West’s Weakness Led Putin into Ukraine—and Other Enemies Are Looking for Similar Signs

by Dennis Ross (/experts/dennis-ross)

Apr 8, 2022

Also published in The Hill

Moscow has provided a wake-up call about how actors like Iran interpret habitual demonstrations of U.S. inaction.

The Biden administration’s effective mobilization of the Europeans to raise the costs to Russia is a reminder that we can lead others when there are fundamental challenges to the rules that we want to guide international behavior. But it also is a reminder that we remain extremely careful when it comes to the use of force. If we want others who are prepared to challenge international or regional norms to know they will pay a price that matters to them, they must know they risk triggering American hard power against them. In the Middle East—where Iran directly and through its proxies has been attacking bases where Americans are present in Iraq and Syria, striking Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, and promoting terrorism against Israel—our responses have been very limited, and Iran shows little fear of us...

Read the full article on the Hill website. (https://thehill.com/opinion/national-security/3262351-wests-weakness-led-putin-into-ukraine-and-other-enemies-are-looking-for-similar-signs/)

This article was written under the auspices of The Washington Institute’s Diane and Guilford Glazer Foundation Program on Great Power Competition and the Middle East.

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.

RECOMMENDED
The Popular Mobilization Forces in Iraq: A Political Bargaining Chip?

Apr 8, 2022
Mohanad Faris
(policy-analysis/popular-mobilization-forces-iraq-political-bargaining-chip)

How the War in Ukraine Impacts Proxies in Syria

Apr 7, 2022
Omar Abu Layla
(policy-analysis/how-war-ukraine-impacts-proxies-syria)

Defense Minister Benny Gantz Discusses Israel's Strategic Challenges

April 11, 2022, starting at 11:00 a.m. EDT (1500 GMT)
Benny Gantz
(policy-analysis/defense-minister-benny-gantz-discusses-israels-strategic-challenges)

TOPICS
- Great Power Competition
- Military & Security
- U.S. Policy

REGIONS & COUNTRIES