

# Project Freedom: another Trump humiliation

The Grayzone's Max Blumenthal and Wyatt Reed on the immediate failure of Trump's "Project Freedom" to open up the Strait of Hormuz. ||| The Grayzone ||| Find more reporting at <https://thegrayzone.com> Support our original journalism at Patreon: <https://patreon.com/grayzone> Facebook: <https://facebook.com/thegrayzone> Twitter: <https://twitter.com/thegrayzonenews> Instagram: <https://instagram.com/thegrayzonenews> Minds: <https://minds.com/thegrayzone> Mastodon: <https://mastodon.social/@thegrayzone> #TheGrayzone

## #Max

And this was, uh, yesterday. I mean, here's the ship being taken out, a tanker, another tanker burning. This was immediately after Trump announced Project Freedom on Sunday because the markets were going to open and he wanted to lower the price of Brent crude. And now oil is back up again, well over 100 a barrel. He lowered it momentarily, and you know, there's a stock market wipeout. And then here's—this is the dump, the Trump administration. This is like their receptacle: Barak Ravid, former Israeli reservist. Steve Witkoff just has this guy on the phone all the time. I don't know if he has time to eat cereal for breakfast when Steve Witkoff is constantly leaking to him.

The new Hormuz initiative will not necessarily include U.S. Navy ships, according to two U.S. officials. Maybe he got Kushner on the line too. One of the officials said U.S. Navy ships will be in the vicinity in case they need to prevent Iran's military from attacking commercial ships moving through the strait. Well, it looks like they didn't prevent that attack. The official said the U.S. Navy is going to provide commercial ships with information on the best maritime lanes in the strait, especially when it comes to using lanes that were not mined by the Iranian military.

So... basically, the U.S. CENTCOM exists to provide advice on where the mines are. But there have been reports that Iran has even lost track of some of its mines. Do you think if you were, I don't know, the captain of a tanker, that you would just trust the U.S. military? Oh, they said the mines are over there. Here's the safe lane through this very narrow strait, like 23 kilometers across. I'm going to take my chances. And by the way, all Iran has is mines. It doesn't have fast boats. It doesn't have anti-ship missiles. I'll just ignore the incoming missile fire. Sounds like a plan.

## #Wyatt Reed

Very questionable idea. And apparently these captains need to check not the CENTCOM page, but the Talking Israeli Parrot page — you know, Barak Ravid's Twitter profile — because I guess he's a more reliable barometer for what's actually happening in the White House than CENTCOM itself. No, it's absurd. The idea that any rational human being, let alone the captain of a ship, would intentionally plunge themselves through this gauntlet is ridiculous. And I think it was actually, if I'm

not mistaken, there's a quote in this Wall Street Journal article that says exactly that by a captain of a ship who pointed out that, you know, I think — I'm not sure if we have this Wall Street Journal — yeah, if you pull that article up, there's a... well, it might not actually be in that one. That might be the condensed version.

But there was a quote by a ship captain saying that this was totally absurd — the idea that we're going to go along with this — and that by being escorted by U.S. naval forces, we actually make ourselves more of a target, which is true. Iran would have every incentive to blow up both the ship itself and any kind of military ship that was escorting it. Now, Trump made it very clear just a few hours later — or the Trump administration did, rather — that there would be no escort, that they, "You guys are on your own. You're welcome to take our advice about, you know, our best guess as to where these mines might be, but we're not going to do any heavy lifting for you." Which is wise. You know, why would they risk their lives plunging headfirst through this incredibly dangerous strait? Much better to get some gullible moron to do it instead and, you know, find out where the mines are that way.

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It turns out that the Trump administration is not playing 13-dimensional chess, that they actually have no strategy, and they're just managing the chaos they unleashed with this insane war, which they fought — which they are fighting — for Israel, as they've acknowledged on the White House website most recently, and that Iran is now claiming to have fired warning missiles at a U.S. destroyer and possibly even hit the U.S. destroyer, and CENTCOM is in full denial mode. This is Iran's footage of warning shots fired at U.S. destroyers — missiles, rockets, and drones.

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So like, where could this possibly lead except more pointless conflict in which the U.S. will not achieve any military objectives, and the Gulf states will continue to get hammered, and the global economy will spiral into chaos? Project Freedom is something that Trump devised flying — he didn't devise it — authorized flying — just flying blind. I know who devised it. It was the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies, which we should probably call the Foundation for the Destruction of whatever's left of our democracy.

This Israeli front group in Washington also devised Trump's naval blockade, which is destroying the global economy and is supposed to be blockading the Strait of Hormuz, which has led us back into conflict because Trump was getting antsy and declared that Iran's terms were unacceptable because they're unacceptable to the Israelis who are controlling this entire situation. So I don't see how this leads anywhere but toward conflict. I've seen some warn this could lead to a Gulf of Tonkin-like false flag attack, but why would that even matter? Let's say the U.S. says, oh, Iran hit our destroyer. Well, Iran would be happy to take credit for that. They're not afraid of further conflict. They're not trying to avoid it. They have the initiative, and they have the upper hand. They have the cards.

## **#Wyatt Reed**

Yeah, I mean, you're right. And Operation Freedom, emphasis on dumb, seems to point in exactly this direction. And as you pointed out, the strategy appears to be getting dictated from Tel Aviv. And this is something that multiple high-level Iranian officials have expressed to me, that it's difficult to negotiate with the White House, given that they appear to be an Israeli proxy. How can you separate between the American interest and the Israeli interest, when the American interest seems to have so slavishly subverted itself to the Israeli interest, when you have people like Jared Kushner and Steve Witkoff negotiating on behalf of whom?

No one seems to know. Whose interests do they represent? It's a very legitimate question. And, you know, from the Iranian perspective, there's very little to be gained by negotiating with these people. And as we can see by their actions over the past 12 hours, it seems preferable from their perspective to just continue with hostilities rather than engage in some kind of negotiating charade in which every time they try to negotiate in good faith, they're getting bitten in response. And so there's really nothing to be gained by doing so. The only thing from their perspective that's left is to speak in military terms.

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Yeah, since you brought up, you know, the U.S. negotiating team, Steve Witkoff has just added Nick Stewart from the Foundation for Defense of Democracies, which was founded to defend Israel's interests in Washington and is an Israeli intelligence cutout. So basically, he added an advisor to help him articulate what he already believes, which is what Israel wants.