

*IRGC tells U.S. Navy that ships  
can be reached at closest point in  
international waters*

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Tehran, August 12 (RHC)-- The Islamic Revolution Guards Corps Navy is not just a coastal force but is capable of having a presence in international waters, a commander of the fifth Martyr Lieutenant General Haj Qassem Soleimani fleet of the IRGC Navy says.

“After the United States imposed sanctions on the IRGC Navy, we had to show that the IRGC Navy is not just a coastal force and is capable of supplying various types of heavy vessels, enabling it to have a presence in international waters,” Colonel Soleimani said on Monday.

He added that the naval fleet, with a domestically-developed Shahid Mahdavi oceangoing warship acting as the flagship, began its mission from Farsi Island in the Persian Gulf where the US killed an IRGC commander.

“This conveyed important messages to the US,” he emphasized. During its mission, he noted, the Shahid Mahdavi warship passed through important and strategic straits of the world, including the Strait of Malaga.

The commander said the Iranian flotilla crossed the Equator and entered the zone of the US Navy’s 7th fleet.

For the first time, it approached Diego Garcia Island and one of the most important US bases in the Indian Ocean, and returned home after 39 days of successful voyage, he added. “We sent a message to Americans that we are able to reach the closest point to you,” Soleimani asserted.

The Iranian commander reiterated the “totally professional” nature of the mission, saying, “We did not seek to stoke any tension.” He made the remarks as the U.S. has sent a guided missile submarine to the West Asia as tensions escalate in the region. Pentagon Chief Lloyd Austin said an aircraft carrier would sail there “more quickly.”

In May, the fifth Martyr Lieutenant General Haj Qassem Soleimani fleet of the IRGC Navy returned home after completing a 39-day mission and took it over the line of zero degrees latitude, the Equator, and into the Southern Hemisphere.

The 2,100-tonne Shahid Mahdavi, a multipurpose vessel designed for long-range operations, is 240 meters in length and 27 meters in width. It joined the IRGC’s naval fleet in March 2023.

The oceangoing warship is equipped with three-dimensional phased array radar, sea-to-sea and sea-to-air missiles, and sophisticated telecommunication systems for electronic warfare. The Shahid Mahdavi is capable of carrying various types of attack helicopters, combat drones as well as fast attack craft.

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