

Articles & Op-Eds

Why Soleimani's Killing Is a Gift to Vladimir Putin

[Dennis Ross](#)

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Both Trump and Khamenei need an off-ramp from the latest crisis, and Putin could well become the intermediary.

The targeted killing of Qasem Soleimani is a potential game-changer in the Middle East. Vladimir Putin certainly sees it that way. Within days, he had rushed to Damascus, Syria—not to shore up Bashar al-Assad or tighten Moscow's grip there but to show that Russia remains a central player and cannot be relegated to the sidelines. Putin draws much of his legitimacy at home from his apparent success at restoring Russian power on the world stage. His effectiveness at boosting the country's international prominence counts for a lot to a people who felt humiliated when the Soviet Union collapsed and America emerged as the world's dominant power...

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