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The photo published by local media shows Iranian-built and overhauled Sahand stealth destroyer (up) and domestically-developed Kordestan forward base ship in the southern port city of Bandar Abbas on November 29, 2025.

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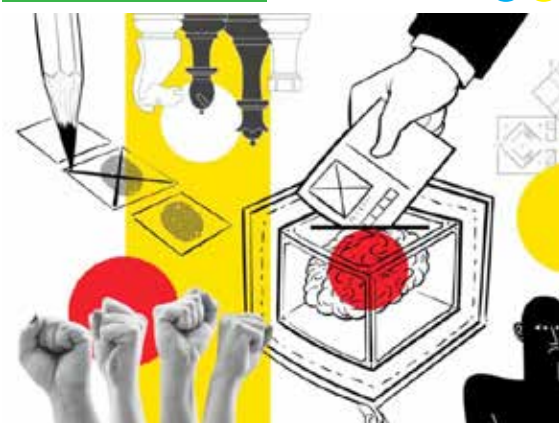
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Europe, regional states trying to ease Iran-US tensions

By Delaram Ahmadi
Staff writer

INTERVIEW
EXCLUSIVE



In the aftermath of the 12-day war, Iran's contacts with the United States over the nuclear issue dropped to a minimum. Yet following tensions between Iran and the International Atomic Energy

Agency, fresh diplomatic efforts have emerged both from Europe and regional states, aimed at getting talks back on track. Saudi Arabia has expressed readiness to facilitate dialogue between Tehran and Washington, European governments, whose role had dwindled to near zero after the activation of the snapback mechanism, have resumed their outreach, and in the latest development, Turkey's foreign minister is heading to Iran with the nucle-

ar file on his agenda.

But the United States and Iran remain firmly dug in, showing little willingness to compromise. In an interview with Iran Daily, Omid Khazani, an international affairs analyst, said European and regional states are deeply concerned about the damaging fallout of heightened Iran-US tensions and are focusing their efforts on resolving the issue, though, he noted that Arab states had a better chance of playing a meaningful role.

IRAN DAILY: After the snapback mechanism strained Iran-Europe relations, how significant was Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi's recent phone call with European Commission Vice-President Kaja Kallas, following his trip to Paris and meeting with her French counterpart? Can these talks be viewed as part of an effort by both sides to dial down tensions?

KHAZANI: If you look at the Western bloc as a whole, their interests do not necessarily overlap regarding Iran. They do share one overarching objective that is preventing any

new country from joining the global nuclear club. But in terms of managing this issue, their interests diverge.

Europe has never pushed ties with Iran to the low level we see today. This is partly because Europe has adjusted its policies to stay aligned with the US.

But if the situation turns from worse to the worst, leading to another war that spirals from short-term strategic strikes into a full-scale conflict, the damage to Europe would be far greater than to the United States. Any long-term instability inside Iran would mean instability in the Caucasus, West Asia, and the strategically vital Persian Gulf, through which one-fifth to one-quarter of the world's daily oil exports pass.

A sweeping conflict would create millions of refugees heading toward Europe, trigger deep security crises, and most importantly, endanger global energy stability. All of this weighs heavily on the minds of European policymakers. They do not want their ties with Iran to collapse to absolute zero. Europe wants to rebalance its relationship with Iran, partly to position itself as a medi-

ator and partly to escape the current nuclear ambiguity.

After the 12-day war, Iran did not leave the NPT, but it entered what is commonly referred to as the "nuclear ambiguity" phase. Europe sees this nuclear ambiguity as a high-risk situation and does not want to live with that uncertainty.

That's why, after the snapback, which fueled anger inside Iran, Europe has been trying to re-engage and, if possible, help shape a new structure for negotiations. But how much political weight Europe actually carries under Trump, who is self-absorbed and dismissive of European leaders, is another matter.

Can European states act as a bridge between Iran and the United States, or are they merely pursuing their own interests?

These two ideas are not mutually exclusive. If Europe wants to act as a mediator, it will naturally pursue its own interests. Europe does not want the current no-deal scenario or nuclear ambiguity to snowball into a massive, uncontrolled war.

The risks are too high, so naturally, Europe wants to be a bridge because its interests demand a resolution to this prolonged crisis. But whether Europe holds this position in Iran's eyes is another question. After Trump's withdrawal from the JCPOA in 2018, Europeans tried hard to preserve some of Iran's economic benefits, creating the INSTEX mechanism. But due to US secondary sanctions, they achieved nothing. As a result, Iran no longer takes them seriously. The snapback mechanism further damaged Europe's image; had they delayed its activation, they might have retained more leverage.

Still, Europe does not want to be sidelined. They want to stay in the game for their own interests, but in reality, neither Iran nor even the United States gives them much weight. In Trump's view, the political clout of Persian Gulf states, even a small country like Qatar or figures like Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, is far greater than that of some European governments, even the EU as a whole.

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