

Never Trust a Politician

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One of my more persistent critics on this site asked, last week, why I might believe anything the current president says — considering all the lies.

For reasons of decorum I won't repeat his exact wording.

The odd thing about the comment was not the vulgarity, though (unfortunately). It was the idea that I was relying upon belief in Donald Trump's veracity. The whole point of my commentary regarding Trump's handling of trade and foreign policy was to read between some lines.

I try never to believe anything . . . er, *everything* . . . any politician says.

In Donald Trump's case, though, there are lies and there are fictions and there are exaggerations. And corkers . . . and "negotiating gambits."

In Donald Trump's case, though, there are lies and there are fictions and there are exaggerations. And corkers . . . and "negotiating gambits." Separating the wheat from the chaff from the grindstone is not always easy.



Based not only on some of what he says, but also on results-thus-far from the EU negotiations, Trump's idea of "fair trade" appears to be *multilateral free trade*. But he has chosen a bizarre method to get there: the threat of high-tariff protectionism — which in the past has led to *multilateral protectionism*, not free trade.

Trump sees everything as a contest. Trade isn't a contest as such. It's win-win. But trade negotiations *are* contests. And Trump's game of chicken is dangerous.

Regarding foreign policy generally, though, he seems to be playing a more familiar game: *we can outspend everybody*. The recent increase in Pentagon spending is bigger than Russia's annual military budget!

So, who pays? Americans in

1. *higher taxes* and
2. the consequences of *massive debt*, as well as in
3. the *higher prices* from his tariffs.

That's awfully daring of him. For us.

This is Common Sense. I'm Paul Jacob.