



By: TA | AP Insight

Why do Europeans react coldly to Trump's request for assistance in the Persian Gulf?



European countries on Monday demanded to know more about U.S. President Donald Trump's plans for **the war on Iran** and when the conflict might end as they weighed whether to agree to his call to send warships to help shore up security in the Persian Gulf.

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer insisted Britain “will not be drawn into the wider war,” and said British troops should only be sent into action that is legal and has “a proper thought-through plan.” His country is considering other forms of help in conjunction with allies.

The cool response to Trump's demand reflects wide caution about the U.S.-Israeli war among allies kept in the dark before, and largely since, it was launched on Feb. 28.

Trump has **asked partners** – including France, China, Japan, South Korea and Britain – to help secure the strait for global shipping.

He said the United States was talking to “about seven” countries, but he wouldn't say which ones and gave no indication of when such a coalition might be formed.

Separately, in an interview with the Financial Times, he warned that “if there's no response or if it's a negative response, I think it will be very bad for the future of NATO.”

EU debates Trump's demand

As European Union foreign ministers gathered to discuss Trump's demand, German Foreign Minister Johann Wadephul said it's important for the U.S. and Israel to define “when they consider the military aims of their deployment to have been reached.”

“We need more clarity here,” Wadephul told reporters.

German Chancellor Friedrich Merz's spokesperson, Stefan Kornelius, underlined that “it is not NATO's war. NATO is an alliance to defend the alliance area.”

Kornelius said that Berlin “took note” of

Trump's comments, but added: “The United States did not consult us before this war, and so we believe this is not a matter for NATO or the German government.”

If there is a request via NATO, we will of course out of respect and sympathy for our American allies consider it very carefully - Radek Sikorski

Estonian Foreign Minister Margus Tsahkna also said that U.S. allies in Europe want to understand Trump's “strategic goals. What will be the plan?”

Polish Foreign Minister Radek Sikorski invited the Trump administration to go through the proper channels.

“If there is a request via NATO, we will of course out of respect and sympathy for our American allies consider it very carefully,” he said.

Sikorski made a reference to Article 4 of NATO's founding treaty, which allies can invoke if they believe their territory or security is under threat.

Acting in Europe's interests

Still, EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas said that “it is in our interest to keep the Strait of Hormuz open.”

Kallas said the EU could expand its **Operation Aspides** naval mission to protect shipping in the Red Sea up into the Persian Gulf. If no agreement is found among the 27 EU countries, those who stand ready to go it alone could form a “coalition of the willing” and provide military support on an ad hoc basis.

The war in Iran has driven up energy prices worldwide, with Brent **crude up more than 40%**.



EU could expand its Operation Aspides naval mission to protect shipping in the Red Sea up into the Persian Gulf - Kaja Kallas

The conflict has also disrupted the wider **global supply chain** beyond oil, affecting things like pharmaceuticals from India, semiconductors from Asia and oil-derived products like fertilizers that come from the Middle East.

Cargo ships are stuck in the Gulf or making a much longer detour around the southern tip of Africa.

Planes carrying air cargo out of the Middle East are grounded. And the longer the war drags on, the more likely that there will be shortages and price increases on a wide range of goods.

France has said it is working with countries — President Emmanuel Macron mentioned partners in Europe, India and Asia — on a possible mission to escort ships through the strait but has stressed it must be when “the circumstances permit,” when fighting has subsided.

French senior officials, speaking anonymously on ongoing talks, said the Netherlands, Italy, and Greece had shown interest and that Spain might be involved in some way.

Starmer said Britain is discussing with the U.S. and allies in Europe and the Gulf the possibility of using its mine-hunting drones already in the region.