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## SETBACKS IN UKRAINE WAR DIMINISH RUSSIA'S CLOUT WITH REGIONAL ALLIES

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The Washington Post (30 November 2022)

Robyn Dixon

Russias war on Ukraine, and its failure so far to subjugate its smaller neighbor, has exposed President Vladimir Putins weakness to other smaller neighbors, including Central Asian nations long viewed by Moscow as part of its rightful sphere of ex-Soviet influence.

The result □ polite but obvious snubs in recent months from Kazakhstan to Tajikistan □ marks a regional realignment that will only sharpen as international sanctions, a global shift away from fossil fuels, and deepening political isolation erode Russias economic power.

Kazakhstans shift is the most significant. The sprawling Central Asian oil power has deepened ties to China, Turkey and Europe, and wooed hundreds of Western companies that exited Russia in response to the Kremllins toxic war, sending Moscow an unmistakable message. Kazakhstan has also served as a way station for tens of thousands of Russian men fleeing military conscription.

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