Twitter Thread by Benjamin Wittes



Benjamin Wittes
@benjaminwittes

For the benefit of anyone who is actually confused, rather than shilling for Putin, I do not believe in US military involvement in the conflict in Ukraine and have never advocated anything of the kind—much less for the US engaging in forcible regime change in Russia.

The tweet in question came in the context of a long series of tweets I have been assembling over the past several days of Russian and Belorussian protests opposing the war and demanding change. https://t.co/dqb1XmD2Mi

> Regime change: Russia.
>
> — Benjamin Wittes (@benjaminwittes) February 27, 2022

It came in the context of a series of actions by Western governments—which I support wholeheartedly—to isolate Russia in non-military fashions and support the international order.

My point was that it's hard for me to imagine unwinding these actions entirely while Putin was still in power. Rather, as many other people are saying—including Russians speaking in Russian—the regular order cannot return while Putin remains: https://t.co/PNa4M7Ksrc

> @Leonid_Gozman: "\u0412\u043b\u0430\u0434\u0438\u043c\u0438\u0440 \u041f\u0443\u0442\u0438\u043d \u0443 \u0432\u043b\u0430\u0441\u0442\u0438, \u043c\u0438\u0440\u0430 \u043d\u0435 \u0431\u0443\u0434\u0435\u0442. \u0415\u0433\u043e \u043e\u0442\u0441\u0442\u0430\u0432\u043a\u0430 \u2013 \u043d\u0435\u0438\u0437\u0431\u0435\u0436\u043d\u043e\u0435 \u0443\u0441\u043b\u043e\u0432\u0438\u0435 \u0443\u0441\u043b\u043e\u0432\u0438\u0435 \u043f\u0440\u0435\u043a\u0440\u0430\u0449\u0435\u043d\u0438\u044f \u043f\u0440\u0435\u0434\u043e\u0441\u0442\u0430 \u0432 \u0422\u0440\u0435\u0442\u044c\u044e \u041c\u0438\u0440\u043e\u0432\u043e\u0439."
>
> — Anders \xc5slund (@anders_aslund) February 27, 2022

Does anyone, for example, really think that Germany is going to say, as soon as the Ukraine conflict ends, "Oh, that 2 percent GDP on defense stuff? Never mind!"

Russia hands knew exactly what I meant: https://t.co/HyxPVdA9kt

> This has to be the policy now
>
> — Dr Alina Polyakova (@apolyakova) February 27, 2022

Most of my Twitter followers did too, I'm sure. A few people were confused and I tried to engage with them politely about what I was and wasn't saying. Thanks to them for the engagement and responses: https://t.co/zRsDBd5zMa

> Don\u2019t think it\u2019s wise to signal existential threat to country with vast army and nuclear weapons. https://t.co/JS7sMign4O
>
> — Murtaza Hussain (@MazMHussain) February 27, 2022

But the tweet did not blow up among those who actually follow me. It blew up among people who do not—many of them Putin's stooges of the right and left: https://t.co/LLucKURBMi

> It is remarkable how Putin apologists don\u2019t like my tweet suggesting that he should not be president of Russia any more. https://t.co/PHQEu6sEHy
>
> — Benjamin Wittes (@benjaminwittes) February 27, 2022

And I do not engage with the Kremlin's useful idiots.
I am appending this thread to the original tweet so that nobody will be actually confused about what I do and do not believe and advocate.
If you hear anyone suggesting that I am warmongering, that person is simply lying.

I have nothing further to say on this subject.