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## The Russian stance on the Syrian crisis

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**Abstract:** The Syrian crisis has been the most decisive in determining Russia's position, particularly after Russia ensured all forms of political and military support for the Syrian regime to prevent its collapse. This was accomplished through a series of negotiations intended at fostering trust between all segments of the Syrian population. To secure its interests and influence in the region, Russia's approach is motivated by a variety of political, domestic, strategic, and economic factors. The significance of this region compels Russia to maximize not only its economic and military strength, but also its international standing as a key global player.

Key words: Russian, Syrian, stance, crisis

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The Syrian crisis has determined Russia's position the quickest compared to the other Arab Spring uprisings. Russia took the initiative early in the crisis by proclaiming its support for the Bashar al-Assad regime and asserting that Syrians should determine their own future. Russia likewise opposed any foreign intervention in the Syrian conflict. The Syrian crisis appeared to be the primary focus of Russia's foreign policy, garnering the government's utmost attention and concern.<sup>1</sup>

Russia has provided the Syrian regime with all forms of political, diplomatic, and military support, ensuring its safety from collapse. Russia has actively supported and protected the Syrian government, despite its repeated calls for dialogue, peaceful resolution, and negotiations as the premise for resolving the Syrian crisis. These calls for dialogue and peaceful resolution were consistent with President Putin's June 2016 statements at the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum, where he emphasized that Moscow's goal was not to expand President Bashar al-Assad's authority, but rather to build trust among the various Syrian factions through political negotiations.

## Chapter one

## The Russian intervention in the Syrian arena

On this basis, Russia has endeavored to provide political and diplomatic protection for the Syrian regime in international forums and United Nations institutions against resolutions proposed by Arab and Western nations to address the Syrian crisis. Russia has warned the United States and the European Union not to arm the Syrian opposition and repeat the Libyan scenario. Additionally, Russia has communicated with the Syrian opposition in an effort to convince them to initiate dialogue with the Syrian government.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Abu Mustafa, S. F. S. (2015). "The Syrian Crisis in the Context of Regional and International Power Shifts 2011-2013." Unpublished master's thesis, University of Gaza, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Gaza, p. 67.



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Zaidan, N. (2013). The Role of Russia in the Middle East and North Africa from Peter the Great to Vladimir Putin. Beirut: Dar Alarabia for Science. (1st edition). p. 70.

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These positions sparked demonstrations in several Syrian cities on September 13, 2011, under the slogan "Tuesday of Anger against Russia." Protests were held in opposition to Russia's support for the Syrian government and obstruction of international sanctions. Protesters chanted anti-Russian slogans such as "Don't kill Syrians with your positions" and "The regime must go, but the people must remain." As part of Russia's rejection of the sanctions that the Security Council intended to impose on the Syrian regime, Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov at the time warned the international community against any provocations aimed at regime change, stating that the protests should be suppressed. It was evident that Russia's stance on the Syrian crisis was substantially influenced by what Moscow perceived to be a deceitful maneuver by NATO in Libya, which used a humanitarian pretext to intervene militarily. In response, Russia declared its opposition to any international decision against Syria. President Putin stated repeatedly that Russia would not support a Security Council resolution on Syria similar to the one on Libya, and that Moscow had no desire to handle events in Syria in the same manner as the Libyan intervention, which served as the justification for military action.<sup>3</sup>

The Russian government's response to the Syrian crisis has been influenced by two major factors. First, Russia has provided the legitimate Syrian government with political support in international organizations such as the United Nations and the Human Rights Council. Second, Russia has provided military assistance to the Syrian Arab Army in its struggle against armed terrorist organizations, thwarting Western efforts to forcibly overthrow the Syrian government, as occurred in Libya.

In addition, Russia has pursued an alliance-building policy, cooperating with Iran to support the Syrian government. This partnership has contributed to the Syrian government's substantial advantage over the opposition. In contrast, the United States and its Gulf allies, notably Qatar and Saudi Arabia, have financed the opposition, resulting in the proliferation of armed groups in Syria.

The continued American support for Kurdish forces, which Turkey views as a direct challenge to its national security, has strained relations between Russia and Turkey. In spite of this, Russia was able to establish a positive relationship with Turkey by the end of 2016, transforming contentious relations into a partnership on the Syrian file.<sup>4</sup>

Russia now enjoys greater stability and power in Syria at the expense of the United States, which has lost a significant ally in the country. This policy has had a clear effect on widening the divergence between various powers in regards to the Syrian file, thereby contributing to its complexity. In addition, it functions as a clear indicator of the emergence of new power balances favoring Russia in the region.

The Russian intervention in the Syrian arena has raised several concerns, the most important of which is: Why did Russia intervene decisively in Syrian affairs to the point where it became one of the key players in the Syrian issue?

### The first demand

### The motives behind the Russian intervention in Syria

The Russian intervention in the Syrian issue was based on a combination of motives that encouraged Russia to embark on this venture to secure its interests and influence in the region, including:

#### First: the political motives

1. Consolidating Russia's international status was motivated by broad strategic concerns, with the goal of positioning the country as an active participant in global decision-making and international systems. The Syrian crisis provided Russia with an important chance to reinforce its place on the international scene, combating what it regarded as American and European negligence and underestimating of Russia's position in a variety of international issues. In response to what Moscow perceived as a strategic and economic containment by the West, Russia intervened in Syria to assert its parallel existence alongside the US and Europe, compelling rival international parties to accept a multipolar system in which Russia and China play an active role in balancing regional and global power dynamics alongside the US and influential European countries<sup>5</sup>. In a February 2007 Independence Paper, Russia highlighted

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Marwan Qublan. (2016). "The Revolution and the Struggle over Syria: Implications of the Failure in Managing the Game of Regiona Balances." Arab Policies Journal, Issue 18, January 2016, p. 29.



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Saeed, A. I. (2016). Syrian Geopolitics and the Power of Syrian Geography. Damascus: Syrian General Authority for Books. p. 37.

Al-Mustafa, H. (2015). "The War on the Islamic State After One Year of Forming the International Coalition: The Case of Syria." Arab Policies Journal, Issue 16, September 2015, p. 75.
Marwan Qublan. (2016). "The Revolution and the Struggle over Syria: Implications of the Failure in Managing the Game of Regional

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American projects to deploy missile defense systems in military bases in Alaska and California in order to seal Russia's eastern gateway. At the same time, the United States attempted to install missile systems in the Caucasus region, posing a substantial challenge to Russia's strategic nuclear force.

2. Russia's involvement in international problems including the Syrian dossier: Russia uses the Syrian war as a bargaining chip with its international opponents and competitors. It uses its clout in the Syrian crisis to negotiate and apply pressure on other issues, most notably the Ukrainian problem.

Russia hopes to gain significant political and diplomatic power by presenting itself as an advocate for minorities and an active participant in handling the rising issue. This role affords the Russians numerous opportunity to demonstrate their political and diplomatic prowess, giving them extra alternatives for efficiently addressing their political and economic challenges.

- 3. Russia's fear of revolutionary waves originates from the nature of its internal affairs, in which there is organized opposition to the ruling regime, particularly in Islamic-populated regions. There are sporadic domestic protests and demonstrations in Russia that demand more democratic freedoms. This situation makes it difficult for the Russian government to support revolutions abroad, as it could incite large-scale protests that endanger Russia's current political system. <sup>6</sup>
- 4. Russia sees its involvement in Syria as a first line of defense against the spread of Islamic movements that could threaten its borders and internal territory. There is a popular idea that the "war on terrorism" in Syria or the Caucasus regions will directly impact Russia and Syria if these movements are not contained at the Syrian front. Conflict in Syria and the Caucasus region are viewed as battlegrounds against terrorism imposed on Russia and Syria. In addition, there is growing concern in Russia due to the fact that thousands of Russian Muslims are joining Islamic movements opposing the Assad regime on the Syrian battlefield. Russia is concerned about the potential return of these militants to the Caucasus, which would pose security threats and destabilize the region.<sup>7</sup>
- 5. The Obama administration's reluctance and retreat on the Syrian issue presented Russia with a significant opportunity, which it utilized to increase its involvement in the Syrian arena. Russia capitalized on the U.S. decision to refrain from engaging in additional conflicts in the Middle East, replacing its previous policy with one that centered on reaching agreements with regional and international powers to address regional issues. In addition, the American administration's reluctance to challenge Russia's policies in the Russo-Ukrainian conflict and Russia's successful annexation of Crimea on March 18, 2014 emboldened Russia to assert its influence in the Syrian crisis and beyond.
- 6. Russia's approach to the Syrian crisis was significantly influenced by its dread of repeating the mistakes of Iraq and Libya. In the past, Russia abstained from voting on a resolution to impose a no-fly zone over Libya in the United Nations Security Council, while the United States and NATO supported the Libyan opposition, ultimately leading to the overthrow of the Gaddafi regime. Moscow feared that a resolution identical to the one passed against Libya could be passed against Syria, resulting in similar outcomes to the Libyan crisis. This could cause Russia to lose its closest allies in the region, thereby diminishing its influence even further. As a result, Russia adopted a more assertive posture towards Syria in an effort to prevent any resolution that could lead to foreign military intervention and regime change<sup>8</sup>.



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Yasser Khodr Al-Jawish. (2001). "The Non-Intervention Principle and the World Trade Liberation Agreements." Cairo, 2001, p. 58.

Khader Atwan. (2016). "Global Powers and Regional Balances." Amman: Dar Osama for Publishing and Distribution. 1st edition, p. 69.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> Nasser Zaidan. Previous source. p. 95.

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#### **Second: Internal Russian Motives**

- 1. The presence of conservative and extremist nationalist political forces is the second aspect of Russian motivations. These forces compel Russia to take a more assertive posture against the United States, its allies, and those cooperating with them, as well as those supporting the Assad regime. In addition, other Russian arms manufacturers stand to lose a client should the Assad regime collapse. These forces exercise substantial bureaucratic sway within the Russian government and parliament, the Duma and the Federation Council, compelling them to advocate for Russian support of the Assad regime.
- 2. Russia's stance towards Syria and the Middle East also has a religious component, as conservative religious trends have acquired increasing influence within the Kremlin. These tendencies are closely tied to Orthodox Christianity, and there is an effort to make religion the center of Russian national identity by incorporating religious values into Russian foreign policy. Russian President Vladimir Putin and his ally Patriarch Kirill, the head of the Russian Orthodox Church, have attempted to portray themselves as defenders of Christianity and Christian minorities in Syria. As a result, the Russian Orthodox Church has supported and endorsed the Russian government's approach to the Syrian conflict, even referring to the Syrian conflict as a "holy war.9"
- 3. In various ways, President Putin's actions have reflected his wish to increase his popularity within Russian society. The ruling elite has benefited from the motivation for military interventions abroad, which is frequently framed as safeguarding Russia's national security and national interests. This is due to the fact that it is associated with an increase in nationalistic fervor among Russian citizens and their belief in the significance of Russia's role and centrality in the international system, depicting Russia's resurgence as a significant power. The Russian ruling elite, on the other hand, portrays itself as a protector of Christians in the Middle East, citing violations against Syrian Christian citizens and clergy to justify its intervention. This narrative is supported by conservative segments in Russia and Europe, where some conservative Christian parties in countries such as Germany, Italy, and France have demonstrated comprehension and support for Russia's intervention on the grounds that it protects Christians in the East. Only a small number of armed factions in Syria, such as the Kurdish People's Protection Units and some Southern Front factions, are excluded from the Russian list of terrorist organizations, while others, such as US-supported Free Syrian Army factions, are included.
- 4. Russia's position on the Syrian crisis can be understood through the "Putin Doctrine," a set of principles Putin has articulated since assuming power in 2000. In the vanguard of these principles is the development of Russia's role in a multipolar world that is not dominated by one superpower. Putin intends to progressively restore Russia's position in Asia and the Middle East and prevent the West from marginalizing Russia's position in international relations. Putin aims to overcome the geopolitical "catastrophe" caused by the dissolution of the Soviet Union by orienting Russia's foreign policy in a clearly Eurasian manner. In accordance with its strategic interests and political principles, Russia has been supporting the Syrian government and maintaining its influence in the region as a result of these principles.

### Third: the strategic motives

1. The strategic significance of Syria: Russia calculates that Syria is of the utmost importance. Syria occupies an important geopolitical position in the Middle East, a region where global interests intersect. Syria is Russia's sole strategic foothold in the region, and it is determined to do whatever it

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> Mohammed Mohsen Abu al-Nour. (2016). "The Implications of Russian Intervention on Iran's Role in Syria." International Politics Journal, Issue 204, 2016, p. 112.



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takes to protect it. <sup>10</sup>In addition, Syria's alliance with Iran, a major Russian ally in the region, bolsters its significance. Russia views Syria as a linchpin of regional security, and it believes that a civil war there would destabilize neighboring countries and cause problems throughout the region, presenting a serious threat to regional stability.

- 2. Protecting allied regimes: The Assad regime in Syria is the only ally of Russia in the Arab region, and they have historically significant alliance relations in various political, economic, and military aspects, which are defined by a number of treaties and agreements. Russia views the Syrian regime as a strategic partner that provides it with significant advantages regarding its position and role in the Arab region, especially in comparison to the United States and the West. 11
  - The factor that justifies Russia's intervention and support for the Assad regime in facing the Syrian opposition forces aiming to overthrow it is that it means losing Russia's only ally among the Arab regimes if that were to happen.
- 3. Preserving Russian military bases, Russia maintains a naval base in Tartus and a crucial listening post in the Latakia mountains.

Russia seeks to maintain a naval presence in the Mediterranean Sea, and these two locations are its only outposts in the Middle East. The deployment of several Russian ships in open waters and Ukraine's decision Russia's options in the Mediterranean have been limited by the decision to cancel the lease on the Sevastopol base. This raises the significance of the Tartus base for Russia, as it enables them to strengthen their intervention in Syria, bolstering the Assad regime and protecting their last bastion in the region.

#### **Fourth: Economic Motivations**

In the Middle East, Syria is one of Russia's most significant Arab economic partners, particularly in the areas of trade, oil, and armaments. There are several Russian energy businesses doing business in Syria, and Russia relies heavily on Syria as an armaments market<sup>12</sup>. Beginning in 1957, Russia (then the Soviet Union) and Syria began to work together. The Soviet Union helped build 63 projects in Syria, one of the most significant of which was<sup>13</sup>:

- 1. The series of power stations on the Euphrates River and the hydroelectric complex with the Al-Baath Power Station.
- 2. The water facility with the Tishreen hydroelectric power station and the first phase of the Tishreen thermal power station.
- 3. It extends 105,000 kilometers of railways and 307,000 kilometers of power lines.
- 4. The construction of several irrigation facilities.
- 5. The Soviet Union's discovery of several oil fields in northeastern Syria.
- 6. The construction of an oil derivatives pipeline between Homs and Aleppo, with a length of 180 kilometers.
- 7. The establishment of a chemical fertilizer plant.

Therefore, Syria is a significant market for Russian products and commerce in the region.

The Syrian-Russian Joint Committee for commercial, Economic, Scientific, and Technical Cooperation, which meets annually in Damascus and Moscow on alternate years, monitors the two countries' commercial, economic, scientific, and technical cooperation. Several agreements

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup>Ibrahim Hardan Matar. (2017). "The Russian Role in the Syrian Crisis: Motives and Determinants." Journal of the University of Iraq, Issue 37, 2017, p. 104.



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup>Maher Hamdi Mohammed Ayesh. (2016). "Movements of Syrian Refugees Crossing Borders: A Study in Syrian Geography." Research Journal, Issue 106, 2016, pp. 91-97.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> Nour Al-Din Hashoud. (2016). "Geopolitics of the Syrian Crisis After the Revolution: A Study of the Transformations of Regional Actors' Roles in the Syrian Conflict." Journal of Politics and Law, Issue 16, January 2016, p. 15.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup>Youssef Mohammad Ziyad. (2018). "The Syrian Crisis (2011-2018): A Study of the Positions of Influential States." Journal of Political Trends, Issue 6, 2018, p. 34.

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encompassing various disciplines were signed between Syria and Russia during Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's official visit to Russia from January 24th to January 27th, 2005.<sup>14</sup>

During the visit of the Russian President to Damascus from 10th to 11th May 2010, the following agreements were reached:

- 1. Agreement on Scientific and Technical Cooperation.
- 2. Agreement on Cooperation in the field of Information Technology and Telecommunications.
- 3. Agreement on Cooperation in the field of Air Transport.

## The first demand The Syrian debts to Russia

Before the fall of the Soviet Union, Syria was supplied with substantial quantities of weapons and other products, resulting in a significant accumulation of debts. By 1992, Syria owed over 13 billion dollars to Russia. In an effort to resolve the Syrian debt crisis, President Bashar al-Assad's 2005 visit to Russia resulted in the signing of a joint Russian-Syrian declaration intended at strengthening bilateral friendship and cooperation. As part of this agreement, provisions were made for the settlement of Syria's outstanding debt and the former Soviet Union's loans to Syria. In this context, Russia chose to forgive 80 percent of the accumulated debt.

Russia relies on its key ally, the Syrian regime, to settle debts and carry out military transactions. Debts owed to the Soviet Union were cancelled and replaced with Syrian economic projects. As a result, Russia sees the fall of the Assad administration as a significant economic loss. Russia's continued interest in Syrian gas is also evident. The Russian company "Stroytransgas" built a gas processing plant in Homs in 2009, its largest project in Syria since the Soviet era. The goal of this effort was to generate half of Syria's electrical requirements<sup>15</sup>.

## Chapter two

## **Intervention forms (political-military)**

This study examines the forms of Russian intervention in the Syrian crisis, which can be summarized in two demands:

#### First demand

## the political intervention (the Russian political role in the Syrian crisis)

Since the beginning of the Syrian crisis in 2011, the Russian Federation has provided the legitimate government of Syria with numerous forms of political support. Russia adopted a clear political posture toward the opposition forces or revolutionary movements and their representative institutions in its dealings with Syrian parties. Russia viewed them as organizations composed of Islamist extremists, Western-aligned politicians and intellectuals. This included the Syrian National Council, which viewed the Free Syrian Army as a hazardous and extremist Islamic organization. On the other hand, Russia engaged positively with the opposition present within Assad regime-controlled territories, particularly those with left-leaning orientations and those willing to reconcile with the notion of preserving the regime and its leadership, such as the National Coordination Committee for Democratic Change. <sup>16</sup>

In contrast, Russia sided with the Assad regime and provided various forms of domestic and international political and diplomatic support. Despite urging the Syrian government to implement political and constitutional reforms, the Russian government viewed it as the country's sole legitimate authority.

Russia collaborated with countries that have strong relations with the Assad regime, such as China, Iran, and the BRICS nations, to establish an international axis supporting the Assad regime. Russia attempted to persuade these countries to adopt a unified narrative aligned with the discourse of the Assad regime, depicting the opposition as primarily extremist elements seeking to provoke the government, fuel

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>16</sup>Nizar Abdul Qadir. (2012). "The Arab Spring and the Syrian Volcano." Beirut, 1st edition, 2012, p. 90.



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup>Agreement on Mutual Encouragement and Protection of Investments - Agreement on International Road Transport by Cars - Cooperation Agreement in the Field of Oil and Gas between the Syrian Ministry of Oil and Mineral Resources and Suez Oil and Gas Company - Agreement between the Syrian Ministry of Oil and Mineral Resources and Suez Oil and Gas Company for Modern Technology in Russia, with the aim of building a factory for the production of basalt pipes - Memorandum of Understanding for Cooperation in Scientific and Agricultural Research.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup>Jamal Wakiem. (2012). "The Great Powers' Struggle over Syria: The Geopolitical Dimensions of the 2011 Crisis." Beirut: Al-Matabi'at Company for Distribution and Publishing. 2nd edition, 2012, pp. 60-62.

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sectarian conflicts, and engage in excessive and indiscriminate violence against civilians. Even government-led atrocities against civilians were attributed by Russia to armed opposition groups in Syria<sup>17</sup>.

The Russian political role in the Syrian crisis is exemplified by a number of noteworthy actions, including:

1. The political solution to the Syrian chemical weapons issue.

Russia proposed a political settlement initiative on 11-8-2013, at the height of former U.S. President Barack Obama's readiness to initiate a military strike against the Syrian regime for its use of chemical weapons against civilians in the Damascus suburbs. The essence of this initiative was Syria's accession to the Convention on Chemical Weapons, which prompted the American president to postpone the military operation and pave the way for political solutions<sup>18</sup>. The issue of chemical weapons in Syria was resolved as a result of a Russian initiative that included Syria's accession to the Chemical Weapons Convention, the disclosure and destruction of weapons production facilities, and the inspection and destruction of chemical weapon stockpiles. In exchange, the United States refrained from attacking the Assad regime. This was made possible by the Geneva Chemical Agreement, which was reached between the Russian foreign minister "Lavrov" and the American secretary of state "John Kerry<sup>19</sup>."

2. Russian Political Support for the Syrian State in the Security Council: (Russian Veto Power in the United Nations' Halls).

Russia opposed the adoption of any resolution condemning the Syrian government by the United Nations Security Council. Russia instead advocated dialogue and a political solution to the Syrian crisis, advising against the use of any military options that would have calamitous consequences for all parties. Russia's political support for the Syrian state was made clear by its repeated use of its veto power ("veto") in the Security Council to block the ratification of resolutions condemning Syria. This unprecedented action in the history of international relations effectively thwarted Western efforts to pass similar resolutions.

3. The Russian political initiatives to resolve the Syrian crisis.

Russia attempted to contribute to the international political resolution of the Syrian crisis through the "Geneva agreements" and its own initiatives. Specifically, Moscow hosted a number of meetings between Syrian opposition delegations. After providing multiple indications of its willingness to support efforts for a political solution to the Syrian crisis, Russia declared its willingness to support the political solution process.

## Second demand The military intervention

In late 2014, when former U.S. President Barack Obama announced the formation of an international coalition to combat "ISIS" in Syria, Russia interpreted this as an unambiguous exclusion from playing a significant role in resolving the Syrian conflict. Since then, Russia has endeavored to establish itself as an indispensable participant in efforts to resolve the Syrian crisis. <sup>20</sup>

After receiving a proposal from the Syrian government for direct military intervention on its territory, Russia obtained its objective. This action proved decisive in rebalancing Syria's power dynamics in favor of the Syrian regime. Russia has emerged as Syria's most influential actor. Although the United States did not take countermeasures to mitigate the impact of this intervention on its allies in Syria, it was consistent with Obama's strategy of attrition, involving Russia and its



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup>Joseph Nay El-Abn. (1997). "International Disputes." Edited by Ahmed El-Gamal. Egyptian Association for Publishing Knowledge and Global Culture, Cairo, 1997, p. 196.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup>Ismail Sabri Muqallad. (1985). "Political and International Relations: A Study of Principles and Theories." Dar Al-Salasil, Kuwait, 1985, p. 172.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Ghazi Hamaan. (2019). "The American Withdrawal from Syria and Its Potential Implications." Arab Affairs Journal, Issue 177, 2019, p. 37.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Ghazi Hamaan. Previous source. p. 40.

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allies in a war of all against all and working to undermine them all.<sup>21</sup>The Russian military intervention in Syria began in response to a request from the Syrian administration on September 30, 2015. The date marked the beginning of Russian military operations in Syria, which were given tacit approval by the United States and some Western capitals and coordinated with Iran. The Syrian regime's military forces were unable to repel attacks from opposition factions and the expansion of extremist organizations, despite Iranian and local militia support, when the intervention occurred.<sup>22</sup> The following are the objectives of the Russian military intervention:

- 1. Stabilizing the Syrian regime within what is known as the "Useful Syria" region.
- 2. Preventing the fall of the regime and reclaiming the territories and cities lost by the regime.
- 3. Safeguarding Damascus and the coastal region, which Russia considers of special importance due to their strategic significance as a maritime gateway to the Mediterranean Sea. This includes conducting preemptive strikes against jihadist organizations to prevent their potential spread into Russian territories or neighboring vital areas.
- 4. Testing the military capabilities and weapons of Russia.
- 5. Exerting pressure on the West based on the Syrian file.
- 6. Preventing the establishment of a buffer zone in Syria.

#### **Conclusion:**

- 1. The significant expansion of terrorist organizations in the Arab countries of the Middle East is correlated with the region's significance in Russia's foreign policy. Concerns about the extension of these threats to Russia's borders and nearby territories have prompted Russia to seek methods to ensure the stability of this region and prevent its involvement in conflicts that could endanger Russia's borders and territories. As a result, Russia has labored to strengthen its ties with these nations.
- 2. Syria accumulated debts as a consequence of the dissolution of the Soviet Union, which strengthened the friendship and cooperation between the two nations. As a result, an accord was reached to resolve Syria's debts owed to the former Soviet Union.
- 3. In addition to being a significant market for Russian munitions, the Middle East now plays a crucial role in military cooperation with Russia, especially in the field of nuclear energy. Numerous nations in the region are currently pursuing nuclear energy capabilities.
- 4. Russia's diplomatic moves towards countering Western policies aimed at containing Russia's role in the region revealed the seriousness of its ambitions to reclaim its status as a key player in the international arena as a superpower. This was especially evident in the case of Syria.
- 5. The Syrian crisis has highlighted Russia's increasing importance in the Middle East. Russia has demonstrated the ability to maintain a balance between the United States, regional powers, and other international actors in the region. In addition, Russia has demonstrated its ability to prevent the United States from circumventing the United Nations Security Council.
- 6. Russia's foreign policy stability toward Syria is closely tied to the country's geostrategic developments. Russia's ambitions to reclaim its influence in the region are at risk. The collapse of the Syrian regime would inevitably result in the United States advancing into regions that Russia views as a threat to its national security, thereby diminishing Russia's influence.
- 7. In addition to bolstering its strategic presence in the Mediterranean Sea through the deployment of its military bases, Russia's military operations in Syria resulted in additional benefits.

In fact, Russia aspires to transform the international system into a multipolar order, with Russia as one of its main poles. This vision is closely linked to Russia's Middle East foreign policy, where the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Ahmed Fouad Ruslan. (1986). "Theory of International Conflict." Egyptian General Authority for Books, Cairo, 1986, p. 170.



<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup>Maisa M. Mohammed. (2004). "Russian Intervention in the Syrian Crisis." Journal of the Faculty of Applied Economics, Issue 4, January 2004, p. 116.

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significance of the region compels Russia not only to maximize its economic and military power, but also to improve its overall international standing. Therefore, Russia is determined to maintain the gains it has made in the region and seek methods to further develop them so as to bolster its position in the international order.

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