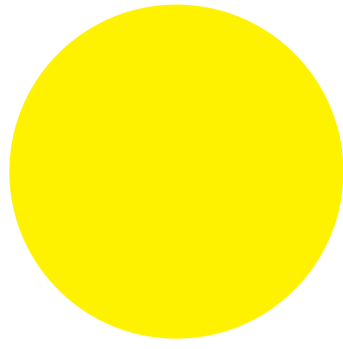


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President Masoud Pezeshkian (c), flanked by Interior Minister Eskandar Momeni (l) and Police chief Ahmad Reza Radan, speaks at a meeting with top commanders of the Iranian Law Enforcement Force in Tehran on May 11, 2026.
president.ir

Europe eyes postwar Persian Gulf role

INTERVIEW
EXCLUSIVE

France and Britain had announced the deployment of warships to the region as part of a joint plan to lay the groundwork for safe transit through the Strait of Hormuz once the situation stabilizes or the conflict is resolved. The move has drawn a negative reaction from Iran, which warned against escalating the crisis and militarizing a vital waterway. In an interview with Iran Daily, Jalal Sadatian, an expert on European affairs, said European countries fear that their economic interests could remain at risk even after hostilities in the region subside, prompting them to explore mechanisms for maintaining a military presence in the postwar period. He stressed, however, that Europe can secure its interests in the region not through military means, but only through diplomacy and dialogue with Iran.

IRAN DAILY: Given that France and Britain, unlike the United States, have not joined plans for a blockade or military coalition in the Strait of Hormuz, what is the significance of this deployment?

SADATIAN: The closure of the Strait of Hormuz has had economic repercussions across the world. It has not only pushed up energy prices in the United States, but has also had a broader impact on prices across Europe. As a result, there is growing concern over the prospect of economic crises. France, Britain, Germany and others have each, in their own way, become increasingly worried about the fallout and consequences of these developments. From a military standpoint, however, Iran has warned France, and according to the latest information received, they have effectively backed away from plans to bring naval assets into the area. Still, efforts are under way under British and French auspices, with the participation of several countries, to assess what measures could be taken. At the same time, Iran has never said the Strait is closed. Rather, Tehran says it is exercising control there against Israel, countries it views as hostile, or states that provided their airspace or facilities for attacks. Other vessels, meanwhile, have continued to pass through in coordination with Iran. The diplomatic track is far more capable of resolving this issue. Iran, according to this view, has not sought to act in violation of legal norms or international regulations. Part of these European moves may also be aimed at appeasing the United States, given that Donald Trump sharply criti-

cized European countries.

European countries have stressed that this mission is intended to ensure maritime security after tensions ease or the conflict ends. What threat would remain that requires a European military presence in the region? Military confrontation may come to an end, but economic tensions will not necessarily disappear. For example, there are concerns that ships could eventually be denied passage through the Strait or that very high fees could be imposed on vessels crossing it. Because European countries have not entered into direct talks with Iran and have not fully considered Tehran's position, they assume Iran may seek to extort money. Iran, however, says it merely wants to collect fees for services aimed at ensuring the safe passage of ships through the area. That does not mean it intends to shut the Strait down. European countries do not want Iran to hold that level of control because they argue the Strait is not Iranian territory but an international waterway. This issue requires dialogue — specifically over the legal basis on which they claim the Strait is an international passage in which Iran has no rights. According to some arguments, the total width of the Strait is 21 nautical miles, of which 12 to 15 nautical miles fall within Iran's territorial waters, while the remainder constitutes economic

waters. In effect, the argument suggests that nearly the entire Strait belongs to Iran.

Iran, meanwhile, raised proposals during talks with Oman's Foreign Ministry suggesting that arrangements for the Strait should be managed under the supervision of the two countries located on either side of it. This indicates that Iran is seeking to resolve the issue through understanding, dialogue and engagement.

Given Tehran's negative reaction, is it realistically possible for European countries to reach an understanding with Iran over a naval presence in the region? Or would Tehran regard such a presence as part of a broader securitization campaign against itself? The idea is categorically unlikely. Iran even rejects the presence of US bases in the area and has repeatedly called for their withdrawal from the region. Tehran insists that regional countries themselves are capable of ensuring security and that there is no need for either American or European military deployments. Iran says it will guarantee security for all parties within the framework of international law and regulations, provided there is no hostility toward it or attempts to resolve matters through war. However, if the aim is to ensure the security of Israel and the United States in the region, Iran says it will not permit

such a role and will resist it. Tehran has already warned both France and Britain not to further complicate an already highly complex situation. Nevertheless, Iran says that if others have concerns or proposals, dialogue remains possible.

In recent months, Europe has tried to distinguish itself from the Trump administration's more aggressive policies toward Iran. Could a more direct French and British role in Persian Gulf security equations undermine that image and affect Europe's future relations with Iran?

Such actions would certainly deepen tensions and make the situation even more complicated. Iran does not want confrontation with Europe. Relations between Iran and Europe had already become more strained over the "snapback" issue. At present, it seems unlikely that Europe truly has the capacity to enter this conflict, particularly given its geographical proximity to Iran and Europe's own vulnerability. At most, European countries may seek to apply limited pressure in order to signal that they, too, are present and should be part of the equation. They want to position themselves as a party to negotiations because Europe has been largely sidelined during the latest developments. Through these largely symbolic actions, they are effectively trying to signal to the Americans that Europe still stands alongside them.