

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

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

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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. \(https://thehill.com/opinion/national-security/3262351-west-weakness-led-putin-into-ukraine-and-other-enemies-are-looking-for-similar-signs/\)](https://thehill.com/opinion/national-security/3262351-west-weakness-led-putin-into-ukraine-and-other-enemies-are-looking-for-similar-signs/)

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