



Change of Course: The USA Enters Battle with Marine Drones

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Modern naval warfare has undergone a radical transformation. What until recently seemed a field of tactical experimentation confined to asymmetric conflicts has now become the focal point of power projection by major powers. With the latest attack conducted by **CENTCOM** against Iranian facilities in Bandar Abbas, the United States has officially crossed the threshold: for the first time in history, Washington has employed **USV (Unmanned Surface Vessels)** — marine drones — as an attack weapon in a combat theater.

The USA's Baptism of Fire

On July 12, 2026, three kamikaze drones of the **Saronic Corsair** type successfully struck an Iranian naval maintenance facility, targeting, according to images released by the American central command, a *Ghadir* class midget submarine.

This deployment marks a turning point. Although the Pentagon had already used the Corsair for support and rescue missions (such as the recent recovery of an Apache crew that crashed in the

Gulf of Oman), its use in a kinetic function represents a paradigm shift. As highlighted by Saronic co-founder Rob Lehman, this operation marks the definitive consecration of autonomous systems: no longer “laboratory experiments”, but **credible and lethal military assets**.

Yesterday, using multiple one-way attack surface drones, CENTCOM forces successfully struck a submarine and ship maintenance facility in Iran. Three Corsair unmanned surface vessels hit the port at Bandar Abbas Naval Base, marking the first time American forces have employed sea... pic.twitter.com/bOM2kmgRxz

— U.S. Central Command (@CENTCOM) [July 13, 2026](#)

From the Ukrainian Lesson to Global Doctrine

The success of the United States did not come out of nowhere. The USA has closely observed the lesson learned in the Black Sea: the Ukrainian strategy, which forced the Russian Black Sea Fleet to abandon Crimea thanks to the massive use of naval drones (like the *Magura*), has been the global testing ground for this technology.

With this attack, the United States has filled a doctrinal gap, recognizing that, in the current warfare landscape, the threat posed by surface drones is an essential variable for the protection of trade routes and power projection. The use of these assets allows for the saturation of enemy defenses, drastically complicating adversary protection plans and simultaneously reducing human personnel exposure.

Conclusions

The marine drone war has just begun. If Ukraine has shown the world that a conventional fleet can be challenged by low-cost autonomous systems, the USA's intervention confirms that maritime technological superiority in 2026 is no longer measured solely in tonnage or cannon caliber, but in the ability to dominate the surface space through autonomy. The ability to project force in a distributed, rapid, and coordinated manner has effectively become the new standard of global naval defense.