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Tensions over oil-tanker attacks in Gulf of Oman – 16th June, 2019

Level 4

Tensions are high after attacks on two oil tankers in the Gulf of Oman. The USA is blaming Iran. The vessels were hit near the strategically important Strait of Hormuz, which divides Iran and the United Arab Emirates. Ships carry about a fifth of the world's oil through it. The US said Iran was behind the "blatant assault". It said the US would defend its allies against "Iranian aggression". However, it gave no proof that Iran was responsible.

The US says the tankers were hit by mines. It showed a video of supposed Iranian forces removing a mine from one of the ships. Iran called the attacks "suspicious". Its navy is investigating them. Iran said the US accusations were "unfounded" and "Iranophobic". The Japanese owner of one of the tankers said some kind of missile, not by a mine, hit his ship. The UN said the truth needed to be "clearly established".

Level 5

Tensions are rising over the latest attacks on two oil tankers in the Gulf of Oman. The USA is blaming Iran for the attacks. The vessels were hit by blasts while sailing near the strategically important Strait of Hormuz. The Strait is between Iran and the United Arab Emirates and around a fifth of the world's oil passes through it. The Strait is 68km at its narrowest point. The U.S. Secretary of State said Iran was behind the "blatant assault". He said the U.S. would defend itself and its allies against "Iranian aggression". However, he gave no evidence that Iran was behind the attacks.

It is the second time tankers have been attacked in the past month. Two Saudi tankers were hit in a UAE port last month. The U.S. says the recent tanker blasts were caused by mines. It showed a video of supposed Iranian forces removing an unexploded mine from one of the ships. Iran's Foreign Minister described the attacks as "suspicious". Iran's navy is investigating them. Iran called the U.S. accusations "unfounded" and "Iranophobic". The Japanese owner of one of the tankers said some kind of missile hit his ship, not by a mine. The UN said the truth needed to be "clearly established".

Level 6

Tensions are rising in the Middle East over the latest attacks on oil tankers. The USA is blaming Iran for the attacks on two tankers in the Gulf of Oman on Thursday. The tankers are owned by Japan and Norway. They were hit by blasts while navigating waters close to the strategically important Strait of Hormuz between Iran and the United Arab Emirates. Around a fifth of the world's oil passes through the Strait, which is just 68km at its narrowest point. U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said Iran was behind the "blatant assault" on the vessels. He said the U.S. would defend itself and its allies against "Iranian aggression" in the region. However, he provided no evidence that Iran was behind the attacks.

The attacks are the second such incidents carried out against tankers in the past month. Two Saudi tankers were sabotaged in the UAE port of Fujairah last month. The U.S. says the latest tankers were hit by mines and posted a video online of supposed Iranian forces removing an unexploded mine off the hull of one of the ships. Iran's Foreign Minister described the attacks as "suspicious". He said Iran's navy was investigating them. Iran called the U.S. accusations "unfounded," "inflammatory" and "Iranophobic". The Japanese owner of one of the tankers said his vessel was struck by some kind of missile and not by a mine. The United Nations cautioned that the truth needed to be "clearly established".