

The Ukraine-Russia conflict echoes loudly in the Middle East

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS: Ukraine is not far from the Middle East, just across the Black Sea from Turkey, and Russia is present in the region in a massive way.

By Herb Keinon / Feb. 24, 2022

The ripples of Thursday's Russian invasion of Ukraine will be felt far and wide. But, for a number of reasons, these ripples – more like battering waves – are likely to strike Israel and the Mideast with greater intensity than other parts of the world.

[...]

The third reason the ripples from this conflict will be felt here stronger than in other parts of the world is that the Russians could use this region to apply pressure on the US and the West.

Or, in the stark words of **Zvi Magen**, who has served various stints as Israel's ambassador to Russia, Ukraine and – before that – as the head of the Nativ liaison bureau inside the Prime Minister's Office dealing with the former Soviet Union – "there is a situation where Russia might just ignite the Middle East to create another crisis of its own to place pressure on the West."

Magen, a senior research fellow at the **Institute for National Security Studies** in Tel Aviv, said that recent Russian responses to purported Israeli military strikes in Syria over the last few weeks were clear signals to the West that the Russians have the ability in Syria to create turmoil.

Magen said that there was a significant outcry in the Russian media earlier this month after an alleged Israeli missile attack near Damascus. The gist of these articles, he said, was that Israel is not behaving properly, that it is allowing itself all kinds of prerogatives, and that while the West is looking at the situation in Ukraine, it is ignoring what is going on in the Mideast.

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