

# Another American Drone Captured by Iran: Washington Feels Trepid

By [Kourosh Ziabari](#)

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Iranian media reported on Tuesday, December 4 that the naval forces of Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps have successfully hunted down an American Scan Eagle surveillance drone which had violated Iran's airspace while on an espionage mission over the Persian Gulf island of Khark on the southern coasts of Iran.

The U.S. military officials and people in the Obama administration rushed to categorically refute the claims that Iran has captured the American drone. Immediately after Iran's English-language Press TV aired an 11-minute footage showing some Iranian commanders inspecting the intact Scan Eagle drone in an undisclosed location in Tehran, the U.S. military officials released statements and denied the reports.

"The U.S. Navy has fully accounted for all unmanned air vehicles operating in the Middle East region," Cmdr. Jason Salata, a spokesman for the United States Naval Forces Central Command in Bahrain told Reuters. "Our operations in the gulf are confined to internationally recognized water and airspace. We have no record that we have lost any Scan Eagles recently."

However, a few hours later, the public relations officer of Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps Ramazan Sharif told the Tasnim News Agency that "the United States will soon or late confirm that it has lost one of its drones."

"I recommend the American commanders to count the number of their drones once again," he said. The Scan Eagle drone, as said by IRGC, was on a mission to gather information about Iran's oil terminals

It's not the first time IRGC takes over an American drone. In December 2011, IRGC's electronic warfare unit captured a U.S.-manufactured Lockheed Martin RQ-170 reconnaissance drone while flying over the southeastern territories of Iran. It was later on confirmed that the sophisticated drone, known as the Kandahar Beast, has been collecting information and imagery of Iran's nuclear facilities and was planned to deliver the information to a U.S. military base in Afghanistan, but failed to accomplish its mission.

Although the American military analysts who were interviewed by the U.S. media tried to play down the importance of Iran's achievement by alleging that Scan Eagle is not a complicated and significant drone, they will surely confirm in their privacy that its being seized by the naval forces of Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps is another debacle for the United States which in the past decade has gone through fire and water to obstruct Iran's nuclear program, while it has no single page of evidence showing that Iran's nuclear activities have a military dimension.

In the past 10 years, the United States pulled out all the stops to hinder Iran's nuclear program. Planning for the destabilization of the Iranian government through funding the so-called pro-reform, pro-democracy movements, imposing hard-hitting economic sanctions which have borne no fruit but the suffering and anguish of the ordinary Iranian citizens, assassinating Iran's nuclear scientists and supporting anti-Iranian terrorist groups such as MKO and Jundallah to carry out terrorist operations inside the Iranian soil are only some of the machinations of the United States for Iran. The superficial excuse is to prevent Iran from going nuclear, but the reality is that Iran is emerging as a regional superpower and this is something which the United States cannot come to terms with.

However, an important point in this latest chapter of standoff between Iran and the United States is the legal aspect of Washington's dispatching surveillance drones to Iran's territory. Iran is not a failed state like Somalia to neglectfully overlook the violation of its airspace by a foreign aggressor. To Iran, such provocations signify the possibility of more serious moves in the future, such as a military strike on its nuclear facilities.

On December 9, 2011, Iran formally lodged a complaint against the U.S. to the UN Security Council and criticized the U.S. for violating Iran's airspace. Albeit it could be predicted from the outset that the Security Council, dominated by a number of veto-yielding powers and some non-permanent members which are heavily influenced by the United States would not take any practical steps to condemn the illegal actions of the United States and its violation of the airspace of a sovereign nation, but it's a must for Iran to bring its case to the International Court of Justice and other international organizations so as to prevent the U.S. from repeating such fatal blunders.

What is clear is that Iran's army and IRGC are sufficiently powerful to confront foreign threats against Iran, even in the face of a possible war against Iran, which the U.S., Israel and their European friends have been trumpeting for so long. The fact that Iran has reached the technical capability to capture American drones flying over its waters and lands indicates that Iran has become a serious contender of the U.S. military power and this is something which the U.S. politicians can hardly believe.

The irony is that the United States has used whatever in its capacity to bring Iran to its knees, and has even banned the export of medicine and powder milk to Iran - which may purportedly contribute to Iran's nuclear program as dual-use materials! - but it seems that Iran does not intend to surrender in the face of such backbreaking pressures.

Maybe it's an advantage of being a lawless superpower that you can send unmanned aerial vehicles to a foreign country thousands of kilometers away from where you are, without being reprimanded and criticized, but imagine for a moment that what could happen if Iran had violated America's airspace by sending drones to the Gulf of Mexico for espionage? Wouldn't it without more ado spark the World War III?

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