

Analysis: Israel Weighs Its Neutrality on Russia-Ukraine Conflict

Ksenia Svetlova
02/22/2022

Jerusalem under pressure from both Moscow and Washington on the conflict

While Western countries mull sanctions against Russia after it formally recognized the independence of two self-proclaimed republics in eastern Ukraine, Israel is busy reshaping its attitude toward current developments. Until very recently, Israel kept mum on Russian threats and their implications, refraining from taking a clear stand like other countries in the West or expressing criticism. According to some analysts, the latest statement from Foreign Minister Yair Lapid could signal a break from Israeli neutrality on Russia and Ukraine.

[...]

Zvi Magen, a research fellow at the **Institute for National Security Studies at Tel Aviv University**, who was Israel's ambassador to Ukraine from 1993 to 1997 and ambassador to Russia from 1998 to 1999, told The Media Line that what seemed to some like a light fluctuation in Lapid's approach actually reflected a policy change.

"This kind of statement is not in any way incidental. I believe that the 'narrow cabinet' ministers took and approved this decision. Let me remind you what kind of relations we have with Russia. We have agreements and understandings: They don't meddle with what we do in Syria [against Hizbullah and Iranian agents]; we don't meddle in their internal business or the situation in Ukraine," Magen said.

"But in recent weeks," he continued, "something changed. They [the Russians] changed their tone. Their rhetoric on Israel became harsher, they operate jammers and other electronic devices that cause interference with our flights, they conduct airborne drills on the [Syrian-held eastern] Golan along with Syrians.

...

For full article:

<https://themedialine.org/top-stories/analysis-israel-weighs-its-neutrality-on-russia-ukraine-conflict/>