Iran Raises the Price of a Deal: No Way Back Through Hormuz?

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Tehran is turning Hormuz into a permanent bargaining chip

Iran's parliament speaker and lead negotiator, Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, told Al Jazeera on 11 November that the Strait of Hormuz will "never return" to its pre-war status and that "the ball is now in the American court". He said Washington has yet to formally answer Tehran's seven conditions, drawn from the June Islamabad memorandum, for reopening the strait and resuming talks. He added that Iran seeks to end the current state of "no war, no peace" through sustained deterrence, with or without negotiations.

If read literally, this redefines the role of Hormuz. Tehran had framed the closure as conditional: meet seven demands and transit resumes. Saying the strait will "never return" to its pre-war status suggests those conditions are just the beginning, and that any deal would leave Iran with greater control over the strait than before the war. Voiced to Al Jazeera, it is also a signal to

Gulf neighbours: Iran may be indirectly putting pressure on Washington's negotiation stance through unsettling Gulf mediators. Both the US and Gulf states will hope to avoid a continued Iranian-led status quo in the Strait of Hormuz, increasing the likelihood that Washington will have to provide Tehran with some concessions, such as reducing economic sanctions, to fully reopen the strait.

The United States is betting on economic pressure, conducted via the Strait of Hormuz blockade, sanctions, and overland trade disruptions, to end the war. For Europe, which depends on Gulf LNG and has defended freedom of navigation in the Red Sea, that strategy is particularly costly. If Tehran maintains its full control over Hormuz, it may leverage this "no war, no peace" stalemate to further alienate Washington from Gulf and European allies through energy insecurity and inflation.

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