

U.S. forces were escorting stolen Iranian oil cargo

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This drone image taken on October 25, 2021 shows a view to MV Sothys, a Vietnamese-flagged oil tanker seized by Iranian elite military force the IRGC in the Sea of Oman on charges of trying to steal a large Iranian oil cargo.

Tehran, November 5 (RHC)-- The spokesman of Iran's elite military force the IRGC has rejected statements by U.S. defense officials claiming that American forces involved in an October 25 ship incident in the Sea of Oman were present at the scene only to monitor the situation.

Brigadier General Ramazan Sharif said on Thursday that U.S. forces had a mission to protect MV Sothys, a Vietnamese-flagged ship which was boarded by IRGC forces after it became known that the tanker was stealing a large Iranian oil cargo.

“They had come to provide support to the bandits of the Iranian oil and to escort them,” Sharif was quoted as saying by ISNA news agency. The statement came after U.S. Department of Defense rejected Iran’s account of the incident which was extensively covered in reports published in the Iranian media on Wednesday.

IRGC’s Navy released a video showing Iranian forces had to repel American destroyers from MV Sothys. However, Pentagon press secretary John Kirby said on Wednesday that US forces had come to the scene of the incident only to monitor the situation.

A report says that stealing oil cargoes is a last-ditch effort by the U.S. to prevent Iran’s growing sales. Other sources in the U.S. have made similar claims about the confrontation on Sothys but authorities in Washington have yet to provide any reason why US military had a major presence near a vessel that was carrying Iranian oil.

The United States has a history of carrying out piracy acts on Iranian oil tankers under the pretext that the shipments violate US sanctions against Iran. In August last year, US forces confiscated 1.1 million barrels of Iranian petroleum from four tankers that were on their way to Venezuela.

Washington declared in November 2020 that the shipment had been sold for more than \$40 million.

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