

# How Iran Decided to Down a US Drone and Narrowly Averted War by Sparing Another US Plane

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Global Research, June 25, 2019

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Region: [Middle East & North Africa, USA](#)

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*Iran averted all-out war in the Middle East at the last moment when the Central command and control operational room of its Army and the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) ordered not to shoot down a US Navy anti-submarine warfare, Intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance Poseidon P-8 .*

Unusually, there were 38 on board the P-8 aircraft which requires a crew of 9. There were a minimum of 6-8 officers onboard (2-3 Col, 3-4 Lt) and the remaining crew likely held grades under Lieutenant. The plane was flying within range of Iranian missiles over Iranian waters when Iran's central command and control received confirmation that the US would not go to war or hit any target in Iran. This took place following the Iranian downing of one of the most advanced US drones last Thursday. The drone had been violating Iranian airspace, according to Tehran authorities, who later presented the debris of the unmanned drone to the media. Iran had received confirmation through a third country that President Donald Trump would refrain from bombing any Iranian positions.

“Iran was about to hit and destroy the US Navy P-8 Poseidon spy and anti-submarine Boeing that was flying in the area when we received confirmation that the US had decided not to go to war and not to bomb any control and command or missile batteries positions, cleared or non-cleared, along the Straits of Hormuz. Had Trump decided otherwise, we had orders to hit several US and US allies' targets and the Middle East would have been the theatre of a very destructive war with huge losses on all sides”, said an Iranian IRGC General.

But how did war almost break out on the morning of June 20<sup>th</sup>, and how did Iran decide to down a US drone?

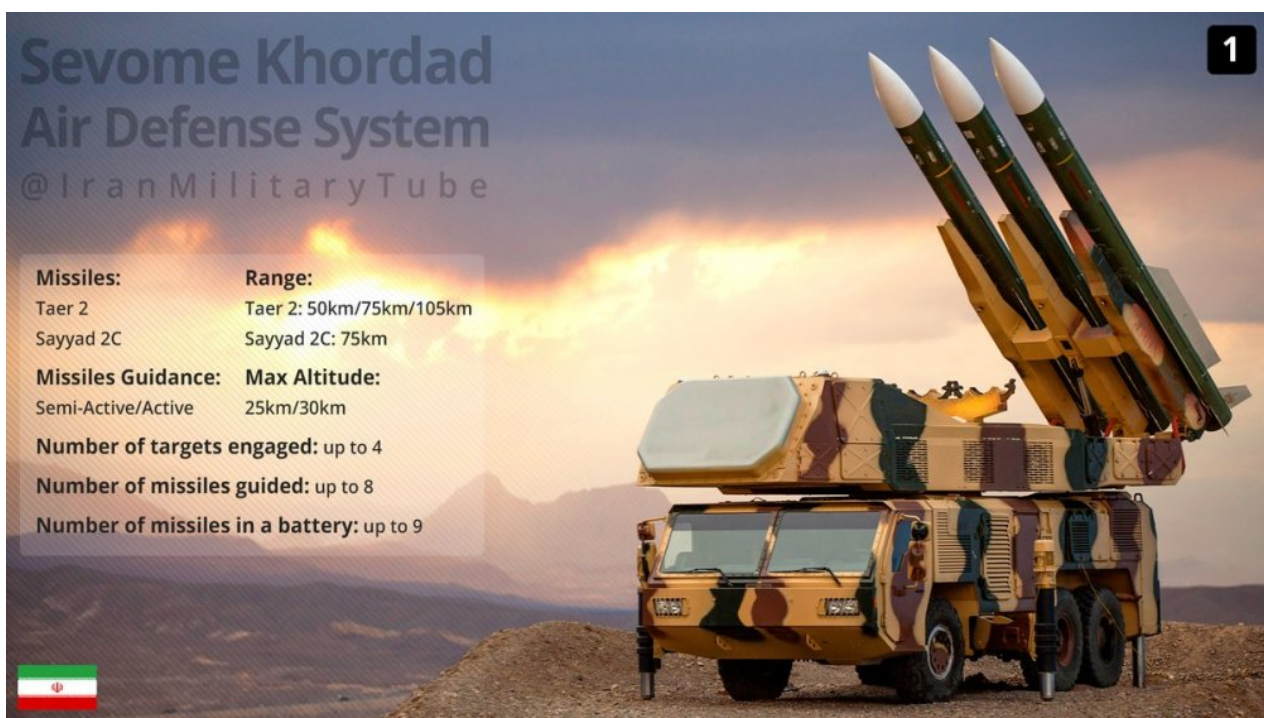
An IRGC high ranking officer said

“the Rules of Engagement are agreed to by the Central command and control of the army and the IRGC. These are communicated to the thousands of air defence forces positions spread throughout the country. Decisions are not independently and unilaterally taken by a lone wolf General or the commander of a particular position, as Trump embarrassingly believes.”

“Iran has received detailed information and mission objectives, via reconnaissance and other intelligence means, related to the types of the mission of the last batch of US forces sent by Trump (the Pentagon announced

it was sending 1000 personnel) to the area. These have the task of monitoring the air and the sea (both above and under), command several drones and have task forces ready to engage immediately any potential target. All this is under the auspices of protecting oil tankers navigating in the Gulf of Oman and the Persian Gulf. This move took place following the attacks on oil tankers at al-Fujairah and the last attacks on two tankers. These attacks are the result of Trump's decision to sanction Iran and prevent any country from buying its oil. Iran made it clear that no oil will be exported from the region if Iran cannot.. Therefore, whatever the US military procedure, it will not enable oil to reach the rest of the world, particularly not in the aftermath of the downing of the drone", said the source.

According to the military officer, the "Iranian Central command and control issued a protocol to be followed by all command and control spread throughout the country, giving instructions to stop any violations of Iran's sea, land and air territories. A warning is issued when the violation is identified, whether intentional or unintentional. The local IRGC command also informs the central command of the violation and, simultaneously, orders the intruder to adjust the course of its trajectory and identify itself.



This is exactly what happened on the morning of the 20<sup>th</sup> of June, the equivalent of the 30<sup>th</sup> of Khordad in the Persian calendar. This is when the US drone was spotted leaving the Emirates and flying towards the Iranian coast, exploring the Gulf for around 4 hours. On its way back, when violating Iranian airspace, the base communicated with the drone and gave the usual warning. The drone responded by turning off its digital system, lights and GPS, indicating that it was a military object with either an intelligence gathering or battle mission. It was thus immediately classified as hostile and therefore a potential target. When it ignored repeated calls for identification, the central command of the air-defence position followed mission instructions and, in this case, decided to down the drone. Our radars could see the drone and the heat it was producing. A "Third of Khordad" missile was launched to destroy the target immediately".

The military commander confirmed that the "political and military leadership coordinate

decisions given to the command centre and weigh carefully the consequences and implications of any orders given. These orders are clear: firmly engage with any threat. An economic war is being waged on Iran, and this war is equivalent to the most violent military action. This is why the thousands of air-defence positions spread in the country will decisively act accordingly: they are on a permanent state of alert and ready to follow the orders and training they have already received in case the US decided to go to war”.

“We decided not to down the P-8 Poseidon because we received confirmed information that no war is expected. Otherwise, we would not have hesitated to hit any US objective in the area, in the air, US military bases or the sea if the US military decides to hit us. The consequences would be irrelevant, and the blame for who started it and who is responsible will no longer matter. We will be at war”, said the general. Unusually the P-8 Poseidon, which normally has a crew of 9, was carrying 38 crew and officers on board.

Iran plans to adopt a strategy of progressive hits in case of war:

“our allies will be an essential part of our battle so the front will be enlarged beyond Iran and the nearby US military bases. The allies are ready to run into battle and are giving signals of their readiness. We have noticed that no Israeli drone has been identified above Lebanon for a couple of days. Obviously, Israel is trying to avoid provoking a message from Lebanon, similar to the downing of the US drone. It looks like the US doesn’t want to receive more than one message from another front. This doesn’t mean Israel will stop violating Lebanese airspace, but Israel is now aware that its air movement is monitored and the sky will no longer be safe when the time comes for a confrontation”.



The US was surprised by the capability of the “Third of Khordad” missile. Its name commemorates the 24<sup>th</sup> of May 1982, the day when the city of Khorramshahr was liberated after 578 days of Iraqi occupation during the Iraq-Iran war. Sayyed Ali Khamenei called that day, the Third of Khordad, “the day of the resistance and victory”.

The “Third of Khordad” missile - originally a SAM 6 - had been domestically modified in 2013 when Russia refused to develop it. Special modifications were introduced, optimising

its electronic equipment, improving detecting sensors including thermal sensors and developing a lock option for its GPS to protect heavy jumping interferences. The missile was given the coordinates and launched against the thermal trace of the US drone, and it destroyed the target.

“We shall not stand idly by if signatory countries will not find a way out for Iran to regain its trade, energy and commercial position in the international market. If sanctions are not lifted one way or another, we are only at the beginning of the crisis. Much more can be expected. Iran will never accept to be disarmed of its missiles because they are a guarantee for its security and that of the region. Today Iran is much stronger, enjoying the support of the population and harmony between the political and military leadership. We shall not submit and no negotiation with Trump can be expected as long as sanctions are hovering over our heads. The world should expect more surprises in the coming days because Iranians refuse to starve. Therefore, we are no longer afraid of any war, even more significant against a superpower country”.

The US drone was downed in the same area where in July 1988 the USS Vincennes guided missile cruiser downed Iranian civilian flight 655 with 290 people onboard. Over 100 bodies are still lying on the seabed of the Straits of Hormuz. On social media members of the families of the victims expressed happiness at seeing an Iranian missile strike a blow to US pride in the Straits of Hormuz. This may have been some consolation to the families, but Trump’s decision to respond by imposing further sanctions on Iran starting Monday means the risks of a wider war and many more dead are looming ever over the region and the world.

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