

Iran Captures US ScanEagle Drone over Persian Gulf

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Commander of the Islamic Revolution Guard Corps (IRGC) Navy Rear Admiral Ali Fadavi announced that his forces hunted a US Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) over the Persian Gulf after the drone violated the country's airspace.

The UAV which had conducted several reconnaissance flights over the Persian Gulf general zone in the past few days was caught and brought under control by air defense units and control systems of the IRGC Navy.

The IRGC Navy commander announced that the haunted UAV was a ScanEagle drone, adding that "such drones are usually sent to mission from large warships."

Fadavi further noted that the IRGC has full intelligence supremacy over the moves of the foreign forces in the Persian Gulf.

ScanEagle is a small, low-cost, long-endurance unmanned aerial vehicle built by Insitu, a subsidiary of Boeing.

ScanEagle is based on Insitu's Seascan miniature robotic aircraft and draws on Boeing's systems integration, communications and payload technologies.

As standard payload ScanEagle carries either an inertially stabilized electro-optical or an infrared camera. The gimbaled camera allows the operator to easily track both stationary and moving targets, providing real-time intelligence.

Capable of flying above 16,000 feet, the UAV has also demonstrated the ability to provide persistent low-altitude reconnaissance.

The development came exactly a year after Iran announced on December 4, 2011 that its defense forces had downed the aircraft through a sophisticated cyber attack.

The drone was the first such loss by the US. US officials have described the loss of the aircraft in Iran as a setback and a fatal blow to the stealth drone program.

The RQ-170 has special coatings and a batwing shape designed to help it penetrate other nations' air defenses undetected. The existence of the aircraft, which is made by Lockheed Martin, has been known since 2009, when a model was photographed at the main US airfield in Kandahar, Afghanistan.

The unmanned surveillance plane lost by the United States in Iran was a stealth aircraft being used for secret missions by the CIA, US officials admitted in December.

The aircraft is among the highly sensitive surveillance platform in the CIA's fleet that was shaped and designed to evade enemy defenses.

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