

# The U.S. Makes Crises in Ukraine and Syria Worse by Not Planning for Them

by [Michael Singh \(/experts/michael-singh\)](/experts/michael-singh)

Mar 2, 2014

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS



[Michael Singh \(/experts/michael-singh\)](/experts/michael-singh)

Michael Singh is the Lane-Swig Senior Fellow and managing director at The Washington Institute.



Articles & Testimony

**Russia's incursion into Ukraine serves as a reminder of something policymakers have learned and forgotten many times over: geopolitics is not dead yet.**

**A**s the United States tries to determine how to respond to Russia's intervention in Crimea -- perhaps the most pressing foreign policy dilemma of Barack Obama's presidency -- another question hovers over the proceedings: Why didn't we see this coming? When I served on the National Security Council staff, the meetings I looked forward to the least were contingency planning sessions. With so much happening in the world that demanded an immediate response, it seemed almost indulgent to engage in hypothetical debates over how to respond to events that had not yet happened, and might not ever. But contingency planning is a critical step in the policymaking process. It forces one to think not merely of how to respond to events of the day but also to extrapolate several moves ahead and consider the likely implications for U.S. interests as those events unfold.

Few foreign policy failures have been so acute lately as the failure to think ahead and plan for contingencies. Many of the crises we are grappling with were foreseeable...

[Read the full article on the Washington Post website. \(http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/the-us-makes-crises-in-ukraine-and-syria-worse-by-not-planning-for-them/2014/03/02/f844fb5a-a221-11e3-a5fa-55f0c77bf39c\\_story.html\)](http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/the-us-makes-crises-in-ukraine-and-syria-worse-by-not-planning-for-them/2014/03/02/f844fb5a-a221-11e3-a5fa-55f0c77bf39c_story.html)

Call ()

Send SMS ()

Add to Skype ()

You'll need Skype CreditFree via Skype

## RECOMMENDED

### BRIEF ANALYSIS

#### Unpacking the UAE F-35 Negotiations

Feb 15, 2022

◆  
Grant Rumley

(/policy-analysis/unpacking-uae-f-35-negotiations)



### ARTICLES & TESTIMONY

#### How to Make Russia Pay in Ukraine: Study Syria

Feb 15, 2022

◆  
Anna Borshchevskaya

(/policy-analysis/how-make-russia-pay-ukraine-study-syria)



### BRIEF ANALYSIS

#### Bennett's Bahrain Visit Further Invigorates Israel-Gulf Diplomacy

Feb 14, 2022

◆  
Simon Henderson

(/policy-analysis/bennetts-bahrain-visit-further-invigorates-israel-gulf-diplomacy)

### TOPICS

U.S. Policy (/policy-analysis/us-policy)

### REGIONS & COUNTRIES

Syria (/policy-analysis/syria)

