

IDF: Our subs sail everywhere; Iran: Our response to any attack will be strong.

Army spokesman tells Saudi paper Israel is tracking Iran movements in region, days after Israeli submarine said to cross Suez Canal; Revolutionary Guard says ready for any scenario.



Illustrative: An Israeli submarine sails during Independence Day celebrations marking 70 years since the founding of the state in 1948, in Tel Aviv, April 19, 2018. (AP/Ariel Schalit)

After an Israel Defense Forces spokesman told a Saudi newspaper on Friday that Israeli submarines were quietly operating “everywhere,” an unnamed Iranian official told Al Jazeera Saturday that “Tehran’s response to any attack on national security will be strong and wide.”

The anonymous source claimed that Israel “is looking for excuses to drag the

region into tension that will create chaos” in the final days of US President Donald Trump’s term.

And the top naval commander in the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps warned that Iran was ready to defend itself and was prepared for any scenario.

“Forces, systems, and equipment are at the desired level of readiness to defend the water borders, the interests and security of our country,” said IRGC Navy Commander Admiral Alireza Tangsiri.

Tangsiri’s comments came after IDF Spokesperson Hidai Zilberman told the Saudi Arabian Elaph news outlet that Israel was tracking Iranian movements around the region and that Israeli submarines were quietly “sailing everywhere.”

Zilberman gave the interview after an Israeli submarine reportedly openly crossed the Suez Canal last week in a show of force directed at Iran. The move was approved by Egypt, according to the Kan public broadcaster, which cited Arab intelligence sources. The submarine reportedly surfaced and faced the Persian Gulf, which lies on the other side of Saudi Arabia.

The intelligence sources said the move was meant to “send a message” to Iran.



Brig. Gen. Hidai Zilberman, who was nominated to take over as the next IDF spokesperson on June 13, 2019. (Israel Defense Forces)

Zilberman additionally said that although Israel was not aware of any specific plans by Iran to attack the Jewish state, Iranian forces could carry out an attack from Iraq or Yemen, according to a translation of the interview by the Ynet news

site.

He said Israel had information indicating Iran was developing unmanned aerial vehicles and “smart missiles” in Iraq and Yemen, and that the weapons could have the ability to strike Israel.

Zilberman said Israel had attacked targets in Syria in the past year, and used 500 smart missiles, without any response from Iran or the Syrian regime. He added that Israel had no intention of letting up its pressure campaign against Iran in Syria.

The IDF has launched hundreds of strikes in Syria since the start of the civil war in 2011 against moves by Iran to establish a permanent military presence in the country and efforts to transport advanced, game-changing weapons to terrorist groups in the region, principally Hezbollah.

Zilberman’s comments were not immediately available in English and the interview contained few direct quotes.

On Monday, IDF Chief of Staff Aviv Kohavi warned Iran against attacking Israel, saying that the Jewish state will retaliate forcefully against any aggression.

Iran has threatened to attack Israel since the assassination of its top nuclear scientist, Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, in late November, in a raid blamed on the Jewish state.



In this Sept. 18, 2016 file photo Revolutionary Guard Gen. Qasem Soleimani, center, attends a meeting with Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and Revolutionary Guard commanders in Tehran, Iran. (Office of the Iranian Supreme

Leader via AP)

In a strikingly similar move to the reported Israeli submarine crossing of the Suez Canal, a US nuclear submarine crossed the Strait of Hormuz on Monday as the anniversary of the killing of Iranian General Qassem Soleimani by a US drone approached.

US military officials fear an attack by Tehran to avenge the powerful Soleimani, leader of the IRGC's elite Quds force, who was assassinated on January 3, 2020, in a US drone strike near Baghdad airport in Iraq.

Agencies contributed to this report.

Source:

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