The True Promise of Joe Biden’s Middle East Trip

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It is no exaggeration to say that the visit represents a transformation of Washington’s regional approach—including a rethink of the “pivot.”

Vladimir Putin’s decision to invade Ukraine has not only changed the security landscape in Europe, it has also fundamentally altered the way the Biden administration views geopolitical realities internationally. Without Putin’s invasion, it is doubtful that the president would have made a trip to Saudi Arabia and met with the crown prince. This trip was about more than near-term oil production. It reflected a deeper recognition that the Middle East, and key states in it, are important in the longer-term competition with the Russians and Chinese. It also reflected Washington’s understanding that many leaders within the region had grave doubts about America’s staying power, and thus, there was an acute need to re-establish the credibility of our commitment to securing our interests and friends in the area. Given where the Obama and Trump administrations were on the high cost of deepening engagement in the Middle East, it is no exaggeration to say that the trip represents a transformation of Washington’s approach to the region. No longer are we talking about a pivot away from it...

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