

THE GREAT POWER COMPETITION BETWEEN THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA IN THE SYRIAN WAR 2015-2020

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Abstract: *Even though the Cold War ended 30 years ago, the Russian Federation and the United States of America continue the competition for power through different means and by using several instruments. The Syrian war is one of the longest and complex events in which the two states have recently exposed their capabilities. On the one hand, the Russian Federation found the Syrian war as an opportunity to improve its economy, extend its military influence and gain more allies by supporting Syrian regime and situating as a counterweight to USA. On the other hand, the United States of America fought to maintain its economic gains, strategic coalitions and limit Iran power in the region, using as motif the establishment of democracy and counterterrorism. All of these represented the most important assets of each state towards increasing their authority outside their borders and consolidating their power status in the last 6 years.*

Keywords: *The Syrian war; The Russian Federation; The United States of America; power status; terrorism; geopolitical context.*

Introduction

The Russian Federation and the United States of America are among the few states which have stood out the most on the international arena in the last century. For this reason, the great power competition between them had a fluctuating evolution and has been continuously debated. Since the end of the Cold War, the importance of nuclear capabilities has diminished and the two states had to find new ways of proving their strengths. One of the most important and recent events in which the two states have both competed and cooperated is the Syrian war.

A strong historical background of the Syrian politics influenced the uprising from 2011, known as the Syrian Civil War. Since Syria was liberated from the French rule in 1946, the state experienced multiple military coups related to the establishment of a new government. Furthermore, it started to involve in military conflicts from the Middle East, in order to develop a strong influence in the region. The current president of Syria, Mr. Bashar al-Assad, was elected in 2000. In that period, his rule was seen as a hope for democratic reforms. However, soon enough, he established an authoritarian regime and continued to support the Syrian military interventions in the neighbouring countries (Dam 2017, 56). Towards the end of 2010, the political situation in the Middle East was difficult and unstable. Within the phenomenon of "Arab Spring" multiple states, such as Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Yemen and Bahrain, encountered a lot of anti-government uprisings. All of these violent conflicts from the last century, which happened both inside and outside the territorial borders of Syria, together with the phenomenon of "Arab Spring" represented the key points for the beginning of the Syrian Civil War in March 2011.

1. The relevance of the Syrian war in the competition for power

The foreign policy of the Russian Federation and the United States of America towards the Syrian war was steady until 2014, as they were not officially involved in the conflict. Each of them supported remotely different sides, according to their interests and beliefs. However, the war developed multiple dimensions throughout time, which directly involved these two states.

Even though the Syrian uprising started with peaceful protests demanding democratic reforms, national unity and release of political prisoners, the police and army intervened at the request of the Syrian president and used live ammunition, open fire, arrested or tortured the citizens (Hinnebusch 2019, 34-37). For this reason, the civilians organised themselves in multiple groups with homemade rifles. However, they needed foreign support in order to resist (Erlich 2014, 10). Therefore, the Free Syrian Army was formed in July 2011 and became one of the most popular military opposition organisations. Its members came from multiple backgrounds: some were defectors of the Syrian Army, others were Syrian civilians and others were foreigners.

The organisation relied very much on foreign support, as the Free Syrian Army's leadership was located in southern Turkey and depended on military supplies coming from other countries (Dam 2017, 65-66). The majority of locals who tried to protest peacefully were mainly backed by the United States of America, several European states and Israel. Nonetheless, the foreign support also worsened the situation, because extremist agitators supported by Saudi Arabia and Qatar were showing a brutal response to the Syrian authorities. As the government officials from Daraa declared, the extremists shot over 1200 authorities, while Local Coordinating Committees organised peaceful protests each Friday at certain mosques. These were the only places left open by the government where people could gather. A young activist from Daraa claimed that the local tribal groups were allowed to own weapons and use them for self-defence when the authorities arrested or rushed into people's houses. However, they were not related to the sponsored rebels of Israel, United States Central Intelligence Agency or Saudi Arabia, who attacked the army (Erlich 2014, 48-50). Thus, in just few months, the Syrian Civil War had multiple sides involved in both camps, including foreign powers. However, the states involved were mainly situated in the Middle East, as the United States of America and the Russian Federation were not officially present in the conflict, yet. The fight had until that point two dimensions: a fight for freedom between the Syrian civilians and the authorities and one between the Gulf States and Turkey against Iran's expansion of power in the Middle East.

In 2012, President Barack Obama warned the Syrian President that if the army would use chemical weapons against the Syrian citizens, the United States of America will be forced to intervene militarily against the Syrian state. However, one year later, President Bashar al-Assad killed hundreds of people in Damascus with sarin gas. As a reaction, President Obama requested the Congress of the United States to approve a retaliatory missile strike, but it was refused. Thus, he negotiated with President Putin to push the Syrian President to give up these weapons. Even though the Russian Federation was an ally of Syria, it decided to ban the use of chemical weapons, in order to avoid the military intervention of the United States of America in the conflict (Wanlund 2021, 376).

Another dimension of the conflict that must be taken into account is the religious one. President Bashar al-Assad was supported by Iran, which funded and trained more than 100,000 Shia Muslims who fought alongside the Russian air force and government authorities against the Sunni Muslims and the citizens, backed by the United States of America, the Gulf States, Jordan, Turkey and Saudi Arabia (Broder 2021, 39-41). In 2013, the conflict intensified,

because there was created the powerful group named the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, later renamed as the Islamic State, which fought everyone, including the Kurds. The Kurds were a minority that did not belong to any country, but since 2011 they declared autonomy in Rojava, in Northern Syria. They were controlled by the Syrian Democratic Forces, but they did not join the fight against the government. Their purpose was to fight the Islamic State, which aimed to establish a united Muslim caliphate in Syria and Iraq. Thus, the religious conflict split in two subdimensions: the fight between Sunni and Shia Muslims and between the Kurds and the Islamic State (Dam 2017, 62-70). All of these events led to the official military intervention in the Syrian war of the United States of America, in 2014, and the Russian Federation, in 2015.

1.1. United States' military intervention in the Syrian war

The approach of United States of America to the Syrian war has been changing between 2015-2020, because the state had two presidents with different foreign policy approaches. President Barack Obama adopted a foreign policy based on diplomacy, rather than violence. His administration tried to have better relations with the Middle East: "a new beginning between the United States and Muslims around the world, one based on mutual interest and mutual respect", declared the president (Wanlund 2021, 375). Thus, between 2009 and 2016, the United States of America has adopted as much as possible a noninterventionist stance. Usually, in the Middle East there were few violent interventions approved by the president, which succeeded in diminishing al Qaeda's influence by keeping the American military in Afghanistan. Regarding the Arab Spring, President Obama sought to give a diplomatic response to the uprisings from Egypt, Libya, Tunisia and even Syria, by supporting the pro-democracy demonstrations and having conversations with the leaders. Eventually, the authoritarian leadership was deposed in several countries, but the situation in Syria was not the same. As I mentioned above, President Obama initially tried to resolve the conflict through diplomatic manners. However, because of the attitude of President al-Assad and the emergence of the Islamic State, the United States of America intervened militarily in order to establish democracy and protect human rights. In 2015, President Obama accomplished the most important action in foreign policy related to Middle East: the international agreement which limited Iran to develop nuclear weapons in return for lifting the United States' economic sanctions (Wanlund 2021, 376-377). This also had an important role in the Syrian conflict, because the limitation of the Iranian power in the region diminished the scale of the conflict.

Since 2016, the United States of America had a new administration led by President Donald Trump. His approach to foreign policy changed the relations with both Russia and Syria. He withdrew from several multilateral agreements concluded by his predecessor, including the one with Iran. Furthermore, he criticised the actions of President Obama and called them "a bad joke", while Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said that the former president showed "wilful blindness to the danger of the [Iran] regime" in his decision regarding the 2015 Nuclear Agreement (Wanlund 2021, 377). The supporters of President Trump praised his approach to foreign policy and called it successful. His realist approach of action has also improved the American-Russian relations, as he and President Putin cooperated in the Syrian war since 2016. President Trump was called "God's gift that keeps on giving", because he took advantage of the American power at international level to defend Russia or even implement its agenda (Wanlund 2021, 352-377). However, he was also criticised for his style of "one-man diplomacy" and putting the "national interest over international leadership." In 2019, after he withdrew the American military troops from Syria and let the Kurds exposed, N.A.T.O. allies questioned the integrity of the United States of America. Furthermore, Turkey and Egypt cooperated with Russia, in order to increase their armament (Broder 2021, 69-70). Apart from this, after the American troops' withdrawal, Russia concluded a ceasefire in March 2020 with Turkey over Idlib. This was the last province from Syria that was hold by the rebels (Bowen

2020). Since then, the conflict has been publicised to a smaller extent, but the regime of President Bashar al-Assad did not fall, the war is not considered as ended and there is still a catastrophic humanitarian crisis in the region, because more than half of the Syrian population has been displaced. At the end of 2020, the Syrian government still controlled the largest part of the state, but Kurdish, Rebel and Jihadist forces were also dominating significant parts of the territory (BBC News 2021). Consequently, there is an international effort to end the conflict, mostly coordinated by the United Nations, and the fall of the current Syrian regime.

The United States' intervention from the last decade in the Syrian war and overall in the Middle East was built around the United States' perception of itself. According to Blago Tashev, specialist of the Strategic Multilayer Assessment program (S.M.A.), "the U.S. sees itself as a status-quo power, maintaining a particular rules-based international order that was created by the U.S. and its allies after the World War II and is based on values shared by America and those allies" (Pagano 2017, 1). However, this order was established during the World War I, when President Woodrow Wilson advanced "The Fourteen Points" in which he emphasized the principles of self-determination and collective security. Furthermore, through his legacy, the United States of America transformed its isolationist policies into interventionist ones and involved the country in world affairs (Herring 2008, 406-407).

German Chancellor Angela Merkel described the United States' approach to international affairs during President Trump as unilateral. She claimed that by withdrawing the troops from Syria and abandoning the nuclear weapons treaty with Russia, Kremlin's position became stronger. Additionally, critics warned about the impact of president's advocacy for autocrat populist leaders, such as President Putin or the Crown Prince Mohamed bin Salman. They concluded that United States' strengths, such as diplomacy and coalitions, have been spoiled during this administration and drag down the country's status of superpower by comparing it to Russia or China. They considered that American alliances and leadership positions in multilateral organisations are important assets that keep the country above other powers. However, because they are deteriorating, the rising power of authoritarian states is facilitated and the "essential pillars of U.S. global power that have sustained Washington's hegemony for the past 70 years" are demolished (Wanlund 2021, 345-354).

Thus, several objectives of the American presence in the Middle East are focused on stability, security, economy and promoting democracy. With the help of its allies, Israel, Turkey, Jordan, Iraq, and Egypt, the United States of America fulfils the former two objectives by restraining Iranian power, countering terrorism and weapons of mass destruction. As a result of this collaboration, the economic objective is also accomplished. However, it can be observed that promoting democracy in the region is not part of the stabilisation process, as the relations with the allies are dynamic and have different interests. Thus, above all its assets, American foreign policy has a flexible approach (Pagano 2017, 2).

1.2. Russian Federation's military intervention in the Syrian war

Looking at the Russian Federation's intervention in the Syrian war, one of the main reasons that stood behind this action was its strong support for the regime of President Bashar al-Assad with whom President Putin has a good relation (Allison 2013, 796). The Russian Federation supports the territorial integrity of Syria, as well as the establishment of a peaceful life for all the ethnic and religious groups from the region (The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation 2016, Section IV, para. 93). Furthermore, the Russian Federation has a specific interest in preserving the relation with Syria due to strategical reasons, as it has a naval base in Tartus and the Khmeimim air base in Latakia (See figure no. 1, Kozak 2015) (Rabinovich 2016, 3).

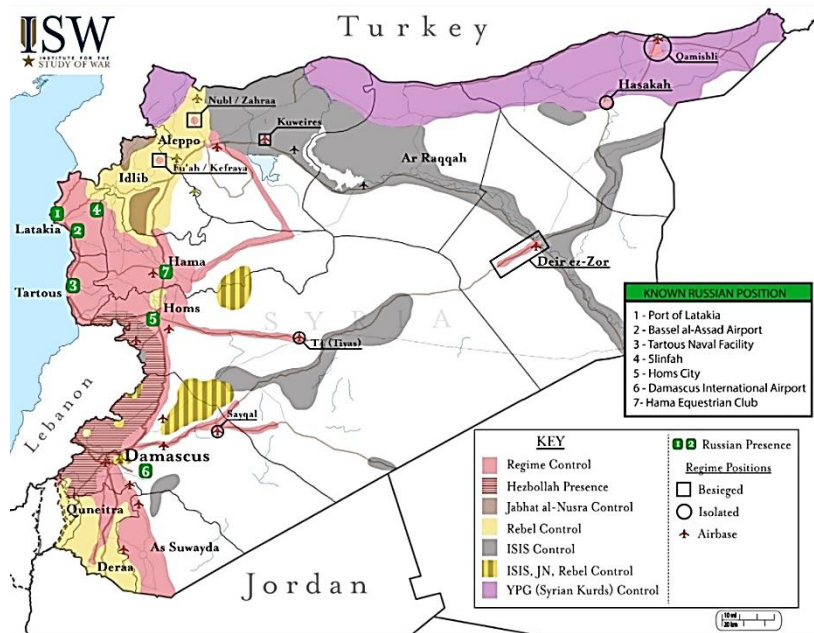


Figure no. 1: Russian Military Presence in Syria in 2015 (Kozak 2015)

In addition to this, the relationship between the Russian and the Syrian President is very important for the popularity of President Putin. If he would undermine the relation with his ally, the Russian citizens or other international supporters would question his commitment to them (Pagano 2017, 14). This consequence is something that the Russian leader would not allow to happen because it would decrease his power and, also, attack some of his personal traits, such as loyalty and hypermasculinity. Besides this, his domestic political legitimization is mostly based upon his success in external events (Taylor 2018, 40).

A second reason for its intervention was the presence of the United States of America in the region and the opportunity to grow Russian prestige in front of its opponent, because throughout history, Russia expressed its counter position over Western-led military interventions. Furthermore, Russia sees the Middle East as an opportunity to balance the United States' influence and win the race for the status of great power (Allison 2013, 796). According to the Russian Foreign Ministry, the West is imposing too much power around the world and does not allow the creation of a balanced centre of power. Furthermore, it considers that the United States of America adopted a containment policy against Russia which halts the need of cooperation in combating international challenges and destabilise international relations (The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation 2016, Sections III-IV).

Another interest of Russia in the Middle East is the opportunity to grow its economy and involve in the regional market due to arms sales, nuclear technology and oil and gas benefits. The export earnings from arms sales significantly rose the budget of the country. Furthermore, President Putin has expanded its personal network in the Russian defence industry, as he appointed comrades from the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation. Thus, his team was controlling the contracts on arms sales, which were evidently for their benefit. He had also collaborated with the main oil and gas companies in the Persian Gulf in order to establish convenient energy prices for his economic plan (Pagano 2017, 3-15).

Regarding its most recent actions in the foreign policy towards Middle East, the Russian Federation continued to pursue the national interest, by staying committed to Syria. In his last official visit to Syria, from January 2020, President Putin discussed with his Syrian counterpart about the evolution of the Syrian war and declared that there could have been observed signs of approaching an end (Presidential Executive Office 2020a). Next month, the State Duma adopted a federal law aimed at improving the military courier and postal communications

between Russia and Syria. According to the agreement, the military correspondence sent to the Russian military formations stationed in the Syrian Arab Republic is protected from border and customs control (Presidential Executive Office 2020b). In March 2020, after Russia made an agreement with Turkey on the Idlib ceasefire, President Bashar al-Assad expressed its gratitude towards the support of Russia in ensuring the territorial integrity of Syria and in fighting terrorism (Presidential Executive Office 2020c). Furthermore, in their videoconference published by Kremlin in November 2020, the two presidents declared that they succeeded in reducing terrorism in Syria and their current main priority is the return of the refugees. They both admitted that there is a humanitarian catastrophe for which there are made significant efforts, but the Syrian president declared that there is a Western embargo which does not let the government to take effective measures for helping the Syrian refugees (Presidential Executive Office 2020d). Consequently, all these recent actions present the same characteristics of Russian foreign policy mentioned above, namely consolidating peace, maintaining excellent relations with its allies, showing reluctance towards the Western world and pursuing its interest in expanding the military and economic resources, in order to raise the power status.

2. The competition for power between the United States of America and the Russian Federation in the Syrian war

The United States of America and the Russian Federation showed a serious involvement in the Syrian war, because the context and the area of the conflict reflected the interests of both states and opened a path towards strengthening their powers. Both states are in a competition to show their own capabilities and, at the same time, the weaknesses of each other. Furthermore, each of them has a different view of the whole international order because of their different approaches of international theory: liberalism versus realism.

While United States of America follows the liberalist tradition, the behaviour of great powers in the current international system is similar to the realist approach. The features which shape the system are the absence of a central authority to protect everyone, the military threat and the constant fear and mistrust among states. For this reason, powerful states try to show that they can be reliable and should become the central authority of the international system. Consequently, when it comes to wars and violent conflicts, power will be defined according to the realist perspective, namely by understanding the interdependence of multiple factors, such as culture, interest, economy, military and politics (Mondal 2014).

Therefore, the differences between the United States of America and the Russian Federation have the core in the structure of their systems. While the former is a promoter of democracy, which invests in defence and has a solid economy, the latter has an opposed regime, which relies on energy exports and foreign policy legitimacy, as its economy is unidimensional and eight times weaker than the American one (Pagano 2017, 8). Nevertheless, the Russia Federation is the sixth in the world at the level of purchasing power. Thus, even though it does not reach the same levels of the United States of America, the Russian Federation's economy should not be underestimated. However, from the military point of view, there is a tough competition between the two. Regarding the military budget in terms of purchasing power, the Russian Federation officially spends approximately 65 billion dollars, but, according to Dimitri Simes, advisor of former United States Presidents R. Nixon and D. Trump and CEO of the Centre for the National Interest, the numbers of the Russian military budget may, unofficially, reach between 140-150 billion dollars (Simes 2021). Even though the United States of America has officially declared a military budget of 732 billion dollars, the manpower in the Russian Federation is much cheaper than in the United States of America. Likewise, while the United States of America have more naval ships and aircrafts, the Russian Federation possesses more

battle tanks and, in terms of GDP, it has a higher defence spending percentage than Americans (Russell 2021, 4). Thus, each of them has different assets.

The Middle East, this diverse area with multiple conflicts which pressured the United States of America in various ways, seemed ideal for ambitious Russia to pursue its interests of involving in serious foreign affairs, cooperate with other influential powers against the United States of America, while becoming, apparently, the mediator of conflicts from Middle East. According to their official policies, the two states share the same interests in countering terrorism and nuclear security. However, they support opposing factions in the Syrian war. For example, The Russian Federation had an efficient cooperation with both allies and rivals of the United States of America, in order to attract them to the Russian side. On the one hand, the Russian Federation allied with Syria and Iran and helped them in terms of weaponry, in order to fight better the United States of America and Israel. On the other hand, it took the advantage of the broken relations during the Arab Spring between the United States of America and Egypt and Saudi Arabia and helped them through diplomatic and military manners. The Russian Federation also had an influence on Israel, in order to drive it away from its dependence on the United States of America and has also built good relations with Palestine throughout history. Thus, by analysing the religious dimension of the Syrian war at the moment of its intervention in the conflict, the Russian Federation was an ally of both Shia and Sunni Muslims until 2015 and its role in the Middle East suffered only small changes (Rabinovich 2016, 3-4). This plan, to ally with as many regional powers as it could, emphasized the interest of Russia to weaken American relationships with Middle Eastern countries and its influence in the region. Thereby, the Russian Federation could gain more support in the domestic and regional public opinion in terms of its strength and diplomatic leadership, while the perceptions about the United States of America would be more negative (Pagano 2017, 3).

Nevertheless, the administration of President Putin showed a similar approach of the Syrian conflict to the one of President Trump, as the American President said himself at the beginning of his term that the relation between them will thrive. "Getting along with Russia is a good thing, not a bad thing", declared President Trump (Wanlund 2021, 356). Since the end of the Cold War and until his presidency, all the American Presidents tried to ease the tensions between the two countries. However, they did not succeed due to the Russian influence over the former Soviet states, where the American influence was also trying to expand. Taking into consideration that they helped each other in multiple situations, the good relation between the two leaders was not a surprise. However, N.A.T.O.'s actions towards the Russian Federation did not show similar "friendly" intentions. The organization sent more troops near Russian Federation's borders in Poland and the Baltic States and, also, gave deadly weapons to Ukraine, actions which President Obama would have not made, claimed Professor Henry Nau, former member of the National Security Council. Furthermore, the United States of America imposed sanctions on the Russian Federation for its invasion in Ukraine and even for its support for President Bashar al-Assad and other actions related to terrorism (Wanlund 2021, 356-358).

The Russian Federation claims that its policy is non-ideological, like the American one which tries to promote democracy and, at the same time, weaken the stability of the region by strengthening extremist factions that threaten Russian security. Thus, from a Russian point of view, its role is to stabilise the balance of power from the region by trying to voice its opinions and advance its policies at the same level as the United States of America. From a Western point of view, the non-ideological involvement of the Russian Federation in the Middle East represents, however, a confrontation with the United States of America. As the Russian Federation is using soft power to gain influence in the region, it might overstep United States' goals. For example, building close relations with many states from the region (including United States' allies) and also with non-state actors (considered by the West as terrorist affiliated) or influencing aspects from regional politics, tourism and education might actually affect the

stability of its relationship with the United States of America. For this reason, the United States of America has a proactive approach and comprehensive policies instead of immediately reacting to the Russian Federation's actions. On the same note, the United States of America is, first of all, focused to accomplish its national interests of containing Iranian power and countering terrorism from the region. Thus, its strategy does not include the Russian Federation as a threat, but rather accepts its presence in the region (Pagano 2017, 18-19).

Russia's foreign policy towards the Syrian war showed its reluctance towards any Western-led military interventions in the region. The Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation from 2013 outlined Russia's strong support for the Syrian regime and stood up for rejecting any foreign military intervention within the state, arguing that it might destabilise international peace. Emphasizing its position as a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council and its aim of settling global and regional problems, Russia considered the measures taken by the West towards Syria as illegitimate and threatening. Therefore, it claimed that the Western intervention consisted in coercive measures which infringed upon the United Nations Charter and were not helpful in resolving the crisis. "Such measures only lead to the expansion of the conflict area, provoke tensions and arms race, aggravates interstate controversies and incite ethnic and religious strife", stated the official document (The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation 2013, Section II, para. 15). The same motivation to settle conflicts could also be observed in the last Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation, published by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2016. In this document it was emphasized the aim of Russia to cooperate with the international community in combating international terrorism, as well as to consolidate global peace and security and settle a fair and democratic international system in accordance with the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and under the organisation's management of international relations. Another significant purpose mentioned in the document is strengthening the position of the state "as a centre of influence in today's world". In Russia's view, this purpose together with its "open and predictable foreign policy" and its historical stateliness in counterbalancing the evolution of international affairs, determine the independent and assertive foreign policy based on following the national interests of the state (The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation 2016, Sections I-III).

However, there is a possible cooperation between the two countries if the tensions among Middle Eastern powers would amplify so much that only a fusion between Russian and American powers would stabilise it. At the moment, the United States of America insists on the regime change in Syria as this might be the only solution. However, it does not provide more details about which alternative for the government might be better. For this reason, both the United States of America and the Russian Federation should focus more on countering terrorism and providing help regarding the security of the citizens. By analysing the situation on short-term consequences, if they succeed in diminishing the disputes, they would support a stable governance in the region. Neither of them is interested in prolonging the regional disputes, so this might be an optimistic scenario in which they might reach an agreement (Pagano 2017, 4-7). Furthermore, the Russian Federation declared that is open to collaborate with the United States of America for international security as long as their relationship is "based on mutual trust, respect of each other's interests and non-interference in each other's domestic affairs" (The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation 2016, Section I, para. 72). However, as I mentioned that the Russian Federation is not hurrying to counter the terrorism from the region until Syria is fully protected, the cooperation with the West might remain unlikely to happen.

Conclusions

The great power competition between the Russian Federation and the United States of America clearly evolved during their intervention in the Syrian war. While the former strongly followed its national interests to have a successful foreign policy that would improve the political legitimacy of the president, the latter was involved more ideologically. Consequently, the American-Russian relationship from the Syrian war portrays the opposing interests and actions of each other in the region, while the two countries did not interact directly with each other.

Besides the different traditions they follow, realism for Russia and liberalism for the United States, both are supporting different sides in the Syrian war. As I have already mentioned above, the Russian Federation backed the groups from Syria and Libya, which fought against the United States of America. Thus, the Russian presence in the region aimed tightening the relations with regional powers and investing in military operations, which would weaken the American influence. Expanding its military capabilities in the region was a very important goal for the Russian Federation because it brought more benefits than a remote cooperation would have done on the long term. On the contrary, the United States of America weakened the relationships with some of its allies, such as Turkey. However, it accomplished other goals, such as defending its economic interests from the region and the expansion of Islamic radicalism.

From the ideological point of view, their relation had a fluctuating evolution. During the administration of President Obama, the Russian Federation was sceptical about the American presence in the region but cooperated with it for limiting chemical weapons in Syria because it was its own interest. However, the situation changed during the administration of President Trump. The similarities between President Trump and his Russian counterpart's approach to foreign policy helped them to limit the international attention toward the conflict. Their cooperation was also very important for the development of the states outside the Syrian war.

While the United States of America aimed mainly to spread democratic values and back the civilians, the Russian Federation supported the regional governments and their authoritarian characteristics. As the civilians did not have the power to influence the order of the conflicts and most of the states complied better with Russia's style of action rather than the Western approach, Russia's bandwagoning strategy was welcomed by several regional powers. Even some of United States' allies gained interest in Russia's presence and moved to its side. However, it is important to mention that the attitude of the Middle Eastern states towards the United States of America was influenced by the fluctuating number of resources received during the two American presidential administrations in-between 2012-2020. For this reason, the future of the Russian Federation's advantages in the Middle East still depends upon the Western interest in the region. Nevertheless, the Russian Federation holds nowadays an important position, at least regionally, and is involved in a war that started ten years ago, which might have another uprising when and if democratic forces from around the world will decide to intervene and re-establish the order in the region. However, the multipolar world of today does not let the United States' rule to overcome other states' powers. The neoliberal system encourages everyone to cooperate for common benefits and until it will change, there will always be multiple strong states, which will dominate together the international affairs.

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