

Some questions to Mrs May and Mr Hunt

I wrote shortly after the Gibraltar authorities seized the Iranian oil tanker about the need for the UK to protect other vessels going through the Straits from retaliatory attack, and asked about the possible prosecution of the Captain and senior officers of the vessel who had been detained with allegations of EU sanctions busting.

We now see a British flagged tanker has been detained by the Iranians with allegations of a collision with a fishing vessel which is denied by those on the tanker, and see that the Captain and officers of the Iranian tanker have been released on bail.

This gives rise to various questions for the UK government

1. Given the very public threat made by Iran to UK shipping in the area, what measures were taken to give protection to British flagged vessels?
2. It is said there are four minesweepers and an amphibious armed naval vessel as well as HMS Montrose in the area, with a destroyer on the way. What if anything can these vessels do to help?
3. What support will the UK receive from the carrier group and amphibious assault ship group the US navy has in the region?
4. When will the Captain and officers of the Iranian tanker be charged? What more can be published concerning the allegations against the Iranian tanker?
5. As we were told this seizure was made to enforce EU sanctions over oil to Syria, what support is the EU offering? Has the EU proposed a joint naval initiative to protect western shipping in the Straits?
6. Why is the advice now given to avoid the Straits for commercial shipping, when this advice was not given before the tanker seizure?