

# Russia Uses Middle Eastern Ties to Mitigate Isolation

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Anna Borshchevskaya is a senior fellow at The Washington Institute, focusing on Russia's policy toward the Middle East.



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**By taking largely ambivalent stances on the Ukraine war, states in the region have helped ease the effects of international sanctions against Moscow.**

**S** yrian President Bashar al-Assad plans to visit Moscow in mid-March to ask for additional assistance, the Vedomosti newspaper reported yesterday. Syria has been Russia's central 'project' in the Middle East for more than a decade, but Moscow uses diplomatic and trade connections with many other regional states to sidestep its international isolation. They are mostly ambivalent about Russia's war in Ukraine but reluctant to make a definitive choice between Moscow and Western powers. Countries across the region will continue to engage with Russia on trade and diplomacy. One key partnership, with Iran, will grow stronger, with implications for the war effort in Ukraine but without Moscow letting this undermine its engagement with Gulf states...

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