Trump’s ’Project Freedom’ just got blown out of the water. What now?

By Frank , 6 May 2026

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> The escalation trap seems to be pulling Donald Trump deeper and deeper into the quicksand of the Iran war. Following Iran’s strike on a UAE oil terminal, Trump has had to back down and “pause” his plan to create a military escort that would chaperone oil tankers through the Straits of Hormuz.
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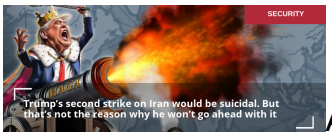
> Project Freedom, according to the president’s own social media posts, has been suspended before it even started as Trump struggles to find more smoke-and-mirror tactics to fool a gullible American public that the war in Iran has been “won”. Eight times, in fact.

But it’s easy to see how Trump is getting pulled about by various players and may still be clinging onto the idea of some sort of military manoeuvre in the Persian Gulf. Martin Jay has previously speculated that he does not believe he will launch a second strike, but an attempt at landing on an island and installing US soldiers there must still be something he is considering.



And since the Iranian strike on the UAE, something extraordinary has happened that will now lodge this idea further in his head—that such a plan might work. The UAE just went out on a limb and beefed up its relations to a whole new level with Israel, even beyond the special status it had as being the Zionist entity's only solid partner in the entire GCC. After the strike on its oil terminal, news flooded social media that the UAE was planning a retaliatory strike and has teamed up militarily with Israel. This is significant on many levels, as not only does it create a clear dividing line between itself and other GCC countries that would like to make a statement to Iran that they are not its enemy, but it also positions the UAE as a major target for Tehran, and so the move is incredibly risky, if not foolish for its elite in Abu Dhabi. It is almost as though they are prepared to destroy everything the country has accomplished in fifty years as an economic miracle of the entire region just to make the point that signing the Abraham Accords was, in fact, not an egregious error on their part. Israel or nothing.

And so the strategy of Israel is shifting from convincing America that it needs to take huge collateral losses, both militarily and in terms of human life, to now convincing the UAE. But do Abu Dhabi's rulers have the guts to take on Iran head-on? Can they take the losses of life and the destruction of their infrastructure that is inevitable? One can only imagine that the Israelis have turned on the charm and sweet-talked its rulers into the fantasy zone that Trump was dragged into.

Perhaps Trump himself has played a minor but important role as well, as it cannot be a coincidence that just a week earlier he commented to journalists that the US should consider compensating the UAE for the damage caused by Iran's strikes. Of course all this is linked, and we shouldn't consider it a coincidence that the UAE has just made the decision on a capricious whim.

> Trump's idea of taking an island in the Persian Gulf and the UAE now making a military alliance with Israel are all part of the same doomed blueprint, which must be bringing new levels of joy to Tehran, whose leaders can hardly believe their luck. They will be thinking, "We'll destroy Dubai and Abu Dhabi and then watch their rulers beg for mercy, while the whole GCC gives in to whatever demands we have, including rule over the straits."

Trump's idea of taking an island is probably his most stupid yet and may well be the brainchild of Israel's military planners. It's dumb on so many levels, but it's easy to see how it is appealing in that it is feasible to install US troops on one of the many islands the UAE claims Iran took from them.

Iran would probably allow the operation to go ahead anyway, as allowing the US to install itself on an island would be the perfect way to hold them hostage. Even from a logistical point of view the idea is doomed. It is one thing to put US troops on an island but quite another to supply them. The Iranians could simply block US ships and planes supplying them once they are there and have set up their base. Troops need food, water, and equipment just to function.

The military planners who came up with the idea are probably thinking that such an island could be a base to launch operations from, but have not figured that Iran will be one step ahead and will not allow the second part of this plan to bear fruit. And so the island idea will blow up in the faces of those who signed it off, as the soldiers will effectively be hostages to be paraded on social media platforms every day while it is Iran, out of an act of decency, who will be feeding them—unless Tehran is so enraged by a strike on its energy infrastructure that it decides to kill them all to send a message to the US and Israel.

> It’s all madness. But the problem with such madness having got to this stage is that the only solution seems to be more madness. Trump, Israel, and now the UAE are all fighting fire with fire, and ironically it is the UAE—the only country in the region that had, at one point, quite cordial relations with Iran—that could have been the diplomatic conduit to finding a peaceful solution. The UAE, which has a huge Iranian community in Dubai, could have been the one country to have stopped the madness and to have brokered peace given its unique relations with both Israel and Iran, and yet it chose not to. This is the escalation trap, as Professor Bob Pape calls it, and it just took its latest victim in Abu Dhabi.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_gvfaNYE3x0