

# Don't Pull Back from the Middle East

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Apr 16, 2019

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS



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Robert Satloff is executive director of The Washington Institute, a post he assumed in January 1993.



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**Safeguarding America's widely agreed interests in the Middle East requires a substantial presence, as does the region's tendency to export insecurity.**

**T**he following is an excerpt from a Foreign Affairs debate on how far the United States should go in withdrawing from the Middle East. ***The full debate is available on the publisher's website.***

**<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/middle-east/2019-04-16/commitment-issues>**

Mara Karlin and Tamara Cofman Wittes argue that because the Middle East matters less to the United States than it did 20 years ago, the region should receive less attention and fewer resources. "Pulling back, however, is the devil we don't know, and so everyone instinctively resists this position," they note. In fact, pulling back is a devil we know all too well—the United States is already well into executing the pullback they fear American leaders will resist. This should be cause for concern because the authors are wrong about something else, too: that the Middle East matters so much less than it once did that the United States can be indifferent about what happens there. In fact, the potential for state-on-state conflict is higher today than at any point in the last two decades... ❖

*Foreign Affairs*

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