

# *U.S. tried to bribe and threaten Iranian ship's captain*

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London, September 8 (RHC)-- E-mails obtained by The Financial Times (FT) have revealed that U.S. government officials were contacting the captain of an Iranian tanker, offering millions of dollars if the captain steered the ship towards an allied country that would impound on behalf of the United States, but threatening sanctions if the captain refused. It was the same ship that was eventually seized by the U.K. in Gibraltar, and subsequently released after it was clear there were no legal grounds for the seizure.

The e-mail was published by the FT, intended for Iranian ship captain Akhilesh Kumar and a number of other captains. It offered personal payments if the captain sabotaged the ship's course, but threatened sanctions on those who don't. It reads: "This is Brian Hook... I work for Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and serve as the U.S. representative for Iran.. I am writing with good news." The message continues: "With this money you can have any life you wish and be well-off in old age ... "If you choose not to take this easy path, life will be much harder for you."

The official's State Department phone number was included on the e-mail so as to reassure the captain of its authenticity.

Iran's Foreign Ministry responded, saying: "Having failed at piracy, the U.S. resorts to outright blackmail—deliver us Iran's oil and receive several million dollars or be sanctioned yourself. Sounds very similar to the Oval Office invitation I received a few weeks back. It is becoming a pattern.

#BTeamGangsters”

Observers say that the U.S. has attempted to isolate Iran through sanctions, as a means of punishing the country for its nuclear program, and opposition to U.S. foreign policy in the region. However, Iran has managed to resist.

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