

**FREE EXPRESSION**

A Daily Newsletter From WSJ Opinion

ABOUT FREE EXPRESSION

GET FREE EXPRESSION IN YOUR INBOX

PROGRESSIVISM DESTI

This material is distributed by American Defense International, Inc. on behalf of the Embassy of the United Arab Emirates. Additional information is available at the U.S. Department of Justice

OPINION COMMENTARY

Follow

# The U.A.E. Stands Up to Iran

This war requires a conclusive outcome—one that addresses Tehran’s full range of threats.

By Yousef Al Otaiba

March 25, 2026 12:47 pm ET



Smoke billows from Jebel Ali port after an Iranian attack in Dubai, March 1. AMR ALFIKY/REUTERS

The past 3½ weeks of war have confirmed what we have known for nearly 50 years—Iran’s revolution is a threat to global security and economic stability. We can’t let Iran hold the U.S., the United Arab Emirates and the global economy hostage. A simple cease-fire isn’t enough. We need a conclusive outcome that addresses Iran’s full range of threats: nuclear capabilities, missiles, drones, terror proxies and blockades of international sea lanes.

Forty miles away, the U.A.E. stands on the front line of this conflict. Iran has launched more than 2,180 missiles and drones at the Emirates, far more

than at any other country. We have one of the world's most effective defense shields and intercept more than 95% of these attacks.

Beyond our borders, Iran is striking airports, seaports and energy infrastructure. It is blockading energy shipments and supplies for fertilizer and manufacturing and threatening theme parks and cultural sites worldwide through its proxy network.

We have hardened our infrastructure and built an oil pipeline to bypass the Strait of Hormuz. But the region needs a coordinated effort to reopen this vital passage and restore energy supplies to global consumers.

This isn't a war we wanted. Until hours before the first strike, Emirati officials undertook intensive diplomatic efforts from Tehran to Washington. We made clear to the Iranians that in the event of a war, U.A.E. territory and airspace wouldn't be used for strikes on Iran. We knew we would be Iran's first choice of targets. Not only because we are so near, but because we are so different. The U.A.E. is a modern, progressive, prosperous Muslim society that delivers for its people. We empower women and welcome all faiths. The U.A.E. is the argument Iran can't win, the idea it can't accept.

The U.A.E. will endure. We will absorb this shock and accelerate economic diversification with new initiatives in artificial intelligence, renewable energy, life sciences and tourism. This includes the world's largest data center complex, a new Guggenheim Museum and the Middle East's first Disney theme park.

S&P Global Ratings reaffirmed the Emirates' AA/A-1+ sovereign credit rating, citing our fiscal depth, diversified growth engines and proven ability to protect investments, even in crisis. Our airlines, Etihad and Emirates, are restoring schedules and resuming flights to the U.S.

We are equally committed to our investment plans in the U.S. Our \$1.4 trillion commitment is firm. The stronger our economic ties to America, the stronger both nations become—and the clearer our message to those who seek to destabilize the region.

Iran's nuclear capabilities have been degraded. Its proxies have been weakened. More needs to be done to remove the missile and drone threats. And we are ready to join an international initiative to reopen the strait and keep it open.

We aren't asking the U.S. to carry the full burden. We are defending our people, protecting regional stability and global prosperity, and demonstrating that real alliances are built on cooperation and contribution, not dependency.

We want Iran as a normal neighbor. It can be reclusive and even unwelcoming, but it can't attack its neighbors, blockade international waters, or export extremism. Building a fence around the problem and wishing it goes away isn't the answer. It would simply defer the next crisis.

*Mr. Otaiba is the U.A.E. ambassador to the U.S.*

---

This material is distributed by American Defense International, Inc. on behalf of the Embassy of the United Arab Emirates. Additional information is available at the U.S. Department of Justice

---