

Fears of 'What's Next?' Will Influence Iran's—and the World's—Reactions

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

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If the United States signals its readiness to do more militarily while also considering compromise, it could spur other governments to apply more effective collective pressure on Tehran.

As the Iranians decide how to respond, Supreme Leader Khamenei understands the real danger of a direct shooting war with America, and he will seek to avoid it. His challenge will be doing enough to show that Iran is exacting a serious price for Soleimani's killing without triggering a more direct war with the U.S. military on Iran itself. We should expect a wide spectrum of actions that could be spaced over the coming months, including: renewed pressure for all U.S. forces to leave Iraq; terror attacks on soft American targets, symbols or officials in the Middle East and internationally; and proxy use of drones, cruise missiles or rockets to hit oil facilities in Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait. There will also be a desire to wreak revenge on President Trump...

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