ATILIM UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS MASTER'S PROGRAMME

RUSSIAN-SYRIAN RELATIONS WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE SYRIAN CIVIL WAR AND ITS EFFECTS ON RUSSIAN-AMERICAN RIVALRY

Master's Thesis

Can Abanoz

Ankara-2020

ATILIM UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS MASTER'S PROGRAMME

RUSSIAN-SYRIAN RELATIONS WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE SYRIAN CIVIL WAR AND ITS EFFECTS ON RUSSIAN-AMERICAN RIVALRY

Master's Thesis

Can Abanoz

SUPERVISOR

Asst. Prof. Dr. Duygu Dersan Orhan

Ankara-2020

ACCEPTANCE AND APPROVAL

This is to certify that this thesis titled “Russian-Syrian Relations within the Context of the Syrian Civil War and its Effects on Russian-American Rivalry” and prepared by Can Abanoz meets with the commitee’s approval unanimously/by a majority vote as Master’s Thesis in the field of International Relations following the successful defense of the thesis conducted in 07/08/2020.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ali İbrahim AKKUTAY (Chair)

Asst. Prof. Dr. Duygu DERSAN ORHAN (Supervisor)

Asst. Prof. Dr. Aslı GÜLSEVEN (Member)

Prof. Dr. Dilaver TENGİLİMOĞLU (Director)

ETHICS DECLARATION

I hereby declare that;

- I prepared this thesis in accordance with Atılım University Graduate School of Social Sciences Thesis Writing Directive,
- I prepared this thesis within the framework of academic and ethics rules,
- I presented all information, documents, evaluations and findings in accordance with scientific ethical and moral principles,
- I cited all sources to which I made reference in my thesis,
- The work of art in this thesis is original,

I hereby acknowledge all possible loss of rights in case of a contrary circumstance. (in case of any circumstance contradicting with my declaration)

Can ABANOZ

ÖZ

Can Abanoz, Suriye İç Savaşı Bağlamında Rusya-Suriye İlişkileri ve Rus-Amerikan Rekabeti Üzerindeki Etkileri, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Ankara, 2020.

Orta Doğu bölgesi Birinci Dünya Savaşı'nın sona ermesinden bu yana bazı anlaşmazlıklardan muzdariptir. Özellikle siyasi, ekonomik ve askeri istikrarsızlıklarla ilgili konular o zamandan beri hiç çözülememiştir. Suriye, Ortadoğu'nun önemli ve karmaşık devletlerinden biridir. Bu tezde, nitel araştırma yöntemi kullanılarak Suriye'nin tarihsel ve mevcut durumundan kaynaklanan sorular cevaplanmaya çalışılmıştır. Bu nedenle Suriye'nin Rusya için neden önemli olduğu, Rusya'nın Suriye konusundaki çıkarları, Rusya ve ABD'nin Suriye konusunda neden farklı yollar izlediği ve her iki tarafın rekabetinin neden Soğuk Savaş 2.0'a dönüştüğü de bu çalışmanın sorularıdır.

1946'dan bu yana Suriye, derin iç meseleler ve uluslararası ilişkilerde sıkıntılı bir süreçten geçmiştir. İç meselelerde siyasi rekabet ve İsrail ile tarihten gelen düşmanlık, Soğuk Savaş döneminde büyük bir zorluğa neden olmuştur. Suriye'nin çok etnik ve çok mezhepli yapısı nedeniyle Hafez Assad döneminden başlayarak mezhep meseleleri ortaya çıkmıştır. Babasının halefi olan Bashar Assad da benzer sıkıntı ve sorunlarla karşı karşıya kalmıştır. Sovyetler Birliği'nin halefi Rusya Federasyonu ile de Sovyetler Birliği ile gelen köklü tarihsel bağlar devam etmiştir. Suriye İç Savaşı başladığında Rusya, Assad Rejimi lehine hızla yanıt vermiştir. Aynı zamanda, ABD'nin, özellikle 11 Eylül'den sonra, Orta Doğu politikalarındaki başarısızlığı, Orta Doğu bölgesindeki terörist faaliyetlerini ortaya çıkarmış ve dünyanın geri kalanına yayılmıştır. Rusya Devlet Başkanı Putin'in Orta Doğu ve Doğu Akdeniz bölgesindeki uzun vadeli hedefleri taraflar arasında büyük bir rekabete yol açmıştır. Rusya ve ABD, bu rekabete katılan vekilleri ile Orta Doğu bölgesinde bir güç haline gelme konusunda çatışmasıyla, Suriye'nin sonsuz iç istikrarsızlıkları yeni bir duruma yol açmıştır. Bu durum yeni bir Soğuk Savaşı göstermekte ve egemen taraflar arasında "Soğuk Savaş 2.0" olarak telaffuz edilmektedir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Soğuk Savaş, Suriye, Sovyetler Birliği, Rusya, Baas Rejimi, Arap Baharı, İç Savaş, ABD

ABSTRACT

Can Abanoz, Russian-Syrian Relations within the Context of the Syrian Civil War and its Effects on Russian-American Rivalry, M.A. Thesis, Ankara, 2020

The Middle East region has suffering from certain disputes since the end of the WWI. Issues related with political, economic and military instabilities, in particular, have never been settled since then. Syria is one of the crucial and complex states of the Middle East. In this thesis, by using the qualitative research method, the questions arising from the historical and the current situation of the Syria are tried to be answered. Therefore, why Syria is important for Russia, what are the Russia's interests in Syria, why Russia and the US are following different pathways over Syria, and why both parties' rivalry has turned into Cold War 2.0 are the inquiries of the current study.

Since independence from 1946, Syria has been through the deep domestic issues and uneasy international relations. Political rivalries on the domestic matters and historical hostility with Israel have been a great challenge in the Cold War period. Due to multi-ethnic and multi-sect structure of Syria and beginning from the Hafez Assad period, sectarian issues have emerged. Bashar Assad, as successor of his father, has been facing the similar troubles and issues. Rooted historical close ties with Soviet Union and Syria has continued with Soviet Union's successor, Russian Federation. When Syrian Civil War has emerged, Russia has quickly responded in favor of the Assad Regime. At the same time, failure of US on the Middle East policies, particularly after 9/11, the terrorist activities in the Middle East region have emerged and spread to the rest of the world. Russia's President Putin's long-term objectives in the Middle East and Eastern Mediterranean region have become great rivalry between parties. Russia and US conflicts in becoming a power in Middle East region, the proxies participating in this rivalry and the endless domestic instabilities of Syria brought about a new situation. This situation is indicating a new Cold War and pronounced as "Cold War 2.0" between the parties in dominance.

Keywords: Cold War, Syria, Soviet Union, Russia, Baath Regime, Arab Spring, Civil War, US

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincere gratitude my supervisor Asst. Prof. Dr. Duygu Dersan Orhan for her guidance and support throughout all period of my thesis. She generously shared his knowledge with me and patiently helped me to improve.

I am also grateful to the thesis committee, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ali İbrahim Akkutay and Asst. Prof. Dr. Aslı Gulseven for their insightful advices.

Special thanks to Prof. Dr. Kudret Ozersay, Asst. Prof. Dr. Berna Numan, Asst. Prof. Dr. Umut Bozkurt for encourage me to stay in great motivation and unforgettable helps.

I would like to express my special gratitude and thanks to Prof. Dr. Yasemin G. Isgor and Asoc. Prof. Dr. Belgin S. Isgor for sharing their time and experience towards the success of this thesis.

Lastly and more importantly, many thanks to my mother, father and dog Dobi for their endless. inspiration, patience, and support throughout my life and my stressful times.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 3

ARAB SPRING AND SYRIAN CIVIL WAR

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AQI	Al-Qaeda in Iraq
ATGM	Anti-Tank Guided Missiles
ASP	Arab Socialist Party
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
EU	European Union
FSA	Free Syrian Army
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
HTS	Hayat Tahrir al-Sham
ICBM	Inter-Continental Ballistic Missiles
IS	Islamic State
ISI	Islamic State in Iraq
ISIL	Islamic State of Iraq and Levant
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
KRI	Kurdistan Region of Iraq
MB	Muslim Brotherhood
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCRC	National Command and both the Syrian and Iraqi Regional Commands
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organization
SAM	Surface-to-Air Missile
SCP	Syrian Communist Party
SDF	Syrian Democratic Forces
SNC	Syrian National Council
SUM	Social Unionists' Movement
TOW	Tube-launched, Optically tracked, Wire-guided Missiles
UAR	United Arab Republic
UK	United Kingdom

UNSC	United Nations Security Council
US	United States
WWI	World War One
WWII	World War Two

INTRODUCTION

Syria, which declared her independence from France in 1946, had been and still experiencing breakdowns and problems related with domestic and international aspects. Syrian society is not a homogenous one. They differ in the social, economic and political levels, regarding fictional, ethnical, tribal and sectarian differences (McLaughlin, 2020). According to the CIA factbook data, the population of Syria comprises 50% of Sunni Arabs, 15% of Alawites, 10% of Kurds, 15% of Levantines and 15% of other minorities which includes Druzes, Ismailis, Imamis, Nusayris, Assyrian, Turkmens and Armenians (CIA-Report, 2018, February 1).

From independence to Hafez Assad period, Syria faced 17 military coups and one failed United Arab Republic experience in which Egypt was the other founder state. Syrian government's current ideology, Baath, has founded in the following years of the World War II (WWII). Michel Aflaq and Salah Bitar led this ideology, both studied in Sorbonne University, in Paris, on nationalism.

From the independence of the Syria to the hegemony of the Baath Party, although some up and downs took place, Soviet Union and Syria established a great partnership during the Cold War period. In Arab – Israeli Wars period and also afterwards, Soviet Union supported and armed Syria.

Soviet Union had been the second arms trader state of the world, after the US, during the Cold War period. The new policy of the Brezhnev administration made Syria one of the significant arms trade buyers until 1980s and it is important to note that they were fully depended to the Russian arms. Beginning from the early years of 1980s, Soviet Union was losing her interest on the conflicts in the Middle East region, due to domestic, international and economy related problems which they experienced during the time. Meanwhile, Hafez Assad became a seeker of new opportunities in the international arena. During the Iran-Iraq War, Syria had supported Iran, which has been another important game changer in the Middle East region. When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, Russia had to stay away temporarily from the Middle Eastern politics. Iraq's invasion of Kuwait and outbreak of the First Gulf War occurred in the same year. Syria assessed that situation regarding her own benefits in the region, and

she took action in favor of the US-led coalition. Hence, Syria has granted a financial support from western oriented Gulf states.

In 2000, two important events took place. First, Syrian President Hafez Assad who stayed in the office for a long term died at 70 and his second elder son Bashar Assad had become the new president of Syria. Second, in Russia, presidential elections has held and Vladimir Putin has voted as the new president of Russia. Afterwards, both states' relations reconstructed again.

In 2001, Al-Qaeda attacked the heart of the US and the US responded with a series of invasions. In 2002, US-led coalition invaded Afghanistan with a claim that they support to the terrorism. In 2003, US invaded Iraq with the same grounds; claiming that Iraq was supporting terrorist activities in the region.

When George W. Bush elected as the new president of the US in early 2001, Russia and the US relations were mainly in a positive path. Also, Putin offered to the US a partnership regarding counter-terrorism and allowed North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) actions over Afghanistan. However, this wind of opportunity terminated when the US-led coalition planned the use of armed forces against Iraq. Russia has objected to the United Nations (UN) resolution which authorizing the use of force over Iraq. On the contrary, the US's withdrawal of Anti-Missile Ballistic Treaty and "color revolutions" over the Russia's neighbors has triggered the old hostiles' rivalry.

Since 1980s, Syrian government had to struggle with opposition groups in Syria. Hama experience in 1980 and the movements after Bashar Assad has come to power in 2000, then Syrian government's violent oppression over opposition had pave the way for further conflicts. Problematic policies of the US and new founded Iraqi government had emerged and terrorist activities spread over the Middle East after the Second Gulf War in 2003. In December 2010, the Arab Spring movement against corrupted regimes began in Tunisia and spread to whole Middle East. Syrian government took action against anti-regime protestors, detained and applied excessive use of force to them. Their approach flamed the civil war in Syria. one of the radical terrorist groups in Iraq-Syria region which was an Al-Qaeda division, named ISIS, which strengthened in Iraq and spread to Syria. In Syria, ISIS quickly mobilized and gained significant territories. In 2013, the US directly involved in the Syrian civil war.

Obama administration also organized and equipped their proxies in the region to fight against ISIS and to prevent Syrian government's attacks on civilians and her proxies.

Two years after the US' involvement to the civil war, in 2015, Russia decided to directly involved in the civil war in favor of the Syrian regime. That action has delighted the Syrian government and army officials; it boosted their motivations and efforts for victory. From the beginning of that conflict, Russia has been a diplomatic shield for Syria, dodged any United Nations Security Council (UNSC) sanctions or actions against the Syrian regime. From 2015, Syrian Army backed by Russia has regained most of the uncontrolled areas over Syria. While conflict is continuing at full throttle, the US and Russia had begun peaceful settlement efforts with different but parallel initiations. Geneva and Astana process have aimed reaching a ceasefire in the region and maintaining peace. Different ideas and different plans over Syria are eroding and neutralizing entire process for now. These changes emerge as Syria has become like a 'chessboard' for the US and Russia. Indeed, this rivalry has developed from Russia's hybrid war of Georgia and Russia's annexation of Crimea. Russia's power play and request to global power like Soviet years and the US' and NATO's attempts over Russia's neighbors and then Syrian question are the signals of the new Cold War with some differences.

Qualitative research method will be used within this current thesis, Syria's political history will be described and explained, and followingly, Syria-Russia relations with Syria's independence to today will be analyzed. Also, Syrian Civil War will be analyzed as a case study for that situation.

Research questions of that thesis are: first, why Syria is important for Russia; second, what are the Russia's interests in Syria; Last but not least, why Russia and the US are following different pathways over Syria and why both parties' rivalry has turned into Cold War 2.0?

To answer these questions, the Syria and related game changing actors and events was explained and discussed throughout this thesis. Such that, Chapter 1 focuses on political history of the Syria. It briefly includes independence from France to the emerge of the Baath Party, and military coups period. How Baath Party has formed, the clash of interests inside of the Baath Party and continued coups were explained. The chapter is expanded with the emergence of United Arab Republic and

its collapse, following the series of conflicts between Syria and Arab alliance with Israel. Chronologically in that period, Syria had faced major challenges in both domestic and international arena. After the consecutive coups held on Syria, the beginning and continuum of Hafez Assad period were analyzed in different aspects.

Since Syria's independence, Syria and Soviet Union have closer ties among the Cold War period. These ties have been many up and downs in that period. Chapter 2 discusses crucial events between parties. In particular, wave of coups on Syria, Baath party's emergence on Syria and Soviet Union's response to the three major Arab-Israeli conflicts are intensively covered under the same chapter. Later years and post-Cold War events in the Middle East region, Syria's, Soviet Union and then Russia's responds over these events is discussed on that chapter. In particular, this part is marking failures of the US Middle Eastern foreign policy prepared to emerging terrorism over the Middle Eastern region. Soviet Union had second arms trader on the Cold War period and Syria's aspirations over Israel and entire Arab world, distinctive arms trade between parties has existed. In the Cold War period, Syria has become number one client and fully dependent to the Soviet Union's arms. That situation caused Syria's economy's one of the important loopholes has become huge military expenditures. Today, in the Syrian Civil War, the same situation is continuing. Due to that situation Soviet Union's and then her successor Russia's whole arms transfers to the Syria are analyzed with details.

On Syria, Islamic opposition is one of the key actors of the Syrian Civil War. On chapter 3 that thesis digs in the history of the Islamic opposition on the Syria. On the Arab Spring Period, major protests against authoritarian regimes has extent to the Syria. In that chapter, all events during the Arab Spring period in Syria are analyzing and describing how protests have turned to the civil war. Although Syrian Civil War has evolved to proxy war between US-led Western states and Russia, role of major and minor state and non-state actors is briefly explained.

While Syrian Civil War is continuing the US and Russia is following different conflict resolution methods. Both parties are offering unique solutions over Syria, and both parties initiatives have far from the resolution. On Chapter 4, these initiatives are analyzing based on the Geneva talks and Astana process. In 2000, with Putin administration, Russian Federation has become a new political and economic

development period. This period has quickly evolved to Russia - US rivalry and finally raised on the Syrian Civil War. This rivalry is carrying essences of the Cold War period, and according to some researchers, that situation is calling as Cold War 2.0. On that thesis, existence of the Cold War 2.0 is proving with policies on major events and arguments.

CHAPTER 1

POLITICAL HISTORY OF SYRIA

Political history of Syria can be analyzed in terms of transitions underwent, coups and international challenges.

1.1. Post-Colonial Transition

Syria is one of the former Ottoman provinces, known as Syria *Vilayet*, which broke apart from Ottoman Empire with a series of agreements between Triple Entente States, Britain, France and Russia. While WWI was continuing, parties drawn a framework for the future of the Middle East with secret Sykes-Picot Agreement. According to the agreement, Syria and Lebanon regions would have been under control of French Mandate, Iraq and Palestine regions would have been of British Mandate. After the WWI, in 1920, parties had assembled in Italy on the San Remo Conference. Main framework of Sykes-Picot Agreement had applied and ratified with minor changes (Al-Jazeera, 2016).

French's claim on Syria based on a combination of religious, economic and strategic interests. France declared herself as the protector of Christian communities in the Levant, in particular Catholic minorities of Mount Lebanon. France's religious justification for her imperial intervention in that region alienated Muslim majority. France had solved that issue with a series of fragmentations in a sort of political units. In 1920, Damascus and Aleppo had been divided into two separate states, each had her own governor and her own French advisor. Syria's compact regional minority groups, Alawites and Druzes, provided a separate state by France for each in 1922. Alawites got North Latakia, Druzes got South Damascus. France's aim was to isolate these groups from national politics, and hence, Syria's political life should control by conservative urban Sunni Muslims (Cleveland, 2016, August 2).

Although Syria has granted her nominal independence in 1941, French control on Syria had continued until 1946. One year later, in 1947, Syria had declared her full independence from France with the pressure of the nationalist groups and the Great

Britain. During this period, political, economic and social statue of Syria was suffering from severe weaknesses as a young state. Like other Arab states in the region, low level of nationality awareness, lack of a strong common ground for Syria's complex population and increased strength of the various ethnic groups were some reasons about these problems. Interregional rivalry in Syria was significant. In particular, the rivalry between Aleppo and Damascus was substantial. The ruling elites of Syria were from old Damascus and these elites were leading the struggle against French mandate (Eppel, 1996; Pierre, 1982; Smith, 1958).

In the same period, Arab Socialist Renaissance (Baath) Party has established and led by two professors in Damascus University, Michel Aflaq and Salah ed-Din Bitar. Both had met Socialism and Marxism while studying in France (Olson, 1978). According to Aflaq, Arab nation has divided as a result of colonialism and imperialism. In that context, the primary aim of the Baath Party had been to revive the will of the Arab who would have an important function in forming the Arab nation (Şahin, 2016).

1.2. The Coups, United Arab Republic and Formation of the Baath Regime

In 1948, Syria had been a party to the Arab Coalition against Israel regarding the Arab-Israeli War which had its last stage in 1947-1949 as Palestine War. On 30th March 1949, Syria's political weaknesses and also polarized political fractions caused another coup led by Husni el-Za'im. This coup had some special characteristics, which made it easy to distinguish from other coups. Such that it launched with the encouragement from US and British intelligence, as well as France. As a result of that coup, an inter-Arab struggle has triggered in Syria until 1970s (Eppel, 1996).

El-Za'im's coup did not exist much longer. In August 1949, a coup had overthrown El-Za'im by Sami al-Hinnawi, who had a pro-Iraqi approach. During his regime, a union and a federation with Iraq has established. An additional coup which led by Colonel Adib Shishakli, who had put pressure on Iraqi supporters in Syria and had managed to came into power in 1954. His regime had established a military dictatorship upon Syria, all political parties including Muslim Brotherhood were closed and a sole one established, Arab Independence Movement. Although he created a new constitution for country, both economic instability and political pressure on

Syrians had caused another coup against him in 1954 (Arı, 2017). In the first 10 years of independence period, with the crucial effects of the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, Syria faced 20 governmental and constitutional revisions (Kılıç, 2013).

In 1954, after the coup, first general elections had held in Syria. Baath Party was the third party (22 seats) after independents (64 seats) and People's Party (30 seats) in parliament with support of Arab Socialist Party (ASP) (Olson, 1978). Baath had addressed domestic and international issues and problems facing in. For international issues, it was against to all foreign influences, and not just anti-Western, as well as it was anti-Iraqi, anti-Hashemite and anti-Soviet ties (Olson, 1978). Beginning from 1955, with the effect of rising of Arab nationalism in Egypt, which led by Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser had resulted to the formation of a new state, United Arab Republic (UAR): the unification of Egypt and Syria. In 1958, after the first talks between parties, Syrian army had agreed to conduct their own negotiations with Nasser. As a result of negotiations, both parties had ratified the union agreement and in February, after a referendum, Nasser became the first president of UAR (Olson, 1978). That union's aim was to complete economic and political union with a common legislative body, a common army, a common flag and a solitary head of the state (Smith, 1958).

However, Nasser had tightened control in Syria in 1958, after the coup in Iraq while Hashemite family has overthrown. Baathists in Syria and Iraq had prepared in a revolt against Qasem regime and bringing Iraq into the UAR. That attempt had resulted in suppression of the Iraqi army easily (Olson, 1978). After that attempt, Nasser had prepared purging of the Baathists from politics and military. It caused opposition to the Egyptianizing in Syria and secret military committee had set up in 1958, which led by four Alawites, Salab Giadid, Hafez al-Assad, and Mohammed Omran and a Druze, Hamad Obeid (Olson, 1978). In 1962, army officers made three separate coups in Damascus, Homs and Aleppo. Commander-in-chief General el-Karim Zahr ed-Din had called a conference in Homs for patching the cracks in the army and to restore the unity, but no actions have taken against that attempt (Olson, 1978). As a result of those domestic conflicts, Baath Party has split into four factions, the first group was Aflaq-Bitar wing, the second was Sami Şüfan's Social Unionists' Movement (SUM), the third was the Haurants and the fourth was other nationalists. First two groups had been

anti-secessionists, others had supported both secessionists and existing political regime in Syria (Olson, 1978). On February 8, 1963, Baathist army officers had seized power in Iraq and directly supported Damascus against Cairo regime. On March 8, Major Ziyad el-Hariri, who was the commander of the Syrian forces on the Israeli front, and the brother-in-law of Akram Haurani, had led and plotted a coup, while Baath party had been in power (Olson, 1978). Split of the Baath Party has sharpened after that coup, had faced four major conflicts. Actually, these conflicts had rooted for power sharing inside Baath Party in Syria. First of those, the Aflaq- Bitar wing, which did not want to full union with Egypt and Iraq. Younger Baath members who wanted to organize for the masses against reactionary secessionism. Other conflicts had raised between National Command and the Military Committee; between the National Command and both the Syrian and Iraqi Regional Commands (NCRC); and also, between the Syrian Regional Command and the Military Committee (Olson, 1978). Syria had held Cairo Unity Talks. Although a few participants wanted to unite with Egypt and Iraq, Nasser's political activities during these talks had fruited with new agreements between parties and stabilized his position. All these three states had signed an agreement that resulted Naser was holding all political power of the union virtually (Olson, 1978). While these negotiations were developing, another Baath wing was working on the progress to purge of Nasserist officers in NCRC and consolidate their political position. Result of their attempts were several ministers' resignations to protest and to force Bitar government to resign. (Olson, 1978). Although several political maneuvers has made, none of these brought political stability to Syria and Nasserist officers had attempted a coup. That coup resulted in two consequences in Syria: the end of the unity agreement between Syria and Egypt, and the most important one, the end of pro-Nasserist political strength in Syria (Olson, 1978)

Following the elections in 1963, which brought a victory to Baathist radicals, Salah Giadid had been promoted, after the assembly of the Military Committee, to major-general and then appointing himself as a chief-of-staff. The government went into a redesigning period, Amin Al Hafez became the new premier after the design of Bitar and Mohammed Omran as his deputy (Olson, 1978).

In 1970, Baathists has faced internal conflicts and another military coup took place, the minister of defense Hafez Assad led which. General Giadid, president al-

Atassi and prime minister Zuayyin, has dismissed. Ahmad al-Khabib had become the new president, Hafez Assad had become the prime minister and head of NCRC. In 1971, public referendum has held in Syria and Hafez Assad, who sole candidate for presidency, had become the president (Arı, 2017; Galvani, Johnson, & Theberge, 1973).

Since Hafez Assad has registered to the military academy in 1951, he did not stay away from domestic political matters, the same as other military officers. Besides being a military officer career and pilot, he had organized activities and recruitments for the Baath Party. The UAR period had been problematic for Assad. He was a supporter of Nasser and supported his idea of the Arab unification. He had been disturbed by Egyptianizing, Egypt's domination in unification. He has worried about Nasser's insistence of the fragmentation of the Baath Party. He and his secret military committee which had evaluated the process and internal conflict after Syria's separation from the UAR. He and his committee got a leading role in the coup in 1963 and later coups. Ironically, when Assad had come to the power, one of his first attempts was de-politicization and professionalization of Syrian army, and this policy has succeeded (Choueiri, 2017).

In 1973, a new constitution came into power that expanded the powers of President. New constitution had been a crucial controversy for the Muslim majority in Syria. Assad had abolished the requirement that the president should be a Muslim. Syria's Sunni majority had protested that decision and pointed to a dilemma, they had claimed that such change had meant Alawite Assad regime was both secular and sectarian. After huge protests, Assad had stepped up from that decision and had changed that article as President shall be a Muslim. In addition, he had given a fatwa from a member of the Shiite ulama about Alawites are Muslims. While he had been guaranteeing his regime, he had selected persons from Alawite community and his family members to the important positions in the government. Alawite appearance of that regime had caused suspicion by Sunni Majority (Cleveland, 2019).

Hafez Assad's primary goals in Syria had been to achieve a military equality with Israel, and to make it the most powerful state in the Arab world. Due to that plan, he wanted to dominate Lebanon, Jordan and Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), that felt naturally within Syria's trajectory through Syria's military power. Also, Syria

would attempt to hold back these states, in particular the PLO, which organization would give an excuse to Israel to attack Syria while Syria has rebuilt arms arsenal of PLO with their undergoing activities upon Israel (Cleveland, 2019).

1.3.Arab – Israeli Wars

The establishment of a State of Israel in May 1948 and the failure of the Arab military invasion to Israel had caused anxiety in Syria due to the insecurity and isolation caused in the region in Syria. Also, with support of Britain, Amman and Jericho conferences had resulted in the *de facto* annexation of areas which had previously invaded by Arab Legion (Eppel, 1996).

On May 15, 1948, troops from Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Transjordan and Iraq had invaded Israel. Those forces have poorly prepared, equipped, motivated and outnumbered in the shadow of inter-Arab political rivalries. The lack of coordination between Arab troops and Israel's engagement of life and death struggle had not given a chance to win for the Arab Coalition. Arab attacks, except Jerusalem region, had repelled by Israel in June 1948, when first UN armistice had issued. On the second round between June 9 and 18, Israeli forces had become superior with support of western states. When the second armistice has issued, Israeli victory already guaranteed. This first Arab-Israeli War had resulted in the partition of Palestine territory between Israel, Egypt and Transjordan (Cleveland, 2019).

The disorientation along the Israeli-Syrian border in the mid-1960's had prepared the ground of the outbreak of war. Incidents on the borderline created new disputes on the armistice agreement which had signed after the 1947-1949 Palestine War. Palestine's el-Fath movement had assisted by Syria had escalated the tensions along the Syrian - Israeli border (Zisser, 2017). During October 1966, Several Israeli civilians and military personnel had killed by el-Fath's landmines, bombs and ambush attacks (McInerney, 1992, p.270). The disorientation along the Israeli-Syrian border in the mid-1960's had prepared the ground of the outbreak of war. Incidents on the borderline created new disputes on the armistice agreement which had signed after the 1947-1949 Palestine War. Palestine's el-Fath movement had assisted by Syria had escalated the tensions along the Syrian - Israeli border (Zisser, 2017). During October

1966, Several Israeli civilians and military personnel had killed by el-Fath's landmines, bombs and ambush attacks (McInerney, 1992).

In 1967, Syria had initiated Palestine's el-Fath attacks to Israel through Jordan territory. Egypt and Soviet Union put pressure on Syria to pull back these guerillas, however such act had no effects on Syria. In early 1967, Israel has begun to counterattack both verbally and directly. At first, radio broadcasts had begun in Jordan for advocating the overthrow of Baath which encouraged by the opposition in Syria (Olson, 1978). While tension had raised between Syria and Israel, Egypt had deployed her troops to Sinai Peninsula and had closed Straits of Tiran. Israel's direct attack on Syria had begun on June 4-5 with a preemptive strike (Laron, 2014; Maoz, 2006). Israel had shortly driven the Egyptian army back across the Suez Channel, whereas the Jordan Army had crossed the Jordan River (LaFeber, 1985). In the morning of that day, Israeli air force had attacked Egypt's airbases and had destroyed most of the Egyptian air force planes which had been still on the ground (Cleveland, 2019, Maoz, 2006). On Syrian side, Israel had destroyed Syrian and Jordan air force as well as Egypt's, although land force had fought and resisted, it had continued little longer with no air support. As a result of the Six Day War Quneitrah area of Syria in the Golan Heights had invaded by Israel (Olson, 1978).

After Syria's defeat against Israel in the Six Day War, Israel had seized Golan Heights, which is still a crucial dispute between Syria and Israel. The aftermath of that defeat resulted in the survival of neo-Baathist Giadid regime, which then called other Arab states to initiate guerilla harassment of Israel constantly and also oil embargo and a total economic, political and cultural boycott the United States, Great Britain and West Germany. Due to lack of unification of Arab front against Israel this call has not been effective. In the shadow of humiliation and desire of revenge from Six Day War's result had put Syria aside from Egypt in the October 1973, during the following Yom Kippur War. Unlike the previous defeat, this time Syria took back many portions of Golan Heights. However, at the last day of that war, Syria had pushed back by Israel to the previous armistice lines. Conflicts between two states had ended temporarily with the signing of the Israel – Syria Disengagement Agreement on 31 May 1974 (Zisser, 2017).

CHAPTER 2

BACKGROUND OF SOVIET UNION – SYRIA RELATIONS

2.1. Cold War Overview

Cold War had been a solid rivalry between US and Soviet Union and their trajectorial elements. Author Joseph Siracusa (2009) had successfully summarized scope of Cold War:

> *"The Cold War reflected the stark fact that the world would exist half slave, half free. It has always been so. The abstract ideals of universal freedom and justice could never establish the foundations of national policy. To eliminate the control of one people over another does not guarantee political progress or even the survival of freedom. The world is unfortunately replete with examples of political and economic retrogression that followed the achievement of self-determination. To free a people from its external masters, required nothing less than war, and to establish a country's vital interest in the freedom of a nation or group of nations, long held in subjugation, was never simple. The price required to achieve such an aim, under conditions of nuclear stalemate, would undoubtedly come very high."*

Soviet Union's lack of interest to the Arab world has been effective until the 1950s due to discovery of Arab's revolutionary potential. Soviet Union has focused on her neighbors' activities such as Mustafa Kemal in Turkey and Reza Shah in Iran. Also, Soviet Union had settled good relations with her southern neighbors which had based on a bilateral treaty focused on non-interference in their internal affairs and the neutrality with any war (Karsh, 1991). First, Soviet Union and Syria relations has established before, a while after the independence of Syria from France in 1946. Parties had signed a secret treaty which included a promise from Soviet Union, supporting Syria internationally, building an army, establishing economic and cultural relations. In 1950, non-aggression pact had signed (Ginat, 2000).

Beginning from the end of 1954, Soviet Union and Syria relations had developed and progressively emerged later in years. In 1955, following the Baghdad Pact had raised tensions between her neighbors, Iraq and Turkey. Those two states had threatened Syria for continuing adverse position to that pact and adherence position to the principle of non-participation in foreign military blocs. Soviet Union has been at

the side of the Syria and had promised to defend her for further conflicts with the neighbors (Ginat, 2000, p.156). In March 1955, Soviet Union had responded to Turkish and Iraqi troops concentration on the Syrian border with an announcement of the extension of aid to Syria with any means for the purpose of securing Syria's independence and sovereignty (Karsh, 1991, p.4). Regarding this, arms trade agreement had signed with Czechoslovakia. In 1955, Syria had signed a mutual defense pact with Egypt, also in the same year Soviet Union had signed arms trade agreement with Egypt. In the shadow of the Suez Crisis in 1956, a year after, Soviet Union – Syria military relations and arms trade had increased (Arı, 2017, p. 127). In October 1957, a large portion of economic and technical agreement of Soviet Union at a total cost of $579 million had delivered to Syria (Karsh, 1991, p.4).

An additional aid agreement had signed in 1957, $90 million for projects which included to finance the construction of the Euphrates Dam. In 1964, $40 million more had promised but not upheld. However, declining of financial aid in between 1962-1964, Soviet Union and Syria's trade volume had expanded (Ginat, 2000, p.156).

The dissolution of the UAR in October 1961 has positively admitted by Soviet Union. For Soviet Union, direct connection to Syria was much better than the UAR connection. While instability period in Syria was continuing, Soviet Union recognized each new regime and continued to provide previously agreed economic aids. The Baath coup in 1963 has pleased with Soviet Union, which then claimed that Baathist rule had been a solution for prevailing chaos (Schoenberger & Reich, 1975).

Between late 1960s to the early 1970s Soviet Union strategy had transformed for the following reasons: first, two wars, Six Day War and Yom Kippur War had happened in Middle East, resulting in the deterioration of Soviet Union and Egypt's relations due to Soviet Union's query on support of Egypt's military campaigns. Soviet Union's position and relations in the Middle East have been weakening and needed to rearrange again. Cold War's détente progress and in particular, Soviet policy in that era had proved beneficial for Russia's expansion to the Third World States. Last point, strength of the Red army had continued to grow. Beginning from 1970s, Soviet Union had initiated new broad expansion policy to the Third World States. Major feature of that policy had been providing support for the establishment and assisting military regimes (Guan-fu, 1983).

According to Assad, conflict with Israel was the priority among other international matters. Assad had claimed that Israel had been an expansionist state and Israel's major purpose had designated by US. Syria's primary duty was resisting against Israeli threat and working for Arab unification. He had noticed that Syrian army has needed to be upgrade for that purpose. To achieve that, he had requested to Soviet Union to increase the quantity and quality of arms. Personnel of the Syrian Army have significantly increased from 50.000 in 1967 to 225.000 in 1973, and over 400.000 in 1980 (Cleveland, 2019, pp. 447-448).

Between the end of the 1975 and early months of 1976, the Lebanese crisis produced a rift between Syria and Soviet Union. Although Soviet Union's reaction over Syria's actions in Lebanon had appeared as positive, Soviet Union has not pleased in growing Syria's indirect military involvement in Lebanon. In the middle of 1976, Soviet Union's attitude had changed, which then caused the deepening of the rift. Soviet Union's position on the heavy-armed confrontation between Syria and PLO had become complicated, since both were closest allies, which had gone through an inevitable confrontation. When Syrian intervention had become increasingly apparent, Soviet Union made a statement about a viable solution to the Lebanese crisis as the Lebanese people themselves could achieve it. But this had been ineffective over Hafez Assad, and Syrian army had marched to the Lebanon. That direct intervention in Lebanon had raised political tension between Soviet Union and Syria (Karsh, 1986). Soviet Union had also appeared in position with Syria against any attempt of the US. Two Soviet airborne divisions have placed on alert and Soviet Union had requested flight permission over Turkey for transporting additional arms to Syria (Dawisha, 1982). In the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) memorandum, dated 1976, other dimensions of the Soviet Union – Syria rift have also described. Here, besides the unpleased stance of Soviet Union, Assad's ban of the SCP, disputes between Soviet advisers and Syrian army, Soviet Union's attempts to provide greater use of Syrian sea ports, Assad's tendency to western goods and technology rather to Soviet Union's and increasing disputes with Iraqi government has noticed. Soviet navy had been using the Syrian ports at Tartus and Latakia since Yom Kippur War for maintaining her naval ships operating on Eastern Mediterranean. Meanwhile, the regime change in Egypt has resulted in the loss of Soviet Union's naval base in Alexandria and increased the

importance of the Syrian naval bases. Then, Soviet Union had put pressure on Syria for extended access to Tartus and Latakia harbors (CIA-Report, 1976). From May 1976, Soviet Union had operated maintenance and docking services at the port of Tartus, which had later upgraded in 1988 for meeting further operational requirements of the Mediterranean squadron (Karsh,1991, p.49).

Assad's visit to Moscow, in April 1985, had been another milestone for Soviet Union- Syria relations. He noticed the recently elected Mikhail Gorbachev's new Middle East policy on Soviet Union's out of arms race in there (Khasan, 1998). Under the Gorbachev's new policy, foreign cooperation had been the key tool for solving the problems of common concern. Soviet Union's foreign policy with priority on ideology has also changed into the pragmatic approach. That pragmatism has continued with recognition of democratization of the foreign policy-making process and lowering of military policy to foreign policy aims. Effect of that policy on Syria has evolved as Soviet Union did not support Syria's military aims on Israel. After reexamining the Soviet expenditures, under the light of the economic reform, defense and foreign aids to the Middle East had scoped. Gorbachev had discovered that these aids resulted in no financial gain to Soviet Union. Wealthy The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states, and political and economically dominant in that region, had remained hostile. Another point considered by Gorbachev about the Middle East under the bipolar political system, Middle East had been more unstable. Within supplied by superpower and developed states, the Arabs and Israel had fought five major wars in 1948, 1956, 1967, 1973 and 1982. Besides those issues, Iran and Iraq had fought due to a continuous conflict between 1980 and 1989. Most important point on these conflicts were Iran- Iraq War and First Gulf War had proven the deadly capabilities of surface-to-surface missiles with chemical warheads. Found an evidence about Israel's possession of a small nuclear stockpile had created the complexity in that situation (Shad, Shad, Boucher, & Reddish, 1995). Gorbachev's primary aim of the Soviet foreign policy was, assuming a position of respect and credibility in the Middle East, as same as the US. He had forced to change the viewpoint at the side of moderate Arabs and Israel. This view had caused dissatisfaction by Syria and Soviet Union had reestablished diplomatic ties with Israel (Shad et al., 1995). When Hafez Assad's visit to Moscow in April 1987, Gorbachev had told to Assad, absence of the relations

between Soviet Union and Israel were not normal. In July 1987, an official delegation had arrived to Israel, stayed three months and evaluated the inventory of the Soviet Union's church properties. In April 1988, PLO leader Yasser Arafat had visited Moscow, where Gorbachev explained Israel's security and border concerns to Arafat. According to the claim of Moscow News, Soviet Union had announced that recent and profound change in policy of recognition of Israel and renouncing terrorism at least a part (Goodman & Ekedahl, 1988; Saivetz, 1989).

In 1989, Soviet Union Foreign Minister Shevardnadze had attempted to organize a strategy meeting between Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt and the PLO but has failed partly due to Syria's disagreement. Another disagreement topic between Soviet Union and Syria was Syrian Army's scale. According to Gorbachev, Syrian army had only been enough to deter any major Israeli attack. He had argued that, if Syrian army has been too advanced, then Assad had might launch an attack for recapturing Golan Heights from Israel. While these disagreements had continued, Syria had suffered severe economic problems which had bound by military expenditures. Almost %70 of the budget had allocated for the military. Gorbachev had insisted for payments with hard currency and be on time, but Syria could not maintain it (Shad et al., 1995).

2.2. Baath Regime & First Approach to Soviet Union

Following the 1963 coup, Baath Party had become the ruling body of Syria for the first time. Political development of Baath Party had cautiously followed by Soviet Union with mistrust and mutual suspicion. However, Baath Party's reformulation of basic ideas such as taking some concepts from Marxist-Leninist doctrine unlike Aflaq's Arab Socialism in Sixth National Congress had pleased by Soviet Union (Ginat, 2000, p.157). Syria's power struggle between Hafez who had represented right wing Baathists (Aflaq-Bitar faction) and Giadid who had represented left wing Baathists had reoriented relations in early 1966. As a result of repeated coups, Giadid had become victorious. At those first days, Soviet Union had avoided any reaction due to that complex situation. Syria had sent positive messages like expanding socialist transformations over Syria and selecting a new communist minister, Samih Atiyya. Allowing communists and removing isolation to Syrian Communist Party (SCP) also

adding the cabinet and taking part in decision for political and economic policies had maintained relations with Soviet Union and also with China (Ginat, 2000, p.160). That government was not a long-lasting one. On February 23, a new coup had appeared, and for the first time, Alawi origin military officers had become the ruling position of Syria. Old Aflaq-Bitar faction and Hafez's removal had created decreased support to the new leaders by Soviet Union. Afterwards, Syrian authorities had expressed friendly relations with Soviet Union to continue the same as before (Ginat, 2000, p.162). Following mutual visits, Soviet Union had agreed to provide support to the new Syrian government. On later visits, both parties had agreed further development and cooperation on the political, economic, trade, cultural and mutual respect to sovereignty and non-interference. Another crucial outcome of that visits was, Soviet Union's assistance in building the Euphrates dam, also Soviet Union would loan and provide designing, building and technical support to the parts of the dam (Ginat, 2000, p.165).

2.3. Arms Trade between Soviet Union and Syria from Cold War to 2019

Crucial development in the arms trade had emerged with Soviet Union as a major supplier. During the interwar years, Soviet Union's share of arms market had been insignificant. In WWII years, Soviet Union's global market share in arms trade was less than 6% of combat aircraft and tanks, and for 10% of armored personal carriers. That situation had changed by 1968, Soviet Union had become responsible for almost trading 30% of the combat aircraft, helicopters and submarines. Rise of the defense industry during the WWII and then progressive reconstruction of the Soviet economy had provided to enter the global arms market. In addition, after the war, the economic weaknesses of Britain, France and Italy that reduced their global roles, had created an opportunity for Soviet Union to increase the volume of the global arms trade. Also, the decolonization wave all over the world has bound with that situation. The newly independent states had become the potential client of the Soviet arms, since these states have considered the acquisition of the military power for transition from weakness to strength. After the abandonment of Stalin's Eurocentric policy and newly adopted global foreign policy under Khruschev and Brezhnev administration, arms

trade and military assistance had become a major instrument of competition between Soviet Union and US in the Third World States (Bennett, 1985; Menon, 1982).

Soviet Union had established a classification system of the Third World States in terms of their political importance according to Soviet foreign policy. That classification had included priorities on the level of interest and activity compared only between Third World States. According to the categorization system, Syria and the UAR had been a high degree of the political importance for the Soviet Union. With those, the close political and economic ties had been crucial to short-term and also long-term aims of the Soviet Union foreign policy. Efforts had aimed about to move the country towards political and economic trust on Soviet Union and excluding any Western influence (Moskoff & Benz, 1973). Through that policy, first arms trade agreement between Soviet Union and Syria had signed in 1954. In 1957, first economic aid had received to Syria about $63 million dollars (Samoylov, 2018).

Syria has been second largest recipient of Soviet arms till 1973 with $1.5 billion military aid from Soviet Union. First large arms aid has made in 1956, in particular after the Baghdad Pact in 1955. Syrian government had signed an agreement which had included to provide for a supply of reconditioned German tanks, 25 MIG-15 interceptors, 60 MIG-17 jets, some torpedo boats, armored personal carriers, certain light and medium tanks. From mid-1950's to 1960, Egypt had been number one of that trade by receiving $500 million in arms, Syria had been third by $200 million (Bennett, 1985; Laird, 1984). Before the Six Days War, arms transfer from Soviet Union had been more than $300 million. Aftermath of Six Days War, and finally in 1970, Syria had almost dependent on Soviet Union's arms. In that period, Soviet Union's major effort had been to resupply Egyptian and Syrian forces (Laird, 1984, p. 203). In between 1967 and 1970, Soviet Union had delivered to Syrian army about 300-400 tanks, over 100 armored personal carriers, 400 field guns, mobile rocket launchers, estimated 40 Surface-to-Air Missiles (SAM) and late-model MIG-21s and SU-7 fighter planes. This support had been more than replaced Syrian army's losses on Six Day War. In 1973, Soviet arms transfer to Syria had almost reached its peak level. From late 1972 to the outbreak of the Yom Kippur War, Syrian army had owned large quantities of weapons for allowing rebuilding and reorganization of 750 tanks, (mostly T-54/55 and a small quantity of T-62s), 100 artillery pieces as well as FROG-7 surface-

to-surface missiles which had capable for striking Israeli positions in the Galilee. Syrian air force had doubled MIG-21 combat aircraft from 100 to 200, 12 to 50 transport helicopters for increasing the capability of airborne transport, and increased air-defense capability with installation of 20 SA-3 and SA-6 SAM batteries (Bennett, 1985; Karsh, 1991; Pierre, 1982).

Within breakdown of Soviet Union-Egyptian relations in mid-1970's Syria had become the primary geopolitical actor in the region. Due to that situation, Soviet Union had aimed to provide significant arms transfer which has partially subsidized (Laird, 1984, p.206). During the first six months of 1973, Soviet shipments amounted to $185 million. Also, after the Yom Kippur War, arms transfer from Soviet Union to Syria had continued with a high rate. According to Israeli defense minister Shimon Peres, Syrian air force's strength had estimated 400 aircrafts, reaching 25% more than those during the Yom Kippur War. All tank losses during the Yom Kippur War had replaced by mostly modernized T-62 tanks. That arms trade has dropped dramatically with Syria's intervention to Lebanon (Beri, 1976). In 1975, modern weapons system had delivered to Syria which are MIG-23 aircraft and SCUD-B surface-to-surface missile launchers. Besides that expansion, Soviet military advisors had doubled from 1000 to 2000 personnel. From mid-1975 to the summer of 1979, another major arms transfer had occurred, Syrian army had received about 400 tanks (T-55s and T-62s), some 500 armored personal carriers, about 100 artillery pieces and a few FROG-7 and SCUD-B missile launchers. Syrian air force had also received 50 fighting aircraft and 20 SA-2, SA-3 and SA-6 air defense batteries to their inventory (Karsh, 1991, p.38). An important progress had also occurred while that arms transfer occurred, in 1976, Syria has attempted to reduce her dependence on Soviet Union. At the same year, a deal has concluded with France for delivery of helicopter and missile systems that worth $80 million (CIA-Report, 1976). In the summer of 1979, following the ratification of an Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty, Soviet Union had decided to improve and modernize Syria's military capabilities. That arms transfer was the largest when compared with the one which has made after the Yom Kippur War. Latest generation of Soviet weaponry, which had included T-72 tanks, 122 mm and 152 mm self-propelled guns, MIG-25 aircraft, MI-24 assault helicopters and SA-8 surface-to-air missiles. Till mid-1982, Syrian army had received about 1400 tanks (included 800 T-72s), about 2000

armored personnel carriers and about 1700 artillery pieces. Syrian air force had received about 200 combat aircraft, included 25 MIG-25's 30 SU-20/22s and unknown quantities of MIG-23 interceptors. Syrian air defense system had expanded and doubled 50 to 100 surface-to-air batteries. In addition, Syrian navy had received four OSA-2 missile boats. Also, Soviet military advisers had expanded 2000 to 2500 personnel (Karsh, 1991, p.39). Syria had become first non-communist state that received Soviet SA-5 and SA-8 SAM's (Laird, 1984, p.207). In addition, Syria had become first non-communist state that received most advanced version of the MIG-23 interceptor. MI-8's more advanced version MI-17 helicopter, additional SA-8, SA-9 SAM's and new electronic countermeasure equipment for jamming Israeli radars with more sophisticated command control systems has also added to Syria's military inventory (CIA-Report, 2011, May 27).

In the 1980s, Soviet Union had become responsible for 34% of the world's total arms trade, 70% to Third World States, in particular Arab Middle East. From 1976 to 1980, the value of the Soviet Union's arms trade had increased four times that any economic aid to the Third World States (Laird, 1984, pp.196, 197). According to Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) records, in between 1977 to 1980, total value of arms dealing between Soviet Union and Syria had been $2.311 billion (Pierre, 1982, p.133). In 1982 and first six months of 1983, the volume of Soviet military deliveries had increased dramatically and had reached peak levels due to 1982 Lebanon War. In 1982, based on CIA's observed shipments over Syria had amounted over $6 billion (CIA-Report, 2011, May 27). In 1984, Syrian army had received about 600 tanks, about 1000 armored personnel carriers and about 1000 artillery pieces. Soviet military advisor had reached to 3000 personnel. Syria's aerial and air defense had expanded with about 140 fighting aircraft, and about 70 extended range SA-5, SA-6 and SA-8 surface-to-air missile batteries. In 1984, military expansion and modernization had completed, arms transfer from Soviet Union had dropped dramatically. During these years, Syria had suffered economic decline, high weapon prices and reduced ability of other Arab oil states to subsidize Syria's military trade due to Syria's support to Iran during the Iran-Iraq War. Also, Syrian army's strength, which had had 500.000 personnel and reserve, had occurred huge drain to Syria's economy. Despite the enormous size of the Syrian army, Syria's armory could not

provide order. Such as, 2800 tanks out of 4000 was fully operational, rest of those had operated as static anti-tank weapons or had stored stockpiles (Karsh, 1991, pp.41-42). As late 1989 when Gorbachev administration had sworn, arms shipments from Soviet Union to Syria had dropped more than %50 according to 1985 shipments (Shad, Boucher and Reddish, 1995, p.88).

After the collapse of Soviet Union, arms trade volume had dramatically decreased to just $2 billion in 1992 compared to $22 billion in 1988. In 1996, Primakov's appointment to minister of foreign relations in Russia had created suitable conditions to military-technical cooperation with Arab States. As 1998, it has increased arms trade between Russia and Syria to $28 billion (Samoylov, 2018, pp. 81,83).

Russian military strategy has significantly revised with Putin's come to power in 2000. Many defense export corporations which were private and state-owned companies had merged as *Rosoboronexport*. With that step, states defense industry had serviced as the instrument of the Russia's foreign policy (Samoylov, 2018, p.83).

Bashar Assad's first visit to Moscow was in 2005, when a new arms deal had concluded. Limited number of MIG-29 and 8 MIG-31E intelligence gathering planes and some older generation air defense system had received. During President Medvedev's visit to Syria, supplying a nuclear reactor which would be game changer on the region has discussed but not concluded. However, Cornet-E antitank missiles, the *Pantsyr*-S1 air defense system had received. In 2011, *Yakhont* P-800 cruise missiles which have capable of deterring Israel and NATO forces in the Mediterranean had received (Magen, 2013).

Early years of the Syrian Civil War, Russia and Syria had concluded significant arms dealing agreement. Syrian army had expanded their arsenal with *Pantsyr-SE1* air defense system, short to medium range air defense systems and medium range *Buk-M2* systems. Russia had also supplied Syria with 9K317E *Telar* vehicles, which have been autonomous missile system, two Bastion systems with 72 *Yakhont* missiles (Crosston, 2014).

According to the literature and official and non-official sources, the economy of Syria primarily based on the military expenditures. As seen in the later years of Syria, these expenditures caused cracks in the Syrian economy. Due to lack of political

and economic engagements with West, isolation worsened that situation. While in the Cold War period and today, arms transfer is an important export revenue for Russia as well as the US. Rivalry between Warsaw Pact and NATO states and both parties weapon systems incompatibility had forced parties to choose only their alliances' weapons except a few exceptions. In terms of isolation and higher diplomatic ties of Syria with Russia, Syria had highly depended to Soviet arms on the Cold War period. Late years of the Cold War, this dependency had been about to end due to Soviet's weakness and new soft power policies. That situation had not continued longer. After the 9/11 period, western hostility and isolation to Syria had emerged again. Russia's new weapons systems had deployed to Syria in particular when the Syrian Civil War had begun. Russia sought an opportunity to test new weapons capabilities over Syria and advertising these systems for further foreign clients.

2.4. Soviet Union's Reactions on Arab – Israeli Wars

Since the 1950s Soviet Union's high influence over Syria and Egypt had pressured the US which pursued three objectives for additional deterrence policy on the Cold War's Middle East theater: containment of Soviet Union's expanding influence, assuring Israel's survival, and avoiding any further US-Soviet clash (Roucek, 1973).

Soviet Union did not want any conflict between Arabs and Israelis at the beginning. She had feared the loss of her Arab allies and hence risking Soviet and US confrontation. Soviet Union had considered that Israel's primary purpose had been an imminent assault and destroying the incumbent neo-Baath regime led by Giadid. In 1966-1967, US had significantly increased military and economic aid to Israel, that situation had easily interpreted by Soviet Union as Israel is a tool of US and instigating a coup in Syria that bring to power a pro-Western regime (McInerney, 1992, p.266). In response to the US' 6. Fleet's presence in the Mediterranean with aircraft carriers included planes which had the capability of the carrying nuclear weapons and submarines. This had changed Soviet Union's Mediterranean and Middle East policy. To get balance with US and for deterrence in 1967, Soviet Union had established her own Mediterranean fleet. Due to that situation, Soviet Union's need of exploitation of Egypt's and Syria's harbors had become more crucial. However, Soviet Union's naval

presence in Mediterranean had not changed the result of the Six Days War (Samoylov, 2018, p.43).

Before the Six Days War, Soviet Union had warned Arab allies about the Israel's intention to attack. Egypt had responded to that warning to send an army into the Sinai Peninsula (Zisser, 2017, p.548). According to Egypt, that warning had been an opportunity to focus on the need to defend her ally (McInerney, 1992, p.267).

Outbreak of the Yom Kippur War, Soviet Union experienced wide-scale Soviet military engagement in a local war. The other significant point of this war has been the evolution of Soviet-bloc intervention in Third World interstate wars. For the first time, Cuban forces had joined the service of Soviet foreign policy. After an armistice signed between Syria and Israel, two Cuban armored brigades had deployed to Syria equipped with Soviet tanks. In early 1974, followed by Egyptian-Israeli disengagement agreement, these forces had transferred to the front for reinforcing on the Hermon Mountain. Following the outbreak of hostilities in February 1974, Cuban forces directly engaged in that conflict. During this conflict, these forces had suffered a high rate of losses. They had remained Syria until they had transferred to Angola in the autumn of 1975 (Karsh, 1991, p.45).

2.5. Iran- Iraq War

In 1979, shah of Iran had overthrown with a revolution, the ideas of Ayatollah Khomeini inspired which. Iran transformed as Islamic Republic of Iran and called for spreading Islamic revolution in the Middle East. Iran's new vision had caused violation on 1975 Algiers Agreement. Kurds on the Northern Iraq had taken advantage to resuming their armed resistance against Saddam Hussein regime. Also, new government had refused to close borders to Kurds whom had been refugee. Another critical challenge between parties had, Khomeini's call to Iraq's Shiite's overthrowing Saddam Hussein and Baath regime. Saddam Hussein's suppression of disturbed Shiite's and execution of leading Shiite clergyman had raised tensions. Khomeini accused Iraqi regime with attacking Islam and Quran (Cleveland, 2016, August 2; Freedman, 1980).

Iraq had complexed situation throughout the war. Soviet Union has been the major arms supplier of Iraq, France had also involved with providing Mirage Jets and Super-Eternard war planes which had equipped with Exocet missiles. With restoration of US-Iraq relations in 1984, US had provided military intelligence to Iraq (Cleveland, 2019, pp. 535-536).

Syria's support for Iran in the Iran-Iraq War had weakened relations with conservative Arab countries. In 1986, they had cut financial aid to Syria, the 1978 Baghdad decisions had given what. During the Iran-Iraq War, Syria had closed Iraq's oil pipelines (Shad, Boucher and Reddish, 1995, p.86). Soviet Union's first response to that conflict had appeared neutral. However, broadcasts of Radio Moscow had signaled a tendency to Iran (Freedman, n.d., p.298).

Soviet Union had offered mediation for resulting the dispute between Iran and Iraq. Soviet Union's shuttle diplomacy between Iran and Iraq had not resulted, but Russia and Iran had improved economic relations, after the ceasefire agreement in 1988, Soviet Union had repeated her mediation offer but Iran had rejected again (Saivetz, 1989).

2.6. 1991 First Gulf War

Conflict between Iraq and Kuwait had emerged with strategic and economic reasons. First, as an outcome of the Iran-Iraq War, Iraq had suffered a crucial burden of debt about $60 billions of which had owed to Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. Iraq had put pressure on Kuwait for forgiving this debt, due to defense of the Arab Gulf states against Iran in the name of Arab brotherhood. Second, Iraq had accused Kuwait of extracting more than its share of oil from Rumeila oil field where he had existed on the borderline between Iraq and Kuwait. According to Iraq, Kuwait had stolen $2.4 worth of oil, what had belonged to Iraq since 1980s (Cleveland, 2019, pp. 552-553).

On August 2, 1990, Iraqi army had invaded Kuwait. Six days later, on August 8, Iraqi government had declared annexation of Kuwait as the nineteenth province of Iraq. Iraq's actions on Kuwait had raised tensions on the international arena and had resulted in Gulf War between US-led coalition forces against Iraq in between January and February 1991. Results of that war had been bitter for Iraq. It had devastated Iraq,

that war had caused crucial refugee problems, and it had emerged US as a superpower in the Middle East (Cleveland, 2019, p.551).

The year before the outbreak of the Gulf War, Syria had announced the establishment of full diplomatic relations with Egypt. After Syria had softened relations with Israel, Assad had pointed the President Carter's intention to talk to the Israel under undoubted conditions. Assad had joined the US led coalition against Iraq. By this way he had sent a message to West, since he had noticed that the Soviet Union's interest on Middle East had declined. Assad had moved pragmatically during that process for reducing Syria's isolation and rising Syria's reputation in the eyes of the Western states. Primarily, Syria had placed embargo and economic sanctions against Iraq on the eve of conflict, then troops had sent symbolically to Kuwait for backing Egyptian army, although they had never fought with Iraqi forces. Assad's attempts to change Syria's perception had resulted in financial awards by Saudi Arabia, for Syria's efforts to defeat Iraqis (Shad, Boucher and Reddish, 1995, pp.77-78). Syria had resulted $700 million in credits from Europe and Japan, over $2 billion in cash from Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States. In addition, Western States had lifted sanctions against Syria, US and Britain had improved their diplomatic relations (Gani, 2014; Shad et al., 1995).

Under Gorbachev's new political thinking about Soviet Union's cooperation with the US, he and his foreign minister Eduard Shevardnadze had supported the US-led coalition to liberate Kuwait. Soviet Union had sought that cooperation with them had been the great opportunity to party of the Arab-Israeli peace process. However, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia's interest of that process had significantly decreased (A. Stent, 2019, February 26).

2.7. Post-Cold War Relations

In the early 1980s, Syria had suffered an economic crisis, between 1985 and 1987 crisis peaked, and that situation had forced to cutback military expenditures. It had caused security deterioration in Syria; she had faced bombing assaults, coup

attempts, through 1986-1987. Foreign relations in Syria had been more positive. Israeli forces in Lebanon had completely withdrawn except limited forces left in some security zones in the area. Syria's influence in Lebanon regime had improved with support of the pro-Iranian Shiite extremist organization, Hezbollah (Karsh, 1991, p.164).

When Gorbachev had come to power, Soviet Union had begun to cut back both military and economic aid and declined her diplomatic support to Syria as well (Shad, Boucher and Reddish, 1995, p.88). In April 1985, Hafez Assad had visited Moscow and had noticed that there were new Soviet Union's policies on the table related to his country. In 1987, Gorbachev had told Assad that the Soviet Union had been outside the arms race between Arabs and Israelis, and Gorbachev had advised to Assad to abandon long-term aim of achieving strategic parity with Israel (Khasan, 1998). Gorbachev's preference on that decision aimed to ensure the rerouting Syria's military option, which was Syria's long-term *modus operandi*, into the continued support for the convocation of an international conference for peaceful settlement (Karsh, 1991, p.21).

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 had radically transformed her successor, Russia, to different economic and foreign policy aspects. This change had caused Third World States, which had close relations with Soviet Union, to forced to design new domestic and international policies to adapt to the new international system. Obviously, Syria was one of them. During that transformation period, Hafez Assad had followed a pragmatic policy and had found new alternative sources and partners. Also, he had strengthened Syria's position in the following events took place (Shad, Boucher and Reddish, 1995, pp.77-78).

When Bashar Assad had succeeded his father in 2000, he had made first official foreign visit to Moscow in 2005. Putin had greeted him warmly. Two leaders had signed a joint declaration of friendship and cooperation agreement. Russia had agreed to write off estimated 75% of Syria's debt from past, which was $9.8 billion. After that visit, Syria has viewed Russia as an important partner again while under the international isolation. From 2007 to 2010 arms deals between Russia and Syria had become to $4.7 billion (Stent, 2019, p.253; Magen, 2013, p.41).

2.8. 9/11 and Second Gulf War

On September 11, 2001, a major global crisis had occurred and eventually a threshold for the political level had been reached. 19 men, who later found as affiliated with Al-Qaeda, had hijacked four commercial airlines and had used as flying suicide bombs. One of those planes had crashed into the Pentagon, second had crashed into a field, last two planes had crashed World Trade Center. Aftermath of that attack, US President George W. Bush had declared a policy called "*the war against terrorism*" and targeted Al-Qaeda terrorist organization with supporter regimes and to bring justice to the organizers of the mass murderers. Al-Qaeda's main base had in Afghanistan and had ruled by former mujahideen, an "Anti-Soviet warrior" during Soviet's invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, Osama bin Laden. Aftermath of 1996-2000 Afghanistan Civil War, Taliban had taken control over most of the Afghanistan. In October 2001, US-led coalition had launched a great military campaign which had aimed toppling the Taliban regime, capturing bin Laden, and taught a lesson to other states that had supported terrorist organizations. While that campaign had begun, 37 states had sent either their troops or provided other means of assistance. Second phase of "war against terrorism" had begun in early 2002. Bush administration had shifted their aim to another country, Iraq, and her leader Saddam Hussein had declared most threatening source of terrorism. In the fall of 2002, UNSC had passed Resolution 1441. That resolution had advised the UN inspection teams to allowed in restricted sites requested to inspect for disclosing weapons of mass destruction, if present. Later weeks, although UN inspection teams had found nothing, any evidence of the existence of any biological and chemical weapons programs, the US had insisted these programs had been a grave danger to the US and its allies. On March 20, 2003, Operation Iraqi Freedom had begun with US-led coalition with massive air bombing. Within 3 weeks, US-led coalition had secured all key oil facilities and had entered Baghdad. This was just a beginning of problems and had pulled a pin of grenade on Iraq. anti-US insurgency had begun to emerge, Iraqis had disturbed in presence of foreign troops on Iraqi soil. Besides lack of security and unemployment, ironfisted approach against Iraqis, former Baathists and the disbanded Iraqi Army's well trained and armed personnel had become new enemies. In 2004, the Jordanian jihadist Abu Musab al-Zarqawi had created a new al-Qaeda branch called al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI)

which had later the crucial role of lethal sectarian violence. At the beginning, AQI had targeted and killed US-led forces and UN staff. That situation changed in February 2007 by bombing of golden-domed Askariyya shrine in Samarra, one of the Shia's holiest places. US had responded to extent US forces in Iraq and organizing Sunni tribal leaders to work together against AQI. While violence had continued with full speed, a new constitution and new political system had formed in Iraq. New political system had followed with great disputes, Shia and Kurdish leaders had consolidated their power while Sunni population felt marginalized increasingly. In Northern Iraq, where the estimated 5 million Kurds had settled, had consolidated autonomous rule. Kurdish regional government based in Arbil, on larger oil fields in Iraq, and had increased tension with Iraqi central government. According to the central government, Baghdad had been the sole authority for disposing and operating resources. Failed and inadequate administration under the first Shia prime minister Nuri al-Maliki, lack of rule of law, with situations even worsened than Saddam Hussein regime, had caused systematic marginalization of the Sunni community in Iraq. That later had resulted in the rise of Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) (Cleveland, 2016, August 2; Fisk, 2015, September 20).

Assad had sent a cable to US President Bush offering his condolences. On that cable, Assad had stated, "condemned the terrorist attacks that targeted innocent civilians and vital centers in the United States." Also, he had called in the radio broadcast for "international cooperation to eradicate all forms of terrorism and guarantee the protection of basic human rights, notably the right humans to live in security and peace, whatever they are." Some reports had proved that Syria had conducted a joint investigation to al-Qaida and its associated persons with the US. In 2002, according to some reports, Syria had assisted to provide information to one of the key figures of the 9/11, Muhammad Hayder Zammar (Lesch, 2005).

One year later, while the US-led coalition's invasion to Iraq, Syria and the US relations had deteriorated. Syria had accused of costing and not saving American lives. As a result of the developed a rift between Syria and the US, due to Syrian army's presence in Lebanon and claimed development of weapons of mass destruction, failed Madrid and Oslo peace processes between Syria and Israel, the US' marginalization to Syria had begun (Lesch, 2005, pp.165-166).

As after effects of the 9/11 attacks, Putin had sought an opportunity to offer the partnership to US to the fight against terrorism. Putin had been the first leader to call George W. Bush after the 9/11, and had reassured support for NATO's antiterrorism campaign over Afghanistan, had accepted establishment of US military bases on Central Asia and providing vital intelligence. Russia has expressed that the antiterror fight a twenty-first-century version of the anti-Hitler coalition (Stent, 2019, p.285).

Sharp changes of the US foreign policy in 2002 had changed Russia's opinion. US' unilaterally withdraw from Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, US support to color revolutions in Russia's neighbors, Baltic states' join to the NATO and finally US-led coalitions' invasion to Iraq had sought hostility (Stent, 2020, p.286).

Russia has calculated, invasion of Iraq could destabilize southeastern neighbors and has caused to fuel extremism and terrorism. Due to that, Russia had joined "coalition of unwilling" in opposing a UN resolution which had included authorizing the use of force against Iraq. Putin had declared that military campaign was illegal and accused the US and her allies of replacing international law to "the law of the fist" (Stent, 2020, p.249).

CHAPTER 3
ARAB SPRING AND SYRIAN CIVIL WAR

3.1. The Islamic Opposition and The Route to The Syrian Civil War

3.1.1. History of the Islamic opposition in Syria

Since Baath regime had taken power in 1963, there had been minor outbreaks of Islamic-inspired protests against it. In 1976, that situation had raised again with a series of attacks against government and party members, in particular, who had belonged to Alawite sect. In late 1970s antiregime forces had concentrated their attacks through guerrilla warfare. Various militant organizations had established an Islamic Front and had declared aim of overthrowing Baath, then establishing an Islamic regime in Syria. In particular, Islamic Front had targeted Hafez Assad's Alawite origins and had exposed him as heretic. Security forces had made hundreds of arrests, but it had not suppressed the spread of violation. Muslim Brotherhood (MB or *Ikhwan al-Muslimun*) had disturbed secularist nature of the Baathist regime, caused economic difficulties and corruption. Also, Iranian Revolution in 1979 had fueled and inspired MB movement on how an Islamic regime had overthrown by any tyrannical and non-Islamist regime event including Shiites (Lesch, 2005, p.44). First landmarked sectarian attack from MB had occurred in 1979. MB had attacked to the Aleppo Artillery School and had killed between 32 and 83 cadets. According to some sources, MB militants had selected in particular Alawite cadets spared from Sunnis (Wimmen, 2016). In 1980, Islamic Front had attacked to government installations in Damascus and protest movements had evolved to full-scale rebellion. In February 1982, Islamic Front had seized control of parts of the city of Hama and had called all Syrians to join in a jihad against Baath regime. Syrian government forces had responded with heavy artillery to old urban quarters where rebels had settled. Tanks had demolished whatever had remained after artillery shell. Entire districts had razed and turned to dust. That operation had lasted two weeks (Cleveland, 2016, August 2; Freedman, 1980; Hinnebusch & Zintl, 2014). For the Syria side, Bashar Assad had stated these days with the entire story in interview:

> *"Syria has had a great deal of experience with Muslim Brothers. We know how to deal with them. The first conflict with them was in 1964 in Hama, but real conflict started in 1976, when they began to assassinate teachers in universities, doctors, and others. Between 1976 and 1977 we were not sure who was doing this because we thought it might be the Palestinians since we intervened in Lebanon on the side of the Christians in 1976. But we soon found out it was the Muslim Brothers, and my father negotiated with them to possibly become part of the government. They did not say no, but they said they wanted to discuss it. But they kept on killing while they were thinking about it. In the end they did not want to share power -they wanted to take power, and they wanted to transform Syria into an Islamic republic. It took us three years between 1976 and 1979 to understand their ideology- what do they want and how do they think. And there were many Syrians who were sympathetic to them because they were viewed as real Muslims. But they were not for Islam, and the people were naïve to think they were. So, we began the conflict with them in 1979; if we started in 1976, we may not have been as successful. It was a difficult time, much worse than when Nasser was confronted by Muslim Brothers, because my father was not as strong as Nasser was at the time, and we were besieged and somewhat isolated in the region"* (Lesch, 2005, p.45).

3.1.2. Events on the Post-Hafez Assad Era

In 2000, Hafez Assad had died, his second elder son, Bashar Assad, had sworn as new president of Syria. With Bashar Assad's positive inaugural speech, Syrians had expected new crucial reforms through Syria. In particular, dissenting inside Syria and exiled opposition movement such as Muslim Brothers. On September 27, 2000, the majority of intellectuals had issued an open letter for ending martial law which had been in effect since 1963, releasing political prisoners, allowing exiled Syrians to return home and freedom of expression and press. That action had begun short term movement called Damascus Spring. Government had responded these demands with releasing 600 political prisoners and allowing to release first privately owned newspaper, however, it had suspended in 2003. On April 21, 2001, these positive steps had pushed back. Bashar Assad had continued to press on dissents. Fate of the Damascus Spring had begun to change with the hunger strike of an Independent Member of Parliament, Mamoun al-Homsi. He had protested arbitrary actions of the government and had demanded rule of law, formation of a human rights committee in parliament, independence of judiciary and temporary suspension of the *Mukhabarat* (Syrian Military Intelligence Directorate). He and other 9 leaders of the movement had arrested and sentenced to prison (Ghadbian, 2015).

Second dissent movement had mobilized after the US-led coalition's invasion to Iraq in 2003. Estimated 250 activists and unionists had demanded similar demands of the Damascus Spring, the release of political prisoners, the end of the martial law and stalling roles of *Mukhabarat*. On March 8, 2004, which was the anniversary of the 1963 Baath coup, activists and dissents had begun to protest in front of the Syrian parliament. Protestors had demanded for an end of martial law. Security forces had detained most of the protestors. A few days later, security forces had intervened in Qamishli region for oppression of the Syrian Kurds. Hundreds of Kurdish Syrians had beendetained, estimated twenty-four people had killed (Ghadbian, 2015, pp. 94-95).

On April 4, 2005, Muslim Brothers had issued a new platform, the Atasi Forum, and had requested the same demands of the previous protests and had added drafting a new constitution that resolves the monopoly of power by Baath Party. One month later, security forces had shut down the Atasi Forum and arrested the board member Ali al-Bayanouni. In March 2006, former vice president of Syria, Adbul Halim Khaddam, had founded a new opposition group, the Syrian National Salvation Front (NSF) which had included the members of the MB, some leftists, liberals, Syrian Kurds and independent dissents (Ghadbian, 2015, pp. 95-97).

3.2. Arab Spring

3.2.1. How it began?

On December 17, 2010, a young fruit salesman named Muhammed Bouazazi had set himself a region afire for protesting against the corrupted economy of Tunisia and refused to pay a bribe to local police. That one-man protest had spread out for a short time to nationwide protests. Even Tunisian government had ordered police to suppress growing protests, but it had only caused to spread more. State media had censored that protest, protestors had used their cellphones, took pictures and uploaded to the Internet. In addition, some satellite TV channels had broadcasted these protests to whole Arab World. These protests had fruited on January 14, 2011, President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali had departed from Tunisia and had taken refuge in Saudi Arabia. Protests and Ben Ali's departure had shaken whole Middle East, as well as the rest of

the world. The domino effect in Middle East had begun. Autocratic regimes on Egypt, Libya and Yemen had fallen at the end of 2011 (Cleveland, 2019, pp. 642-643).

3.2.2. Syria and Arab Spring

During Arab Spring waves had continued, Syria had appeared to be immune from this hectic situation. In February 2011, some schoolboys who has living in the Syrian border town Derra, had decided to play a prank and had sprayed the slogan "The people want the downfall of the regime" on their school's wall. These schoolboys were then had arrested and beaten. Their families protested these arrests and Syrian government had responded with firing upon them. Meanwhile, in Libya, brutal execution of Gaddafi had sparked an anger in entire Arab world, protests in Syria, and it elaborated eventually all into the civil war (Cleveland, 2019, pp.654-655; Stent, 2020, p.250).

3.2.3. Russia and Arab Spring

Russia had distanced herself from affected States during the Arab Spring at the beginning. But Putin had signaled some positive affirmations about Arab Spring. He had argued that social dynamics resulting in the Arab Spring were both positive and necessary, and the "sympathies of Russians were on the side of those struggling for democratic reforms" (A. Stent, 2016). Despite Putin's soft arguments about Arab Spring, Kremlin had argued that this was no Arab Spring, but an Arab winter. Arab spring and color revolutions had caused brought down long-serving autocrats and fundamentalist groups about the rise. That situation made Russia anxious and potentially a threat for some implications for Russia's own Muslim population (Stent, 2019, p. 250). Moscow had realized that most of the states which had overrun by the Spring irreversibly changed, but they had not chosen to join Western based democratization. Due to West's foreign policy on Libya, Russia's attitude has carried another dimension. UNSC resolution in 1973 which had included the declaration of Libya air territory as no-fly zone, permission of any action to protect the civilian population and preserving the territory they occupied. Then, excluding the introduction of occupying forces in resolution had become the motivation of military support to insurgents and caused regime change, then fragmentation of Libya. Russia's

skeptical attitude to Islamists rooted back to Cold War years, while US had supported Saudi Arabia and other Persian Gulf states, which had been strong Islamic traditions. Russia had supported secular Arab regimes just like Nasser's Egypt, UAR, Baathist Syria, Iraq and Arafat's PLO. During the war in Afghanistan in 1979, Persian Gulf states had sponsored Mujahedeen, the same support had continuously resumed for the anti-Russian forces in the Chechnya and Kosovo crisis. In addition to sponsors, the direct involvement of Middle Eastern terrorist organizations had occurred in Chechenia, Dagestan and Tajikistan. The best-known commanders recognized in the world had come from Saudi Arabia: Huttab, Abu al-Walid, Abu Amar, Abu-Haws and others who had provided contract with Osama bin Laden and Al Qaeda. Their cooperation against Russia had begun in Afghanistan than had continued in Tajikistan and Chechnya. These experiences had oriented Russia's foreign policy establishment to negative or suspicious view to any radical Islamist forces. As a consequence of that, later events in Arab Spring had called for Islamist Autumn. External factor of the Russia's skepticism about Arab Spring had been by virtue of the Western influence. For Russia, West's specific foreign policy agendas and conceptual ideological programs had been part of the "Greater Middle East" plan. According to Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, "the Arab Spring was the harvest of seeds sown by George W. Bush" and he had added later:

"The slogans of change and democratization were not agreed by the countries of the region. We have seen a lifetime of revolutions and firmly insist that any changes take place by evolution, resting on the desires of the peoples themselves. The fact that the peoples of the Middle East and North Africa, just like the peoples in the other part of the world, want a better life, want to be respected as citizens in their own states – this is absolutely natural, and we actively support these ambitions. When the "Arab Spring" started to happen, this is what we stated. At the same time, we strongly urge external factors to obey the principle of -do not harm.-" (A. Stent, 2019, February 26).

For the Russian perspective, beginning of the events from Saddam Hussein's being overthrown and being executed, the lack of evidence of weapons of mass destruction or evidence of Iraq's links with Al Qaeda, later 2006-2007 inter-ethic civil war over Iraq, emergence of terrorism, collapse of Iraqi economy, mass civilian refugee waves, *de facto* fragmentation of Iraq and Shiite-Sunni tension had caused the

birth of the ISIS. All of these events had demonstrated dangers and harms of the foreign intervention (Vysotsky, 2014)

3.3. Syrian Civil War: The Beginning of the Apocalypse and The Characteristics of The Syrian Civil War

While Syrian uprising had evolved to civil war, that had become to proxy warfare due to regional rivalries and power-political disputes (Hughes, 2014). Proxy warfare means being or involved in a conflict against a common adversary or target by the supporting states or sponsors and non-state proxies (Hughes, 2014, p.523). According to this definition, State sponsors against Assad government known as Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Turkey, Jordan, US, Britain, France and other Western governments. In particular, western and Gulf states have provided small arms to various rebel groups in Syria. These states have provided anti-tank missiles like Russian-made Kornet or, the most expensive, the American Javelin, and man-portable air defense systems (MANPADs) to overcome Assad's army's armored vehicles and therefore controlling the Syria's airspace (Hughes, 2014, p.527).

Proxy war is an effective strategy for states or certain groups since the early ages. That strategy has dramatically elevated on the Cold War period. Soviet Union and the US had used the proxies for different aims on states in the name of ideological rivalry. When the Syrian civil war has begun, shortly after the first conflicts, states proxies, in particular western friendly ones, and western private military companies have been on the field. Yes, it is a civil war, but not just for Syrians.

3.4. Internal Actors in the Syrian Civil War

3.4.1. Assad regime supporters

Assad is controlling all core elements of military and internal security institutions, despite some defects existed on Sunni-Arab majority (Martini, York and

Young, 2013, p.3). In early 2012 to 2013, Assad has organized fragmented militias under the name of the National Defense Forces (NDF). Iran Revolutionary Guards have equipped and trained NDF militants. At the end of 2013, NDF had grown to estimate 100.000 militias (Erlich & Chomsky, 2014).

3.4.2. The opposition and terrorist organizations

3.4.2.1. Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS)

Islamic State of Iraq in the Levant, ISIS, or *Da'esh* in Arabic, is the most extremist and dangerous Islamist group in Syria region, as well as rest of the World. It was headed by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi from Iraq and linked with al-Qaeda. That group had formed in Iraq, as ISI, after the US-led coalition's invasion in 2007 with oppositions of ultra-right-wing movement. After the US Army's withdraw from Iraq in 2011, Maliki government tried to monopolize power upon central government, due to that, many Sunni groups had alienated. Wrong policies had caused ISI has resurrected. Aftermath of the Arab Spring, ISI has snatched to Syrian uprising, turned to armed conflict and spread out to Syria, and changed its name to the ISIS. ISIS, funded from wealthy gulf states' businessmen, has begun taxing Syrians on its own controlled areas, funded their arsenal with smuggling and ransom money. ISIS has aimed about four points. The first was the conquest of large areas of Iraq and Syria, and the second was demanding obedience from Salafi Jihadist groups in the region. ISIS had succeeded in that aim. Certain groups in the Sinai Peninsula, Libya, Algeria, Yemen, Saudi Arabia and Nigeria have declared allegiance to the ISIS and recognized al-Baghdadi as a caliph of Muslims. Third aim was seizing control of all Muslim states that has bordered Syria and Iraq, including Saudi Arabia, Jordan, the Gulf States and Turkey. Fourth aim was calling and controlling whole Muslim/Arab world, struggling against the West and then rising with the global conquest (Dekel, Boms, & Winter, 2016).

In 2013, ISIS had merged with al-Nusra. Both of them have declared a transnational Islamic state governed by Shariah law in its own controlled areas, opposed by criminality and corruption. They had tried to manipulate Syrians to sell

bread at below black-market prices. End of 2013 to beginning of 2014, ISIS and al-Nusra cooperation had deteriorated. Al-Nusra had criticized ISIS's sectarianism and ISIS' aim to dominate the entire movement. In February 2014, ISIS and al-Nusra had split completely (Erlich, 2014, pp.98-99; Cleveland, 2019, pp. 634-635).

After 9/11, with growing Islamophobia in the West has resulted in alienation in Muslim communities. That situation has motivated Muslim youth to join ISIS and other jihadist militants. On the other hand, ISIS had been an effective on the internet, it had applied many social media campaigns as well as internet forums for reaching a foreign audience. As a result of that many foreigners from rest of the world had joined ISIS campaign even if they had been non-Muslim previously (Basit, 2014).

3.4.2.2. Free Syrian Army (FSA)

FSA is the opposition group has formed in July 2011 with defectors from Assad's army. That is the armed wing of the Syrian National Coalition and its successor, the National Coalition for Revolutionary and Opposition Forces. After a while FSA established group has begun with targeted assassinations. First major battle of FSA was attacking to the Harasta Air Force Intelligence base near Damascus. With the bombing of an important security complex in Kafr Soueah Square in Damascus had caused killing of both soldiers and civilians in December 2011, and this had triggered armed struggle to replace the mass demonstrations and finally have resulted in a civil war. Supporters of the FSA are the US, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Qatar. The US has provided $15 million valued medical supplies and communications equipment once. Then, the US has provided weapons, in particular Anti-Tank Guided Missiles (ATGM), to the FSA with the control of CIA due to complaints of rebels. Later years the CIA had established a program for focusing the training of the defectors of Assad's army (Erlich, 2014, pp.90-95).

3.4.2.3. Jaysh al-Islam (Army of Islam)

Jaysh al-Islam has formed in 2013 on the Damascus area with a merging of fragmented militias. Leader of that opposition group is Zahran Alloush, son of Sheikh

Abdullah Mohammed Alloush, who respected religious scholar. Al-Islam is funded by Saudi Arabia and one of the radical extremist groups led by Iran and Shia Muslims (Erlich, 2014, p.95).

3.4.2.4. Ahrar al-Sham

That militia, also called as Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), has founded in 2011 by ultraconservative former politicians and mainly existed in Idlib province in northwestern Syria next to the Turkish border. Al-Sham's leaders, Hassan Aboud and Abu Khalid al-Suri, who were the longtime member of the Al-Qaeda. That group has funded by ultra-right-wing religious leaders in Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and some wealthy members of the Muslim Brotherhood. But in 2012, relations with the Muslim Brotherhood had broken due to political and ideological reasons. Al-sham has joined with other conservative groups and formed the Islamic Front which against both FSA, al-Nusra and the Islamic State of Iraq and al-Sham (Erlich, 2014, pp. 96-97).

HTS is the largest non-ISIS extremist group in Syria. It has been effective in controlling over largest portion of Idlib and formed a government named "Salvation Government". In February 2018, Hurras al-Din has formed as a part from HTS. However, Hurras al-Din and HTS have had crucial leadership disputes about strategies over Syria, they are cooperating. Unlike HTS, foreign fighters are most of the Hurras al-Din and focuses on external attacks over Syria (SSG, 2019, September).

3.4.2.5. Jahbat al-Nusra (The support front for the people of Levant)

Jabhat al-Nusra has formed, funded and armed directly by an al-Qaeda affiliate in Iraq. Al-Nusra had led by Abu Mohammad al-Jolani, who had previously fought with the US and al-Maliki government in Iraq. In December 2012, the US put al-Nusra to on its list of terrorist organizations due to links with al-Qaeda. At the beginning, al-Nusra had fought with FSA together. Later, some criticisms had emerged by rebels about al-Nusra links with al-Qaeda. Rebels had frightened for harming sectarianism and rebel cause. As a result of this situation, al-Sham had to break up from al-Nusra (Erlich, 2014, pp.96-97).

3.4.2.6. The Syrian Kurds

The United States has cooperated with the Syrian Kurds as her proxy with "by win, and through" policy. In September 2014, the US had sent a small group of US special forces to Syria to train Syrian Kurds in the northeast Syria. From August 2014 to March 2019, the US and Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) had cleared over twenty thousand square miles of ISIS-held territory. US officials have described their cooperation as tactical, temporary and transactional. Although the US has never officially supported for Kurdish autonomy or other means of self-rule in Syria, the YPG has leveraged strategic and tactical support from the US to establish civilian governance with the political wing. The areas across from the Democratic Union Party (PYD,Partiya Yekîtiya Demokrat) liberated from ISIS (Aftandilian, 2018; SSG, 2019, September)

3.4.3. External Actors in the Syrian Civil War

3.4.3.1. Russia

Russia's return to the Middle East, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, is one of the major success of Vladimir Putin. He has restored old Soviet ties and new ones. While in Soviet times, client states had chosen on ideological grounds. Today Russian foreign policy is more pragmatic and nonideological (Stent, 2020, p.243). According to Vyacheslav Nikanov, Duma member and grandson of Soviet foreign minister Vyascheslav Molotov is describing the aim of Russia as, "Our main aim in Syria is to make sure that our citizens who went there to fight with ISIS never come back. For Russia, intervention in the Middle East is a matter of defending our own security. All the rest are details" (Stent, 2020, p.242).

Primarily, Russia and Iran are currently supporting Baath regime for different interests. According to Russia, Syrian Civil War is a great opportunity for the motivation of her own concerns for global positioning, maintaining global diplomatic significance. Also, it's a kind of showroom for commercial weapon sales, since all new military products are currently testing in Syria. Another aspect of Russia's support is unlike US and Western States, Russia has a unique perspective on the Radical

Islamism for long lasted bloody conflict in the Chechenia region. According to Russia, Arab Spring has contained as a potential "Great Islamist Revolution." New regimes which had formed after the Arab Spring in Egypt, Tunisia, Yemen and Libya had provided none democratic demands and stability affirmed Russia's skepticism (Crosston, 2014).

Russia has followed crucial foreign policy measures at the beginning of that conflict in favor of the Assad Regime. Putin had suppressed any attempts at taking a solid position against Assad Regime on the international arena. West's attempts about overthrowing Assad also had failed. At the end of the day, European leaders came to Putin for influencing Syria is a victory and Russia has gained position itself as a center of diplomacy in Syrian Civil War. While West had been criticizing Assad regime about lack of democracy and human rights, Russia had been more skeptical. Russia believes that Syria's position is messier than West's view and more prone to any unpredictable escalation. Russia has warned other powers against any attempts at trying to turn Syria into another Libya catastrophe. The key message of Russia on early stage was, Syrians decided to fate of Syria themselves, the only solution was national dialogue and talks between Syrian authorities and opposition. Assad's presence was not be any precondition of these talks. The US' point of view was, the civil war would end only Assad was no longer in power and opposed Russia's any intervention over Syria (Vysotsky, 2014, p.59; Stent, 2020, p.254; Crosston, 2014, p.98). Putin has justified Russia's entry with these words, "The collapse of Syria's official authorities will only mobilize terrorists. Right now, instead of undermining them, we must revive them, strengthening state institutions in the conflict zone" (Stent, 2020, p.254).

Expelling Damascus from Arab League and Arab states' criticization of Russia's support to Syrian government in 2012 had become challenging situations between parties. Syrian government had insisted two of the Arab League members, Saudi Arabia and Qatar, have supporting terrorism in Syria. During that talking some harsh talks had occurred between Qatar and Russia, Russia's envoy had responded Qatar's prime minister's criticism with these words, "If you speak to me in that kind of tone again, the place we call Qatar won't be on the map any longer tomorrow." Aftermath of that threat, Qatar and Turkey have signed disclosed military cooperation agreement (Hürriyet, 2012, July 03; Malashenko, 2013).

Wind has changed its direction in February 2013, First Russian- Arab Forum has held in Moscow and Arab League envoys has joined. Secretary General of the Arab League Nabi al-Arabi has expressed that the Arab League and Russia were seeking peaceful resolution in Syria and has added, Russia has been capable of persuading the Syrian government on this (Malashenko, 2013, p.13).

In September 2015, while Assad forces had suffered manpower crisis in the army, Russia and Iran had initiated massive military assistance to support Assad forces. Russia had loaned air base from Syria, put 34 Russian combat aircraft and approximately 4.500 troops to Khmeimim at Latakia region (Petrou, 2015, October 19; Rabi & Friedman, 2017). That intervention had affected on three points for Syria in the short term. First, that move has given the moral and military boost to Syria. Second, Russia had drafted a peace plan for a ceasefire between moderate opposition groups except ISIS, later it has discussed in Astana process, and the US' step up from military support of Syrian Kurds and her proxies. Last but not least, Putin's retaliation to a bomb attack on a Russian passenger plane that killed 224 people which had claimed by ISIS had occurred (Matthews, 2016, May 3).

In December 2017, Putin had visited to Khmeimim Air Base. He had hugged Bashar Assad and had declared victory against ISIS. Also, he had announced that some Russian troops would withdraw (Stent, 2020, p.242).

One of the major tactical benefit for Russia in the Syrian civil war is reopening Tartus Naval Base on the Syrian coast. As mentioned before, in the Cold war years Tartus Naval Base was the second important base after Alexandria base in Egypt. However, that naval base was less functional than in the Cold War years. Such as one of the three floating piers was fully functional, a repair vessel on loan from the Black Sea fleet, some warehouses and 50 personnel has staying on the naval base. In 2015, Russia had stated an interest in maintaining Tartus Naval Base. A plan has set up for major restoration of whole facility to allow Russian navy for permanent base on Mediterranean. According to some analysts, this logistics support point in Mediterranean has symbolizing Russia's geopolitical and geostrategic influence (Allison, 2013; Malashenko, 2013).

Russia's position in Syria should give the greater confidence above all. Syria's great sense of insecurity and isolation from West has become a great opportunity for

the access for the Russian arms and petroleum industries to Syria as well as increased diplomatic presence which has dealt for the Syrian crisis. Russia is not expecting any Syrian-US rapprochement soon, also Syria will not experience any democratic revolution which in favor of the West to mediate them. That situation provides Russia to remain the most influential player in the Syrian Crisis (Crosston, 2014, p.98).

3.4.3.2. Iran

Although Khomeini and other Iranian leaders have been a little common ideological perspective with Syria's Baath, Iran has supported Syria in the civil war. In February 2012, Iran had held an "Islamic Awakening" conference in Tehran. On that conference, Iran had sought as Syrian uprising as a Western conspiracy. Iranian president also had expressed that, "Today Syria, tomorrow your country."

Iranian leaders had declared that they support Assad regime against Israel, the US and the Sunni extremist factions. Also, Hezbollah had declared to provide armed support to Assad regime for protecting holy Shia shrines (Erlich, 2014, pp. 151-152).

In September 2015, besides Russian forces, Iran had also initiated military intervention. Iran had sent between 6.500 and 9.200 military and paramilitary personnel in Syria, including Iran's army's special forces (*Artesh*). Iran had also trained, recruited, paid and directly commanded thousands of Shia's from Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan to fight for behalf of the Assad regime (Rabi and Freidman, 2017, pp.433-434).

3.4.3.3. United States

Syria's stance in favor of the Russia during the Cold War years and anti-US orientation has implemented a decisive role in the US-Syria relations (Samoylov, 2018, p.121). Beginning of the Syrian uprising, Obama administration had blamed Russia for supporting Assad regime and had claimed support with Russian arms (Erlich, 2014, p.227).

On September 10, 2014, the US had taken a critical decision for the fate of Syria and ISIS. Three months after the ISIS had attacked Mosul, US President had declared, "Our objective is clear: We will degrade, and ultimately destroy, ISIL

through a comprehensive and sustained counterterrorism strategy." Besides this strategy, Obama had pointed four parts to his strategy. First, the US has been "conduct a campaign of systematic air strikes" through Iraq and Syria. Second, the US has increased their support "to forces in Iraq fighting these terrorists on the ground." In Syria, the US "ramped up its military assistance to the Syrian opposition" because it "cannot rely on an Assad regime that terrorizes its own people. Third, Washington would cut off the Islamic State's sources of funding and "stem the flow of foreign fighters into and out of the Middle East." And, fourth, the president said the US would "continue to provide humanitarian assistance to innocent civilians who have displaced by this terrorist organization" because it "cannot allow these communities to be driven from their ancient homelands" (Obama, 2014, September 10; Rabi & Friedman, 2017).

As a result of that, in August 2014, the US has authorized airstrikes in Iraq against the IS to protect Yazidi community of Sinjar (Shengal) in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI). In addition, the US has also increased support to Kurdish Peshmerga as well as Iraqi Security Forces (Rabi and Freidman, 2017, p.428). Significant partner of the US has found for fighting ISIS: Syrian Kurds. Beginning from the siege of Kobani in October 2014, the US has ultimately provided support to two major Syrian Kurds forces, The People's Protection Units or *Yekineyen Parastina Gel* (YPG) and the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF). That cooperation has become controversial for the US' long-term ally Turkey. Turkey has feared another *de facto* State along the southern border, same as Kurds had established in Northern Iraq (Rabi & Friedman, 2017; Samoylov, 2018).

3.4.3.4. Saudi Arabia

From the beginning of the uprisings in Syria, Saudi Arabia has been a major supporter of Sunni opposition, in particular Jihadi-Salafi groups. Saudi Arabia's involvement to the civil war has cooperated with other anti-Assad Arab states. Some reports have expressed that Saudi Arabia has financed and provided small arms and ant-tank TOW (Tube-launched, Optically tracked, Wire-guided Missiles) to opposition, in particular, FSA. Saudi Arabia has also involved US-led coalition's air

strike against ISIS, as well as trained and equipped opposition forces at camps in Jordan (Ellison, 2016).

CHAPTER 4

PEACE EFFORTS AND COLD WAR 2.0

In 2016, US Secretary of State Kerry and Russia's foreign minister Sergei Lavrov had held regular meetings to discuss resolving the conflict, but due to different opinions, it had not resulted. The US had insisted that Assad had to go, Russia said that Assad must remain in power and did everything about to secure this outcome. In 2017, Putin has summoned Assad to Sochi and has announced that the war is ending and Russia would sponsor peace talks to provide a political process and reconciliation over Syria and added, "We still have a long way to go before we achieve a complete victory over terrorists, but as far as our joint work in fighting terrorism on the territory of Syria is concerned, this military operation is indeed wrapping up" Next day of that meeting, Iran and Turkey's leaders has traveled to Sochi, had met with Putin to participate in these talks (Stent, pp. 255-256). In 2018, during the Helsinki summit, Putin and Trump have appeared to agree to work together in Syria (Dobbins, Philip Gordon, & Martini, 2017; A. E. Stent, 2014).

The US-led group which including Egypt, France, Germany, Jordan, Saudi Arab and United Kingdom are trying to revitalize Geneva process (SSG, 2019, September).

4.1. Geneva Peace Process

Geneva Peace Process has begun on June 30, 2012 as Geneva I and process had initiated in United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSC) 2254. This resolution included four main steps and all of these are stalled. In the political process, in mid-January 2016, talks between the government and the opposition would begin with the initial step toward a political transition. Nation-wide cease-fire would begin as parties take with the initial step toward a political transition. A new constitution would draft beginning from June 2016. Free and fair elections would hold in June 2017, which would supervise by United Nations (SSG, 2019, September).

Second round -Geneva II- talks had begun between January 22-31 2014. Although any agreements had not reached on these talks, for the first time Foreign

Minister of Syria, Walid Muallem and President of the SNC (Syrian National Council), Ahmad Jarba as behalf of the opposition had joined. Third round -Geneva III- talks had held on between April 13-27 2016. After seven indirect meetings between parties. Syrian government had insisted acceptance of her own proposal until a new constitution had drafted and a new government had established. Opposition had suspended to join directly to Geneva III due to violence in Syria. After four meetings between parties, no agreements had reached again.

4.2. Astana Peace Talks

Indirect talks between Syrian opposition and Syrian government representatives have opened Astana region in Kazakhstan at Jan 23 2017. These talks had sponsored by Russia, Turkey and Iran. Moscow had invited all the opposition fighting groups except ISIS and HTS (Wintour, 2017, January 23). On the first round, Astana-1, parties had discussed three key topics, initiating the ceasefire which had announced on December 30, 2016. The parties demanded that Russia, Turkey and Iran to control of the ceasefire and discussing establishment of a mechanism which had accepted both parties to prevent any further conflicts. Second, opposition had demanded to separate between opposition and ISIS and Jabhat al-Nusra, and the last, to prove the parties who sought a solution they have fought terrorism in Syria (Onjanov, 2018, p.149). Significant result of that meeting was, mentioned in annex-1.1, establishing a tripartite mechanism which included Russia, Iran and Turkey's providing and supervising the ceasefire, maintaining peace and avoid any kind of provocation (Onjanov, 2018; Wintour, 2017, January 23).

Astana-2 talks held on February 15-16, 2017 with participation of Russia, Iran, Turkey, Syrian government, opposition, UN and the US delegations. Main topics of Astana-2 talks were, to protect ceasefire in Syria, to pass regulation of the joint operation group, to ensure the continuation of the ceasefire control mechanism and sanctioning system against the party who violated ceasefire and to form workgroup between Syrian government and opposition groups in demand of the proposal of Russia to draft a new constitution. At the end of Astana-2 talks guarantor states -Russia, Iran and Turkey- accepted regulation of the joint operation group. That regulation included to provide the separation of opposition groups and terrorist groups

from each other and taking confidence-building measures to solve the Syria question politically. Also, guarantor states agreed that the parties should constantly consult on the issue of ensuring the compliance with the ceasefire and to open an investigation the parties who violated the ceasefire (Onjanov, 2018, pp. 158-159).

Astana-3 talks held on 14-15 April 2017. Opposition groups have not attended on the second round of these talks due to failure to comply with Russia's commitment to halt air strikes upon opposition groups as well as terrorist groups. According a to joint declaration of Astana-3 talks, Russia, Iran and Turkey is the official guarantor states to ensure control of the ceasefire, negotiations in Astana conducts great importance, in terms of the progress of the Geneva process and its expansion of the scope and consensus reached on the next meeting held on 3-4 June 2017 (Onjanov, 2018, pp. 161-163).

Fourth round of Astana talks' time shifted due to a chemical attack to Khan Shaykhun in Idlib district. None of the parties officially took responsibility about that attack, Syrian government and opposition have accused each other. The US has responded that attack with launch of 60 tomahawk missiles to the military airport in Humus controlled by Syrian government. Most of the Syrian air force plane has severely damaged. In the shadow of these events, Astana-4 held at 3-7 May 2017. Establishing de-escalation zones have discussed at that talks and accepted by guarantor states and Syrian government. According to memorandum at annex-2.1, de-escalation zones have established in Idlib and certain parts of Latakia, Hama, Aleppo, north of Homs, eastern Ghouta and south parts of Syria. Opposition has objected to that plan, they have believed that was a temporary solution, has not maintained peace in Syria (Onjanov, 2018, pp. 165-172).

Actually, all of these efforts are not providing a permanent solution in Syria. For instance, any attempt to a ceasefire did not last longer. Since all of these parties are not participating in the process and every rebellion group or terrorist group has their own different fractions and these fractions are shifting sides day by day, it is very difficult to establish a long-lasting solution. Sometimes, due to the clash of interests between their leaders, rebel groups are fighting each other. In conclusion, many different variables exist. Second, even UN is not willing for resolving the Syrian question, same as long-termed Cyprus question. It is arranging discrete events,

assembling with different topics, but in reality, these are not constructive. Also, the weak point of the UN and UNSC system, animosity of the UNSC permanent members and its unique plans over Syria is creating challenging situation.

4.3. Cold War 2.0?

Fall of the Berlin Wall on November 9, 1989 had triggered ending process of the Cold War. Mikhail Gorbachev's positive messages about cooperation with the US had welcomed with Western leaders cautiously. According to them, even some problematic issues had still existed, they had praised to come out the Cold War period. One of the major problematic issues has emerged after thirty years later. Both parties have estimated 14.000 nuclear weapons about 1.800 is still on hair-trigger alert (Heuvel, 2019).

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 had changed Russia's and the US' international status dramatically. Russia had lost her global power race against the US and had faced a huge economic crisis in early years of the collapse. Middle East has always been a region where Russia and as well as the US have attempted to prove its great power status. When Primakov had appointed as foreign minister in 1996, Russia has attempted to strengthen its ties with the Middle East (İsmayılov et al., 2013).

In 2007, Putin had attended his first Munich Security Conference, which was the most influential in other security conferences around the world. A year before the US Vice President Dick Cheney had criticized Russia's domestic system and Russia's relationship with neighbors in Lithuania. Putin has responded these arguments on Munich Security Conference with this speech only targeted the US: It is a world in which there is one master, one sovereign. And at the end of the day this is pernicious not only for all those within the system but also for the sovereign itself because it destroys itself from within. And this certainly has nothing in common with democracy… Incidentally, in Russia we were constantly being taught about democracy. But for some reason teach us to do not want to learn themselves" (Monaghan, 2015; A. Stent, 2019, February 26). President Putin has also blamed an unipolar world for "an almost contained hyper use of force –military force--- in international relations… that is plunging the world into an abyss of permanent conflicts," and he has concluded "One state and, of course, first and foremost the US,

has overstepped its national borders in every way" (Dadak, 2018, November 27; The Washington Post, 2007, February 12).

After the Soviet Union had collapsed, newly established Russian Federation had inherited most of the Red Army's military inventory, included approximately %50 percent of all nuclear weapons in the world. Russia is investing heavily in upgrading her nuclear arsenal for any global confrontation (Dadak, 2018, November 27).

Russia has also taken some significant steps against the US, Russia's strategic bombers are patrolling again in both US coasts, also Russian navy is conducting exercises in the Caribbean coast just like old Cold War years. Russia is investing heavily in upgrading her nuclear arsenal for any global confrontation. Furthermore, in August 2008 the short-term war had occurred in Georgia. Two major reasons resulted that conflict were South Ossetia and Abkhazia where had included Russian majority, had declared their independence from Georgia, Georgia had claimed that they had been part of her. Second and more crucial reason was deteriorated relationship between Putin and pro-Western president Mikhail Saakashvili. Saakashvili had sought NATO and the EU (European Union) membership. Russia had launched a military operation between South Ossetia and Georgia on August 8, one day later on August 9, Abkhazia. On August 12, the ceasefire agreement had reached and Putin had destroyed pro-Western Saakashvili's credibility. Later, Putin has made a coherent message to counterparts about Georgia: "You were warned about pushing for NATO membership and trying to regain Abkhazia and South Ossetia by force; you didn't listen. Your Western partners promised you protection and didn't deliver. We threatened you with consequences. We delivered." That event had incited Kyrgyzstan to shut down an airbase in Manas for further US operations (Dadak ,2018, pp. 89-90). Russia had withdrawn from the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty to have more freedom to pressure on near abroad nations. With the US' abandonment of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty European arms control system had ended (Dadak, 2018, November 27; Hill & Gaddy 2013; McLaughlin, 2020).

On March 2, 2014, Russia's invasion and finally, annexation to Crimea is another decline affecting Russia and the US relations (McLaughlin, 2020, p.123). That move is crucial for Russia. Analysts argued that Russia is the first time to become an active player in Europe since 1989 (Trenin, 2014, March 4).

Russia's military intervention to Syria in September 2015 has been a great opportunity to Obama administration's uncertain foreign policy over the Middle East (A. Stent, 2019, Febuary 26). After a one-hour warning to US military personnel in Syria, the US and allies had surprised and had shocked to Putin's order to a squadron of Russian jets to deploy Khmeimim airbase. Russian planes have flown in same airspace with the US and her allies, who have battled with the same enemy, ISIS. While the US and her allies have more strict rules about minimizing any civilian casualties, Russia has flown more sorties and hit more targets than did the US and her allies (Stent, 2019, p.252). According to Andrew Monaghan, in 2015, both parties' interests appear common for fighting against ISIS, as each party describes ISIS' causes, nature, location and scale of issues differently. As well as each party has novel ideas upon ISIS. Most times during the Syrian Civil War, these positions are mutually inconsistent. As a result of that, neither causes nor solutions are not clear for each party on the Syria case (Monaghan, 2018, p.5). Another significant event in that period, CIA has assisted a group of rebels in southern Syria. Those group has been primary aim to overthrow Assad regime. Besides that, Pentagon has formed a separate $500 million valued program to train and equip a small group of northern Syrians to fight ISIS militants. But these trained and equipped militants have scoped in fighting Assad's army rather than ISIS (Kaplan, 2019, August 21).

In April 2017, the US had ordered air strikes on Syria, in response to claimed Assad's chemical weapons attack. Putin had responded that, "aggression against a sovereign state in violation of international law and under a false pretext." In July 2017, CIA's aid to opposition forces had ended. Another significant event had occurred between Russia and US parties had agreed that Euphrates River would be the de-escalation zone. Russia and her allies have supposed to stay on the west side, the US and her allies in the east (Eilam, 2019; A. Stent, 2016, 2019, February 26). In 2018, aftermath of another chemical weapons attack who had claimed that initiated by Assad, the US, the UK (United Kingdom) and France had targeted air strikes against Syrian weapons facilities coordination with Russia for ensuring prevent any Russian casualties (Stent, 2020, p.255). Russia and the US' rivalry over Syria has fruited in favor of Russia in 2018. President Trump has declared that the US would no longer

called for Assad's ouster and has signaled that the US would begin withdrawing from Syria (Stent, 2019).

Putin had addressed in March 2018 to the Federal Assembly before the fourth term of elections to introduce new, improved ICBM (Inter-Continental Ballistic Missiles which had claimed undetectable by US missile defenses and ability to deploy multiple warheads from Russia to the US' South Florida coast. Also had introduced four new superweapons which have still developed, nuclear-warheaded cruise missile, *Burevestnik* and an intercontinental undersea drone, Poseidon. After these weapons' introduction, Putin had sent a message to the US: "You did not listen to us when we objected to your unilateral withdrawal from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty in 2002 or when we opposed NATO enlargement. You disrespected us, treated us as junior partners, and took us for granted. But Russia is back and will respond to any provocation from you. You must, at last, take us seriously now." He had continued that, "Our nuclear doctrine says Russia reserves the right to use nuclear attack or an attack with other weapons only response to a nuclear attack or an attack with other weapons of mass destruction against her or her allies, or a conventional attack against us that threatens the very existence of the state. It is my duty to state this: Any use of nuclear weapons against Russia or its allies, be it small-scale, medium scale or any other scale, will treated as a nuclear attack on our country. The response will be instant and will all the relevant consequences." In response to that speech, Donald Trump had initiated to raising Pentagon's budget for nuclear weapons to counter Russia's (Anonymous, 2018, Mar 1; A. Stent, 2016, 2019, Febuary 26).

During Putin's fourth term, another pressing point of Russia-US relations is still ongoing Syrian Civil War. Both air forces are still in Syria and operating. That's why coordination between Syria and the US is quite important. Russia is pressing the US for securing promises of US assistance in reconstructing Syria US demands to cut Iran's activities over Syria (Stent, 2019).

Russia's foreign policy in the Middle East based on some anti-US sentiments. For Russia, as a result of globalization and the end of a bipolar era on the world the Middle East's ideological view has turned into religious practice and nationalism, it causes instability and conflicts on entire region. Another issue to mention is, Russia is claiming the US has pursued aggressive regional policy in the name of modernization

and democratization. The US has been an imposition of foreign standards on Muslims who are following their traditions. As a result of that policy, conservatives and radicals has resisted that change, regional security has compromised. That's why international terrorism has grown more than before. Even the US forces had withdrawn from the region, anti-Western view on the Arab streets hasn't altered. It has caused to unleash radical Islamic forces searching for new targets, Russia and as well as her interests in the region (Magen, 2013).

However, Russia is ruling with patriotism and anti-US sentiment, today no universal ideological rivalry doesn't exist between the West and Russia, evolved Cold War rebooted between parties. Russia has state-owned capitalism with tsarist tendency instead of a communist past. Russia's new ideological approach is assembling in the past-Soviet space, to left and right populists in the West and a group of states whose people dislike the United States. Although US' military is much stronger than the Russia's, according to Russia, Putin's efforts over Russian military and his accomplishments, Russia became greater and global competitor to the US. Unlike the Soviet Union experience, Russia's economy integrated to the global economy and provides leverage as well as gives Russia to crucial vulnerabilities. An additional difference from the Cold War years, political and military government-to-government channels with rules of the game had accepted between parties. Now Putin has created their personalized rules of engagement. Old channels had gone. But West returned to follow old Cold War tactics against Russia, which are deterrence and engagement. (Stent, p. 2020, 323; Trenin, 2014).

Failure of the resolve of certain issues just like two world wars, lack of perfect peace settlement between parties and lack of full integration into a new world system after Cold War, lead a new conflict (Trenin, 2014). Since end of the Cold War, Western security has changed measures, cut their budgets and lost their institutional memory and knowledge about Soviet Union as well as Russian Federation. Aftermath of 9/11, Western security institutions have changed role, focused on fighting counterterrorism and counter-insurgency in Afghanistan and Iraqi campaigns. It has caused little attention to evolved Russian military and initiated new security thinking of Russia. For analysts, Russia had learned military lessons from the Cold War years, adapted to 21st century and applied in Crimea (Monaghan, 2018, pp. 11-12).

CONCLUSION

Middle East region has not maintained peace since the end of the WWI period, unfortunately. In particular, Syria has suffered political instability from independence to 1970s Baath regime with waves of coups. Formation of the Baath party and then reaching to come to power was turbulent. However, political stability not maintained in the early Baath party period. Political differences and rivalry between factions in the Baath party had caused several coups on Syria. After latest coups, Hafez Assad was the winner of that rivalry. While domestic instability had occurred in Syria, she had suffered greatest international troubles.

When Israel had established with Balfour declaration, Syria had not welcomed Israeli state like some Arab states. Beginning from 1948, 1967 and in 1973, Syria has had three major conflicts with Israel. Results of all these conflicts, Syria had survived, but it caused anxiety against Israel. Due to that anxiety, Syria had become a huge military investment against any Israeli threat. Syria has been a great partnership with Soviet Union since independence. On the foreign policy, Soviet Union has lack of interest of the Middle East matters at the beginning, when Cold War had warmed up in the 1950s, that situation has changed. Soviet Union has been a protector of Syria against any Western threat. While Syria had been problematic over domestic matters, Soviet Union had followed the same path like other foreign states. Soviet Union had followed the progress cautiously with the aftermath of any coup in Syria. But the rise of Baath party and Baath coups on Syria has been different for the Soviet Union. If looked at the Soviet Union history, she had always been in a great relationship with secular regimes. And ideas of the Baath Party have been quite close to the Soviet Union's ideological aspect, thanks to the Aflaq and Bitar. Albeit, Neobaathists had been far away from a bit, Soviet Union had accepted it. Except for some critical crisis and rifts between Soviet Union and Syria, like Lebanese crisis, both parties have been close relations till end of the Cold War period. Soviet Union and Syria have been a crucial economic loophole. When Gorbachev has come to power, he attempted a new economic aspect on Soviet Union. He had noticed that any armed investment to the Syria has not been feasible for Soviet Union. Transformation of the ideological approach to rationality on her foreign policy and establishment with a new relationship to Israel has been a rift between Syria and Soviet Union. These reasons have major

causes of Syria to in search of new partners and broke the Soviet dependency chain. During the Iran-Iraq War, Syria has supported Iran. While last days before the collapse of the Soviet Union, a crisis between Kuwait and Iraq has emerged. Syria had sought an opportunity to reinstate her image to the West and earned economic awards. During the First Gulf War, Syria has supported US-led coalition against Iraq and awarded economic aids.

When Soviet Union has totally collapsed, successor Russian Federation has suffered from the great economic breakdown. That breakdown has continued until Putin administration. In the early years of Putin administration, Russia had followed Primakov's, Soviet Union's former foreign minister, rationality approach on the foreign policy. Also, Russia has begun great relations with the US. In particular, with the early years of the George W. Bush administration, both parties have praised themselves. These close relations have been a little longer. After 9/11, the US' has claimed Saddam Hussein's support to Al-Qaeda, Iraq's possession of the WMD. Due to these reasons the US has imposed to the invasion of Iraq, Russia has strongly disagreed with that idea.

Syria has always been trouble with terrorism. In particular, in the 1980s many terrorist attacks have occurred over governmental institutions. This problem has originated as sectarian dissentient between Alawites and Sunnites. Of course, since other religious groups are existing in Syria, Alawite-Sunnite rivalry deepened with historical backgrounds. When Hafez Assad who has been Alawite elected, Sunnites has not pleased. Hafez Assad's selection of key governmental institutes with relatives and other Alawites whom close to Assad has created a rift between parties. Assad's every attempt to suppress that crisis has not been enough to satisfy the Sunni majority in Syria. When Bashar Assad has succeeded his father after his death, Syrian opposition sought an opportunity to loosen authoritarian measures over Syria. Bashar Assad has listened and loosened some measures at the beginning, but then changed his mind. Also, he has arrested key opposition leaders and suppressed any demands. When Arab Spring has emerged from most of the Arab states and overthrown of the long-term authoritarian leaders, Syria has seemed like immune of these attempts. But Syria's oppression attempts with excessive use of force against opposition have raised tensions. Due to that, antigovernment protests have transformed to civil war. From the

beginning, it has seemed ordinary civil war but then it has evolved into a proxy war between Russia and the US. Mentioned earlier, Syria- Russia relations have been close ties. Even Soviet Union has collapsed, Russia had followed old tradition. For Putin's rationality view, Bashar Assad has supported. After the overthrown of Saddam Hussein in Iraq, successors have not maintained political stability after Saddam. Either the US wrongful policies over Iraq and new Iraqi governments grand failures, Iraq has become a base of the terrorism. Also, Russia has suffered radical Islamist terrorism in domestically. For the Putin, secular Bashar Assad is greater than other western oriented "democratic" factions in Syria. He has learned lessons on color revolutions and aftermath of the Arab Spring. On the other hand, Assad's Syria is allowing Russia's spread over the Middle East and Eastern Mediterranean. It's important for long-term aims of Russia. Bashar Assad is necessary for now, until a suitable successor will exist for Russia's in favor.

The US disturbed with that strong relationship, also expansion and involvement of Russia over her neighbors and rest of the world. Russia's actions over Georgia, Crimea and now in Syria raised tensions between parties. When Syrian civil war has evolved to proxy war shortly, the US has become a party and indirectly joined that civil war with its own proxies. But own proxies have failed in to suppress ISIS over Iraq and Syria, although huge support from the US, in 2014, the US has directly involved that conflict. One year later, Russia has directly involved the civil war while Syrian army has exhausted. Both party's primary purpose has been defeating ISIS, but the US has also attempted to oust Assad. While the US and proxies attacking either ISIS and Assad forces on the field, also attempted sanctions against Assad regime in the international arena. Russia has blocked the US from any attempts against Assad regime. In particular, any economic sanction and military intervention on the international level has repelled by Russia. Both Russia and the US have initiated different peace efforts over Syria. Both parties have followed different ways on it. At the beginning the US-led Geneva Peace Talks has purposed to oust Assad but then abandoned of this idea with Russia's efforts. Russia-led Astana Process has purposed with peace talks and negotiations between Assad and opposition with the guarantee of the Russia, Iran and Turkey. Although oppositions demand over Assad regime on the

certain issues has seemed like settled on, it seems not providing permanent peace over Iraq like Geneva Peace Talks.

According to researchers, this rivalry denounced as Cold War 2.0. Of course, some differences are existing over that, like lack of ideological grounds and not seeking any global rivalry. It seems like valid for the short term. In the long term, the race of dominance of the Middle East and of course Eastern Mediterranean has spread global rivalry. Another point is, Putin's Primakov style rationality instead of ideological approach and raising anti-US movement all over the World is gaining new alliances with Russia. Parties withdraw of the various missile limitation agreements has raised tensions on the international arena.

Although the lack of ideological or not seeking any global rivalry "for now", Putin had declared the new Cold War beginning from 2007 on the Munich conference with his own sentences. On the diplomatic means, Russia seeks opportunity and benefits US' failures on the foreign policy since 9/11. In particular, Russia's involvement of the Middle East and presence of the Eastern Mediterranean through Syria emerged. That move may cause global rivalry in the long term. Last but not least, due to different pathways of both parties on the Syrian civil war, the civil war seems not over in the short term.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Aftandilian, Gregory. (2018). A Security Role For The United States In A Post-Isis Syria?: Challenges And Opportunities For U.S. Policy (pp. 3-6). US Army War College: Strategic Studies Institute.

Al-Jazeera. (2016). A Century On. interactive.aljazeera.com/aje/2016/sykes-picot-100-years-middle-east-map/index.html.

Allison, R. (2013). Russia and Syria: explaining alignment with a regime in crisis. *International Affairs, 89*(4), 795-823.

Anonymous. (2018, Mar 1). Putin on new US nuclear stance: If attacked, Russia will use nukes, *RT news*. Retrieved from https://www.rt.com/news/420171-nukes-us-russia-attack

Arı, T. (2017). *Geçmişten Günümüze Orta Doğu: Savaş, Siyaset ve Diplomasi* (7 ed.): Alfa publisher.

Basit, Abdul. (2014). Foreign Fighters in Iraq and Syria – Why So Many? Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses. *Counter Terrorist Trends and Analyses 6*(9), 4-8.

Bennett, Alexander, J. (1985). Arms Transfer as an Instrument of Soviet Policy in the Middle East. *Middle East Journal, 39*(4), 745-774.

Beri, H. M. L. (1976). Soviet Arms in West Asia. *Economic and Political Weekly, 11*(52), 1989-1990.

Choueiri, Y. M. (2017). *Ortadoğu Tarihi: Dini, Siyasi, Kültürel ve Ekonomik Perspektiften*: İnkilap.

CIA-Report. (1976). Relations Between Syria and the USSR.

CIA-Report. (2011, May 27). Soviet And East European Military Transfers To Non-Communist LDCs

CIA-Report. (2018, February 1). The World Factbook: Syria.

Cleveland, W. L. . (2016, August 2). *History Of The Modern Middle East.* (6 ed.): Westview Press.

Crosston, Matthew D. (2014). Cold War and Ayatollah Residues

Syria as a Chessboard for Russia, Iran, and the United States. *Strategic Studies Quarterly, 8*(4), 94-111.

Dadak, C. (2018, November 27). A New "Cold War"? *The Independent Review, 15*(1), 89-107.

Dawisha, K. (1982). The U.S.S.R. in the Middle East: Superpower in Eclipse? . *Foreign Affairs, 61*(2), 438. doi: 10.2307/20041444

Dekel, U., Boms, N. T., & Winter, O. . (2016). Mapping the Non-State Actors in Syria and their Attitudes toward Israel. *Syria's New Map and New Actors: Challenges and Opportunities for Israel.*: . Institute for National Security Studies.

Dobbins, James, Philip Gordon, & Martini, Jeffrey. (2017). *A Peace Plan for Syria III: Agreed Zones of Control, Decentralization, and International Administration*. Santa Monica, Calif: RAND Corporation.

Eilam, Ehud (2019). *Russian Military Involvement in Syria*. US: U of Nebraska Press.

Ellison, Danielle. (2016). FPI Bulletin: Saudi Arabia and the Syrian Civil War: Foreign Policy Initiative.

Eppel, M. . (1996). Syrian-Iraqi Relations during the 1948 Palestine War. . *Middle Eastern Studies, 32*(3), 74-91.

Erlich, R. W., & Chomsky, N. . (2014). *Inside Syria: The Backstory of Their Civil War and What the World Can Expect.* Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books.

Fisk, Robert. (2015, September 20). Anti-Soviet warrior puts his army on the road to peace: The Saudi. , *Independent*. Retrieved from https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/anti-soviet-warrior-puts-his-army-on-the-road-to-peace-the-saudi-businessman-who-recruited-mujahedin-1465715.html

Freedman, Robert O. (1980). SOVIET POLICY TOWARDS THE MIDDLE EAST SINCE THE INVASION OF AFGHANISTAN. *Journal of International Affairs, 34*(2), 283-310.

Galvani, John, Johnson, Peter, & Theberge, Rene. (1973). The October War: Egypt, Syria, Israel. *MERIP Reports*(22), 3-21. doi: 10.2307/3012270

Gani, J. K. . (2014). *The role of ideology in Syrian-Us relations conflict and cooperation*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.

Ghadbian, N. (2015). Contesting Authoritarianism: Opposition Activism under Bashar al-Asad, 2000–2010. In R. Hinnebusch & T. Zint (Eds.), *Syria from Reform to Revolt* (Vol. 1, pp. 91-112). Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press.

Ginat, Rami. (2000). The Soviet Union and the Syrian Ba'th regime: from hesitation to rapprochement. *Middle Eastern Studies, 36*(2), 150-171. doi: 10.1080/00263200008701312

Goodman, Melvin A., & Ekedahl, Carolyn McGiffert. (1988). Gorbachev's "New Directions" in the Middle East. *Middle East Journal, 42*(4), 571-586.

Guan-fu, Gu. (1983). Soviet aid to the third world, an analysis of its strategy. *Soviet Studies, 35*(1), 71-89. doi: 10.1080/09668138308411459

Heuvel, Katrina vanden. (2019). Opinion | From the hope of 1989 to a new Cold War. Retrieved from The washington post website: https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2019/11/12/hope-new-cold-war/

Hill , Fiona, & Gaddy , Clifford G. . (2013). *Operative in the Kremlin* (1 ed.): Brookings Institution Press.

Hinnebusch, Raymond, & Zintl, Tina. (2014). The Syrian uprising and Bashar al-Asad–s first decade in power *Syria from Reform to Revolt, Volume 1* (pp. 285-310): Syracuse University Press.

Hughes, G. A. (2014). Syria and the perils of proxy warfare. *Small Wars & Insurgencies, 25*(3), 522-538.

Hürriyet, Daily News. (2012, July 03). Turkey and Qatar sign army cooperation deal. https://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkey-and-qatar-sign-army-cooperation-deal-24593

İsmayılov, Meşdi, İşyar, Ömer Göksel, Demirağ, Yelda, Gökçe, Mustafa, Adıbelli, Barış, Ereker, F. A., & Kaya, S. (2013). *Rusya'nın Doğu Politikası*. Bursa: Ekin.

Kaplan, F. . (2019, August 21). Obama's Way: The President in Practice. *Foreign Affairs*.

Karsh, Efrahim. (1986). Influence Through Arms Supplies: The Soviet Experience in the Middle East. *Conlict Quarterly, 6*(1), 45-55.

Karsh, Efrahim. (1991). *Soviet policy towards Syria since 1970*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Khasan, Hilal. (1998). Russia's Middle Eastern Policy. *The Indian Journal of Political Science, 59*(1/4), 84-105.

Kılıç, M. (2013). *"Soğuk Savaş"tan Bugüne Darbeler ve Devrimler*. İstanbul: Cem

LaFeber, W. (1985). *America, Russia, And The Cold War*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Laird, Robbin F. (1984). Soviet Arms Trade with the Noncommunist Third World. *Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science, 35*(3), 196-213. doi: 10.2307/1174128

Laron, Guy. (2014). Nasser's gamble: how intervention in Yemen caused the Six-Day War and the decline of Egyptian power. *Cold War History, 14*(3), 451-452. doi: 10.1080/14682745.2014.917801

Lesch, D. W. (2005). *The New Lion of Damascus Bashar al-Asad and Modern Syria*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Magen, Z. (2013). *Russia and the Middle East. In Russia and the Middle East: Policy Challenges.* . Tel Aviv Institute for National Security Studies.

Malashenko, Alexey. (2013). RUSSIA AND THE ARAB SPRING: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Maoz, Zeev. (2006). *Defending the Holy Land*: University of Michigan Press.

Matthews, O. (2016, May 3). Putin's Bloody Logic in Syria, *Newsweek*. Retrieved from https://www.newsweek.com/2015/12/04/putins-bloody-logic-syria-397556.html

McInerney, Audrey. (1992). Prospect Theory and Soviet Policy Towards Syria, 1966-1967. *Political Psychology, 13*(2), 265-282. doi: 10.2307/3791681

McLaughlin, G. . (2020). *Putin at War: From Chechenya to Syria.*: Pluto Press.

Menon, Rajan. (1982). The Soviet Union, the arms trade and the third world. *Soviet Studies, 34*(3), 377-396. doi: 10.1080/09668138208411425

Monaghan, Andrew (2015). A 'New Cold War'? Abusing History, Misunderstanding Russia. *Chatham House*.

Moskoff, William, & Benz, G. William. (1973). The USSR and developing countries: Politics and export prices, 1955–69. *Soviet Studies, 24*(3), 348-363. doi: 10.1080/09668137308410868

Obama, Barrack H. (2014, september 10). Statement by the President on ISIL. from https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2014/09/10/statement-president-isil-1

Olson, Robert. (1978). THE BA'TH IN SYRIA 1947–1979: AN INTERPRETATIVE HISTORICAL ESSAY (Part One). *Oriente Moderno, 58*(12), 645-681.

Onjanov, N. B. . (2018). *Ara Bulucu: Suriye Düğümü*. Ankara: Panama Yayıncılık.

Petrou, M. (2015, October 19). Putin's new world order. . *Maclean's Magazine*, 36. https://archive.macleans.ca/article/2015/10/19/putins-new-world-order

Pierre, A. J. . (1982). *The Global Politics of Arms Sales*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

Rabi, U., & Friedman, B. . (2017). Weaponizing sectarianism in Iraq and Syria. *Orbis, 61*(3), 423-438.

Roucek, Joseph S. (1973). THE US AND USSR CONFRONTATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN. *Il Politico, 38*(3), 546-575.

Şahin, T. Y. . (2016). *Uluslararası Politikada Orta Doğu*. Ankara: Barış Kitap.

Saivetz, Carol R. (1989). ISLAM AND GORBACHEV'S POLICY IN THE MIDDLE EAST. *Journal of International Affairs, 42*(2), 435-444.

Samoylov, Y. . (2018). *Rusya'nın Suriye Politikası.* . Hitabet Yayınları: Ankara.

Schoenberger, Erica, & Reich, Stephanie. (1975). Soviet Policy in the Middle East. *MERIP Reports*(39), 3-28. doi: 10.2307/3011049

Shad, Tahir I., Shad, Tahir L., Boucher, Steven, & Reddish, Jennifer Gray. (1995). SYRIAN FOREIGN POLICY IN THE POST-SOVIET ERA. *Arab Studies Quarterly, 17*(1/2), 77-94.

Smith, C. G. (1958). Arab Nationalism. A Study in Political Geography. *Geography, 43*(4), 229-242.

SSG, Syria Study Group. (2019, september). Final Report and Recommendations. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace.

Stent, Angela. (2016). Putin’s Power Play in Syria: How to Respond to Russia’s Intervention. *January/February* https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2015-12-14/putins-power-play-syria

Stent, Angela. (2019, Febuary 26). *Putin's World: Russia Against the West and with the Rest*. newYork: Twelve -Hachette Book Group.

Stent, Angela E. (2014). *The Limits of Partnership*

U.S.-Russian Relations in the Twenty-First Century: Princeton University Press.

The Washington Post, Newspaper. (2007, February 12). Putin's Prepared Remarks at 43rd Munich Conference on Security Policy. . *The Washington Post*.

Trenin, D. . (2014, March 4). Welcome to Cold War II. *Foreign Policy*.

Vysotsky, Alexander. (2014). Russia and the Arab Spring. *Connections, 14*(1), 41-64.

Wimmen, H. . (2016). *Syria's Path from Civic Uprising to Civil War* Washington, DC Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Wintour, P. . (2017, January 23). Russia in power-broking role as Syria peace talks begin in Astana., *The Guardian*. Retrieved from https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jan/22/russia-syria-talks-astana-kazakhstan-

Zisser, Eyal. (2017). Syria – from the six day war to the Syrian civil war. *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies, 44*(4), 545-558. doi: 10.1080/13530194.2017.1360011

ANNEXES

Annex-1.1. Joint Statement By Iran, Russia, Turkey On The Internatıonal Meeting On Syria in Astana, January 23-24, 2017

The delegations of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Russian Federation and the Republic of Turkey, in line with the Joint Statement of their Foreign Ministers made in Moscow, on December 20, 2016 and the UN Security Council resolution 2336;

Support launching the talks between the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and the armed opposition groups in Astana on January 23-24, 2017;

Appreciate the participation in and facilitation of the above-mentioned talks by the UN Secretary-General Special Envoy on Syria;

Reaffirm their commitment to the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic as a multi-ethnic, multi-religious, non-sectarian and democratic State, as confirmed by the UN Security Council;

Express their conviction that there is no military solution to the Syrian conflict and that it can only be solved through a political process based on the implementation of the UN Security Council resolution 2254 in its entirety;

Will seek, through concrete steps and using their influence over the parties, consolidation of the ceasefire regime established pursuant to the arrangements signed on December 29, 2016 and supported by the UN Security Council resolution 2336 (2016), contribution to minimizing violations, reducing violence, building confidence, ensuring unhindered humanitarian access swiftly and smoothly in line with the UN Security Council resolution 2165 (2014) and protection and free movement of civilians in Syria;

Decide to establish a trilateral mechanism to observe and ensure full compliance with the ceasefire, prevent any provocations and determine all modalities of the ceasefire;

Reiterate their determination to fight jointly against ISIL/DAESH and Al-Nusra and to separate from them armed opposition groups;

Express their conviction that there is an urgent necessity to step up efforts to jumpstart the negotiation process in accordance with the UN Security Council resolution 2254;

Emphasize that the International Meeting on Syria in Astana is an effective platform for a direct dialogue between the government and the opposition as required by the UN Security Council resolution 2254;

Support the willingness of the armed opposition groups to participate in the next round of negotiations to be held between the government and the opposition under the UN auspices in Geneva as of February 8, 2017;

Urge all members of the international community to support the political process with a view to swiftly implementing all steps agreed on the UN Security Council resolution 2254;

Decide to actively cooperate on the Astana platform on specific issues of the UN-facilitated Syrian-led and Syrian-owned political process so as to contribute to global efforts to implement the UN Security Council resolution 2254;

Express gratitude to the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, His Excellency Nursultan Nazarbayev, and to the Kazakh side in general, for hosting the International Meeting on Syria in Astana (Al-Jazerra,2017)

Annex-2.1

The Islamic Republic of Iran, the Russian Federation and the Republic of Turkey as guarantors of the observance of the ceasefire regime in the Syrian Arab Republic (hereinafter referred to as "Guarantors"):

- guided by the provisions of UNSC resolution 2254 (2015);
- reaffirming their strong commitment to the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of the Syrian Arab Republic;
- expressing their determination to decrease the level of military tensions and to provide for the security of civilians in the Syrian Arab Republic,

have agreed on the following.

1. the following de-escalation areas shall be created with the aim to put a prompt end to violence, improve the humanitarian situation and create favorable conditions to advance political settlement of the conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic:

- Idlib province and certain parts of the neighbouring provinces (Latakia, Hama and Aleppo provinces);
- certain parts in the north of Homs province;
- in eastern Ghouta;
- certain parts of southern Syria (Deraa and Al-Quneitra provinces).

The creation of the de-escalation areas and security zones is a temporary measure, the duration of which will initially be 6 months and will be automatically extended on the basis of consensus of the Guarantors.

2. Within the lines of the de-escalation areas:

- hostilities between the conflicting parties (the government of the Syrian Arab Republic and the armed opposition groups that have joined and will join the ceasefire regime) with the use of any kinds of weapons, including aerial assets, shall be ceased;

- rapid, safe and unhindered humanitarian access shall be provided;
- conditions to deliver medical aid to local population and to meet basic needs of civilians shall be created;
- measures to restore basic infrastructure facilities, starting with water supply and electricity distribution networks, shall be taken;
- conditions for the safe and voluntary return of refugees and internally displaced persons shall be created.

3. Along the lines of the de-escalation areas, security zones shall be established in order to prevent incidents and military confrontations between the conflicting parties.

4. The security zones shall include:

   - Checkpoints to ensure unhindered movement of unarmed civilians and delivery of humanitarian assistance as well as to facilitate economic activities;

   - Observation posts to ensure compliance with the provisions of the ceasefire regime.

   The functioning of the checkpoints and observation posts as well as the administration of the security zones shall be ensured by the forces of the Guarantors by consensus. Third parties might be deployed, if necessary, by consensus of the Guarantors.

5. The Guarantors shall:

- take all necessary measures to ensure the fulfillment by the conflicting parties of the ceasefire regime;
- take all necessary measures to continue the fight against DAESH/ISIL, Nusra Front and all other individuals, groups, undertakings and entities associated with Al-Qaeda or DAESH/ISIL as designated by the UN Security Council within and outside the de-escalation areas;
- continue efforts to include in the ceasefire regime armed opposition groups that have not yet joined the ceasefire regime.

6. The Guarantors shall in 2 weeks after signing the Memorandum form a Joint working group on de-escalation (hereinafter referred to as the “Joint Working Group”)

composed of their authorized representatives in order to delineate the lines of the de-escalation areas and security zones as well as to resolve other operational and technical issues related to the implementation of the Memorandum.

The Guarantors shall take steps to complete by 4 June 2017 the preparation of the maps of the de-escalation areas and security zones and to separate the armed opposition groups from the terrorist groups mentioned in para.5 of the Memorandum.

The Joint Working Group shall prepare by the above-mentioned date the maps of the de-escalation areas and security zones to be agreed by consensus of the Guarantors as well as the draft Regulation of the Joint Working Group.

The Joint Working Group shall report on its activities to the high-level international meetings on Syria held in Astana.

The present Memorandum enters into force the next day after its signing.

Done in Astana, 4 May 2017 in three copies in English, having equal legal force.

Signatures

Islamic Republic of Iran Russian Federation Republic of Turkey

MA THESIS-2020

ORIGINALITY REPORT

6%

SIMILARITY INDEX

PRIMARY SOURCES

1	Efraim Karsh. "Soviet Policy towards Syria since 1970", Springer Science and Business Media LLC, 1991 Crossref	241 words — 1%
2	connections-qj.org Internet	199 words — 1%
3	Uzi Rabi, Brandon Friedman. "Weaponizing Sectarianism in Iraq and Syria", Orbis, 2017 Crossref	147 words — 1%
4	www.tandfonline.com Internet	116 words — 1%
5	apps.dtic.mil Internet	60 words — < 1%
6	Miguel V´zquez Liñ´n. "Putin's Propaganda Legacy", Post-Soviet Affairs, 2013 Crossref	50 words — < 1%
7	www.independent.org Internet	42 words — < 1%
8	ri.fgv.br Internet	34 words — < 1%
9	www.coldwarstudies.com Internet	32 words — < 1%
10	Rajan Menon. "The Soviet Union, the arms trade and the third world", Soviet Studies, 2007	25 words — < 1%

Crossref

11	Geraint Alun Hughes. "Syria and the perils of proxy warfare", Small Wars & Insurgencies, 2014 Crossref	24 words — < 1%
12	Efraim Karsh. "Chapter 3 Soviet-Syrian Relations: The Military Dimension", Springer Science and Business Media LLC, 1991 Crossref	21 words — < 1%
13	eprints.soas.ac.uk Internet	21 words — < 1%
14	shakespir.com Internet	19 words — < 1%
15	www.foreignpolicy.org.tr Internet	19 words — < 1%
16	es.scribd.com Internet	17 words — < 1%
17	docplayer.net Internet	16 words — < 1%
18	theanonymousrevolutionary.com Internet	16 words — < 1%
19	Michael Eppel. "Syrian-Iraqi relations during the 1948 Palestine War", Middle Eastern Studies, 7/1996 Crossref	16 words — < 1%
20	www.expatica.com Internet	14 words — < 1%
21	H. KHASHAN. "An Unpropitious Return!: A Rejoinder", Security Dialogue, 09/01/1998 Crossref	13 words — < 1%
22	Rami Ginat. "The Soviet Union and the Syrian Ba'th	13 words — < 1%

	regime: from hesitation to rapprochement", Middle Eastern Studies, 4/2000 Crossref	
23	calhoun.nps.edu Internet	13 words — < 1%
24	"Migration, Security, and Citizenship in the Middle East", Springer Science and Business Media LLC, 2013 Crossref	12 words — < 1%
25	acikerisim.deu.edu.tr Internet	12 words — < 1%
26	www.theguardian.com Internet	11 words — < 1%
27	H. Khashan. "Russia's Middle Eastern Policy", International Studies, 01/01/1999 Crossref	11 words — < 1%
28	raamoprusland.nl Internet	11 words — < 1%
29	etd.lib.metu.edu.tr Internet	11 words — < 1%
30	researchcommons.waikato.ac.nz Internet	11 words — < 1%
31	Kimberly Marten. "Putin's Choices: Explaining Russian Foreign Policy and Intervention in Ukraine", The Washington Quarterly, 2015 Crossref	11 words — < 1%
32	www.cia.gov Internet	10 words — < 1%
33	"Handbook on Geopolitics and Security in the Arctic", Springer Science and Business Media LLC, 2020 Crossref	10 words — < 1%

34	"Regional Powers in the Middle East", Springer Science and Business Media LLC, 2014 Crossref	10 words — < 1%
35	carnegie.ru Internet	10 words — < 1%
36	journals.univ-danubius.ro Internet	10 words — < 1%
37	marxistleftreview.org Internet	10 words — < 1%
38	www.allazimuth.com Internet	10 words — < 1%
39	blaydes.people.stanford.edu Internet	10 words — < 1%
40	Gu Guan-fu. "Soviet aid to the third world, an analysis of its strategy", Soviet Studies, 2007 Crossref	10 words — < 1%
41	Barry Turner. "Chapter 332 Syria", Springer Science and Business Media LLC, 2014 Crossref	10 words — < 1%

EXCLUDE QUOTES	ON	EXCLUDE MATCHES	< 5 WORDS
EXCLUDE BIBLIOGRAPHY	ON		

CURRICULUM VITAE

Name Surname: Can Abanoz

Place and Date of Birth: Ankara/Turkey 3.11.1986

Education:

Degree	Field	University	Year
Undergraduate	International Relations	Eastern Mediterranean University	2017

Foreign Languages: English

Publications:
Abanoz C, "*1. Dünya Savaşı'ndan Günümüze Hardal Gazı ve Etkileri: Örnek Savaşlar ve Sonuçları*", Ankara Sağlık Hizmetleri Dergisi, Cilt 18(2), ss. 49-51, 2020.

E-mail: canabanoz@hotmail.com

Phone: 05413740470

Date: 7.8.2020