

President Trump's Gulf Trip: Economic Dealmaking on Day One

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

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In this second of several daily videos from Washington Institute scholars, Ambassador Dennis Ross reviews activity on the first day of President Trump's May 2025 trip to the Gulf region.

President Trump has arrived in Saudi Arabia. He was welcomed by the crown prince, he had a series of meetings, he went to a number of sites. He also visited and spoke with the Saudi Investment Forum.

All this, I think, was quite consistent with his purpose in going. This was not a geopolitical visit. This is not a security architecture visit. This is a visit about American business. This is a visit about investments in the kingdom for American companies and Saudi investments in the United States. All this is designed to show the president puts America first, especially in terms of the economy. We will see something similar in the other stops. We know from today that a \$142 billion set of projects for defense were signed. We are hearing talk about \$600 billion worth of projects over time, over the life of the administration that will be concluded.

Again, this will be reflected in other stops in Qatar and in the UAE. I suspect one other thing we may see. There may yet be another hostage deal that gets concluded before the end of this trip. And it's worth noting as well, that the president did, in a speech, reflect his basic philosophy.

He said, we're not there to preach the way other administrations have. We're not there to intervene militarily the way other administrations have. And the region itself does best when the region is left to its own devices. ❖

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