

# *Venezuela to escort Iranian oil tankers amid threats from the U.S.*

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Caracas, May 20 (RHC)-- The Venezuelan minister of defense has announced that the country's armed forces will escort in its maritime and air zone the Iranian ships that transport fuel to Venezuela.

Vladimir Padrino López's statement took place this Wednesday during the inauguration of the Bolivarian Army Textile Center, in Fort Tiuna. The defense minister ratified that Venezuela and Iran are allied nations in international peace and diplomacy, totally sovereign and independent.

"We have established contact with the Iranian Defense Ministry. All these ships, when they enter our exclusive economic zone, will be escorted by ships, vessels and planes of the FANB (Bolivarian National Armed Forces), to welcome them and say to the Iranian people: "Thank you for so much solidarity and cooperation in the midst of these difficulties that the world, which is our home, is facing."

In addition, pointing out that the countries of the world are guaranteed the right to trade freely among themselves, Padrino said that the Venezuelan government, led by President Nicolás Maduro, has been in contact with the Minister of Defense of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Brigadier General Amir Hatami.

Five European countries, which are part of the Security Council, are asking to "depoliticize" the sending of humanitarian aid to Venezuela in the midst of the COVID-19.

Regarding the U.S. threats to prevent the arrival of humanitarian aid, food and gasoline to Venezuela, Padrino affirmed that all steps taken are "always under principles of respect, mutual recognition." He added: "There is no question of bowing our heads or allowing ourselves to be intimidated."

Some reports confirm that the U.S. has deployed several warships in the Caribbean Sea region in order to prevent the entry into Venezuela of a Persian-flagged tanker, called Clavel, loaded with fuel.

The new American adventurism has unleashed a wave of condemnation at both national and international levels. When many countries in the world are sending aid to Latin America to fight the new coronavirus pandemic, which caused COVID-19, the U.S. sends warships to attack Venezuela.

Faced with such a situation, Caracas rejected the "pseudo-proposal" of the United States of a "transition government" and Maduro assured, in turn, that if they were attacked, the fury of the Bolivarian people would defeat the invaders.

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