

Iran Accuses US of Docking Chemical Weapons-Laden Ship in Persian Gulf

By [Zero Hedge](#)

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*Featured image: MV Cape Ray in the Persian Gulf during Operation Nautical Horizon, June 24, 2018.
Image source: Stars and Stripes*

Multiple Russian and Middle East news sources are reporting [new accusations by the Iranian military](#) that that **a US ship carrying chemical weapons has recently anchored in the Persian Gulf and in engaged in a “dangerous plot”**, though not naming the particular “Gulf state” territorial waters at which the ship docked.

The accusation comes just as a major seven week US military exercise, [Operation Nautical Horizon](#), has concluded in the Persian Gulf which involved **the same military transport ship that decommissioned Syria’s declared chemical weapons stockpiles**.

Iran’s Press TV reported that senior Iranian military spokesman **Brigadier General Abolfazl Shekarchi** said the US Navy’s *MV Cape Ray* vessel had docked at the coast of one of the Persian Gulf Arab countries after recently being escorted into the region by an American warship, and **implied further that chemicals carried by the ship could be transferred to US-backed groups in Syria**.

“After suffering consecutive blows by the resistance front, the Americans have now resorted to dangerous ways to continue their presence in Iraq and Syria,” Shekarchi stated, [according to Iranian state-run media](#).

Press TV further cited the general as saying,

“The news proves that chemical attacks in Iraq and Syria have been engineered and led by the Americans,” and that, **“The Western countries have used the alleged gas attacks in Syria as a pretext to target military positions inside the Arab country.”**

He [said](#):

“Checking the records of the US cargo vessel *MV Cape Ray* revealed that the vessel had been present in the coasts near Iraq and Syria, where the Americans had launched a military aggression under the pretext of the use of

chemical weapons by those countries.”

Middle East Monitor, echoing Iranian media reports, [explains](#):

“The official stressed that the Iranian army has accurate information on the ship’s characteristics including the number of crew and the chemical substances it carries, adding that Tehran will disclose details and objectives about the ship in the future.”

Thus it appears Iran is preparing to bring formal charges of chemical malfeasance in the region by the US before an international body, similar to an international lawsuit it is reportedly bringing against the US as “founders” of ISIS, [based on statements Trump previously made on the campaign trail](#).

Though Iranian reports that the Cape Ray vessel could be instrumental in a Syrian “false flag” chemical incident **were not accompanied by any level of proof**, and must be treated with much skepticism considering there’s a broader propaganda war currently being waged between Iran and the West, the London-based Middle East news site [Middle East Monitor](#) noted,

“The [MarineTraffic website](#) confirmed that the vessel has anchored in the coast of Bahrain and visited the Shuaiba port in Kuwait two days ago.”

Indeed, [Stars and Stripes](#) confirmed the presence of the Cape Ray in the Persian Gulf **during scheduled military exercises, called Nautical Horizon, which took place for seven weeks and wrapped up in late June**. The Cape Ray reportedly participated in a major logistics part of the exercise off Kuwait, and which heavily involved forces from the US base Naval Support Activity Bahrain.

Iranian complaints appear to hinge on the fact that the *MV Cape Ray* is **well-known for its central role in the 2014 destruction of Syria’s declared chemical weapons stockpile**, at which time Army engineers outfitted the massive transport ship with [Field Deployable Hydrolysis Systems](#), which [broke down a reported 600 metric tons of chemical weapons materials at sea](#) as part of a joint UN-OPCW mission, and as part of a US-Russia deal to decommission Syria’s sarin.

After the Cape Ray completed its mission of breaking down the chemical precursors to various nerve agents, the remaining raw chemical materials were [reportedly incinerated at commercial facilities in the UK and Finland](#). Thus the ship’s entire purpose in the 2014 mission was first to render the chemical materials unusable, and then to offload the resulting compounds for final destruction as part of a deal **that both the US and Russia called a success**.

However, **the Iranians seem to think the vessel is some kind of permanent chemical weapons transport vehicle, which it is not**, though it understandably doesn’t sit well with Tehran that the US conducts regular war games in Iran’s own maritime backyard.



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Michel Chossudovsky

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