

U.S. Policy toward a Weak Assad

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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Bashar al-Assad's rule of Syria has been characterized by vacillation and a constant pattern of miscalculation. Whether his regime can survive its most profound error and the potential loss of its control of Lebanon remains to be seen. For now, U.S. policy, while emphasizing the need for full implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1559 to withdraw all foreign forces from Lebanon, should avoid engaging with the Syrian leadership before its future becomes clearer. In the meantime, the United States should also engage with Syria's neighbors in discrete contingency discussions to deal with the possible regional consequences of Syrian instability.

In 24 years of dominating Syria, Bashar's father, the late Syrian president Hafiz al-Assad, never put himself in such a precarious political position. Over the years, I spent countless hours with Hafiz al-Assad negotiating the smallest details of the Middle East peace process....

Read the full text (http://www.twq.com/05summer/docs/05summer_ross.pdf) of the article in PDF format, available from the Washington Quarterly website. The Quarterly is a publication of the Center for Strategic and International Studies. ❖

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