

Iran refrained from hitting manned U.S. plane accompanying spy drone



Tehran, June 22 (RHC)-- A senior Iranian military commander says Iran has refrained from shooting down a U.S. plane with 35 people on board that was flying alongside an American spy drone. The drone was shot down after invading Iranian territorial airspace on Thursday.

"Along with the US drone, there was also an American P-8 plane with 35 people on board," Amir Ali Hajizadeh, the commander of the Aerospace Division of Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC), told reporters on Friday.

"This plane also entered our airspace and we could have targeted it, but we did not because our purpose behind shooting down the American drone was to give a warning to terrorist American forces," Hajizadeh added.

The IRGC said in a statement that the US-made Global Hawk surveillance drone was brought down by its Air Force near the Kouh-e Mobarak region, which sits in the central district of Jask County, after the aircraft violated Iranian airspace.

The IRGC Aerospace Force on Friday released the first photos of the wreckage of the downed U.S. spy drone. It displayed parts of the drone recovered in Iranian territory -- thus refuting earlier claims by the U.S. that the drone was flying over international waters, and had not violated Iran's airspace.

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