

“Operation Project Freedom” and the Shifting US Approaches Towards Iran

(Translated)

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It is noticeable that whenever the US administration fails with a particular approach, is unable to achieve its objective, or perceives its losses as outweighing its gains, it quickly changes course.

When it failed to topple the regime in Iran or subdue it into submission by assassinating the first and second tiers of leadership, and after continuing its aggression for forty days, it announced a two-week cessation, then an indefinite one, and turned to negotiations to reach an agreement with Iran, with Trump claiming that he had changed the regime.

When Trump saw that there had been no significant change in the stance of those in power, he resorted to blockading Iranian ports. However, this did not achieve the desired outcome of forcing Iran to surrender, and Iran, in fact, gained control of the Strait of Hormuz. Hundreds of huge tankers became stranded in the Gulf.

Trump did not request assistance from anyone when he began the aggression, because he is consumed by the arrogance of believing he can turn the world upside down and set the skies ablaze. However, Trump realized he was powerless against a country that possessed only a tenth of the weapons he had. He sent out distress signals for help in controlling the Strait, but his Western allies did not respond.

So, Trump resorted to another tactic, announcing on May 4, 2026, an operation called “Operation Project Freedom,” ostensibly to assist ships from countries he described as neutral and uninvolved in the Middle East crisis, which were stranded in the Strait of Hormuz, in order to facilitate their passage.

When this failed, Trump halted the operation. On May 5, 2026, he announced its suspension, stating on Truth Social, “Based on the request of Pakistan and other Countries, the tremendous Military Success that we have had during the Campaign against the Country of Iran and, additionally, the fact that Great Progress has been made toward a Complete and Final Agreement with Representatives of Iran, we have mutually agreed that, while the Blockade will remain in full force and effect, Project Freedom (The Movement of Ships through the Strait of Hormuz) will be paused for a short period of time to see whether or not the Agreement can be finalized and signed.” Then on May 6, 2026, he claimed, “They want to make a deal. We’ve had very good talks over the last 24 hours, and it’s very possible that we’ll make a deal. Iran cannot have a nuclear weapon, and they won’t, and they’ve agreed to that.”

When none of the claims of Trump materialized, and Iran did not respond to his nine-point proposal, instead presenting a fourteen-point counter-proposal, he resorted to engaging in naval skirmishes with them. He said this was not a return to war, so as not to appear to be resuming hostilities, because if it were a resumption of hostilities and achieved nothing, he would have failed a second time, and would also have to seek congressional approval for war. It appears he will employ this tactic: strike and then stop.

On May 5, 2026, Secretary of State Rubio announced that the United States had ended its offensive operations against Iran and was now in a defensive posture. He stated that Operation Epic Wrath had concluded, as President Trump had informed Congress. “The operation is over. Epic Fury, as the president notified Congress, we’re done with that stage of it. We’re now on to this Project Freedom,” he said. He added, “it’s to rescue like almost 23,000 civilians from 87 different countries that are trapped inside of the Gulf and left for dead in the Persian Gulf by this Iranian regime... They’re isolated, they’re starving, they’re vulnerable, and at least ten sailors have already died as a result of this – civilian sailors.” He

called on Iran to come to the negotiating table and accept American terms, noting that US envoys Witkoff and Kushner were continuing to work toward a diplomatic solution. He stated that “As far as a negotiation is concerned, I think the President’s been clear that part of the negotiation process has to be not just the enrichment, but what happens to this material that’s buried deep somewhere that they have – still have access to if they ever wanted to dig it out. That has to be addressed. And that’s being addressed in the negotiation.”

On May 1, 2026, Trump informed the leaders of the House of Representatives and the Senate that offensive operations against Iran had ended, following pressure from Congress to seek authorization to continue the war, which had entered its third month. He affirmed his compliance with a law stipulating that the president must obtain authorization from the legislative branch before deploying troops for more than 60 days.

When Iran did not respond and refused to resume negotiations for an agreement, he returned to threatening and announced on May 9, 2026, a project he called “Project Freedom Plus,” which he did not elaborate upon. However, US officials stated that it included increasing the US military presence in the Gulf, tightening the naval blockade on Iranian ports, and enhancing response operations in the Strait of Hormuz. It was reported that the previous version of Project Freedom was limited to sending a small number of warships to escort commercial oil tankers and deployed approximately 15,000 troops and 100 aircraft. It only partially succeeded in saving some ships because it was met with Iranian threats.

On May 6, 2026, the American website Axios quoted a Pakistani source as saying that the United States and Iran were close to agreeing on a one-page memorandum to end the war. The agreement includes Iran's commitment to suspend uranium enrichment, the United States agreeing to lift its sanctions, the release of billions of dollars of frozen Iranian funds, and both sides lifting restrictions on passage through the Strait of Hormuz.

This means Trump is compelled to reach an agreement with Iran because resuming hostilities requires congressional approval, which is not guaranteed, and because the outcome of renewed fighting is also uncertain, as he has already tried and failed. Similarly, his plan to rescue the ships stranded in the Gulf requires considerable time to succeed and is fraught with risks. It is noticeable that Trump wants to secure quick, profitable deals, thus measuring political action against his business dealings, and this is the secret to his downfall.

Changing tactics is a good thing, but changing them frequently is not commendable. Instead, it indicates confusion and a lack of in-depth and informed analysis of the situation and its potential outcomes. It is like someone floundering without a plan, saying, ‘Let's try this method, and if it doesn't work, we'll try another,’ and so on. This undermines trust in those who devise strategies, because a strategy must be designed to achieve a goal after thorough study, not improvised. This indicates that America is not as formidable as many fear it is, and that defeating it is possible. This will happen, by the Permission of Allah (swt), when the Khilafah Rashidah (Rightly Guided Caliphate) on the Method of the Prophethood is established, and when there is a sincere, aware, and resolute political leadership, like that of Hizb ut Tahrir.

Meanwhile, the rulers of Pakistan, who are oblivious to the value and the actual potential of their country, which is not intrinsically dependent on America, are attempting to rescue it from its predicament. They are acting as intermediaries and messengers, eager to serve their master Trump so that he can escape his predicament and implement his projects in the region. Instead of siding with him, declaring their independence from America, working towards the unification of Muslims and their lands, and handing over ruling authority to Hizb ut Tahrir so that America can experience what the Khaleefah (Caliph) Umar (ra) imposed on Persia and Rome as experiences, they are failing to do so.