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Iran and Russia to Hold Joint Navy Drills as U.S. Pressures Tehran on Nuclear Program

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Zuma / TASS

Iran and Russia will hold joint naval drills this week, the Russian Defense Ministry and Iranian state media said Wednesday, as U.S. and Iranian officials meet in Switzerland for talks on Tehran's nuclear program.

Russia's military released a video showing one of its warships, the corvette Stoiky, arriving at the port city of Bandar Abbas, where Iran's navy is based.

In a statement, the Defense Ministry said "Russian and Iranian sailors were working in tandem to ensure the safety of civilian navigation."

Iranian state media, citing a navy spokesman, reported that joint exercises would begin on Thursday and take place in the Gulf of Oman and the Indian Ocean.

"The aim [of the drills] is to strengthen maritime security and to deepen relations between

the navies of the two countries," the spokesperson said without specifying when the exercises would end.

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Iran announced Tuesday that it would partially close the Strait of Hormuz for a few hours for "security" reasons during its own drills. The strait serves as a critical passageway for global oil and liquefied natural gas shipments.

Russian presidential aide Nikolai Patrushev said this week that the Russian, Iranian and Chinese navies had sent warships to the Strait of Hormuz for joint exercises, called Marine Security Belt 2026.

The drills come as Iranian and American officials said they have made progress in nuclear talks being mediated by Oman.

U.S. President Donald Trump has escalated threats against Iran over its nuclear program and deadly crackdown against anti-government protesters earlier this year. Washington and its European allies accuse Tehran of trying to build a nuclear weapon, allegations Iranian officials reject.

Amid the talks, the U.S. military has undertaken a major buildup of aircraft and naval forces in the Middle East as part of Trump's pressure campaign on Iran.

On Monday, the ideological arm of Iran's armed forces launched exercises in the Strait of Hormuz in an apparent challenge to American forces deployed in the region.

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