

TEHRAN (Press TV) -- A major Iranian businessman on Sunday dismissed Britain's planned announcement for imposing sanctions and asset freezes on Iran, calling it insignificant due to the fact that Tehran holds almost no tangible assets in the UK that could be affected by such measures.

"As far as I know, Iran has no (major) assets in the UK that the government of this country could confiscate," said Ali Naqi Khamoushi, who heads the joint chamber of commerce between Iran and Britain.

TEHRAN (Tasnim) -- Vice-President for Science and Technology Affairs Sorena Sattari on Sunday highlighted Iran's scientific progress and said special plans have been devised to counter U.S. sanctions against the Islamic Republic's biotechnology industries.

Speaking on the sidelines of a visit to a knowledge-based company in the northern province of Alborz, Sattari said that the Vice-Presidency for Science and Technology Affairs has special programs aimed at countering the sanctions, particularly in the area of biotechnology.

Viewpoint

Detention of "Steno Impero" Unconnected to British Buccaneers

Radio Exchanges Reveal:

UK Frigate Tried But Failed to Prevent Seizure

TEHRAN (Dispatches) -- Intercepted radio communications between a British warship and Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) showed that the British navy tried but failed to prevent the seizure of a British tanker in the Strait of Hormuz, fueling a wave of recriminations in London on Sunday.

In the tape, obtained by the shipping consultancy Dryad Global and posted on its website, the voice of an Iranian with the IRGC is purportedly heard ordering the Stena Impero tanker to follow orders. "If you obey you will be safe," the man allegedly said.

A British naval officer interrupts, telling the Stena Impero that it has to proceed through the waterway. The British officer then addresses the Iranian: "Please confirm that you are not intending" to board the MV Stena.

He was speaking from the British frigate HMS Montrose, one of two warships sent to the Persian Gulf to protect British shipping from Iranian pledges to seize a British tanker in retaliation for Britain's detention of an Iranian tanker in the Mediterranean earlier this month.

IRGC spokesman Brig-Gen Ramezan Sharif said Tehran had seized the ship despite the "resistance and interference" of a British warship that had been escorting it.

In London, Britain's defense minister defended the actions of his country's navy, pushing aside a charge by a former admiral that the British-flagged oil tanker should have been better protected ahead of its interception on Friday.

Tobias Ellwood, the defense secretary, said the priority now must be for Britain to "de-escalate tensions" with Tehran.

"Our first and most important responsibility is to make sure that we get a solution to the issue to do with the current ship, make sure other British-flagged ships are safe to operate in these waters and then look at the wider picture," he said on Sunday.

Asked by Sky News whether Britain had taken its "eye off the ball," and failing to defend ships in crucial waterways, Ellwood replied: "No, not at all."

On Saturday, the IRGC released footage showing its commandos in black ski masks and fatigues rappelling from a helicopter onto the British oil tanker seized in the Strait of Hormuz.

The video showed several small IRGC boats surrounding the larger Stena Impero tanker as it moved through the strait.

Above, a military helicopter hovered before several men rappelled onto the ship.

Its release came hours after Britain's Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt claimed that Iran was on a "dangerous path," adding that a response would be "considered but robust".

The circumstances of the tanker's seizure have come as a reminder of how difficult it is to secure the safety of shipping in the Persian Gulf after the U.S. escalation of tensions.

A fifth of the world's oil passes through the narrow, crowded waterway, but many countries, such as China, rely on the route for a far greater percentage of their energy needs.

On Sunday, Iranian Foreign Minister Muhammad Javad Zarif warned Britain not to escalate the situation. In a posting on his Twitter account, he accused the U.S. national security adviser John Bolton of seeking to drag Britain "into a quagmire".

The standoff comes as the British government and lawmakers are distracted with the finale of the leadership contest to succeed outgoing Prime Minister Theresa May, a race between the current Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt and the former foreign secretary Boris Johnson.

According to the polls, Johnson is expected to win and enter 10 Downing Street on Wednesday afternoon — with the ongoing crisis with Iran waiting on his desk.

In a column in the Observer newspaper, Allan West, a former first sea lord and chief of Naval staff, wrote that the British government's warning that British-flagged vessels avoid the passage through the Persian Gulf was "not good enough".

"Some powerful groups in Israel, Saudi Arabia and the United States want war and think a precision strike against key parts of Iran's military capability would lead to regime change. They are wrong. It would lead to an open-ended war with catastrophic consequences across the region and the globe," he added.

Britain's seizure of an Iranian tanker, the Grace 1, near Gibraltar had prompted Iranian pledges to seize a British tanker in retaliation.

The Washington Post said Iran's retaliation has thrust Britain into the heart of the ongoing dispute between Washington and Tehran over the United States' withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal and subsequent imposition of harsh new sanctions on Iran's economy.

Iranian Animations Make It to Finals at Italian Festival



Iran Earn Nine Medals at 2019 Asian Karate Championships

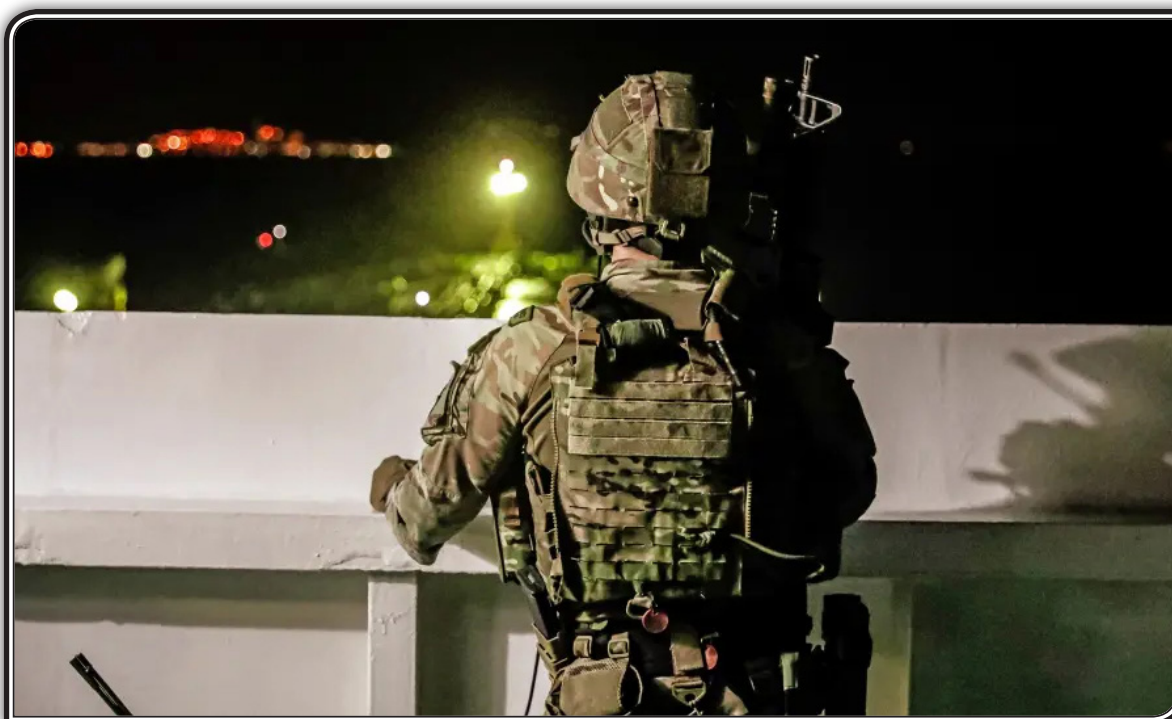


Iraqi Forces, Hashd al-Sha'abi Purge Over Dozen Villages of Daesh



Tehran 'Ready for Different Scenarios'

Iran Warns UK Not to Escalate Tension



A British soldier looks on during an operation involving Iranian-owned oil supertanker Grace 1 in waters off Gibraltar.

TEHRAN (Dispatches) -- Iran on Sunday urged the UK to contain "domestic political forces" which wanted to escalate tension between the two countries after the capture of a British-flagged tanker in the Persian Gulf.

"UK government should contain those domestic political forces who want to escalate existing tension between Iran and the UK well beyond the issue of ships. This is quite dangerous and unwise at a sensitive time in the region," Iranian Ambassador to London Hamid Baeidinejad tweeted.

Britain has called Iran's cap-

ture of the Stena Impero on Friday a "hostile act", with a UK official declining to rule out sanctions in response to the move which came after British Royal Marines seized an Iranian oil supertanker off Gibraltar.

Baeidinejad warned that Iran "is firm and ready for different scenarios".

Iran's top diplomat said only "prudence and foresight" could alleviate tensions between his country and Britain.

"Having failed to lure @realDonaldTrump into War of the Century, and fearing collapse of his #B_Team, @AmbJohn-

Bolton is turning his venom against the UK in hopes of dragging it into a quagmire," Muhammad Javad Zarif said on Twitter.

"Only prudence and foresight can thwart such ploys."

Tehran for weeks has vowed to retaliate for the seizure of its Grace 1 oil tanker by British forces.

Iranian lawmakers threw their weight behind the IRGC. As of Sunday noon, 160 members of Iran's parliament had signed up on a declaration of support for the Friday seizure.

Tasnim news agency reported

that the declaration of support was collecting more signatures as the day went by.

The MPs said that recent weeks had witnessed "suspicious acts of sabotage" in the region as well as the illegal seizure of the Iranian tanker by the UK government.

In the latest suspicious act, they said, the UK-flagged tanker had violated maritime rules in the Strait of Hormuz.

"It seems that self-proclaimed world powers are preparing to portray regional waters as unsafe for the transfer of the world's required energy; thus, we deem alertness and decisiveness in confronting... violations an inherent duty of the government," the lawmakers said. "We support the IRGC's apt and decisive move to seize the offending British ship."

Parliament speaker Ali Larijani also hailed the IRGC. "The Britons committed robbery, and the IRGC gave them the response that fitted them," he said.

The IRGC impounded Stena Impero on June 19 "for failing to respect international maritime rules" as it was passing through the Strait of Hormuz en route to Saudi Arabia.

It came 15 days after British naval forces unlawfully seized Iranian-owned supertanker Grace 1 and its cargo of 2.1 million barrels of oil in the Strait of Gibraltar.

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Trump's Lie Was Too Big Not to Deceive Iran

TEHRAN (Dispatches) -- A senior IRGC commander said Sunday U.S. President Donald Trump's lie about downing an Iranian drone was so big that even the Iranian military first believed it and checked to see if any of its drones had been targeted.

"After Trump's claim that the U.S. had shot down an Iranian drone, we checked our various drone units for several ties," IRGC Aerospace commander Brigadier General Amir-Ali Hajizadeh said.

Iran first believed Trump's claim because "it was not believable for us that he would personally tell such a big lie on TV," he added.

"That was why we had a few hours of delay in dismissing the news, and finally we found out that our unmanned aerial vehicle had monitored the U.S. fleet's ac-

tivity from the time it entered into the Strait of Hormuz to the time it left the strait," he noted.

General Hajizadeh said the U.S. president later blamed his national security advisor John Bolton for the lie.

Trump claimed that an American warship had destroyed the drone after it came within 914-metres of the USS Boxer amphibious assault ship.

The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps later released footage which proved the U.S. president wrong.

"Unlike Trump's delusional and groundless claim, all drones belonging to the Islamic Republic of Iran in the Persian Gulf and the Strait of Hormuz, including the one mentioned by the U.S. president, have returned to their bases safe and sound after

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U.S.-Backed Terrorists Caught Smuggling Daesh

DAMASCUS (Dispatches) -- Kurdish-led militants from the so-called Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) have reportedly been caught smuggling women with affiliation to the Daesh terrorist group in Syria's north-western province of Aleppo.

The so-called Syrian Observatory for Human Rights (SOHR) reported that two SDF members were caught at a checkpoint in the city of Manbij northeast of Aleppo attempting to smuggle out five female members of the terror outfit.

SDF forces rounded up the two fellow militants who were smuggling Daesh women in exchange for \$10,000 each, the Britain-based monitor further noted.

The women were smuggled out of the Al-Hawl refugee camp close to the Syria-Iraq border, said the observatory,

adding that it is not the first time such smuggling attempts have taken place at the camp.

Al-Hawl camp is largely inhabited by Daesh militants and their family members, particularly after the Takfiri terrorists were driven out of their last bastion in eastern Syria.

Over the past few months, several rallies have been held in northern and eastern Syria in protest against SDF practices, calling for their expulsion. Protesters are demanding an end to the SDF occupation, which has led to chaos, kidnapping, killing and monopoly on Syria's oil.

The Syrian foreign ministry said in letters addressed to the UN chief and head of the Security Council on May 13 that the SDF should be compelled to respect the world body's resolutions that assert Syria's sovereignty,

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