Trump orders U.S. Navy to attack and destroy Iranian boats

Washington, April 22 (RHC)-- U.S. President Donald Trump is stepping up his anti-Iran threats by claiming that he has instructed the U.S. Navy to destroy Iranian boats "if they harass" U.S. ships in the Persian Gulf.

@realDonaldTrump
I have instructed the United States Navy to shoot down and destroy any and all Iranian gunboats if they harass our ships at sea.

The order is Trump's first reaction to a recent confrontation between U.S. warships and Iranian boats in the Persian Gulf. Trump posted the tweet as his administration is under unprecedented pressure over its highly criticized response to the coronavirus pandemic, prompting suggestions that his anti-Iran statement is probably meant to divert attentions from his poor handling of the crisis.

A video released by Iran's Islamic Revolution Guards Corps on Sunday shows the IRGC Navy warning off a flotilla of U.S. warships in the Persian Gulf as they try to approach the Iranian territorial waters.

In the video, personnel of the IRGC Navy warns the vessels to stop inspecting and detaining Iranian fishing or commercial ships in the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman. They also warn the U.S. would face consequences according to the laws of the Islamic Republic of Iran if they ignore this notice.

Tensions in the strategic waterway rose significantly last summer after a series of mysterious explosions targeted a number of oil tankers. The U.S., quickly blaming Iran for the incidents without providing conclusive evidence along with other countries such as Saudi Arabia, has since deployed thousands of troops and military equipment to the region.

Meanwhile, in a statement released on Sunday, the IRGC refuted the claims by Washington that Iranian forces behaved in a dangerous manner when faced with U.S. Navy vessels. The IRGC further blamed Washington as the main source of insecurity in the West Asia region and called for the full withdrawal of all American forces.

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