

Right-wing U.S. senator warns Iran of 'overwhelming military response'



Washington, May 21 (RHC)-- U.S. Senator Lindsey Graham -- a right-wing, pro-war senator -- has accused Iran of carrying out the recent attacks on oil pipelines and tankers around the Persian Gulf, and warned Tehran to expect "an overwhelming military response" if it harms U.S. interests in the Middle East region.

"Just received a briefing from National Security Advisor [John] Bolton about escalating tensions with Iran," the South Carolina Republican wrote on Twitter. "It is clear that over the last several weeks Iran has attacked pipelines and ships of other nations and created threat streams against American interests in Iraq," he added.

The Republican senator made a similar warning on his website after so-called "sabotage attacks" were carried out last week against commercial ships near the territorial waters of the United Arab Emirates (UAE). According to some independent analysts, the bombing of Saudi oil installations was a false flag operation carried out by U.S. intelligence agencies in order to start another conflict in the Middle East.

According to the Foreign Ministry of UAE, the incident occurred near the emirate of Fujairah, one of the world's largest bunkering hubs that lies just outside the Strait of Hormuz, which is a vital oil and natural gas corridor for the global energy market.

The cause of the explosions has not been ascertained and there has been no claim of responsibility, but speculations range from drone or missile attacks from Yemen, to possible dropping of bombs by US forces to ignite tensions in the region.

Iran on Monday voiced concern about "adventurism by foreign players" to disrupt maritime navigation in the Persian Gulf region, describing the incident as "lamentable" and "worrying" and calling for thorough investigations.

"I don't want a war, but if there's any effort by the Iranians to come after American interests, that would be a hostile act," Graham said in a statement on his website. "I like the fact that we're moving military assets forward, that we're putting bombers in the region, we're sending in an aircraft carrier, as a warning to Iran that if you come after American interests ... we're going to hold you accountable," Graham said.

Graham said Iran is "challenging" the president -- as are North Korea, China, Syria and Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro.

Observers say that U.S. President Donald Trump and his reactionary foreign policy advisers such as John Bolton and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo have been stepping up pressure against Iranians in the wake of Trump's withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal. Trump has also tightened economic sanctions against Tehran and blacklisted the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC).

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