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Naval Chief Stresses Combat Readiness and Maritime Technology at Conference

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Pakistan's Chief of Naval Staff, Admiral Naveed Ashraf, emphasized combat readiness and advanced maritime technology during the Pakistan Navy's Command and Staff Conference held on July 16, 2025, in Islamabad. This article explores the Navy's strategic priorities, its role in regional security, and the challenges of modernization amid complex geopolitical tensions, urging robust defense policies.

The conference, convened at Naval Headquarters (NHQ), reviewed operational plans and strategic policies. Admiral Ashraf praised the Navy's performance in Exercise Ma'araka-e-Haq (Battle of Truth), highlighting its critical role in securing Sea Lines of Communication (SLOCs) and ensuring uninterrupted port operations vital to Pakistan's trade. He stressed the importance of perpetual readiness to counter both conventional and non-traditional threats, describing the Navy's posture as an "impregnable deterrence" at sea. "Our forces must be prepared for any aggression," he said while addressing senior officers and field commanders.

A key focus of the conference was the integration of cutting-edge technologies such as unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and autonomous surface and sub-surface vessels to enhance surveillance and operational capabilities. This aligns with Pakistan's ongoing push for indigenous warship construction aimed at reducing dependence on foreign sources, a priority Admiral Ashraf discussed in a January 2025 Naval Technology interview. The Navy's planned acquisition budget of \$3.1 billion through 2029 underscores its commitment to modernization.

However, escalating tensions in the Middle East and Indian Ocean region, including recent Iran-Israel clashes, complicate the maritime security environment. The conference reaffirmed the Navy's commitment to safeguarding Pakistan's maritime frontiers. Despite progress, challenges remain, particularly regarding reliance on foreign technology and financial constraints. Experts advocate for accelerated indigenization efforts and enhanced regional cooperation to ensure the Pakistan Navy remains a formidable force in a volatile region.