

The Persian Rug Weaver Strikes in the US Backyard Through Venezuela

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Iranian tankers were 2200 km from the US coast when the Iranian-flagged “Fortune”, followed by “Forest”, entered Venezuelan waters, challenging the US embargo and the US’s threats. The Islamic Republic was broadcasting loud and clear a strong message.

The first message was dispatched to the US administration after Gulf and Arab Leaders conveyed a direct message to the Iranian leaders: “Washington is determined to stop the Iranian tankers sailing to Venezuela”. Iran responded to all messages received that “its five tankers will sail to Venezuela and if any of these tankers is intercepted, Iran will respond in the Straits of Hormuz, the Gulf of Oman or anywhere else it sees fit.”

“These five tankers – the Clavel, Fortune, Petunia, Forest and Faxul- are only the beginning of the supply to Venezuela. Iran has the right to send any of its tankers anywhere in the world and any US interception will be considered an act of piracy and will trigger a direct response,” said an Iranian decision-maker who revealed the Iranian response to the US administration via message-carriers.

“Iran had decided to avoid the horn of Africa because the plan was for the first tanker to reach the Venezuelan waters on the first day of Eid el-Fitr. The aim was to share an important day of the Islamic Republic’s defiance to the US in its backyard and to break the sanctions imposed on one of Iran’s main allies. It is a message for the “Axis of the Resistance” that Iran will not abandon its friends and allies anywhere in the world whatever the challenges. It is directly confronting the US by imposing a new rule of engagement”, said the source.

Iran shut its ears to all threatening messages from the US menace and instructed its five tankers to go not round the horn of Africa but through the Gulf of Aden via Bab al-Mandab strait, the Suez Canal and Gibraltar into the Atlantic Ocean- where the US has a strong presence and influence. This shortens the distance and it tested the intentions of the American Navy. Simultaneously, Iran informed its allies of its readiness to confront the US if ever an escalation should loom on the horizon so that these allies within the “Axis of the Resistance” are ready for a wider confrontation if needed.

The first Iranian tanker, “Fortune”, reached the Caribbean Sea on the first day of Eid al-Fitr, on Sunday 24th of May, with US Navy ships in the vicinity. The tankers are carrying over 10 million barrels of oil but also Alkylate and spare parts to start repairing any of the eight “out of order” refineries, to enable oil-rich Venezuela to be self-sufficient in the future. The US sanctions on Venezuela had paralysed Venezuelan refineries and caused gasoline shortages,

with the aim of overthrowing the legitimately elected President, Nicolas Maduro.

Iran is challenging the US administration and considers it a victory that its first tanker went through without being intercepted. Tehran considers this challenge to US authority much more significant than the downing of the US's most sophisticated drone or the bombing of the US's largest military base in Ayn al-Assad, Iraq.



“Our allies used to wonder why Iran was not confronting the US dominance face-to-face. In fact, we were preparing for this day, and what helps us the most is the US sanctions that force this country to be autonomous on many levels. Today, Iran and its allies are all equipped with strong ideology and motivation to face down US hegemony, with sufficiently advanced military and financial support to stand up to the US and its allies, both in the Middle East and outside the Middle East. Since World War II the US has not faced a challenge to its hegemony similar to the one Iran is representing, particularly when the main enemy, the US, believes that 40 years of sanctions and maximum pressure have crippled Iran’s capabilities. Imam Khamenei informed all our allies that the military and financial support to all of them will increase and will meet all their needs in Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq and Yemen. The Axis of the Resistance is now ready and united as one front”, said the source.

Venezuela had asked President Vladimir Putin for help. Russia said clearly it was not willing to send ships close to the US coast because that might support President Trump by triggering a false threat which could lead to unifying the national feeling behind him. This is why Putin had to refuse Venezuela’s request. Iran came forward at the first demand and was grateful for the opportunity to challenge the US and to pay back the support Venezuela offered in the year 2008 when Iran was in need and under heavy US sanctions that forbid technology transfer to build or repair its own refineries. Since then, Iran has built 11 refineries (and 3 more in Pars, Anahita and Bahman Geno which are still under construction) and is considered the third most important country in the world to have developed Gas to Liquid technology (GTL).



Since the US assassinated Brigadier General Qassem Soleimani at Baghdad's airport, Iran has imposed new rules of engagement on the US. Its message consists in the inevitability of a response against its enemies if they hit Iran, and the threat that no attack will go unanswered. It seems Iran is no longer ready to turn the other cheek and has decided to take special measures to respond to any attack against its troops or interests, including in Syria (more details will be provided in another article). Also, Iran and its allies have raised the level of readiness to maximum in case the US administration decides to attack any aspect of Iran's interests, particularly the flotilla heading to Venezuela.

Iran is not facing the US directly, and is not asking its allies to do the job on its behalf. The "Persian rug weaver" waited through 40 years of sanctions for this day, until its capability and preparations were completed. This means that now Iran will be tougher and harder, and that is manifest in the election of the new parliament and the new government. President Trump has abused and exhausted all the avenues used by President Hassan Rouhani. Therefore, any new negotiation between Iran and the US will be very difficult: there is a total lack of trust in any document signed by the US.

Whether a Republican or a Democrat reaches the White House at the end of 2020, they will be waiting by the phone for many long years if they imagine that Iran will take the initiative and call the US for a meeting. It will now be up to the US to prove to Iran that it is worth holding any negotiations at all.

Iran has planted robust roots in Afghanistan, Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq and Yemen. It is now spreading towards Venezuela and will support President Maduro, a strategic rather than ideological ally, to stand against US hegemony and sanctions. More tankers are expected to follow in the very near future. Iran is eager to confront President Trump and tempt him into a confrontation only months before the elections. The Coronavirus mismanagement, the US's rebuttal of its deals with Russia, Trump's aggressive position towards China and the World Health Organisation, and his rejection of the Iranian nuclear deal (JCPOA): all these are striking possibilities for a challenge to his re-election. This is why Iran is preparing more surprises for Trump- to show that his Middle Eastern policy is jeopardising the safety and

security of the US and its allies both in Europe and the Middle East, and indeed global world security.

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