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Russian Policies to Counter US Dominance in Syria: Analysis of Post Arab Spring Era

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ABSTRACT

The Russian-Syrian relationship has always been a pendulum, swinging from close to distant during the last half-century. As a result, today's interpretation of the link is an uneven mix of factual judgment and sheer speculation. Russia's ambition is to maintain diplomatic prominence and its position as an international influencer. This research explains the whole situation in the light of Neorealist theory that how the international structure persuades Russia for shaping its foreign policy towards Syria. Then again, Syria is geographically most important in facilitating the Russian maritime base on its coast of the Mediterranean. This research tries to look at the strategies that Russia has been adopted to counter US hegemonic influence in the Middle East. The contemporary situation means to re-establish Russia's status as a politically influential nation in the twenty-first century.

INTRODUCTION

Russia has consistently assumed a functioning part in world legislative issues. Under the Administration of Vladimir Putin, Russia is resolved to accomplish its pride as one of the significant powers once more. The Arab Spring came about in different Civil and Proxy Wars in the center East, the Republic of Syria is one of them that endured. In line with Bashar - al Assad Russia mediated in Syria. The choice of intercession in Syria assumed a significant part in Russian legislative issues on the International Stage. Despite the presence of the U.S and different variables, Russia helped Bashar al-Assad for different reasons. Russia respects the international significance of just all Syria in the center east. In doing as such Moscow stopped all the resistance to prevailing in Syria. Russia's strategies for Syria end up being a reappearance strategy in the worldwide executive issues for Russia (Ahmad, 2020).

Russian government showed deep interest and concern in the Middle East, more specifically after Arab Spring to retain its influence after disintegration. The best geographical country that Russia found was the best place to intervene and to use against the US hegemonic influence in Syria. Therefore Russia intervenes militarily and supports the Assad government to fulfill its goals. Furthermore, to understand Russia's involvement in Syria in the post-Arab Spring era, as well as its

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intervention and backing for the Syrian government, one must first comprehend Russia's viewpoint about the root cause of civil war in Syria, what Russia thinks about the causes, on which Russia justifies its involvement. There is a contradiction in the views of the US and Russia towards the root cause of the Syrian crisis. According to the US, it was the reaction of the oppressed majority against the government of Syria, in the context of a wave of democratization. However, when we look at Russia's perspective, we can see that the crisis was seen through a complicated prism. The reasons for violence, according to Russia, are ethnic and religious diversity within Syria's people, as well as a tightly-knit army and ruling party.

The most important question is that what the Syrian crises have served for Moscow. What achievements Moscow has got upon the military intervention and supporting Syrian government. Whether Russia is there just for diplomatic reasons or it was for the broader and long-term goals which were already anticipated by the Australian Foreign minister. Moscow supporting the Syrian government has appeared the reflection of long-term goals by president Putin. Putin readily accepts all kinds of international condemnation for assistance and supportive policies for Assad only to protect its remote naval station in the city of Tartus in the eastern Mediterranean Sea, which guarantees Russia's presence in the whole region of the Middle East, and through which Russia could be a watchdog there. Russia can curb external interference in Syria's internal affairs very easily through that naval base. The naval base is also a counter-strategy that balances the stability of US hegemony in the ME (Robin Yassin-Kassab, 2016).

On uppermost of that is, Syria is a key friend of Moscow in the Middle East, and when Syrian President Bashar al-Assad requested assistance, Russia stepped in to assist Syria in a time of crisis. According to American leaders and politicians that step taken by Russia, marks its U-turn in the region of the Middle East. According to these claims, Russia was isolated during the period when Egyptian President Anwar Sadat switched his country's allegiance from Russia to the United States. However, when looking at Russia's current situation and relationships in the Middle East, it is clear that Russia is not fully re-entering the region. In the era of the cold war, Syria was a strong ally of the Soviets, and therefore reasonable for President Bashar Assad to seek help from Russia. When looking at Russia's current policy in Syria, both short-term and long-term destinations appear to drive Russia's current approach. Furthermore, Syria is an ancient friend that allows Russia to wield influence, with tens of thousands of Russians (about 100,000) exists in the Syrian state. While analyzing the immediate goals, Russia, as a dominant player, is deploying various amounts of ships and airplanes to Syria, with the primary goal of weakening pressure on the government of Syria and bringing a better political solution. Moscow also desired to terminate the civil war, which could help Europe to prepare a deal in merging its connections with Syria and address the refugee situation there (Celso, 2019).

Theoretical Framework

The best explanation to describe the reality of Russian policy is neo-realism. The main theory of International Relations is neorealist or structural realism. It aims to clarify how countries, mostly the dominant ones, interact and behave on the international ground, starting with a minimal set of assumptions. It aims to give a scientific account of the international political system. Classic realists focus just on the state and overlook the system, while Neorealists focus on both. Kenneth Waltz compares the international world to a system and claims that realists only discuss the state and neglect the structure. Also, explain how international structure influences state conduct. The state acts by the international framework (Waltz, 1959).

The behavior of states is determined by international structure, according to neorealism (Scott Burchill, 2005). In the scenario of the Russian reaction and its policies in Syria, are the physical actions of Russian perspectives. The spread of radicalism, American hegemony in the region of the Middle East, and Russia's internal security interests oblige Russia to back the government of Syria in the period of post-Arab Spring.

The study also looked at how Russia's internal political developments have influenced an aggressive international strategy that served as a key component of Putin's method for regaining legitimacy and maintaining authority. This strategy's impact on Russia's Syria deals has been widely overlooked, especially under Putin's most recent government. Taken together, these findings may shed light on why reaching a political settlement in Syria has remained elusive in recent years. Because of the multiple interfering elements discussed in this study, Russia's assessment of what it can accomplish in Syria has shifted over time.

Literature Review

Following the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Russia found itself in a position of severe vulnerability and needed to concentrate its efforts solely on the country. Because it has the world's largest Muslim population, Russia seeks excellent relations with Middle Eastern countries, whose assistance may be utilized to combat anti-Russian terrorism. Because Russia has suffered through the breakup of the Soviet Union, two Chechen wars, and a bombing attack on the Moscow metro in March 2010. These fears have prompted Russia to strengthen its southern border security. Another factor for Russia's interest in Syria is its proximity to the Mediterranean Sea. Protecting Syria involves safeguarding Russian interests in the country and future access to the area. In Tartus city on the coasts of the Mediterranean Sea, Russia had one military navy base. However, Russia got another advantage through its military involvement, it succeeded in getting access to an additional airbase in the city of Latakia, called Khmeimim (Hmeimim) (KREUTZ, 2010)

Russia, at the request of President Bashar al-Assad, granted the Russian army in Syria on 30 September 2015. Following a request for military support in Syria, Russia launched airstrikes against several militant groups opposing Bashar al-regime, Assad's marking a critical crossroads for Russia's position in the war. Russia has objected to any UN-led diplomatic or military intervention in Syria. For the first time in post-Cold War history, Russia launched a military action outside the former Soviet Union's borders. Before the intervention, Western nations were dissatisfied with Russia's diplomatic support for the Syrian regime, as well as its repeated use of its veto power in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) (Allcock, 2016).

As the world witnessed indissolubly relations between Russia and the US, the competition between the two countries is still going strong. For example, the 2008 Georgian war and Ukraine's Orange Revolution, as well as the civil war in Syria, following the uprising, becomes grounds for the clashes between both superpowers. A cold war broke out in Syria as a result of both countries' engagement. President Barack Obama wanted to detain Russia to its regional power, but the Russian military engagement in the Syrian state demonstrates that Russia wants to re-establish itself as a global player and participate in every key international decision (Pruitt, How a Five-Day War With Georgia Allowed Russia to Reassert Its Military Might, 2018)

Following a Russian-Syrian summit of January 24 in 2005, Russia declared that Moscow said that in exchange for Syria's authorization to build permanent Russian naval bases in Tartus and Latakia, it would write off the majority of Syria's debt and supply arms. The total amount that Moscow has forgiven would be over \$9.8 billion of Syria's \$13.4 billion. Closer ties with Syria, in Moscow's estimation, were a reaction to what is perceived by the foreign policy of the US (Borshchevskaya, 2016).

Russian military involvement in the Syrian crisis has generally focused on the operation's key objectives. Experts, media, lawmakers, and administrators have questioned the Russian reaction, that whether Russia is fighting for the government of Assad or ISIS and other extremist organizations in Syria. These disputes appear to be important politically, but they are often highly disrupting and don't add much to understand the Russian operation's objectives and consequences. There is so much more to understand. Experts can spend years researching Russian doctrines and dialogues by Russian officials and yet there is no one exact assumption has been made that how

Russia will react in certain scenarios. However, Russia's reactions to the Syrian conflict offer plenty of thought to comprehend Russia's strategies (Rodkiewicz, 2017).

Importance of Syria for Russia to be dominant in the region

Naval Base

Syria is Russia's latest strong Middle East Arab ally. A Russian maritime base on the Syrian Mediterranean coast of Tartus built-in 1971 has been housed in Syria. The Russian naval presence near Tartus might serve three purposes: backing for the Assad regime, the encirclement of a regional partner by NATO or Western powers, and a clear message that any movement would cause recreate the ties of the cold war between the US and Russia.

Russia regards Syria as an important piece of the terrace and has the only maritime base before the CIS countries like Tartus on the Mediterranean Sea. After Russian military bases in Cuba and Vietnam has abandoned, the only relevant geostrategic that remained was Tartus. Tartus is Syria's only place to stock and maintain on the Mediterranean coast. In winter, Russia does not have much to pay and will not lose access to hot water. Russia would need to make an enormous effort to protect its interest if it lost access to the Black Sea. Tartus was leased back to the Soviet Union in 1971, and Syria was exempt from debt in exchange for \$1.3 billion from the Soviet Union. In 1990, Russia was not allowed to have an entirely free base in Tartus as remuneration and it had not obtained customary arms supplies for Syria. Russia aimed at approaching the Black Sea, which was recently changed at a basic level following the accession of Bulgaria and Romania to NATO, and Georgia, and Ukraine. Through its naval base in the Mediterranean Sea, In addition, NATO intends to transport forces on the Azov Sea, which connects the Black Sea with Ukraine's Kerch Strait, has also encouraged Russia to increase its commitment to control the Mediterranean in Syria (Dettmer, 2021).

In 2005, the state of Romania agreed to a deal with the US to transport US Marines in the Black Sea, which was a major source of anxiety for Russia. Russia does not want NATO to have unrestricted access to the Black Sea, and by controlling the eastern Mediterranean, Russia may develop its maritime foreign policy as necessary. Since 2008, Moscow has dispatched several ships to the Mediterranean, delivering a variety of military measures. The government of Syria provides Russia with a critical opportunity to play a decisive role in regional and global critical endeavors, causing significant consternation among Turkish and Western important plans. Syria is important to Russia because it may use it to exploit the tensions between the United States and Iran, which it supports. Russia's current actions are also influenced by its financial machinations.

The most crucial thing for Russia is to secure the greatest critical trade route through the base of Tartus, and Russia's energy companies may be interested in a possible gas and oil hold along with the Syrian coast. Russian future ambitions in the Middle East are unmistakable, as continuously expanding the circle of its diplomatic and political relationships with further Middle Eastern states, including Iran and Egypt. Following the election of Abdel El-Fattah El-Sissi to Egypt's presidency in 2013, the two nations had four summits to improve affairs and retained several agreements, containing a rocket system as well. This condition harkens back to the days of former President Nasser when Moscow was a major seller of armed weaponry to the state of Egypt.

Latakia Port

The war led by the United States against ISIS captured Syria's airspace for decades but, with Russia's participation in the Syrian dispute, air space has not only been controlled by America, but it is also in partnership with Russia. Russia was already assisting Syria at the time by providing defense equipment, and it jumped into the conflict by facilitating the Syrian government through the land, air, and water. The Syrian military operation was Russia's first activity beyond its borders after the country's collapse.

Russia provided missiles to the government of Syria via Iraq and Iranian territory solely to emphasize that Iran and Iraq are their common allies. The Russian military collaborating with

Syrian forces, according to the US defense secretary, disproves Russia's claim to be combating ISIS. By destroying all opposition, Russia's main goal is to limit the west's options to Assad or ISIS. Russian airstrikes are said to be focused on areas that are a bastion of extremist powers as well as ISIS, such as Homs, Idlib, Hama, and Tartus.

Russian Strategies to Counter US Influence

US Influence in Syria

Russia is concerned about US activity in the region. The US has always been enraged by Russia's Syrian alliance, particularly, Russian use of chemical weapons in the state of Syria. Russia has consistently blocked UN resolutions against the overthrow of Bashar al Assad, president of Syria, which has enraged the United States.

"I want to make it clear to Assad and those under his command. The world is watching. The use of chemical weapons is and would be unacceptable. And if you make the tragic mistake of using these weapons, there will be consequences, and you will be held accountable." Barack Obama announced on 3rd December 2012 (Phillips, 2016).

The tension has been increased between Moscow and Washington since 2012. As tensions escalated after the US Senate rendered the Magnitsky decision in December 2012, experts of Russia have declared that a strict response will be taken to the United States in their all statement and would consider the law of Magnitsky to be an important concern. President Vladimir Putin stressed that the United States does not reserve the privilege of dealing with ethical choices that could affect Russia's legal settlement, as the United States also has problems with human rights violations, like Guantanamo and Abu Ghraib. Russia reacted to the "Magnitsky Law" by enforcing the "Dmitriy Yakovlev Law" prohibiting the American people from accepting young people stranded in Russia on December 21, 2012. The Dmitriy Yakovlev law does not only carried restriction on admission young people trapped in Russia by residents of the United States, but also on the residents of states that infringe the privileges of Russia, and further, it do not allow the actions of non-governmental organizations funded by the United States, by justifying that it would create risks for Russians interests in the country. Within the frame of that law, it would envision persons in Russia who have violated the Russian people's privileges or committed activities against Russian citizens and closed groups being barred from holding jobs in Russia (Tugce Varol Sevim).

Followed by the protest, Moscow settled for Non-Governmental Organizations to be trained externally as "remote agents". United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has worked in the Russian state for many years, and the organization is accused of facilitating governmental matters and trying to influence the political conclusion to end activities in the Russian state, particularly in the middle of September and October 2012. As a response, Russia temporarily ceased USAID drills with American spy services (Ward, 2018).

A series of incidents in January 2013 heightened relations between Russia and the United States. For example, the Jewish Chabad-Lubavitch Hassidic faction, based in the United States, has sued the Russian government over the migration of the "Schneerson Library," which was moved to Russia during World War I and has been kept in the Lenin Library since 1918, and a federal court in the United States that ruled on the issue determined that the Russian government should pay \$50,000 per citation. On the 25th of September 2002, Russian Prime Minister Dimitriy Medvedev announced that elements of the US-Russian Drug Traffic Control Agreement were signed. Russia's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Vitaly Churkin, claimed that Russia is seeking clarification on data linked to a 20-tonne weapons stockpile transferred to Libya by Qatar with US support during the height of the crises in Libya. The Russian government has announced that it will ban beef imports from the United States as of February 11th, 2013 and that this ban will last as long as feasible.

Indeed, some improvements contradict these activities in the US and Russian respective relations. In November 2012, in light of US statements, John Kerry became a favorite in the Kommersant newsprint for the post of Minister of External Affairs and further, there were statements made by an individual. Unidentified duty officer linked to Hillary Clinton is "curious and belligerent." As a result, Moscow announced that Russia wanted to forge all kinds of more pleasant relations with the United States and improve relations that had become difficult over the years. Specifically, after John Kerry deployed 4,444 people in charge of remote affairs. Tensions defying Russia could be seen as a significant element for Iran and Syria and even for the Asia-Pacific region as well.

Russia believes that in this process the post-Assad period is, as, in the case of Libya, not all of them prohibited. Russia did not put an amendment in its position in the Syria crisis, and further Russia preceded discussions with the main strategic characters on the screen for the post-Assad period. In this scenario, the strain between Moscow and Washington tends to be accepted to represent an interruption in understanding two nations of the Syrian crisis. Trenin, the administrator of the Carnegie Moscow Center, rightly points out that the main cause of the difference between Russia and others, including Turkey, the United States, and the Arab states that Moscow claims Syria must depend on Syrians themselves and all other countries to avoid intervention or sanctions against Damascus.

However, Russia has several advantages in Syria, including a naval station in Tartous, a large arms market, business ventures such as energy purchases, a partner state, with a large number of Russian inhabitants. In June 2011, Russian Deputy Ambassador to the United Nations, Alexander Pankin, declared that the current situation in Syria, despite the rising tensions and showdown, does not constitute a threat to global peace and security. Syria's local circumstances, in our perspective, could pose a genuine threat to regional security" and didn't change until today.

Russian strategies to counter the US influence in the Syrian civil war

In June 2011, Russian unimpeded international strategy began in conjunction with Alexander Pankin, Russian Associate Ambassador to the United Nations, stating that the current situation in Syria does not pose a threat to global peace and security despite the increased tension and showdown. We believe that from the local circumstances of Syria a genuine threat to the security of territory could develop and did not fit until today.

First and foremost, Russia did not trust Barack Obama's and Donald Trump's Middle East policies. They saw the United States' policies and military intervention in Syria as aimed only at destabilizing the Islamic state. Moscow has pushed Washington to play a role in Assad's party and the opposition's likely coexistence. Moscow was indulgent to the Assad regime and asked the US to treat its security operation with gentleness.

Both parties wanted their "peace models" to be the sole options for ending the Syrian conflict, and neither of the titans was willing to admit that one or both of their viewpoints on the Middle East's political puzzles could be wrong. Russia was about to interrupt because it had gotten a formal invitation, but the US perceived this as a threat and has never backed its enemy, especially in oil-rich Syria. On foreign soil, the world was seeing a power battle between two massive titans, with neither of them responsible for the consequences.

By switching the course of the Syrian common conflict and saving an old customer, Moscow made an impression on other Middle Eastern systems that it is a solid accomplice. Scarcely anybody would scrutinize that Moscow has situated itself as a significant international and military entertainer at the famous intersection of the world after many years of undisputed U.S. military predominance. Russia has situated itself as an important conversationalist to all gatherings to the district's struggles (RUMER, 2019).

Revision of Russia-Tajik Model

The Tajik model, modernized and changed by Russia for post-Soviet states' versions of civil strife, served as Russia's blueprint for Syria. According to this concept, the opposition would be able to

participate in the state's authority and even keep it during the Assad regime's transition period, and Assad would modify some measures to favor the opposition, but the opposition would stay the opposition (Rezvani, Political stability, transition and conflict: Tajikistan compared with Georgia, 2018).

The situation would be monitored by a multilateral organization, which would include Russia's veto authority, and no additional charges to the situation would be permitted. The chair for Washington in this type of global monitoring body is unavoidable, and Russia needs the US to sit alongside him and merely watch. Russia wanted a leg up on the US and sole control of Syrian territory, but America's purpose was to show the rest of the world how effective and committed the US is in defeating terrorists and "Islamic extremism." When we analyze Syrian media about identical situations that have happened before, but with new labels each time, the phrase is artificial and conflicts with most after how political exploitation has occurred in the guise of counterterrorism.

Washington, between Destabilizing and Rehabilitation

After the ceasefire initiative, Washington felt that further attention was unnecessary or unnecessary; therefore they rejected this model, as well as any other move that could potentially benefit Putin rather than Obama. The US desired to be idolized and rewarded as the good guy in the overall scenario as the arbitrator while receiving their charges as a by-product of its peacemaking and stabilizing efforts. The United States had something to stand on in the form of Russia's phony peace initiative. The US interpreted it as participation in her version of a peacekeeping mission.

Five years into Russia's tactical intercession in Syria, understanding Moscow's endgame could give basic bits of knowledge into the long-term struggle's direction, just as Russia's stance in the Middle East and past. Albeit as yet developing and subject to inner discussions, Moscow's Syria system has all the earmarks of being fixated on a "ranges of authority" model. In this model, Syria is partitioned into unmistakable domains under the influence of contending outside benefactors. This methodology acknowledges an intricate exchange of military, political, and financial force between outside entertainers Russia, Turkey, the United States, and Iran inside the unique Syrian setting (Yacoubian, 2021).

Looking back for about three decades, we can see that Obama had a past to learn from when it came to Russia. The Arab world had already been shaken by Iran-US relations, particularly the Arab-Israeli conflict, in which the US couldn't afford to take chances for the sake of Syria. With its further broad system to understand the conflict in the Syrian state on its positions, Russia's decision to mediate in Syria may thus be considered trustworthy. Russia has attempted to achieve this with the strategy of establishing contacts with the Gulf countries. Moscow has demanded and will continue to demand, that any peaceful aims in the Syrian state would be based on the Syrian state's current political system and organizations, with some force sharing between the Damascus system and the Syrian restricted components he chooses (Rezvani, Russian foreign policy and geopolitics in the Post-Soviet space and the Middle East: Tajikistan, Georgia, Ukraine and Syria, 2020).

Conclusion

The study focuses on Moscow's interests and military participation in Syria, as well as the Kremlin's efforts to reclaim regional control. Russian-Syrian relations, in particular, may be traced back to both nations' alignment during the Cold War. Furthermore, the Kremlin has always been Damascus' first partner in the arms trade. Syria has been Russia's only stand in the Mediterranean Sea since the Cold War era, and the only country where Russia has a maritime station in the port of Tartus, whereas America has multiple bases in the region of the Middle East. These outposts, of course, we're used to containing US authority. In this circumstance, strong dominating strategies are required from Russia to fulfill its interest and reestablish its position. The result of the Arab Spring's domino effect brought the Arab Spring to Syria, allowed Russia to re-establish its power in the region. Russia could no longer afford to lose its sole ally and naval base in the Middle East

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