

Audacity and Insolence

February 17, 2011

According to the Israeli government, two Iranian warships plan to sail through the Suez canal en route to Syria. Israel's foreign minister, Avigdor Lieberman, declared that "this is a provocation that proves that Iranian audacity and insolence are increasing." The international community, warned Lieberman, "must understand that Israel cannot forever ignore these provocations."

Every warship should be melted down for scrap metal, of course, but what is remarkable about this story (which is denied by Egyptian canal officials) is the incredible hypocrisy involved. Towards the end of the Reuters report we find this:

"Most military ships that pass through the canal are American, along with some French and British. Two Israeli destroyers and submarine passed through last year."

And AP notes:

"Meanwhile, the U.S. aircraft carrier USS Enterprise was transiting the Red Sea on Wednesday, after passing through the Suez Canal on its way to the U.S. Navy's 5th Fleet area to support combat operations in Afghanistan and other duties in the region, two officials in Washington said."

If Iran's actions show audacity and insolence, then what must U.S. actions show? Or those of Britain or France? And what must be shown by Israeli threats to take military action in response to actions far less provocative than the routine behavior of Washington or Tel Aviv?