



President Donald Trump's pick to run the Navy is exiting "effective immediately" as the U.S. naval blockade has become a key issue in the war and as Iran grows more aggressive on the waters, seizing two ships on Wednesday.

Pentagon spokesperson Sean Parnell announced Secretary John C. Phelan's exit Wednesday afternoon without elaborating on what prompted the move. The former Trump campaign donor's departure comes as Iran tightens its grip over the Strait of Hormuz and as Trump says he will not call off his blockade of Iranian ports.

A ceasefire between the United States and Iran remains in effect after Trump extended the break in hostilities. But tensions on the water remain high. Iran views the naval blockade as an act of war and has signaled it is holding up further peace negotiations. The president says he's waiting on the Islamic republic to deliver a "unified proposal" for peace.

The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps seized two vessels for alleged maritime violations and escorted them to Iran's shores, according to the semi-official Tasnim news agency. The ships were the first seized since the beginning of the U.S.-Israeli war on Iran began Feb. 28.

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