

Israel watches warily as Russia, Iran build stronger ties

Israel is clearly concerned that Russia's criticism could move from rhetoric to action.

By [David Isaac](#)

(July 21, 2022 / JNS) Underscoring the warming ties between the two countries, Russian President Vladimir Putin traveled to Iran on Tuesday. This was the third time since the start of the year that Putin has met with his Iranian counterpart, Ebrahim Raisi. Israel is closely watching the strengthening Russian-Iranian alliance.

"We really don't know what the actual results of the meeting were, whether they signed something in the way of a real alliance," said **Zvi Magen**, senior research fellow at the Tel Aviv-based **Institute for National Security Studies (INSS)**.

"We know what they said and what they intended by the meeting. Iran and Russia have a mutual interest in presenting a united front against the West, specifically against the United States, especially as President Biden was just in the region," he told JNS. "They were presenting a counter-alliance to the one led by the United States against Iran. Whether it includes Russian military obligations, we don't know."

Israel is clearly worried about the direction of Russian diplomacy in the region. During a Cabinet meeting earlier this week, former Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett warned that Israel should take care not to neglect its relations with Russia.

"Israel has been very careful throughout the war with Ukraine. It hasn't supplied Ukraine with weapons. It hasn't taken part in sanctions against Russia," said **Magen**, who served as Israel's ambassador to Ukraine (1993-1997) and Israel's ambassador to Russia (1998-1999).

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