



מרכז עזרי לחקר איראן והמפרץ הפרסי  
מركز عزري برای مطالعات ایران و خلیج پارس  
The Ezri Center for Iran & Persian Gulf Studies

# *The Persian Gulf Observer*

*Perspectives on Iran and the Persian Gulf*



ס

ס

ס

**European Appeasement of Iran Endangers National Security  
in Europe**

*Issue No. 34*

*(April, 2019)*

Attached please find the 34<sup>th</sup> issue of *Persian Gulf Observer*, titled "European Appeasement of Iran Endangers National Security in Europe" by The Ezri Center's research fellow, Dr. Yossi Mansharof and The Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security's researcher.

*The Persian Gulf Observer: Perspectives on Iran and the Persian Gulf* is published periodically by The Ezri Center for Iran & Persian Gulf Studies at the University of Haifa, expressing the views and analysis of the Ezri center's researchers on various issues concerning the Persian Gulf region and the countries which lay by its shores.

You are most welcome to follow the Ezri Center's tweets at: <https://twitter.com/EzriCenter> , be our friend on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Ezri-Center-for-Iran-and-Persian-Gulf-Studies/141080069242626>

Watch and listen to conferences and lectures at the Center's YouTube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCZdzvlhv7a8nxLjYZdaz68Q>

and visit our site: <http://gulfc.haifa.ac.il/>



להלן הגיליון ה- 34 של *Persian Gulf Observer* ובו מאמר שכותרתו "מדיניות הפיוס האירופאית כלפי איראן – סכנה לביטחון הלאומי של אירופה" מאת ד"ר יוסי מנשרוף, עמית מחקר במרכז עזרי וחוקר מטעם מכון ירושלים לאסטרטגיה וביטחון.

*The Persian Gulf Observer: Perspectives on Iran and the Persian Gulf* מתפרסם בתדירות תקופתית ע"י מרכז עזרי לחקר איראן והמפרץ הפרסי באוניברסיטת חיפה, ובו מוצגים מאמרי דעה, פרי- עטם של חוקרי המרכז על מגוון נושאים מאזור המפרץ הפרסי והמדינות השוכנות לחופיו.

אנו מזמינים אתכם לעקוב אחרי ציוצי המרכז בטוויטר בכתובת: <https://twitter.com/EzriCenter> ,

להיות חברים שלנו בפייסבוק: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Ezri-Center-for-Iran-and-Persian-Gulf-Studies/141080069242626>

[Persian-Gulf-Studies/141080069242626](https://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Ezri-Center-for-Iran-and-Persian-Gulf-Studies/141080069242626)

לצפות ולהאזין לכנסים והרצאות בערוץ היו-טיוב של המרכז:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCZdzvlhv7a8nxLjYZdaz68Q>

ולבקר אותנו באתר הבית: <http://gulfc.haifa.ac.il/>

## **European Appeasement of Iran Endangers National Security in Europe** By Yossi Mansharof

The European Union's current policy is to preserve the nuclear agreement with Iran – the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) – even though the American administration, led by President Donald Trump, has withdrawn from it. Ever since the US withdrawal from the nuclear agreement in May 2018, Europe has been striving to devise an economic mechanism that will enable it to evade secondary American sanctions and continue, and even increase, the volume of its trade with Iran. Despite these prolonged and intensive efforts, the EU has been unable to create such a mechanism, due to the many difficulties involved.

While the EU and Iran agree on the necessity for the nuclear deal, the EU opposes other aspects of Iranian activity that Khamenei has declared are red lines for Iran. The EU opposes the Iranian effort to upgrade the range and accuracy of its missiles, and calls for restrictions on Iran's missile program. Britain recently formulated a program of sanctions against Iran's ballistic missile program. Implementation of this package depends, however, on the EU's consent, which appears unlikely at the present time.

During his visit to Tehran in March 2018, French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian delivered a demand by the EU that Iran commence negotiations on its missile program. Since then, however, Iran has accelerated its efforts to upgrade its missile arsenal. The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Deputy Command Hossein Salami stated in November 2017 and February 2019 that Iran would increase the range of its missiles to enable it to threaten Europe with missile attacks if Iran feels that Europe constitutes a threat to it, or in response to attempts by the EU to strip Iran of its missiles.

The EU also opposes Iran's expansionist ambitions in the Middle East and its negative role in various arenas in the region. In its statement in early February 2019, the EU expressed concern about Iran's continued military presence in Syria, its military and financial support for Hezbollah, and its subversion in Yemen and support for the Houthis.

The EU also expressed opposition to the Iranian regime's violation of the human rights of women, religious and ethnic minorities, and minors. The EU's adherence to the nuclear deal, however, has deprived it of any means of exerting pressure and influence on Iran. Its opposition to Iran's policy on matters in dispute is therefore toothless and inconsequential.

The result of the EU's attachment to the nuclear deal is appeasement of Iran. As part of this appeasement, the EU confines itself to statements against Iran's missile program and expansionism in the region. The EU has also made its peace with the political and security settlement prevailing in Lebanon, which gives Hezbollah effective control of the country. The EU sent a low-level delegation to the Warsaw summit, probably in order to obstruct the US attempt to form as broad an international coalition as possible against Iran.

The EU also responded weakly to the arrest in Iran of dual European-Iranian citizens on various pretexts, including espionage. It showed indifference to Iran's violation of human rights by hosting Alaeddin Boroujerdi in January 2018, despite his leading role in suppressing the Iranian Green Movement in 2009 in his position as Chairman of the Iranian Parliamentary Committee for Foreign Policy and National Security. The weakness of the EU's policy on Iran was also demonstrated by its feeble response to the arrest of 7,000 Iranian demonstrators in 2018, 26 of whom were executed.

The EU's appeasement also makes it more reluctant to impose sanctions against the political wing of Hezbollah. It thereby maintains the artificial distinction between the terrorist organization's political and military wings (except for France, the Netherlands, and the UK, which have classified Hezbollah in toto as a terrorist organization).

The EU's fidelity to the nuclear deal and its appeasement towards the Iranian regime's aggression both inside and outside Iran have encouraged Iran to escalate its terrorism on the European continent. The Iranian terrorist campaign in Europe, which has been mostly unsuccessful up until now, has encompassed many countries. This campaign is apparently a result of cooperation between the Iranian institutions responsible for exporting terrorist. These include the IRGC Quds Force, the Iranian Ministry of Intelligence and Security (MOIS), and Department 210 of the Iranian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which the CIA says is the main operations center for Iranian espionage outside the country.

These Iranian agencies collaborated with Hezbollah's foreign terrorist apparatus (Unit 910), headed by Talal Hamia. Cooperation between Hezbollah and Iranian terrorist agencies operating in other countries first become known following their joint terrorist attacks, such as the attack on the Mykonos restaurant in Berlin in 1992 and the bombing of the AMIA Jewish community center in Buenos Aires in 1994. In at least one case, Hezbollah and Iranian infrastructure in Europe were found to overlap.

One example is the Zahra Shi'ite center in Dunkirk, France, owned by Hezbollah supporters. The French authorities closed it down and confiscated money and weapons there because it raised money for Hezbollah and Iran and helped recruit members for pro-Iranian militias. The manager of this center was Yahia Gouasmi, a leader of the Shi'ite community in France, who was close to the Iranian regime. Gouasmi has close ties with Iranian association Ahl al-Bayt World Assembly, an organization used by the Quds Force all over the world as a cover for moving funds and logistical equipment. These discoveries make it very likely that Iran and Hezbollah used Zahra Center for purposes of terrorism.

In most cases, the Israeli Mossad, not European intelligence agencies, is responsible for foiling Iranian subversion in Europe. Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif therefore declared that the allegations about Iranian terrorism were a Mossad plot.

The German authorities discovered a cell of 10 Iranian spies in December 2017 conducting surveillance of Israeli and Jewish targets. These targets included the Israeli embassy in Berlin and kindergartens and other centers of the local Jewish community. In November 2017, a German court convicted Mustufa Haider Syed-Naqfi, a Pakistani citizen living in Germany, of spying for Iran. The Iranian spy was tailing Reinhold Robbe, the head of the German-Israeli Association.

According to the Dutch government, Iran has committed two terrorist attacks in the Netherlands. In November 2017, Ahmad Mola Nissi, leader of the Arab Struggle Movement for the Liberation of Ahvaz, was shot to death in front of his home in the Hague. Ahvaz is an Iranian province with an Arab (non-Persian) majority. In December 2015, near Amsterdam, Iran assassinated Mohammad Reza Kolahi, who was sentenced to death in Iran for his role in blowing up the Islamic Republican Party headquarters in Tehran in June 1981, an attack in which 70 Iranian leaders died. In response to the violation of its sovereignty, the Dutch government merely expelled two Iranian diplomats in 2018, without explaining the reason for the expulsion. The Dutch government alleged that Iran had hired local criminals to carry out the assassinations.

In June 2018, Iranian opposition political party Mojahedin a-Khalq held a conference in Paris attended by Rudy Giuliani, President Trump's lawyer. The French government said that it had prevented the MOIS from carrying out a terrorist attack against the participants in the conference. France impounded assets belonging to Iranian intelligence and two Iranian citizens. An investigation by the French government revealed that MOIS director general Saeid Hashemi Moghadam gave the order for the attack and Assadollah Asadi, an Iranian diplomat stationed in Vienna, masterminded it.

The German state attorney said that Asadi, who was registered as a diplomat in the Iranian embassy in Vienna, was actually a member of MOIS whose task was to conduct surveillance of Iranian opposition groups. Asadi was arrested in Germany and extradited to Belgium. He was suspected of delivering a device in which 500 grams of explosives were concealed to a Belgian-Iranian couple in Luxembourg. Iran's planned terrorist attack was prevented by the Mossad, in cooperation with the French, German, and Belgian intelligence services.

In October 2018, the Danish government claimed to have thwarted an Iranian attempt to assassinate a leader of the Arab Struggle Movement for the Liberation of Ahvaz. As part of this affair, the Swedish police arrested a Norwegian citizen and extradited him to Denmark. The Mossad also helped thwart this terrorist attack by Iran. Denmark recalled its ambassador from Tehran in response, but he was back in Iran in less than a month. Denmark nevertheless called for EU sanctions against Iran. The Danish foreign minister declared that the information he had received from Danish intelligence about Iran's plan to assassinate a Danish citizen on Danish soil was incontrovertible.

In December 2018, the Albanian government expelled the Iranian ambassador and another Iranian diplomat. The Albanian media reported that the two diplomats had been involved in planning a terrorist attack during a game played by the Israeli national soccer team in Albania. The Mossad was also responsible for foiling this terrorist attack.

European diplomats explained that the EU refrained from strong criticism of Iran because of its wish to strengthen Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, who is perceived as a moderate in Iranian politics. This policy facilitates EU efforts to preserve the nuclear agreement with Iran and avoid anything that might help Trump. Faced with the EU's intentions to impose sanctions on Iran in response to revelations of growing Iranian subversion throughout Europe, however, Rouhani himself implicitly threatened in December 2018 to carry out terrorist attacks in Europe.

Despite Iranian terrorism in Europe, the EU's sanctions against Iran were flimsy. Sanctions were applied to the MOIS Directorate for Internal Security and two Iranian intelligence agents. In view of the far-reaching activity in Europe by Iranian intelligence dating back to the 1990s, including assassinations of members of the Iranian opposition, this limited measure should probably have been taken long ago.

In an implicitly critical statement, Ali Majedi, Iranian ambassador to Germany until November 2018, attributed these terrorist actions to Iranian "rogue elements." Use of the term "rogue elements" by the Iranian regime in previous cases of terrorism shows an Iranian effort to evade official responsibility for its terrorist operations within and outside Iran. Given the EU's desire to maintain the nuclear agreement and its commercial ties with Iran, however, it is very doubtful whether this Iranian admission will cause any fundamental change in the EU's policy on Iran.

The weakness shown by the EU towards Iran enables the latter to conduct espionage throughout the continent and undermine sovereignty in Europe. The EU's current policy allows Iran to maintain extensive terrorist infrastructure all over Europe, consisting of hundreds of operatives belonging to Quds Force, Iranian intelligence, and Hezbollah. These agents will carry out terrorist attacks against Israeli, American, or European targets on the continent whenever Iran gives the order. Some of this infrastructure is known, at least to German intelligence, which is aware of the presence of 950 Hezbollah agents in Germany.

Israel should enhance the political and public discourse in key Western countries concerning Iran's energetic terrorist activity on European soil. The goal should be to foster public awareness of Iranian subversion in Europe that will force the EU to reconsider its policy towards Iran.

**The article was originally published in The Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security (JISS):**

<https://jiss.org.il/en/mansharof-european-appeasement-of-iran-endangers-national-security-in-europe/>

**For Hebrew version:**

<https://jiss.org.il/he/mansharof-european-appeasement-toward-iran-is-a-danger-to-europes-national-security/>