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exercise

MIDLINK

THREE

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Warships of the Iranian Navy, coastal minesweepers SHAHRUKH and SHAHBAZ, dress ship on the occasion of the birthday of His Imperial Majesty the Shahanshah of Iran while in Karachi harbour during the two-day period of communications drills.



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**MIDLINK
THREE**



COVER PHOTO. At Pakistan Naval Station KARSIK a bugler sounds the opening of CENTO naval exercise MIDLINK THREE as senior staff and ships' officers arrive for a preliminary briefing conference.



Rear Admiral A.R. Khan (centre), Commander in Chief of the Pakistan Navy and MIDLINK THREE exercise commander, welcomes Rear Admiral F.L. Ashworth, U.S. Navy, Commander of Carrier Division 18, who has just arrived by helicopter for a briefing conference.

During two important weeks in October and November of 1960 thirty-five warships from navies of Central Treaty Organization countries participated in the largest maritime exercise ever held in the Arabian Sea. Under the code name MIDLINK THREE, this was the third in a series of annual CENTO naval exercises. The operation began on October 25 at Pakistan Naval Station KARSAZ, near Karachi. It opened with a special briefing for Flag, Staff and Commanding Officers by the exercise commander, Rear Admiral A.R. Khan, Commander in Chief of the Pakistan Navy.

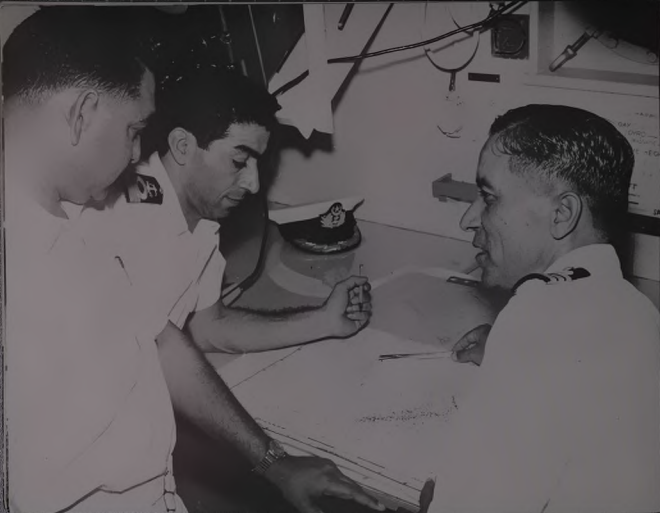


Captain F. M. A. Torrens-Spence, Commanding Officer of HMS ALBION, arrives at KARSAZ Naval Station for the briefing conference.

Officers from staffs and ships of CENTO navies arrive for the briefing conference held in Crescent Hall at Naval Station KARSAZ.

Defining exercise objectives in a formal operation order, Admiral Khan said that a primary aim of MIDLINK THREE would be to give participating units "an excellent opportunity to work together and put CENTO maritime doctrine into practice". Moreover, warning of the importance of the manoeuvres to CENTO nations who desire to preserve their independence and security, Admiral Khan said that "a break in this (CENTO) Pact area will jeopardize the security of the free world".

After this briefing, 8,000 officers and men present for the operation set out to demonstrate under realistic conditions an unmistakable readiness to defend the principles of liberty so that no force would dare try to take them away, not even under a cloak of "peace".



Commander M. Din (right), Commander of Pakistan Navy Mine Force 33, discusses minesweeping operations with Lcdr. F.K. Nasir (left), Commanding Officer of Pakistan Navy minesweeper MUBARAK and Lt. P. Bilgari, Commanding Officer of Iranian minesweeper SHAHBAZ.

Aboard Iranian minesweeper SHAHBAZ, a petty officer sends a message by semaphore during comprehensive communications drills conducted during the first two days of MIDLINK THREE.



During the first two days of the exercise a full schedule of harbour communications drills was carried out to improve teamwork necessary for later manoeuvres at sea. All ships — carriers, destroyers, frigates, minesweepers and submarines — took part in this training which was especially helpful to radiomen, signalmen and other communications personnel.

On October 28, all units stood out to sea in groups according to the type of vessel and headed for assigned "operating areas" where they began a three-day phase of more than seventy individual drills.

In one sector, aircraft carriers ESSEX and ALBION conducted intensive flight operations. Crews stood at "flight quarters" continuously for eighty-five hours, indeed a

Commander G. E. Crosbie of the CENTO Combined Military Planning Staff, discusses air attack plan with the pilot of a Royal Navy jet fighter prior to a launch from HMS ALBION.



Jet fighter aircraft aboard HMS ALBION brought to the hanger deck of the big carrier by elevator for routine maintenance.

Royal Navy "SEA HAWK" jet fighter aircraft aboard American carrier ESSEX during the first sea phase of MIDLINK THREE.



Aboard HMS SCARBOROUGH Able Seamen Mills (left) and Huntley clean a gun barrel on completion of firing practice.

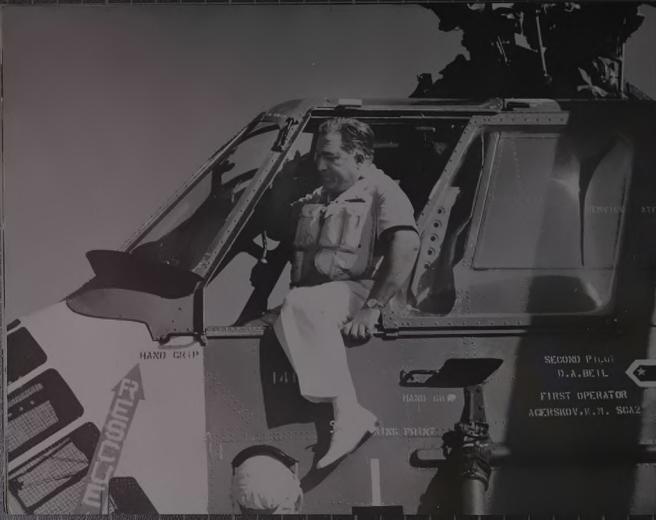


gruelling pace, but one which would even later be exceeded.

In another sector, frigates and destroyers carried out high-speed manoeuvres with precision timing. Submarines also tested their skill at rapid diving, escape and tracking in preparation for subsequent "attacks" on warships and their huge "convoys".

Surface and anti-aircraft gunnery practices were also conducted during this period ended on October 31, when ships returned to Karachi for final briefings before beginning a full-fledged convoy protection operation.

On November 2, fresh from their earlier practice in multinational teamwork, the ships again stood out to sea. As Task Force 343 divided into several "task groups", all except the submarines formed a "friendly" BLUE



Rear Admiral A. R. Khan, Commander in Chief of the Pakistan Navy, descends from an ESSEX helicopter after a two-hour observation flight on the first of a 5-day convoy protection operation involving all 35 warships present in Karachi waters for MIDLINK THREE.



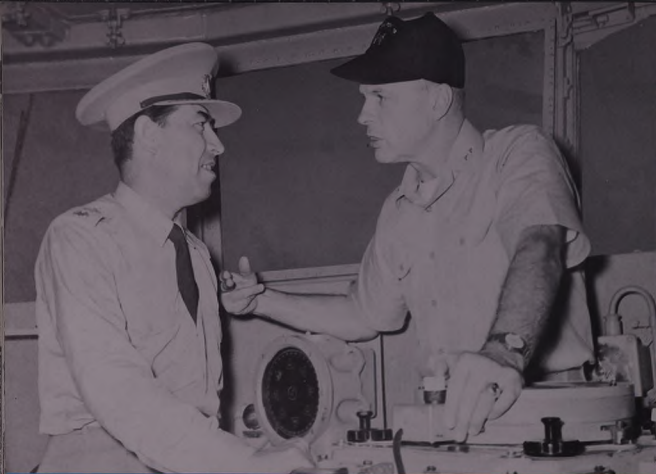
Admiral Khan studies the technique of operating helicopter equipment with crewmen.

force under the tactical control of Rear Admiral F.L. Ashworth, U.S. Navy, in his flagship ESSEX.

One major task group was the anti-submarine carrier force containing the 33,000-ton ESSEX and its anti-submarine search and attack aircraft and helicopters. Another was the carrier strike group consisting of the 26,000-ton ALBION with jet fighter aircraft assigned to protect all ships from the air.

The convoys, too, were formed in numbered task groups, which consisted largely of hypothetical merchant vessels carrying nearly 200,000 tons of essential cargo.

The basic battle problem was for the anti-submarine carrier and the carrier strike group to protect the convoys from hostile action by three submarines deployed as an



Rear Admiral F.L. Ashworth, Commander of Task Force 343, discusses the convoy protection operation with Colonel Muzaffer Toygar, Turkish Military Attache to Pakistan, aboard flagship ESSEX.



Colonel H. Oskoui of Iran and Commander S. M. Ahmed from Pakistan, both from the CENTO Combined Military Planning Staff, study movements of fast and slow convoys steaming in the Arabian Sea.



Anti-submarine search pilots relax in a ready room, where pilots are briefed, prior to taking off on many missions conducted during around-the-clock flight operations.

A helicopter flying at low altitude scans the seas for "enemy" submarines lurking for attack on Task Force 343.



A rescue team, consisting of a man in an asbestos fire-protection suit and another equipped to apply first aid, stand ready aboard ALBION should a plane crash occur during aircraft recovery.

Two anti-submarine helicopters maintain contact with an "enemy" submarine by special listening equipment. A "smoke pot" marks point where contact was originally made. A destroyer will soon arrive to "drop" powerful depth charges on the hidden craft.



"enemy", or ORANGE, force.

From November 2, when minesweepers combed the approaches to Karachi harbour before dawn, until the end of this phase over 119 hours later, aircraft pilots and ships' crews were continuously alert and ready to "sink" a hidden enemy. More than a dozen sure "kills" succeeded in breaking what a casual observer might describe as a monotonous vigil.

For example, it was at 5.03 a.m. on November 3, when Commander Kenneth Helsel, ESSEX Air Group Commander, detected a snorkling submarine while piloting an S2F "Tracker" aircraft during a routine search mission. On hearing the low-flying airplane, the submarine tried to escape, but Helsel and his co-pilot hung on, maintaining contact by



Aboard ESSEX, a mighty twin-engined S2F "Tracker" anti-submarine search and attack aircraft lands after a routine search mission.

battery-operated sonar, or listening, buoys dropped from his aircraft.

Although Helsel's plane carried weapons capable of delivering a deadly blow to the submerged enemy, a special Surface Attack Unit consisting of two destroyers was rushed to the scene. The finishing touch was applied at 6.00 a.m. when one of the destroyers "dropped" a pattern of depth charges loaded with powerful explosives.

Naturally, the task force was destined to sustain losses, and indeed the first occurred early in the operation on the afternoon of November 3, when two hypothetical merchant vessels steaming in the faster of the two convoys were "sunk", a 5,000-ton cargo ship and a tanker loaded with ballast.

There were also reports of some close



Flight deck handling crews prepare to move a helicopter below decks for maintenance after one of many search missions completed throughout over two hundred hours of continuous flying during two phases of MIDLINK THREE.

Anti-submarine search helicopters take off on a routine daylight search mission.

Maintenance men carrying out repairs on aircraft which completed all of their missions without accident during both sea phases of the CENTO exercise.



calls. One evening, during a scheduled aircraft launch, ALBION executed a half-circle turn, just in time to avoid a definite torpedo "hit". A green flare, or signal, fired from the attacking submarine was sighted off the stern of the big carrier. Observers noted that if ALBION had been headed in the opposite direction, "friendly" BLUE forces would have suffered a critical loss.

On another occasion, unexpected realism was injected into the exercise. A helicopter pilot reported picking up an "SOS", or distress, signal by special listening equipment. Interrupting operations, the task force commander ordered all submarines to surface. At sundown, several hours after receipt of the signal, all ships had been accounted for and the manoeuvres were resumed.



During precision-like manoeuvres, engine room crews maintained an alert watch over the operation of powerful, but delicate propulsion machinery.

A Pakistani medical officer examines a patient in a shipboard "sick bay."

An additional feature was attack by "enemy" aircraft of the Pakistan Air Force and ALBION which bombed and strafed the task force. Ships and planes were lost or damaged, but the convoy operation went on.

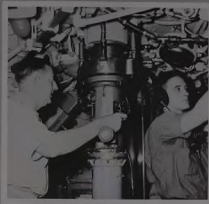
During MIDLINK THREE there were some unexpected and unusual incidents. For example, ESSEX rammed and killed her first whale in more than eighteen years of cruising the seven seas and the Royal Navy tanker TIDEFLOW also rammed one.

Although they contain major shipping lanes, both the Indian Ocean and the Arabian Sea remain inadequately surveyed and charted. So, as a service to mariners, navigators reported valuable oceanographic data to hydrographic offices responsible for informing ship captains throughout the world.



PNS TIPPU SULTAN, flagship of the Commander in Chief of the Pakistan Navy, comes alongside an aircraft carrier for refueling.

The Commanding Officer of an "enemy" submarine gives the order to fire one of its deadly torpedoes at a warship protecting one of two huge "convoys."



Thus rich in action, the last phase of MIDLINK THREE ended early on November 7 when ships returned to Karachi for a tabulation of results. Again speaking as exercise commander, Admiral Khan said during a critique that the operation had been a definite success. "Every officer and man deserves a sincere WELL DONE," he said. Justly proud of their achievement, "all hands" sailed home on November 10 under the control of national commanders.

Thus ended another important chapter in the history of the partnership of free nations striving together to maintain their independence and security.





A gunnery crew loads an anti-aircraft gun during firing practice.

One of many swift destroyers participating in MIDLINK THREE refuels from ESSEX.



Commander Hubert Hollins (left), Executive Officer of HMS ALBION, presents a plaque containing his ship's emblem to Lieutenant David Greer of ESSEX as the latter is about to take off from ALBION following a brief visit towards the end of the final phase of MIDLINK THREE. This occasion served as one of many clear examples of mutual respect and admiration which the officers and men from CENTO navies participating in MIDLINK THREE showed towards one another.



ESSEX refuels from Royal Navy tanker TIDEFLOW.

**CENTRAL TREATY ORGANIZATION
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