

British defense secretary reserves the right to strike Iran



London, January 9 (RHC)-- British Defense Secretary Ben Wallace has put up a spirited defense of the U.S. decision to assassinate Iranian Quds force General Qassem Soleimani in a terrorist-style drone strike outside Baghdad airport.

Delivering a statement in the House of Commons, Wallace claimed that General Soleimani was “no friend of the UK or our allies in the region.” Wallace tried to justify the assassination on dubious legal grounds by saying: “The UK will always defend the right of countries to defend themselves.”

Wallace’s claim flies in the face of all pertinent facts, notably credible reports that General Soleimani was on a peace mission to Baghdad to try to diffuse tensions with Saudi Arabia. And the U.S. accusation that General Soleimani had been planning attacks against U.S. interests hasn’t been backed up by any evidence.

Ben Wallace threatened that “aggressive behavior” from Iran “was never going to go unchallenged.” The British defense secretary didn’t explain what he meant by “aggressive” behavior. Wallace claimed that the UK is “changing the readiness of our forces in the region” by placing “helicopters and ships on standby to assist if the need arises.”

Wallace didn't address credible reports of the UK adopting an aggressive posture vis-à-vis Iran, in order to assist the U.S. in any potential military action. The Sun newspaper reported two days ago that a British nuclear-powered submarine was in "striking position" of Iran, ready to fire Tomahawk cruise missiles at Iranian targets.

During the question and answer phase, Wallace was asked by acting Liberal Democrats leader, Sir Ed Davey, whether he would rule out "any UK involvement in any attack in any site in Iran." "I'm not going to rule out anything," said a combative Wallace.

"We cannot say what's in the minds of Iran or anybody else in the future. That's why we will always reserve that right to take the decision at the time of it," he added.

Wallace's aggressive tone towards Iran is in keeping with the positions of both the Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, and foreign secretary, Dominic Raab, both of whom have defended U.S. actions in recent days.

But Wallace goes a step further by introducing for the first time the strong possibility of the UK taking military action against Iran.

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