

Russia could be preparing new challenge for West in Mediterranean, former Israeli envoy warns

Moscow recently held a major Mediterranean military exercise; Jerusalem's situation is a "very difficult challenge," says former Israeli Ambassador to Russia and Ukraine Zvi Magen.

By Yaakov Lappin

(February 25, 2022 / JNS) Russia could be preparing an option to challenge the West and NATO in the Mediterranean and Middle East as a means of opening a new global hotspot, former Israeli Ambassador to Russia and Ukraine **Zvi Magen** has told JNS.

Magen noted a large-scale naval and air exercise held by the Russian military in the eastern Mediterranean in recent days, which saw long-range nuclear-capable bombers and fighter jets carrying hypersonic missiles Russia's Hmeimim airbase in Syria for massive naval drills in the region amid soaring tensions with the West, according to a report last week by *Military Times*.

"They are in the Mediterranean training and this could form a challenge for NATO's underbelly. This creates all kinds of problems and a new front against the West in the Middle East," said Magen, who also served in Israel Defense Forces Military Intelligence, and is a senior research fellow at the **Institute for National Security Studies** in Tel Aviv. "Russia could be preparing an option for regional activity beyond eastern Europe."

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