

Iranian foreign minister says U.S. cannot disrupt legal international trade



Tehran, May 21 (RHC)-- Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif says the U.S. is not permitted to disrupt legal trade among other countries, slamming such interventionist policies as a threat to the entire world community.

If a country moves to hinder legal trade "based on its own wrong policies," it will "definitely face an international reaction," Zarif told reporters in response to a question about Washington's threats against Iranian tankers carrying fuel for Venezuela.

"Legal trade will continue across the world and the U.S. is not allowed to hamper the process. Such a policy poses a danger not just to one or two states but to the entire world," the top Iranian diplomat said.

Braving the tough American economic sanctions against both Iran and Venezuela, the Islamic Republic is shipping tons of fuel to the Latin American state. Unconfirmed reports and tanker monitoring groups report that at least five Iranian-flagged tankers are transporting fuel to Venezuela.

Angered by the shipment, the U.S. administration has in recent days intensified its anti-Iran rhetoric, threatening to seize the vessels crossing the Caribbean to sanctions-hit Venezuela.

In a letter to the United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres on Sunday, the Iranian foreign minister issued stern warning against any provocative acts by the U.S. through dispatching naval forces to the Caribbean Sea to disrupt the course of Iranian tankers.

Following Zarif's letter, Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs Abbas Araqchi summoned the Swiss envoy, whose country represents US interests in Tehran, to voice the country's vehement protest at US provocations. Iran has vowed a crushing response if the United States acts on its threats.

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