

Moscow and the Middle East

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Whatever course Iran and the wider Middle East may take following the war, Russia is well positioned for the aftermath.

No matter when and how the war in Ukraine ultimately ends, an aggressive Russia will remain a challenge for the United States and the broader West. In December 2025, NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte said as much in his speech before the Munich Security Conference. “We are Russia’s next target,” he warned; “NATO’s own defenses can hold for now but with its economy dedicated to war, Russia could be ready to use military force against NATO within five years.” Yet the challenge Russia poses is not confined to the European continent. Despite the mounting costs and international isolation incurred by its aggression against Ukraine, Russia’s government has articulated a global vision and increasingly positioned itself as a major geopolitical player in various global theaters. In this calculus, the Middle East figures prominently...

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