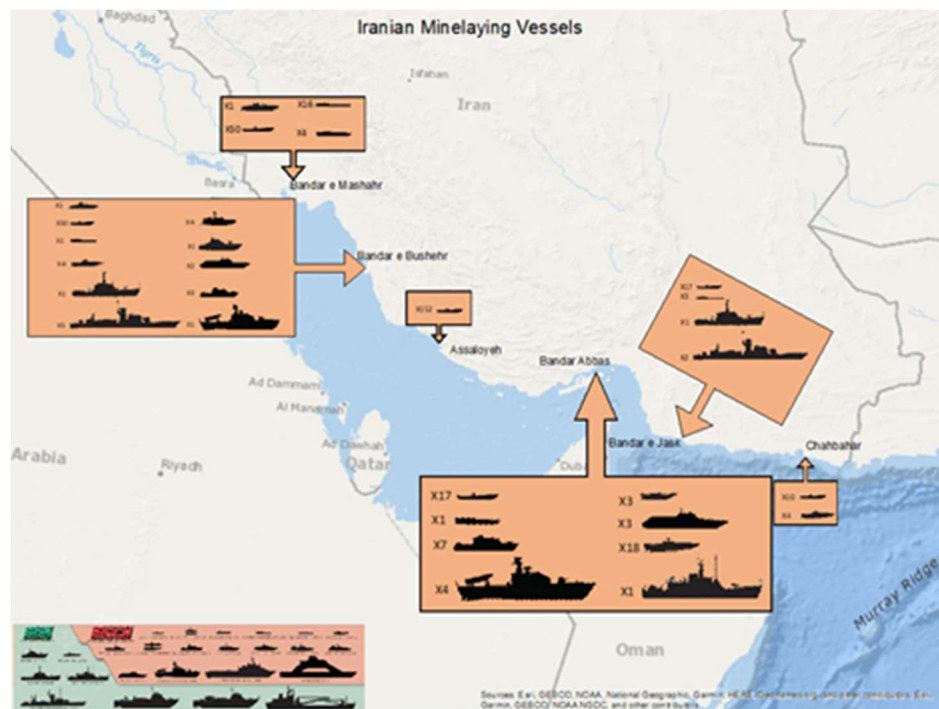
1. Commercial vessels could use radio to warn other vessels of the confiscations, this could cause vessels moving towards the port to divert elsewhere. Both of these indicate this scenario.
2. Iranian citizens complaining about the detainment or commandeering of civilian ships would indicate this action.
3. A large exodus of civilian ships from harbor facilities, and the corresponding irregularities in AIS tracking data could indicate this scenario.

## Implications

Iran's capability to lay a vast majority of their naval mines in such a short period could embolden Tehran, as their mines are more likely to close the strait long enough to force adversaries to capitulate in the military and diplomatic sphere. Additionally, as the US only has 4 AVENGER-Class minesweeping vessels in the Persian Gulf, mine removal would occur slowly, especially in the face of Iranian military resistance. As the US only has 14 AVENGER-Class vessels[vi], and all are tasked elsewhere, increasing intelligence and detection capabilities in the region, as opposed to increasing minesweeping capabilities likely represents the most effective way to counter the mine threat.

[Nicholas Cifolelli]

**Graphic 1:**





## Appendix 2

### Estimation of Ship Capabilities

	Speed (km/h)	Endurance (km)	Mine Capacity
Kilo Class	37	U	24
Ghadir Class	20	U	2
Fateh Class	26	U	8
Ashoora	74	370	1
Bladerunner	111	555	1
USB*	74	370	1
Boghammar	83	926	1
C-14	93	555	1
Cape	37	U	9
Combattante	67	1060	12
TIR	96	U	1
PGM-71	18	U	9
MK-3	48	650	4
Kashdom	74	370	1
Tarlan	74	370	1
Kuch	74	370	1
Houdong	65	650	5
*Unidentified Small Boats			
U-Unknown			



## **ISRAEL: Netanyahu Opposition Will Likely Continue Developing Political Influence Despite Election Loss**

**Summary:** Benny Gantz will likely maintain political influence in Israel despite his loss of the 9 April election for the premiership and will hold some leverage over the Knesset due to his political alliance's control of 35 seats. Additionally, Gantz and the Blue and White Alliance will likely gain further support from the Israeli population during the fifth term of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, bolstering his effectiveness as the opposition leader to Netanyahu and the right-wing coalition.

### **Increased Opposition Presence in Israel**

Gantz will likely continue developing extensive political support as the primary opposition to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the right-wing coalition subsequent to a dramatic increase in national and international support. Gantz established himself as the primary competitor to PM Netanyahu leading up to the April election, siphoning a substantial amount of support from political parties in opposition to Netanyahu and the right-wing coalition, and gaining significant media coverage from local, national, and international new sources. Increasing local and national media coverage and polls of Benny Gantz suggest that support will continue to grow. Additionally, The Blue and White Alliance will likely cultivate its support following its establishment of 35 seats in the Knesset, rivaling Likud as the largest single party in the Knesset. The Blue and White Alliance consists of the Israel Resilience, Yesh Atid, and Telem parties and now controls 35 of the 120 Knesset seats. The Blue and White Alliance established itself as a patriotic-yet-pluralistic and politically-centered party prior to the 2019 election.

### **Possible Indictment may Undermine Netanyahu**

In addition to Gantz' growing support, PM Benjamin Netanyahu will likely continue to lose political support due to Israeli Attorney General Mandelblit's announced intention to indict Netanyahu for bribery in three criminal investigations, Cases 1000 (Netanyahu admitted Arnon Milchan and James Packer gave him gifts totaling a value of NIS 1 million. Additionally, Netanyahu assisted Milchan in both personal and business-related matters; however, he denies any connection between the two matters), 2000 ( Netanyahu admitted that he worked with Arnon Mozes about Yediot, an Israeli news site, adjusting coverage to favor him in exchange for lessening competition from Israel Hayom, a primary competitor), and 4000 (Former Director-General of the Communications Ministry, Shlomo Filber, admitted to engaging in a bribery deal with Shaul Elovitch in exchange for positive media coverage of PM Netanyahu under the orders of the PM), paving the way for Benny Gantz to capitalize and gain support from disenfranchised Israeli citizens.

### **Outlook and Implications:**

Although Netanyahu holds a significant and well-established base of support from primarily secular and right-wing citizens, shifting popular political views and his impending indictment will likely push popular support in favor of Benny Gantz and his Blue and White Alliance. Although Likud's right-wing coalition would maintain power for the duration of Netanyahu's term, a successful indictment will likely sway public favor towards the center and away from the

right-wing coalition. This change in Israel's political landscape could likely result in a Blue and White Alliance victory in the following election. International disapproval of recent conflicts between Israel and Palestine could also shift public favor towards more peaceful relations, which align with Gantz' and his party's political platform. Additionally, Gantz already gained significant political momentum as PM Netanyahu's main adversary and will likely remain as such in the next election.

Political control of the Israeli Knesset will likely affect Israel's international diplomatic efforts. Under the current administration of PM Netanyahu, Israel remains consistently engaged in military operations in Syria as well as in Gaza and the West Bank; however, under the control of Gantz, would will likely re-enter negotiations with Palestine for a peace agreement, reducing the need for U.S. military support. Israel would likely preserve military operations in Syria to sustain a buffer of control against Syria and Iran, relying on U.S. military and diplomatic support.

[Riley Coder]

## **LATIN AMERICA: New Leadership Could Indicate a Regional Shift to the Right**

**Summary:** Five countries in Latin America will hold presidential elections before the end of 2019. In combination with regional turmoil, the outcomes of these elections may represent a broader regional shift to the right and will likely demonstrate the impact of a changing geopolitical landscape. Understanding this shift may give indication of possible future trends of right-leaning governments.

### **Development and Analysis:**

On 22 March, delegates from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Paraguay, and Peru announced the formation of Prosur, an international coalition that will attempt to find common solutions to regional issues. Given the current right leaning political climate in South America, including Chile's current center-right president Sebastian Piñera who will initially lead Prosur, it will likely lean further to the right than most international institutions. Reportedly, the goal of this institution differs from its predecessor, the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), which many believe became politicized to the point of no longer fulfilling a purpose. However, many critics believe that Prosur may have some of the attributes thought to have contributed to UNASUR's failure.

One central considerations exist as reasoning for a move towards support of right-leaning governments: a reactionary response to the recent agenda proposed by left leaning officials. This originates within the context of the "Pink Tide," a term coined to suggest the surge of leftist governments during the late 1990s and early 2000s. Economic stagnation in 2012 arguably led to the dissatisfaction of left-leaning leadership and helped solidify the platforms of parties on the right. In today's context, Chile best represents the rightward shift. The reelection of Piñera in 2018 for a second non-consecutive term exemplifies the attempt at a coalesced stability in Latin American governments.

Right leaning religious opinion helps to create a base for conservative parties to gain popularity. According to Pew Research, one in five Latin Americans identify as "Evangelical", while the numbers in certain Central American countries approach a majority. Evangelicals' support of traditional conservative values often results in support of center-right to right political candidates. Additionally, right leaning politicians capitalized on the battles against rampant corruption in almost every Latin and Central American country and focus their rhetoric and policies on fighting corruption. A poll from Pew Research Center listed crime and corruption the top two problems for the region. As a result, many Latin American countries have vowed to fix those issues, which likely translates to growing support for the right.

South America's rightward shift is further demonstrated by political events in Brazil and Argentina. In Brazil, President Jair Bolsonaro supports military rule, primarily as means of curbing the surge in violent crime. The first 100 days of his presidency showed mixed results, but many believe that political stability and harnessing the potential for economic growth will likely come sooner rather than later. Argentina will hold presidential elections this October, and its current leader Mauricio Macri faces a referendum in large part due to an economic recession. Polling less than 30% among his party, Macri will likely lose leadership in Argentina's Congress. Of the leading candidates, both Juan Manuel Urtubey and Sergio Massa likely

represent a shift to the right. Argentina will almost certainly focus on its internal problems first, although the country may soon shift to a regional focus.

Latin American countries will likely benefit from this opportunity for collaboration to work towards finding solutions for regional challenges. As many worry that international institutions such as Prosur will suffer the same issues as past coalitions, success will likely depend on the active involvement and adherence to a shared vision of regional economic and socio-political prosperity. Latin America's right-wing parties effectively overcame perceptions of acting hostile and overtly creating inequality. In this case, Chile made significant improvements regarding income inequality. However, other countries in the region lack the same progress, but are attempting to improve. Effective continuity will likely drive success for right-leaning parties achieving regional influence. As the region attempts to solve shared problems, the leading countries will likely exert their influence in attempt to improve their regional and global influence. As a result, public pressure will likely center on Prosur, as citizens will expect an impact and the group to govern as effectively as initially promised.

[Bryce Leech]

## **MALI: UN Withdrawal Likely to Worsen Conflict**

**Summary:** Canada and the Netherlands plan to withdraw troops from the UN operation in Mali, creating a power vacuum and likely exacerbating ethnic conflict.

### **Development and Analysis**

On 30 March, Canada and the Netherlands announced they would pull their troops out of the UN mission in Mali despite the UN's request for an increased presence. The UN considers Mali the most perilous of its peacekeeping missions, as over 200 peacekeepers died since the mission began. UN forces face upwards of 20 different armed groups, including the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) and al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). Mali already lost ground to armed groups, and if the war escalates, the government's power will almost certainly reduce significantly. Should the UN, or individual countries, pull troops out, the armed groups will gain significant ground, and given the weakened state of the government, one group may succeed in 'conquering' Mali as a base of operations. UN officials described Mali as a fight they cannot afford to lose, but if other countries follow Canada's lead, one or more of these groups will likely overpower peacekeepers. Mali's government failed numerous times to resolve the fighting, demonstrating Mali cannot fight on its own. Without the UN, the power of the government will almost certainly fade away, leaving a power vacuum.

Ethnic tensions between the Dogon and Fulani further complicate the UN mission. The dispute shifted from a regional conflict to a full-scale ethnic cleansing earlier in March, with an attack that left over 100 Fulani dead. The Dogon receive backing from Mali's military and claim to target the Fulani because the Fulani support the armed groups, although tensions between the groups run much deeper. Land and resource disputes exacerbated the issue, and Malian officials could not resolve the conflict. Instead, the military reportedly provided the Dogon with weapons to fight the Fulani with. This could arise from the fear that the Fulani are conspiring with the Jihadist groups and may be the government's attempt to squash the Fulani before they add to the war in the north.

If the Fulani truly collaborate with one of the Jihadist groups, it will likely provoke both the war in the north and the ethnic conflicts in central Mali. Depending on how deep the ties with such a group (most likely ISGS or AQIM) run, they could possibly provide the Fulani with weapons or materials to fight the Dogon. ISGS may also recruit Fulani members, turning the conflict into not only an attempted ethnic cleansing, but a jihadist mission as well. If this occurs, the Fulani may join the war in the north. Despite terror groups possibly enabling the Fulani, the Dogon outnumber the Fulani significantly and receive backing from the Mali government. Therefore, though the Fulani would likely not defeat the Dogon even with terrorist backing, its partnership with terrorist groups increase the likelihood of casualties for both combatants and civilians.

If the Fulani join the armed forces in northern Mali at the same time that Canada withdraws its troops, it could give whichever group they join an upper-hand in the conflict. Because the 20 groups work against each other, rather than with each other, the Fulani could tip the scales as to which group comes out on top. This group would likely be the one to push further into central Mali and continue to destabilize the region. If Mali's government breaks down, the Fulani-aligned group could rise to fill the power vacuum. The UN votes to renew the mission in Mali this summer. With Canada and the Netherlands withdrawing, the momentum will likely not push

a renewal of the mission. Additionally, other countries may follow suit. Ultimately, The UN's decision to renew or not will likely set the stage for the future direction of the conflict.

[Kaylee Coffman]

**This is a global intelligence briefing prepared by the students of the Global Security and Intelligence Studies program at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in Prescott, Arizona. The views expressed in this briefing are those of the students, not the university.**

**Though we do not publish sources with the final publication, we log and cite every source we use for our research and are happy to share them on request.**

**For questions or comments, contact Editor in Chief Zach Coffee at [editorsee@gmail.com](mailto:editorsee@gmail.com) or Eagle Eye Faculty Advisor Dale Avery at (928) 777-4708**