

Iran Builds Prototypes of U.S. RQ170 Drone despite US Doubts

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Iran has started to copy the captured U.S. spy drone RQ 170, the commander of the Aerospace Force of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps announced on Saturday, Iranian Mehr news agency reported.

Brigadier General Amir Ali Hajizadeh who was speaking on the anniversary of the establishment of the IRGC also said experts are receiving information from the captured spy plane, and revealed what he said were “codes” gleaned from the unmanned aircraft.

“I am giving you four codes so the Americans understand just how far we have gone in penetrating the drone’s secrets,” he told state television.

“In October 2010, the aircraft was sent to California for some technical issues, where it was repaired and after flight tests, it was taken to Kandahar (in Afghanistan) in November 2010, when a series of technical problems still prevailed,” he said.

“In December 2010, it was sent to an airport near Los Angeles for repair of its equipment and sensors, and flight tests. The drone was then sent back to Kandahar,” he said.

Hajizadeh did not give further details, saying: “This aircraft is a national treasure for us, and I cannot divulge information about it.”

But he added Iran has “started producing a copy of the RQ-170 drone,” stressing it used the same US technology in stealth fighters and bombers.

For his part, the US Senator Joe Lieberman said that Tehran’s declaration about copying the US spy drone amounts to little more than “Iranian bluster.”

“There is some history here of Iranian bluster particularly now when they’re on the defensive because of our economic sanctions against them,” said the independent lawmaker, chairman of the Democrat-led Senate’s Homeland Security Committee said.

Lieberman made his remarks to the “Fox News Sunday” program after General Hajizadeh’s speech on state TV, saying that he felt “skepticism” at the claim, the first reaction from a senior US politician.

However, Tehran’s technological and military capabilities prove the opposite, and the coming days will reveal the truth.

The unmanned, bat-winged RQ-170 Sentinel drone went down in Iran four months ago, and

Iran's gleeful military proudly displayed it on state television apparently intact, though with what appeared to be damage to one of its wings.

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