

# What Trump Means by 'America First'

by [Dennis Ross \(/experts/dennis-ross\)](#)

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## ABOUT THE AUTHORS



[Dennis Ross \(/experts/dennis-ross\)](#)

Dennis Ross, a former special assistant to President Barack Obama, is the counselor and William Davidson Distinguished Fellow at The Washington Institute.



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## In a world where major threats require help from partners, uncertainty about U.S. leadership does not make America safer.

**P**resident Trump believes that multinational institutions and agreements do nothing for America, and that alliances are encumbrances. But when friends and partners believe they are on their own, they will either act unilaterally, in a way that may not be well-considered, or feel they must make suboptimal deals with those who threaten them. The expected U.S. retreat from Syria now forces Riyadh to confront such a dilemma. If the Saudis believe Russia can manipulate Iranian threats against them by offering mafia-style “protection,” they may feel unable to withstand Russian pressure to cut oil production significantly to drive up the price...

**[Read the full article on the Wall Street Journal website. \(https://www.wsj.com/articles/what-trump-means-by-america-first-11546992419\)](https://www.wsj.com/articles/what-trump-means-by-america-first-11546992419)** ❖

*Wall Street Journal*

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