

White House threatens to stop Iranian oil tankers to Venezuela



Washington, May 21 (RHC)-- The Council on Hemispheric Affairs (COHA) has published an analysis of the dangerous geopolitical games that President Donald Trump's administration seems to be eager to play as five Iranian supertankers head towards Venezuela.

The text of that study is presented below.

One of the consequences of the U.S. blockade of Venezuela is a gasoline shortage, as any nation that sends the necessary additives to process Venezuelan crude into fuel faces heavy-handed sanctions.

Yet without gasoline, Venezuelans are unable to transport food and other necessities from the point of sale to their homes and workplaces. And this precious commodity, which was virtually pennies on the gallon just months ago, is presently being sold on the underground market at exorbitant prices in U.S. dollars.

Five Iranian supertankers on the way to Venezuela, carrying approximately 45.5 million gallons of gasoline and related products, as reported by the British outlet Express.

According to Reuters, an anonymous senior Trump administration official said the Iranian fuel shipment "is not only unwelcome by the United States but it's unwelcome by the region and we're looking at

measures that can be taken.”

This message, as yet unconfirmed by the Trump administration, has been taken seriously by Iran as a threat to impede the arrival of the supertankers.

Also, unconfirmed reports over the weekend that the U.S. Navy has deployed four additional warships to the Caribbean along with a P-8 Poseidon multi-mission aircraft has raised alarm bells in Tehran, as Iranian authorities warn against U.S. interference with commerce between sovereign states.

In response to the perceived threat to their oil tankers, Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif wrote UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres saying: “Coercing nations into complying with the U.S. illegal demands threatens multilateralism, as the foundation of international relations, and sets a dangerous precedent, paving the way for those who aspire rather divide, not unite, nations,” as reported by Reuters.

Tehran lodged a protest with the Swiss ambassador to Iran, who represents U.S. interests against any possible actions to impede its ships.

“If the United States, like pirates, intends to create insecurity on international highways, it will take a dangerous risk that will certainly not go unnoticed,” the Iranian news agency NOUR warned.

And the leader of the Islamic Revolution, the Ayatollah Seyed Ali Jamene, highlighted “the repugnance” the world’s people feel towards U.S. intimidation, attacks, and occupation. The ayatollah went on to declare that “the U.S. will be expelled from [Iran’s neighbors] Iraq and Syria,” HispanTV recalled.

“In the face of U.S. eagerness to dominate two regions of the world, Venezuela plays in Latin America the role that Iran plays in West Asia,” political analyst Carmen Parejo Rendon said.

Both countries insist on preserving their national sovereignty and intend to exercise the right to trade on mutually beneficial terms without the interference of an outside power. Though Venezuela has a different social system than Iran, it has incurred a similar fate.

Despite whatever differences, their crime, in the ideological framework of U.S. exceptionalism, is daring to exist outside Washington’s sphere of influence. Nearly two centuries after the Monroe Doctrine, the U.S. continues to see both regions as part of its backyard.

“You have to ask yourself what interest Iran has in Venezuela, where we have seen recent indications of Iranian military and state support. It is to gain a positional advantage in our neighborhood as a way to counter U.S. interests,” the U.S. Southern Command tweeted.

Both Venezuela and Iran have been historically subjected to U.S. intervention against democratically elected governments and have paid a heavy price for forging independent domestic and foreign policies.

Since the election of Hugo Chavez in 1998, Washington has backed a broad spectrum of regime change strategies, most recently on behalf of the self-proclaimed president of Venezuela, Juan Guaido.

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