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RUSSIA IN THE SYRIAN CONFLICT

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ANALYSIS

The Impact of the Syrian Conflict on Russian Relations with Other Middle Eastern Countries

By Mark N. Katz, Fairfax, VA

Abstract

Russia has taken a strong stand in supporting Syria's ruling regime in the on-going civil war. Surprisingly, this stand has not fundamentally altered Russia's relations with most other countries of the Middle East.

Moscow Backs Assad

Moscow's continued support for the Assad dictatorship's efforts to suppress its opponents has not only had a negative impact on Russian relations with the West, but with many Middle Eastern states that support the Syrian opposition. How negative this impact has been, though, has varied greatly.

This article will examine how the Syrian conflict has impacted on Russian relations with the Sunni-dominated governments of six key Middle Eastern states that oppose the Assad regime and Russian support for it: Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Turkey, Jordan, Egypt, and Libya (space does not allow a discussion of more). The conclusion will then examine the impact of the Syrian conflict on Moscow's overall relations with the Middle East.

Saudi Arabia

The Syrian conflict has had an especially negative impact on Moscow's relations with the Kingdom. Non-existent during the Cold War, Saudi-Russian relations were generally poor during the 1990s and early 2000s when Moscow accused Riyadh of supporting the Chechen rebels. Russian officials and commentators saw the Kingdom as supporting the rise of Sunni radicalism in the Muslim regions of Russia, in Central Asia and the Caucasus, and elsewhere. In 2003, though, a rapprochement occurred between the two countries. While some differences remained (most notably over Iran), the countries appeared to share a common interest in supporting the status quo in the region. Moscow, in particular, hoped that improved Saudi-Russian relations would lead to large-scale exports of arms and other goods to the Kingdom, as well as investment opportunities for Russian petroleum firms there.

Shortly after the start of the Arab Uprisings at the beginning of 2011, though, tensions emerged between Moscow and Riyadh. With Saudi Arabia supporting the opposition to Moscow-backed regimes in Libya and especially in Syria, the older Russian image has re-emerged of Saudi Arabia as the supporter of radical Sunni Islamist forces not just in the Middle East, but inside Russia itself. Many Russian observers portray Saudi Arabia as an even more sinister force than the U.S.

While the Obama Administration's support for the Arab uprisings is based on (what Moscow views as) the mistaken notion that democracy is possible in Arab countries, Saudi Arabia—which Moscow does not see as a champion of democracy—knowingly supports them in order to promote the rise of Sunni radicalism. Russian commentators also express disappointment that Moscow's earlier hopes for increased economic ties with the Kingdom have been largely disappointed. Without anything to mitigate them, Saudi-Russian relations appear likely to remain acrimonious as long as the Syrian conflict persists. Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov's calls for Saudi Arabia (along with Iran) to participate in a peace conference on Syria possibly indicate that Moscow hopes to mitigate the damage that differences over Syria have done to Saudi-Russian relations.

Qatar

While sometimes difficult even beforehand, Russia's relations with Qatar have also soured over the Syrian uprising. Just as it does with Saudi Arabia, Moscow sees Qatar's support for the Syrian opposition as reflecting a desire to promote Sunni radicalism both in that country and elsewhere (including Russia's North Caucasus). The fact that a country as small as Qatar has been acting in opposition to Russian interests is especially galling to Moscow. Russian-Qatari differences over Syria, though, have not prevented the giant Russian natural gas corporation, Gazprom, from signing an agreement in December 2012 to purchase "major volumes" of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) from Qatar or from opening a representative office there in February 2013.

Turkey

Moscow and Ankara have had serious differences with regard to Syria. Forced to care for a growing number of refugees fleeing Syria as well as Syrian government forces firing across the border into Turkey, Ankara has not been pleased that Moscow continues to aid the Assad regime. For its part, Moscow is not happy that Turkey has supported the Syrian opposition and has called for the departure of Assad as well as for (more worrisome to Russia) NATO to take action with regard to

Syria. Moscow was especially furious when in October 2012 Ankara forced an aircraft flying across Turkey en route from Russia to Syria to land due to a tip from the U.S. government that it was conveying Russian arms to Damascus (according to one Russian press account, it was “only” carrying radar equipment for anti-aircraft systems and elements of missile systems).

Yet despite their differences over Syria, Russia-Turkish relations have remained good. Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan visited Moscow in July 2012, and several “important economic agreements” were signed then. Putin also visited Turkey in early December 2012. While Putin and Erdogan expressed differences over Syria, their main focus appeared to be their bilateral trade relationship. Having reached a massive \$32 billion in 2011, Putin and Erdogan expressed the hope that this would reach \$100 billion in a year. With large-scale energy and construction deals as well as tourism (3.5 million Russians visited Turkey in 2011) supporting them, Russian-Turkish bilateral economic interests are simply too important to both Moscow and Ankara for either to allow them to be disrupted by differences over Syria. In May 2013, the deputy director of the Russian Federal Service for Military-Technical Cooperation enthused about the prospect of Turkey buying a Russian long-range air defense missile system.

Jordan

Moscow and Amman have also differed over Syria. Like Turkey, Jordan has been forced to care for a large number of refugees fleeing from the conflict in Syria, and so is unhappy with continued Russian support to the Assad regime, which has allowed the conflict to continue. Moscow, for its part, is unhappy that the Syrian opposition has been receiving arms via Jordan. Here again, though, these two governments have decided not to let their differences over Syria hamper their improving bilateral relations. On February 19, 2013, Putin received Jordan's King Abdullah II in Moscow. Although they discussed Syria and the Middle East peace process, they focused more on their growing trade ties (\$426.5 million in 2011), the possibility of Russian participation in the construction of Jordan's first nuclear power plant, and even military-technical cooperation (which Putin described as “developing well”). Included in the latter was the startup of an RPG-32 hand-held anti-tank grenade launcher assembly and testing plant in Jordan by the Russian firm Rostekh in May 2013. Further, Moscow has also begun delivering humanitarian aid for the Syrian refugees in Jordan.

Egypt

Many Russian commentators have expressed apprehension about Egypt's new Islamist president, Mohammad

Morsi, and his Muslim Brotherhood supporters. The Russian government, though, has taken a more pragmatic attitude toward him. Although the new Egyptian government has been critical of the Assad regime, Moscow very much appreciates that Morsi has expressed opposition to foreign (i.e., non-Arab) intervention in the Syrian conflict. Although Morsi upset Washington by working to improve Egypt's relations with Iran, this initiative did not bother Moscow as Russia also has relatively good relations with Tehran. Russian tourists continue to visit Egypt in large numbers. One account noted that over a million Russians visited Egypt both in 2010 (the year before Mubarak fell) and in 2012 (the year afterward). In February 2013, the Russian Ambassador to Egypt, Sergei Kirpichenko advised that, “The scale of Egypt's Islamization should not be exaggerated,” and even blamed what Islamization has occurred on the previous regime: “The country took the Islamization course back in the 1970s when Anwar El Sadat...started flirting with the Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamic political forces, and the revolution of 2011 brought those forces to power.”

Further signs of improving Russian-Egyptian relations in 2013 include Morsi's issuance of an invitation to Putin to visit Egypt, the discussion of Russia extending a loan to Egypt, and the growth in Russian-Egyptian agricultural trade. Perhaps especially since the Morsi government has differences with the U.S., as well as with Saudi Arabia and Qatar, Moscow has chosen to focus on those areas where the Russian and Egyptian governments agree rather than upon their differences over Syria.

Libya

President Putin, Foreign Minister Lavrov, and other high level Russian officials have often cited how the provisions of UN Security Council Resolution 1973 imposing a no-fly zone over Libya were “overstepped” by the West and its Arab allies to bring about the downfall of the Qaddafi regime as the reason why Russia will not agree to even more limited Security Council sanctions against the Assad regime. Moscow is adamant that it will not allow what happened in Libya to happen again in Syria.

It is ironic, then, that—despite having difficulties at first—Russia has developed relatively good relations with the new government in Libya. In December 2012, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Bogdanov announced that Moscow was in talks with Tripoli regarding Russia training Libyan military personnel. In January 2013, the Russian oil firm Tatneft held discussions with Libya's National Oil Corporation about the former resuming operations in Libya; Tatneft employees returned to Libya three months later. In February 2013, the Russian Federal Service for Military-Technical

Cooperation announced that it was holding talks about resuming Russian arms sales to Libya. Also in February, Russian Foreign Minister met with Mahmoud Jibril, the leader of the Libyan National Forces Alliance, in Moscow where they discussed “ways to strengthen the traditionally friendly Russian–Libyan relationships in various fields.” Russian Railways has also expressed hope that it will soon resume the work in Libya that was interrupted by the 2011 conflict. The post-Qaddafi Russian–Libyan relationship, then, is yet another case of how differences over Syria have not been allowed to get in the way of improving bilateral ties.

Conclusion

Syria has been a divisive issue between Moscow, on the one hand, and the six Sunni-dominated governments discussed here, on the other. Moscow’s relations are truly bad, though, with only two of them: Saudi Arabia and Qatar. By contrast, Moscow has maintained or even improved its relations with the other four: Turkey, Jordan, Egypt, and Libya.

Although Russian fears that Saudi Arabia and Qatar are actively supporting Sunni radicals not just in Syria but also in the post-Soviet space may go a long way

to explaining Moscow’s poor relations with these two monarchies, it is noteworthy that Moscow either has or hopes to have improved economic ties with the other four. What this suggests is that if Saudi Arabia and Qatar could bring themselves to increase their economic ties with Russia, the existing level of animosity in their relations with Moscow could diminish considerably. While the Qatari government has taken steps in this direction, it is not certain whether the Saudi or a future Sunni-dominated Syrian government would feel inclined to do so.

On the other hand, Moscow’s good relations with Turkey, Jordan, Egypt, Libya, and other Sunni governments may not prevent increased Muslim opposition activity in the North Caucasus or other parts of the post-Soviet space. Indeed, continued Russian support for the Assad regime in Syria may only encourage Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and non-state actors in the Sunni world to retaliate by supporting Sunni opposition movements inside Russia and the region.

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ANALYSIS

Civil War, Revolution or Counter-Insurgency? The Syrian Conflict through Russian Eyes

By Philipp Casula, Zurich

Abstract

The Russian coverage of the ongoing conflict in Syria differs significantly from its depiction in most Western media outlets. Russian journalists report mostly from the perspective of the government and disregard the opposition’s standpoint. The opposition itself is mostly portrayed as radical and fundamentalist. There is a particular lack of political and background analysis. The conflict is usually presented as the regime’s struggle with terrorism, a view which not only legitimizes the Syrian regime, but which also appears to conform to Russian domestic and foreign policies.

Confusing Alliances

In his latest book, *State of Exception*, German novelist Navid Kermani highlights how the Syrian conflict blurs common interpretative patterns: On the one hand, there is an apparently secular Syrian regime, which, however,

is allied with the Iranian theocracy and the Lebanese Hezbollah. On the other hand, there is a partly religious Syrian opposition participating in demanding democracy and human rights. Also the Russian position in the conflict causes confusion and concern in the West:

Russia (along with China) regularly blocks UN Security Council resolutions on Syria and, at the same time, continues to deliver weapons to the regime. In regard to possible intervention, Russia stresses the principle of non-interference in internal affairs, in the case of the weapons sales, it refers to the fulfillment of old contractual obligations, which furthermore do not violate any international laws.

In siding with Assad, Russia seems to act against its own interests, accepting tensions with major Western partners and with many Middle Eastern governments. How to explain this stance?

Despite the fact that Syria has been a long-standing ally of the Soviet Union and Russia in the region, the country is neither a major trade partner nor a major customer of Russian weaponry, at least not if compared to countries like India, China or Algeria, according to SIPRI data. Similarly, the decrepit Russian Tartus naval facility does not seem to provide sufficient grounds to risk Russia's international reputation. Analyzing its depiction in major Russian media outlets, this paper argues that the Russian stance in the conflict is based on a perception of the war that is largely opposed to the prevailing Western interpretations. Russia's support of the ailing Syrian regime is not only in line with foreign policy preferences but also with domestic policy exigencies.

The Russian Perspective

Russian media coverage of the conflict almost exclusively adopts the perspective of Syrian officials and government troops. Russian journalists in Syria are always embedded with forces loyal to the regime. The reports of Anastasiya Popova provide a telling example. During 2012 she produced various short segments aired by the Russian state-owned channel *Rossiya 24*, and two major documentaries, "The Syrian Map" (January 2012) and "Syrian Diary" (December 2012). The opening scenes of the "Diary" do not leave any doubt about the stance taken: It starts with a dedication to all Syrians killed by terrorists. In Popova's images and comments, Syria appears as a largely modern, secular and peaceful state, suddenly dragged into a spiral of violence and terrorism. The report repeatedly alludes to the multi-confessional character of Syrian society by showing Muslim soldiers praying in Christian churches or Christian troops defending mosques against rebel attacks. The Syrian army is repeatedly portrayed as a professional and disciplined fighting force, whose ranks are composed of ordinary but patriotic fathers and sons who simply defend their country. Their enemies, in contrast, are radical and cruel Islamists, drug addicts, criminals, or greedy mercenaries hiding behind demands for democracy to fool a naïve Western audience. Popova does not spare

the viewers graphic footage of violence allegedly committed by the opposition. The opposition forces are portrayed as being externally funded, especially by the West and the Gulf states, to trigger a regime change. Popova and her team barely mention the peaceful opposition against Assad and completely ignore its violent repression and the human rights violations by the regime. It is only one side which is cruel and violent. Later, in an interview for *Radio Mayak's* "Profilaktika" show, the journalist admitted that, actually, the opposition might have various faces, also peaceful and legitimate ones, and that given the multiplicity of actors it would be wrong to speak of a civil war in which there are only two sides opposing each other. However, such complexity remains underdeveloped in her reports. Popova also dismisses the view of the conflict as revolution since, for her, it is not (all of) the people standing against the regime. She explains that her aim was to produce an emotional report focusing on the human tragedy taking place in Syria, beyond the "political games". Indeed, by depoliticizing the conflict, by omitting the political struggles, Popova's reports appear either as naïve or as consciously distorting. President Vladimir Putin, however, praised the courage of Popova and her crew, awarding them in December 2012 the medal of bravery (*za otvagu*), usually (and tellingly) reserved to military personnel.

In addition to Popova's first reports in early 2012, Georgy Zotov reported from Damascus for the popular weekly *Argumenty i Fakty*. His view is palpably more critical than that of his TV colleague. Zotov stresses that the revolution has not fallen from the sky: He points at the endemic corruption in Assad's Syria and quotes critical voices from Damascus. Assad is clearly characterized as a dictator. However, more space is given to the fears of a radical Islamist takeover of the capital or of a Western military intervention, the latter, though, being deemed unlikely by Zotov as in Syria there are "too many Russian anti-aircraft systems and too little oil".

Yevgeny Poddubny reported from Syria in fall 2012. His coverage for Russian state TV, "Battle for Syria," draws an even more one-sided picture than Popova's reports, seeing a big conspiracy at work, with the West in particular aiming at yet another regime change. The ("so-called") Free Syrian Army is compared to a terrorist organization, funded by foreign donors and supported by foreign mercenaries, aiming at establishing a "Sharia state" in Syria. To achieve that aim, it terrorizes the population, and all the government troops actually do is to react to this violence by trying to protect civilians. Conceived as a "frontline report," the political analysis contained here does not go beyond geopolitical speculations, giving more space to action-filled images of government forces engaging "terrorists". Grossly sim-

plifying the picture, Syria is put in a row with “Afghanistan, Iraq and Libya,” as yet another Western attempt at toppling a regime. In all these cases, Poddubny tells the viewers, the West did not succeed in changing the political structure or improving the security situation. Poddubny hence delivers a double Russian orientalist argument alluding to an immutable, violent and corrupt Orient and to the naïve West, which is deemed to be incapable of understanding the true nature of the East.

A Filtered Syrian Perspective

Interviews with russophone Syrians, who often studied in Russia, are a distinguishing feature of many Russian reports. Zotov, for instances, interviewed a Damascus-based professor. On the one hand, the researcher confirms the perception of a corrupt regime. On the other hand, and given the radicalization of the opposition, he returned to side with the regime, because, at the end of the day, compared with other dictators, he argues, Assad at least provided for free schooling and healthcare. This interaction with linguistically privileged interlocutors also leads to an ambiguous reporting on the waves of the traditionally liberal *Echo of Moscow* radio station. In January 2013, the station aired an interview with Qadri Jamil, deputy premier of Syria. The interviewers, Aleksey Naryshkin and Aleksey Solomin, engaged him critically on various occasions, among others regarding his additional post as leader of an opposition movement. But despite such critical attempts, the Syrian official ultimately was given the opportunity to extensively inform the Russian audience first hand on why the regime is fighting a just cause. He especially criticized Western support for the rebels, with aid deliveries not reaching the needy population but falling into rebel hands. Also, his claim that the “support for terrorists” by Saudi Arabia and Turkey could not take place without the permission of the “big boss,” the United States, remained unchallenged by the conductors of the show, with Solomin finally succumbing to the position advanced by his guest that Assad is fighting against “islamist fundamentalists and radicals.”

Also on Radio *Echo of Moscow*, Sofiko Shevardnadze, granddaughter of Eduard Shevardnadze, talks extensively about her experience visiting Damascus and interviewing Assad for *Russia Today*. Similarly to Popova's reports, she presents the issue in a depoliticized fashion, highlighting in her discussion with host Olga Bychkova the “human tragedy” of a “weak man” who never wanted to be president of Syria in the first place. At least she admits the demagogic character of Assad and that Syrians demanded more rights and freedoms—demands to which the regime did not respond. The Syrians are also said to have been tired of Assad's reign. However, what

started peacefully with legitimate demands turned violent, though not due to the regime, but because of terrorists who turned the peaceful protest into the (human) disaster of war. That the regime might bear the main responsibility for this turn is glossed over by Shevardnadze, who instead blames foreign-funded extremists only. When Bychkova alludes to regime air raids on hospitals in Aleppo, Shevardnadze denies any knowledge of such raids and refers to her experience of terrorism in Damascus, a city, which she portrays as a modern metropolis in which people live a lifestyle very similar to the Russian one (“short skirts, sunbaths, cinemas”). This perspective on Syrians as people “similar to us” (Russians) is underscored in many reports by repeated hints at the Christian Orthodox minority and the substantial russophone diaspora. The NTV channel estimated in April 2013 that around 8,000 Russian citizens are registered as residents with the authorities but, according to the *Kommersant* daily, up to 30,000 CIS citizens might live with their families on Syrian soil. Since early 2013, Russia has repatriated 279 of its citizens.

Conclusion

Thus, the Russian media coverage falls roughly into two categories. On the one hand, the “emotional reports” which focus on the sufferings of civilians at the hands of “terrorists” and on the humanitarian disaster, like the reports of Popova. On the other hand, there are the “war reports”, like those of Poddubny, which highlight combat operations. What they share is the lack of political perspective on and interpretation of the conflict. There is little analysis of how and why the conflict started and few mentions of the regime's authoritarianism. Also, the reports stay widely silent about the regime's violence and the peaceful demands of the opposition. What remains is a storyline which focuses on counterinsurgency. Hence, while the prevailing Western media storyline is that of “a evolution,” the one prevailing in Russia is one of “combating terrorism”. The latter is one well-known to the Russian audience and accepted by the Russian regime.

Given that most Russian media are mainly state controlled (especially Russian TV), one could dismiss these reports simply as propaganda. However, independent Russian Middle East experts, who do not tend to depoliticize the conflict, also largely share these views of a foreign-induced war. While Yevgeny Satanovsky, head of the Moscow-based Institute of Middle Eastern Studies, focuses on conspiracy theories, Yevgeny Primakov, a former minister of foreign affairs and leading expert in the field, is more nuanced and careful. In an interview for the official *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, he characterized the conflict as civil war, however, he also accused the U.S., Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Turkey of meddling in Syria's

internal affairs. In this and other interviews, he advances the hypothesis that the Arab League supports Assad's opponents to prevent the rise of a "Shia belt," reaching from Iran and Iraq to Syria and Lebanon. A Sunni-dominated Syria would end the alliance with Iran and side with its opponents. Primakov does not believe that the West aims at democracy and stability for Syria. However, he contends that there were objective reasons for the Arab spring, among them unemployment, corruption, the lack of democratic freedoms and the rulers' unwillingness to reform while stubbornly sticking to power.

Summing up, the Russian perspective does provide an alternative view on the Syrian conflict, but definitely not a more objective one. While the Western media might have overemphasized the social basis of the opposition, the Russian media certainly overrate the support for the regime, as independent analyst Parviz Mullodzhanov suggests. One simple reason for this marked difference is a difference in access. Russian journalists would certainly have trouble if they wished to report side-by-side with rebel units, as would Western media outlets if they wanted to report independently from entrenched Damascus.

Most importantly, however, this form of reporting corresponds to Russian domestic and foreign policy exigencies: The wish for an international system dominated by nation-states which interact on the basis of law. Adhering to the principle of non-interference has always

been high on the agenda of the Putin administration. While, most likely, there is no direct pressure from the state to report in a certain manner, it is certainly encouraged (as the medal of bravery for Popova's crew shows). Rather, media reporting reflects a certain general perception of the war, also fueled by certain expert opinions. Generally, there is little interest in the Syrian war in Russia, as VTsIOM polls show (see p. 10).

The domestic dimension is connected to two political issues. Firstly, the state's relation to Islam and its perception by the population, which is also influenced by the notorious instability in the North Caucasus. Secondly, the Putin regime abhors any revolutionary or regime change scenario, especially since the 2004 Orange revolution in the Ukraine. The depiction of Syria as descending into chaos, with the threat of the regime falling into the hands of Islamic terrorists and/or the West sends a powerful message to any Russian opposition movement. The association of unrest with Western influence is reflected also in the recent Russian crackdown on NGOs.

The images of the Syrian conflict employed to convey this message are basically not that different from those in Western media but the message is an opposite one. As Kermani noted, "the same images of destroyed cities and crying mothers are used to demonstrate the barbarism of the other side."

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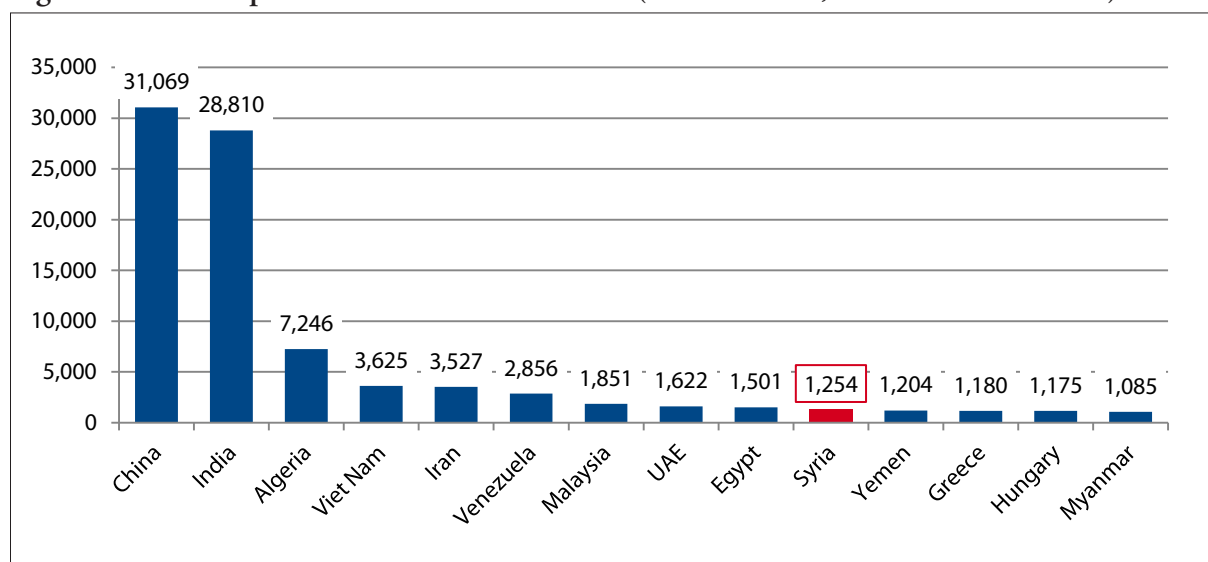
Further Reading

- Kermani, Navid: *Ausnahmezustand [State of Exception]*. Munich: C.H. Beck, 2013.
- Trenin, Dmitri: *The Mythical Alliance. Russia's Syria Policy*. Moscow: Carnegie Center, 2013.

STATISTICS

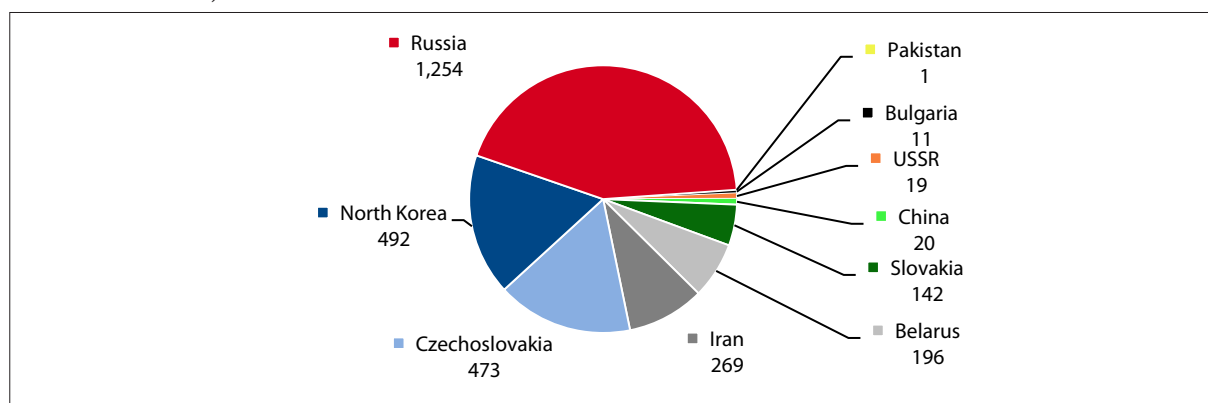
Russian Arms Deliveries To Syria

Figure 1: Arms Exports From Russia 1991–2012 (in US Dollars, Constant 1990 Prices)



Source: SIPRI Arms Transfers Database, <http://www.sipri.org/databases/armstransfers/>

Figure 2: Syrian Arms Imports 1991–2012 By Country of Origin (in US Dollars, Constant 1990 Prices)



Source: SIPRI Arms Transfers Database, <http://www.sipri.org/databases/armstransfers/>

Table 1: Top Ten Importers of Russian Arms 2008–2012 (in US Dollars, Constant 1990 Prices)

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	Total Imports 2008–2012
India	1,612	2,060	2,298	2,449	3,966	12,385
China	1,839	1,302	636	692	679	5,148
Algeria	1,595	1,030	670	951	645	4,891
Viet Nam	153	55	151	1,318	353	2,030
Venezuela	702	252	57	274	410	1,695
Syria	46	73	268	312	376	1,075
Malaysia	408	407			3	818
Egypt		8	367	405	20	800
UAE		118	294	96	96	604
Iran	15	15	41	33	15	119

Source: SIPRI Arms Transfers Database, <http://www.sipri.org/databases/armstransfers/>

Table 2: Arms Exports From Russia To Syria 1992–2012

No. ordered	Weapon designation	Weapon description	Year of order/ licence	Year(s) of deliveries	No. delivered/ produced	Comments
149	V-46	Diesel engine	1991	1992–1993	139	For 149 T-72M1 tanks from Czechoslovakia and (after 1992 break-up of Czechoslovakia) from Slovakia; more delivered from USSR before break-up of USSR 1992
(1500)	9M119/AT-11 Sniper	Anti-tank missile	(1998)	2000–2005	(1500)	For modernized T-72 tank
(500)	9M131/AT-13 Saxhorn	Anti-tank missile	(1998)	1999–2001	(500)	
(1000)	9M133 Kornet/AT-14	Anti-tank missile	(1998)	1998–1999	(1000)	
(1000)	9M133 Kornet/AT-14	Anti-tank missile	2002	2002–2003	(1000)	
(250)	9M133 Kornet/AT-14	Anti-tank missile	2004	2005	(250)	
(250)	9M133 Kornet/AT-14	Anti-tank missile	2005	2006	(250)	
(200)	Igla/SA-18 Grouse	Portable surface-to-air missile (SAM)	2005	2006	(200)	For use with Strelts SAM system (not with portable launchers after Israeli and US pressure)
(36)	96K9 Pantsyr-S1	Mobile air defence (AD) system	(2006)	2008–2012	(24)	Part of \$400–730 m deal; no. could be up to 50; delivery by 2013*
(700)	9M311/SA-19 Grison	SAM	(2006)	2008–2012	(470)	Part of \$400 m deal; for Pantsyr AD systems
(8)	9K40 Buk/SA-17SAM System	SAM system	2007	2010–2012	(6)	
(160)	9M317/SA-17 Grizzly SAM	SAM	2007	2010–2012	(120)	
(2)	K-300P Bastion-P	Coast defence system	2007	2010–2011	2	
(12)	MiG-29SMT/Fulcrum	Fighter ground attack (FGA) aircraft	2007			MiG-29M2 version
(12)	S-125 Pechora-2M	SAM system	(2007)	2011–2012	(8)	\$200 m deal; Syrian SA-3 SAM systems rebuilt to Pechora M2 version
(72)	Yakhont/SS-N-26	Anti-ship missile	2007	2010–2011	(72)	Bastion (SS-C-5) coastal defence version
(200)	Igla-S/SA-24	Portable SAM	(2008)	2008–2010	(200)	For use on Strelts SAM system
(87)	Kh-31A1/AS-17	Anti-ship missile/anti-radar missile (ARM)	(2009)	2009–2010	87	Incl. Kh-31P anti-radar version
	Kh-35 Uran/SS-N-25	Anti-ship missile	(2009)			For MiG-29 combat aircraft
(100)	KAB-500/1500	Guided bomb	(2010)	2012	(50)	
(100)	R-73/AA-11 Archer	Short-range air-to-air missile (SRAAM)	(2010)			For MiG-29 combat aircraft
(50)	RVV-AE/AA-12 Adder	Beyond-visual-range air-to-air missile (BVRAAM)	(2010)			For MiG-29 combat aircraft
(36)	Yak-130	Trainer/combat aircraft	2011			\$550 m deal; status uncertain

Information concerning the year of order, year(s) of deliveries and number delivered/produced figures are in brackets if the accuracy of the data is uncertain.

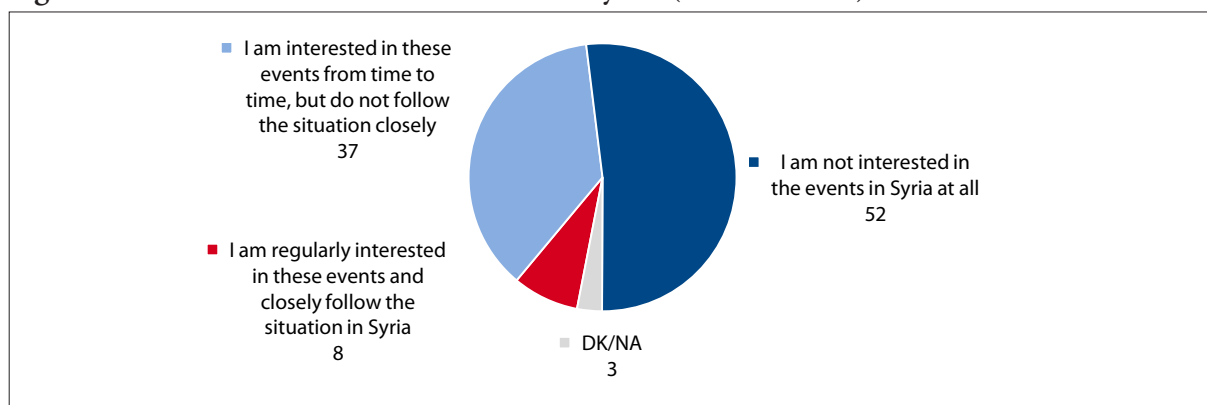
* According to comments by President Vladimir Putin at the Yekaterinburg Russia–EU summit on 4 June 2013, the S-300 systems have apparently not been delivered yet (<http://eng.kremlin.ru/transcripts/5528>)

Source: SIPRI Arms Transfers Database, <http://www.sipri.org/databases/armstransfers/>

OPINION POLL

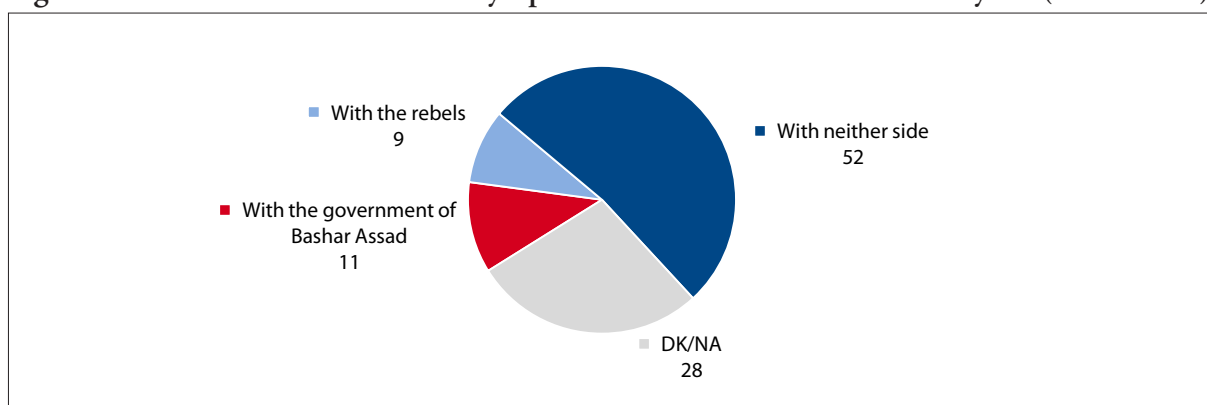
Russian Attitudes Towards the Conflict in Syria

Figure 1: Are You Interested in the Events in Syria? (VTsIOM Poll)



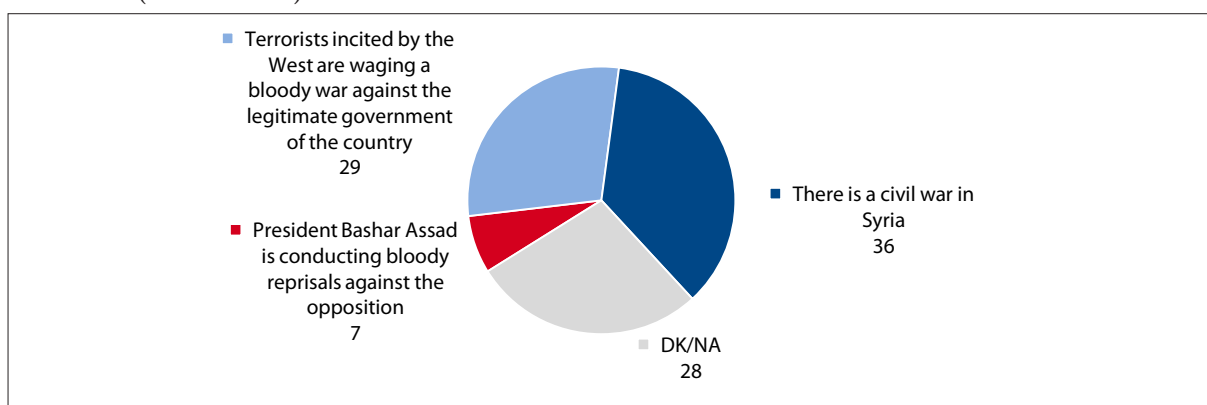
Source: representative opinion polls by VTsIOM on 7–8 July 2012, <http://wciom.ru/index.php?id=459&uid=112938>

Figure 2: With Which Side Do You Sympathize in the Present Conflict in Syria? (Levada Poll)



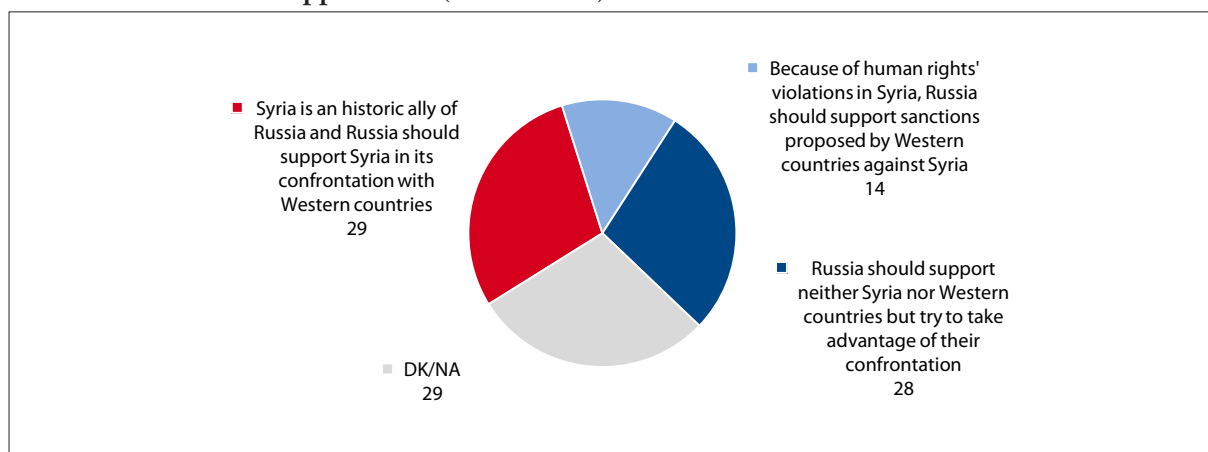
Source: representative opinion polls by Levada Center on 23–26 November 2012, <http://www.levada.ru/18-12-2012/rossiya-na-mezhdunarodnoi-arene>

Figure 3: With Which Opinion on the Present Events in Syria Would You Rather Agree? (Levada Poll)



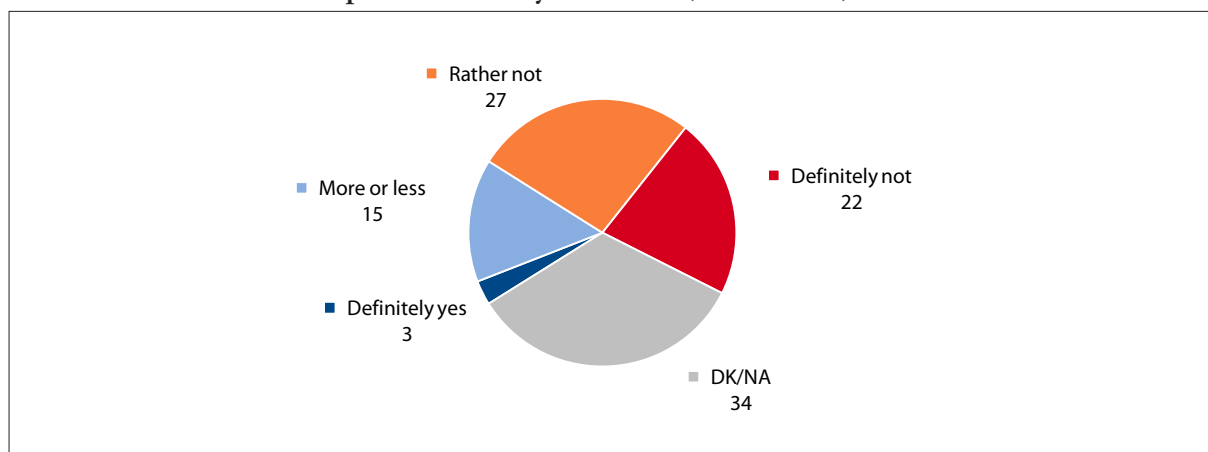
Source: representative opinion polls by Levada Center in July 2012, <http://www.levada.ru/27-07-2012/v-sirii-idet-grazhdanskaya-voyna>

Figure 4: In Your Opinion, Which Position Should Russia Take Vis-a-vis the Syrian Government, Which Western States Accuse of Human Rights' Violations and Brutal Repression of the Opposition? (Levada Poll)



Source: representative opinion polls by Levada Center in July 2012, <http://www.levada.ru/27-07-2012/v-sirii-idet-grazhdanskaya-voyna>

Figure 5: Would You Support a Military Operation in Syria to Protect the Civilian Population, Similar to the Operation in Libya in 2011? (Levada Poll)



Source: representative opinion polls by Levada Center in July 2012, <http://www.levada.ru/27-07-2012/v-sirii-idet-grazhdanskaya-voyna>

ABOUT THE RUSSIAN ANALYTICAL DIGEST

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The Russian Analytical Digest is a bi-weekly internet publication jointly produced by the Research Centre for East European Studies [Forschungsstelle Osteuropa] at the University of Bremen (www.forschungsstelle.uni-bremen.de), the Center for Security Studies (CSS) at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Zurich (ETH Zurich), the Resource Security Institute, the Institute of History at the University of Zurich (<http://www.hist.uzh.ch/>) and the Institute for European, Russian and Eurasian Studies at The George Washington University. It is supported by the German Association for East European Studies (DGO). The Digest draws on contributions to the German-language Russland-Analysen (www.laender-analysen.de/russland), the CSS analytical network on Russia and Eurasia (www.css.ethz.ch/rad), and the Russian Regional Report. The Russian Analytical Digest covers political, economic, and social developments in Russia and its regions, and looks at Russia's role in international relations.

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