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2021 REVIEW

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THE HELIOS RAY, UNDER IRANIAN "SIGHTS"

On Thursday night, close to the time that the giant MV Helios Ray, an Israeli owned ship flying the Bahamian flag was struck by missiles or mines attached to it's hull, the Iranian press agency "Fars" published an article relating to the increased activity of the Iranian navy and its presence in the Red Sea, the gulf of Aden and Bab Al-Mandab (between Djibouti and Yemen in the south of the Red Sea) .

The message conveyed the Commander of the Iranian Navy, admiral Hossein Khanzadi in the above article was clear and delisive, the Iranian fleet acts in order to identify foreign ships in international waters and to protect Iranian interests in particular in all matters to ships and tankers chartered by Iranian interests. The admiral emphasized the "we will not compromise and we are not "joking" with any country or state both in and out of the area. The integrity of our interests is a "red line" from our point of view". The article also quotes him as stating that the Iranian fleet actions are "in line with international efforts to combat piracy."

In parallel Fars published an interview with David Swanson, described as a "news reporter and political activist" and having a record of being "anti-war". The headline of the interview was that the U.S.A and Israel give legitimacy to assassinations in other

countries and the content was the Israeli attributed assination of senior Iranians.

A precis of previous publications reveals inter alia, that the detention of the British tanker, the Stena Impero on 19.7.19, a few hours after the Gibraltar High Court extended the arrest of the tanker, the Grace 1 which was detained by a British commando force as it was en route to "breach" sanctions on the Syrian refineries and petrol industry forming part of the Assad regime. A few years previously, in 2015 the Iranians placed an embargo on the ship, the "Maersk Tigris" which flew a Marshall Islands flag, which country is under the protection of the U.S.A. The Stena Impero was detained by the Iranian authorities as it performed "dangerous manouvres" and also entered the straits of Hormuz from the North and not the South. The Maersk Tigris was allegedly detained in order to enforce an Iranian judgement obliging "Maersk" to pay compensation of 3.6 Million U.S Dollars.

Accordingly, Iran does not hesitate in acting against British and American protected ships in addition to the capture and detention of other ships.

Accordingly, it is possible to recognize the current rhetoric of "combat piracy" as an intentional attack of an Iranian rocket or

mine on the Helios Ray which is described in the press as owned by an Israeli entity. According to FARDAY BTA the HELIOS RAY sailed from Malta to Port Said, passed through the Suez Canal on 9 February, transversed the Iranian Straits, and called at the ports of Sahar in Oman, Dubai, Hamad in Qatar and King Abdul in Saudia arriving at the latter on 24 February. On 25-26 the Helios Ry sailed in the straits of Hormuz, and the Gulf of Oman being vulnerable to Iranian or Iranian "protected" vessels which could easily have attacked the Helios Ray.

The structure of the "Helios Ray", as appears from the photographs appearing in "marine traffic" is vulnerable to the damage described above. It is relatively easy to target the ship above its water-line, without causing it to sink and inviting a response and at the same time causing damage and delay to the ship, and it's freedom of navigation which is also protected by UNCLOS Rules. It is almost unnecessary to state that the damage mentioned above requires skill on behalf of it's perpetrators and it can be assumed that a "professional" hand was involved .

It appears that the "Marine Cold War" is continuing and that the Iranian Forces utilize their presence in the Persian Gulf to react in the area and from Iran's standpoint to "atone" for action against it in other fronts.

The Israeli shipping publication "Hamitan" ("Cargo") reports that the Helios Ray is owned by Rami Unger a shipping magnate, not generally known to the public. He is more well known as the owner of a company, "Telcar" the importer and distributor of the Kia, Dahaitsu and Sniyang motor vehicles than an estimated 100 Ro-Ro ships. He does not operate shipping services but charters his ships to companies such as, Hyundai-Glovis, China Shipping, Wallenius – Wilhelsnen, NYK, MOL,"K" LINE, Eukor and Hoegh Autoliners.

Unger has a number of holding companies and the Helios Ray is held by a company known as Ray Car Carries, registered in the Isle of Man, known as a tax haven. The Ship is managed by a Greek company known as Stamco which specializes in Ro-Ro ship management. Unger's ships were built in Poland, South Korea, Croatia and Vietnam.

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Contents of the article are only for general information and do not constitute a legal opinion.

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