

Why Did the UK Commander of HM Montrose Refrain from Firing on Iran's Revolutionary Guards (IRGC)? Who in Iran Gave Orders to Capture the "Stena Impero"?

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The US officially [asked](#) Europe, in particular the UK, France, Germany and Italy, to provide a naval force to patrol and protect ships sailing in the Straits of Hormuz, even if the command and control is handled by the Europeans and not the US. Washington wants to drag the old continent into the front line in case of a military confrontation with Iran. It is well known that the US is behind the existing tension in the Middle East today following its unlawful unilateral withdrawal from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action ([JCPOA](#)), known as the nuclear deal. However, to the dismay of the US, Europe has up to now [refused](#) to follow the US path. The US would like to see Europe more involved. Although the Trump administration is not looking for war, despite the fact that Iran turned its missiles against the UK Royal Navy HMS Montrose and the US destroyers (when the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps confiscated the British-flag tanker Stena Impero). This is the reason that the British command chose to avoid a military confrontation and decided against a military intervention to protect the tanker.

"I order you not to intervene in my operation. The tanker is under my control. Do not put your life in danger". This is exactly what the Iranian IRGC naval officer [told](#) the commander of the Foxtrot 236 when Iranian special forces were about to board the tanker Stena Impero. But why would he warn the British Navy "not to risk their lives"?

The British Navy's radar sweeps had discovered active mode missiles radar tracking them by means of their semi-radar homing from different launch platforms- main radars which could easily create a saturation attack designed to put the ship in a helpless position and eventually destroy it. The Iranian missiles were ready to fire had the commander of the UK vessel decided to engage with the Iranian fast boats.

Iranian missile platform launchers spread all along the Iranian coast overlooking the Straits of Hormuz had the four US vessels and the one UK naval ship in their sights, ready to engage. Other Iranian armed drones were in the air, also ready to engage, waiting for orders to dive on their selected targets. Iran has not revealed, to date, other more sophisticated missiles that it has manufactured and could put in service in case of war.

The UK commander of the Foxtrot 236 Royal Navy decided to let go of Stena Impero and

allow the diplomacy of his government to take over, to avoid the potentially serious casualties inevitable in the case of a military confrontation.

However, the British government is insisting on saving face. It therefore has to reject any exchange of tankers. The Royal Navy had already [confiscated](#) an Iranian supertanker, Grace 1, in Gibraltar. London pushed even further the conflict with Iran when the Gibraltar court extended by one additional month the arrest of the Iranian supertanker following a US request.

The only plausible solution is for the Gibraltar court to refrain from adding more fuel to the ongoing crisis and to end the detention of Grace 1, once the period of one month is reached. This will enable Iran to release Stena Impero from Bandar Abbas harbour and end the crisis.

Why did the IRGC officer order the British commander to keep away even if the HMS Montrose was within a reachable distance, along with another four US frigates, well-armed and potentially ready to engage?

When the British authority decided to extend the arrest of "Grace 1", it basically ended the initiative of Emanuel Bonne (the French presidential envoy) to obtain the release of the Iranian super tanker. The UK's decision to undermine its European partner's initiative and abide by US policy showed the vulnerability of Europe's fragile unity. London agreed to be an instrument of Trump's policy.

This is when the Iranian Leader Sayyed Ali Khamenei ordered the commander of the IRGC Hussein Salameh to stop the first British ship and retaliate with a tit-for-tat. Following a meticulous overview of all ships navigating in the area, Salameh was informed about the Stena Impero, but also about the five western military ships in the vicinity. The IRGC commander informed Sayyed Khamenei who responded, according to a well-informed source: "Go with God's blessing and have no fear. They will not dare to attack us".

This is how the decision was taken, at the highest level of the Iranian leadership where the spiritual, military and political leadership were involved under the flag of "protecting the national interest and security of the country."

Notwithstanding the UK position, Europe will not accept the US trap and become a shield for a war Washington would like to impose on the continent. British oil companies are changing the registrations of their ships and removing the British flag so as to sail safely through the Straits of Hormuz. BP, the giant British oil company which was the first to follow this procedure, is [avoiding sending ships](#) to the region, relying instead on proxies. This is a flagrant manifestation of its lack of trust in its own government's decision, which is not in the interests of the UK but instead reflects a servile devotion to Trump administration policy.

There is a war risk premium that tanker owners pay when navigating in the Persian Gulf. They now have to pay an [additional](#) \$185,000 for supertankers, in the wake of the attacks of recent months.

The IRGC has sent many messages by shooting down a US drone, by sabotaging tankers and by capturing another. They come down to a single message: if Iran does not export its oil, no country will. The arrival of a new UK Royal Navy ship, the [HMS Duncan](#), will change nothing: it will add to the bank of objectives and list of Iranian targets available in the

Persian Gulf in case of war. The US decision to revoke the nuclear deal not only made the Middle East less safe, but also has brought Russia further into the warm waters of the region: Iran has announced a [joint](#) naval exercise with Russia in the next months. Iran is bringing the Russians into what used to be the US's "water playground". Obviously, Washington's "[maximum pressure](#)" is failing to produce the results the Americans predicted.

As long as Trump is in power, the situation in the Middle East will not stabilise. Not many people in the world believed the Secretary of State Mike Pompeo when he said the US sanctions are [crippling](#) Iran by up to 95%, and that Iran's Middle Eastern influence is seriously affected by the US measures.

Iran is defying US hegemony and is ready for war, openly challenging the US and the UK. Tehran is welcoming [Chinese](#) and Russian support and is developing its missile capability to compensate for its lack of superiority in the sea and the air.

Iran counts on its missiles to impose its Rules of Engagement and is challenging both the US superpower and the UK with its imperial tradition.

The US is no longer in a position to dictate to Iran and "cut its nails". Tehran is developing further its missile technology and nuclear capability. It is ready for the next step, which involves further partial withdrawal from the nuclear deal despite France and Germany's efforts to proclaim their distance from the US attitude. The world will continue to focus on this part of the world, watching with anxiety how the US-Iran confrontation will unfold.

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