

Russian intervention in the Middle East: Political and Economic Dimensions

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Abstract

Russia being one of the major super powers in the region not only ceased to view the Middle East as the secondary important player and develop much interest in the region based on its interest and diplomacy. The interventions of Russia in the Middle East started since 2011 where they played their role to secure the regions' interest against the West. However, this influenced deeply the economic and political situation in the Arab world, due to various circumstances. The purpose of the paper is to develop comprehensive understanding towards the rising influence of the Russia and its intervention in the Middle East, based on gaining the political and economic dimensions towards it. The aim of the study is to conduct the critical analysis on the issue by means of gathering secondary data from past studies.

The findings of the paper helped in revealing that the fall of the Soviet Union changed the dynamics of the region where much of the political and economic changes have been witnessed due to series of tensions and conflicts. However, since 2011, Russia tried to portray its positive involvement in harmonizing the Middle Eastern conflicts, but the Western conflicts with the communists affected the political scenario of the entire region. The implications involve much emphasis towards playing an influential role in reducing the situation of conflict and war in Syria, Palestine, Yemen and its adjoining areas. The relationship between Iran and Russia are with the common interest to reduce the political involvement of the West in the Central Asia; therefore, it is imperative for Russia to take other major regional powers onboard so that a positive dialogue can be ensured.

Keywords: Russia, the Middle East, Soviet Union, Economic, Political, Interventions, Military, Trading, War.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Overview

The rise of Russia and its declaration as the super power dated back since the fall of USSR. Russia is known as one of the strongest power in the world with strong ability to stand against the US. Since the fall of the USSR, the Russian policies specifically towards the Middle Eastern region have been considered as inconsistent and conflicting (Kozhanov, 2018). For the Western policymakers, it is the matter of concern that the frequent and historic U-turns of Russia in the Middle Eastern region is whether with the intention of conflict or cooperation. Based on the Russian perspective towards the Middle East, the Western world tends to drive its policies for Russia. The paper investigates the political and economic dimensions of the Middle East based on the Russian intervention (Lu, and Thies, 2013).

Background of Issue

The Middle Eastern region suffered great crisis in the past due to the various factors, but prominently due to petroleum, religion, and nationalism. This was found one of the major reasons of a division and between the Soviets and the Arabs. Due to Islam, being the forefront religion and the unity of Arab against Israel and the West resulted in significant crisis and conflicts. However, in the late 90's, the invasion of the Soviet Union by Afghanistan gave rise to another era of cold war, which weaken the position of the Soviet Union and led the Arabs to gain power over the Soviets and the West based on having the petroleum dominance (Becker, and Horelick, 1970; Freedman, 1985).

The policies designed by the Soviet Union towards favouring a specific Arab group led the other groups to move towards the West. The Soviet favouritism increased towards Syria and Iraq led Saudi Arabia and Egypt who were the former allies of the Soviet to back the West. To exert the political power, the Soviets adopted the strategy of stick-and-carrot in order to persuade Arabs to join them, but Arabs closely maintained their ties with the religion and their strong allies (Kozhanov, 2018). However, the

invasion of USSR reduced its popularity and results the Arab world to lose its diplomatic trust towards the Soviet. After the series of conflicts between the Arab nationalism and the West as well as communists because of petroleum, many tensions have been witnessed among the communist regimes that attacked the Islamic nations later (Trenin, 2013).

Later, in 2010, the series of wars and conflicts witnessed in the Arab Peninsula, the involvement of Russian in Syria based on its refusal towards recognizing potential threats caused by Iran in the past based on its nuclear programmes, and several other issues witnessed in the Arab, increased the concerns of the Western super powers. During 2010-2011, the rising involvement of Russia in Libya conflict, the cooperation towards resolving the Iranian nuclear programme and plans during 2012-2015, the initiatives taken to resolve Yemen conflict in 2011-2012, the refusal towards the export of S-300 missiles to Syria during the year 2013-2014 increased hope of Moscow to play an influential role in the Arab region (Allison, 2013; RUSSIA'S, 2006).

Problem Statement

After the invasion of the Soviet Union, the entire dynamics of the politics in the region have been changed because of the history and series of conflicts. The West based on its interest in the Middle East created its strong ties with the Arab league especially the Saudi Arabia, whereas the invasion of the Soviet Union resulted in giving a reason of exerting power by Russia on the Middle Eastern countries not with the intention to create conflict, but to avoid the intervention of the West in Middle Eastern region. Besides, much of the relationship of the Middle Eastern countries has been affected due to the Russian-Iranian relationships, but Russia tried to consider the immediate allies into forming a strong control over the region to avoid Western intervention. Further, there have been political as well as economic interventions done by Russia, which influenced the Middle Eastern region to sustain its regional positioning (Kozhanov, 2018). Based on this, the

issue investigated through the paper was *to critically analyse the Russian intervention in the Middle East based on economic and political dimensions.*

Aims

The aim of the study was to critically analyse the influence of the Russian intervention in the Middle Eastern region and the political and economic dimensions towards it.

Research Questions

The questions of the study were as follows:

What is the historical perspective of the Soviet role in the Middle East?

What is the geopolitical links of Russia with the Middle East?

How economic and political interventions done by Russia influence the current dynamics of the Middle East?

How diplomatic and economic interventions of Russia resulted in influencing the Middle Eastern political arena?

Significance of Study

The study played significant role to understand the role and the intervention policies of Russia in the Middle East and its political as well as economic dimensions as well. It was found that the historical involvement of Russia in the Middle East affected the economic and political situation especially the perspective of the former allies were negative about the Soviet's role in Arab region, but after 2011, the involvement of Russia in the Arab helped to improve the political stance of Russia in the entire world.

Hence, the study played influential role to share concrete understanding for policymakers as well as academic practitioners towards the Russian intervention in the Arab based on gaining knowledge towards its political and economic dimensions.

Research Methods

As the present paper focused on analysing the crucial role of Russia in the Middle East; therefore, the interventions Russia in the Middle East have been discussed based on

their political and economic dimensions. The paper focused on gathering the comprehensive facts and evidences from the past studies for which the secondary research was conducted. The paradigm of the investigation focused much on gathering the constructive information; therefore, the philosophical approach applied on the research was *social constructivism*. For the field of political science, the best philosophical approach tends to be social constructivism, which helps in constructing the literature based on critical reviews. The data shared through the paper emphasized on the actual experiences and events; hence, the subjectivity is obtained through the investigations. With the help of social constructivism, the Russian intervention in the Middle East have been investigated comprehensively by gathering the series of incidents taken place in the past. Besides, the suitable research design based on the chosen philosophy was *exploratory research design*. With the help of exploratory research design, the problem discussed in the paper has been explored by gathering subjective facts and presenting discussion over it. To gather subjective facts and evidences, the *secondary data* have been gathered from existing literature. Mainly for the investigation, the past research journals, newspaper articles and published documents have been explored, which helped to critically review the causes of Russian intervention in the Middle East based on the political and economic dimensions of it.

For the paper, as mentioned earlier the material gathered and the procedure used was obtained from the published reports; therefore, the use of such material helped in preparing a concrete analysis that can help readers to understand the perspective shared through the paper. Majorly, the journal articles that have been used to conduct the literature review were based on the Russian intervention and its perspective, whereas for the analysis, the newspapers and the published reports have also been used for the investigation. The common journal articles that have been used for the analysis include the paper of Lanoszka, (2016) on *Russian hybrid warfare and extended deterrence in eastern Europe*; Dannreuther, (2015) on *Russia and the Arab Spring: supporting the counter-revolution*;

Allison, (2014) on *Russian 'deniable' intervention in Ukraine: how and why Russia broke the rules*; Öniş, (2014) on *Turkey and the Arab revolutions: Boundaries of regional power influence in a turbulent Middle East*; Gause III, (2014) on *Beyond sectarianism: The new Middle East cold war*. The books have also been discussed in the paper, which include *A history of the modern Middle East* by Cleveland, and Bunton, (2016); *The Middle East in Transition: Studies in Contemporary History* by Laqueur, (2016); *Perilous Power: The Middle East and US Foreign Policy Dialogues on Terror, Democracy, War, and Justice* by Chomsky, Achcar, and Shalom, (2015). Some websites have also been accessed, which include the website of Foreign Policy, NationsInterest.org, dw.com and Rand.org.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Russia Geopolitical Links with Middle East: A Historical Background

Certainly, Russia is not a newcomer in the region and it has the close link with the Middle East and other Islamic countries throughout history. Russia is a territory which has a natural coexistence and mutual influence over Turkish Caucasian, Eastern Slavic and Persian people (Arakelyan, 2017). During the 16th century and 19th century the Tsars of Russia at least fought about thirteen wars with the Ottoman Empire in order to get control over the Caucasus and the Black Sea area. During these years Russian fleet also occupied Beirut and since then the Russian policies are towards its southern states that are adjacent to the Border of Russia. These states include Afghanistan, Iran and Turkey (Wheeler, 1959). However, later in the nineteen century and at the beginning of the twentieth century the Russian realm was not engaged in a type of colonial carve-up and the moral credentials with the Arab world were considered at top priority and much friendly as compared to the western world (von Hauff, 2018).

After the 1917 Revolution, the new ideological dimensions were built by victorious Bolshevik that provided right to Muslims as well as Arabs to be the master of their destinies and countries as they wished for (Greenstock, 2017). Later on, during the era of Stalinist many political problems arose, but the rise of Khrushchev's opened a new way of USSR military and political presence in the region (Ashford, 2018). This created allies between the Arab people and Eastern Europe in order to struggle for the economic development, social development and for the political reforms where South Yemen, Libya, Iraq, Syria, Algeria and Palestine gained diplomatic help from the Soviet bloc to protect against annihilation and western intervention (Kardaş, 2010).

Later on, the collapse of Soviet Union developed strong foundations which further promoted the fruitful relationship and cooperation with the Iran and Arab work. In 1991 Russia neglected the potential to further develop its ties and the economic and political contacts were completely curtailed which was due to 1990s turmoil that limits Russia

exporting capacities (Sladden, Wasser, Connable and Grand-Clement, 2017). This also affected the business contacts of Russia with the Middle East due to the loss of Ukrainian ports and the major trade gateway in the Mediterranean. At this time Arab countries contributed about 1% of the Russian annual trade but the active involvement and development with the Middle East was adjacent to the ideology of the Russian elite because Russia was considered to be the part of the western island rather than Middle East (Halpern, 2015).

Era of Post Modernization and the Foreign Policy of Russia- Middle East

Since mid of the 2000s, Russia has been recovered from the domestic crises due to its ambitious goals. From the geopolitical terms, The Moscow wants to build strong power bloc as the outside player in Cassian, Caucasus and Central Asia (Laqueur, 2016). In this regard Russia has grown its economic and political allies with Saudi Arabia, Iran and Turkey whole it's considered as the regional partner. Therefore, the invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan and the Gulf war feared Russia due to the presence of military forces in the region. Russia continued the objection against the presence of US military in East Asia and views it as trespassing the Russia turf. From the economic aspect, Russia intervenes into Miss East because it is leading producer of energy and consider oil and gas-rich counties as its competitors and partners. The sharing of the common internet helps to maintain oil prices and to regulate competition in the gas market. For instance, Russia persuades Iran to pump east India instead of West towards Europe (Goldschmidt, 2018). The Russian companies play greater importance on a project of oil and gas in Algeria, Saudi Arabia, Libya, Iraq and Iran. Besides this, any Middle East counties are the consumer of Russian high-tech exports (Sladden, Wasser, Connable and Grand-Clement, 2017).

Russia is completing its project of Bushehr nuclear power in Iran and also has several plans for Syria, Iran and Algeria. Russia also internet in the Middle East by selling commercial plans to Iran and purposed to build railway roots in Saudi Arnaia and Libya

(Krueger, 2016). Besides this, since the Soviet times, Russia is one of the key players that exports arms and weapons in Middle East countries such as Iran, Algeria and Syria. Therefore, the foreign policy of Russia in the Middle East and towards Syria is more merely aggressive but the defensive policies are used which aims to develop political and economic reforms. This further helps to protect the southern borders and at present, the Russian trade becomes modest and reached more than \$218 million in which the Russian export only accounted for \$206 million during 2004 (Held, 2018). Russia also invested in economic projects in Syria which includes gas-processing plants in Homs which cover about 50% of Syrian electricity and fulfil the industry demand.

Chapter 3: Economic and Political Intervention by Russia in Middle East since 2012

Consequently, to define the predominated factor that influences over Russia and the Middle East relation was due to the Russian-Iran dialogue. After the terrorist attack of 9/11 the improvement in Russia- US relation also hampered the interaction between Iran and Russia (Chomsky, Achcar, and Shalom, 2015). Since 2012 Russia is not ceased to consider the Middle East as the region for the secondary importance but also stop considering it as the playground for the goading towards west. Instead of developing an interest in Middle East region Russia is more likely to have a goal of self-interest which resulted in serious transformation and can be categorized into three periods:

Period of 2012 to 2013 – During 2012 and 2013 the Russian cautions returned towards the Middle East and gain deeper involvement in the regional affairs so that they can expand the political ties with the regional powers (Gause, 2014). This period is highly characterized by the intensive development of diplomatic contacts and work as the neutral power in order to resolve ongoing conflicts. This brought Russia and Iran at a stable level where they created and improved the political dialogues with Egypt (Chomsky, Achcar and Shalom, 2015). However, Russia also concentrated in ramping up the dialogues with countries such as Israel, Syria and Iran during which Russia encountered multiple difficulties due to the constructive dialogues. For instance, the appointment of the new ambassador in 2013 by Russia in Qatar did not receive any official explanation and it creates disputes in Doha Airport and further forced Moscow to withdraw the previous ambassador (Sladden, Wasser, Connable and Grand-Clement, 2017). Therefore Russia decided not to retaliate because it can boost the conflicts between Russia and Qatar (Öniş, 2014).

Besides this, during the same period, Russia also welcomed Middle East authorities and talk on the range of economic and political issues includes the strategy of

Kremlin. Moscow further continued working with the Arab counties and other Persian Gulf counties within the defined framework of Russia –GCC strategies (Allison, 2014). During this, the Gulf monarchies also launched in 2011 by Maslow and in 2013 the government also initiated the Arab-Russian cooperation forums where the Russian high officials and representative of the Arab counties can discuss economic and political problems (Krieg, 2016). The core motivation behind intervention by Russia in Middle East affairs was to:

- (i) Intense its contract with the domination states of Middle East to avoid internal isolation that was emerged from West
- (ii) To protect its image as the enemy of Islam that was the main concern of Kremlin
- (iii) To take active part in resolving the internal issues and secure dialogue among West and Iran on the nuclear conflicts which created an outcome of P+51 agreement

Period of 2013 to 2015 – The era of 2013 increased the involvement of Russia in the domestic affairs of Middle Eastern countries which further went beyond the diplomatic relations and culminated military interventions in Syria which started over 2015. The Russian policy in the Middle East was reactive and the main moves of Russia in the Middle East are due to emerging challenges (Dannreuther, 2015). The growing confirmation of Putin and West re-established Russia as one of the influence of power in the world. The key driver for this is the major support to the Assad Regime and Russia sees itself as one of the defensive power. In 2013 on international media, the inevitable military operation was reported in the Damascus's neighbourhood the Eastern and western power accuse Assad regime which raised military intervention by US (Sladden, Wasser, Connable and Grand-Clement, 2017). The Syrian conflict did continue and Russia started taking deeper interest and the number of Jihadist from post-soviet states and Russia joined the conflicts in Ira and Syria. The Russian troops were sent to Syria which

crumbles Russian leadership and caused compete for destructions (Cheskin and March 2015). The era of 2013 increased the involvement of Russia in the domestic affairs of Middle Eastern countries which further went beyond the diplomatic relations and culminated military interventions in the Syria which started over 2015. The Russian policy in Middle East was reactive and the main moves of Russia in Middle East are due to emerging challenges (Dannreuther, 2015). The growing conformation of Putin and West re-established Russia as one of the influence power in world. The key drive for this is the major support to the Assad Regime and Russia sees itself as one of the defensive power. In 2013 on international media the inevitable military operation were reported in the Damascus's neighborhood the Eastern and western power accuse Assad regime which raised military intervention by US (Sladden, Wasser, Connable and Grand-Clement, 2017). The Syrian conflict did continued and Russia started taking deeper interest and the number of Jihadist from post-soviet states and Russia jointed the conflicts in Ira and Syria. The Russian troops were sent to Syria which crumble Russian leadership and caused compete destructions (Cheskin and March, 2015).

Post 2015 – The extensive involvement of Russia in Syria resulted in audaciousness in its capabilities which influence the behaviour of the Middle East, Western countries and beyond. It is recognized that the Syrian conflicts cannot be solved without any negotiation and there is no country currently which can resolve this issue (Cleveland and Bunton, 2016). However, Moscow considers that the international allies can help to force international communities in order to accept the goal of diplomatic solutions and due to this Russia is resolute towards continuing the fight against Syrian opposition in order to weaken the Assad adversaries. In the same year, the Kremlin periodically asks for the oppositions patrons in West and Middle East to choose between Russia terms, military onslaught or peace of which Russia does not hesitate towards intensifying the bombing of besieged Aleppo in 2016 where the US-Russian agreement of ceasefire failed (Laqueur, 2016). Therefore, this made Russian believe that they must intensify their military efforts

to ensure that the US is more inclined in order to accept the view of Moscow situation (Sladden, Wasser, Connable and Grand-Clement, 2017). In this regard, Russia military strategy was highly driven by the idea of saving the Assad regime from the complete collapse and to prevent ongoing war in Syria, Iraq and Lebanon. The fall of Aleppo during 2016 bolstered the confidence of Russia in its ability which further transformed the Russian and Middle East policies and today Russia is more proactive and less reactive (Lanoszka, 2016). Kremlin further sabotages the application of UN-Led agreement 2015 and by 2018 Haftar took control over the Eastern part of Libya and fight against UN (GNA).

However, throughout decades the Russian intervention in the Middle East from 2017 has coated heavy loss in term of economic condition. This is mainly due to the drop in oil prices and the annexation of Crimea put extra pressure on the budget. In this case, the reliable sources of income are more paramount that change the Russian perception towards business opportunities in the Middle East (The National Interest, 2018). Therefore to gain long-lasting benefits Russia increase its economic activity in the Middle East region by increasing its trade volume. The trade volume since 2012 to 2017 was showing an upward trend (See Appendix A) and the total share of Russian trade in 2016 was 0.8% in Algeria, 0.9% in Egypt, 0.5% in Israel, 0.2% on UAE, 3% in Turkey and 0.5% in Iran (See Appendix A).

Chapter 4: Diplomatic and Economic Engagement of Russia in Middle East

Transactional and Relationship – Russia aims to promote its interaction with various non-state and state actors in the Middle East while the relationship with Moscow is transactional. The country is realistic in economic and political dealing and they do not engage in the democratic reforms or human right issues with the western government (Dannreuther, 2015). The transactional relationship includes the relationship of Russia with Iran and both of them supports the Syrian government (Cook, 2018). Therefore, from the past few years, Russia and Iran have gained significant benefits to improve their ties as they are engaged in a more complex relationship which one another. Besides this, Russia is also engaged in the transactional relationship with Saudi Arabia on the recent agreement of oil production. The Riyadh and Moscow struck in the deal on December 2016 in order to lower the oil production despite having distinctive views on the future of the Syria and threat posed due to Tehran (Sanders and Azzam, 2018).

Russia as Alternative Signal towards West – Russia is one of the useful alternatives to the US and western world. Therefore, the Middle East government implemented on various economic and political deal where Russia is the primary mean for signalling the US. For instance, the Cairo signed off a deal of \$3.5 billion with Moscow after the halt of US military aid (Sladden, Wasser, Connable and Clement, 2018). This made Russia the participant with Egyptian paratroopers in order to conduct joint military exercises. Therefore, Middle Eastern countries consider Russia as the powerful entities and by maximizing option Russia and Middle East countries gain benefit from one another (Goldschmidt, 2018).

Geopolitical Insurmountable Obstacles – Arakelyan (2017), argued that the potential alliance of Russia with Middle East countries is not transactional but they are more insurmountable obstacles. The obstacles emerge due to geopolitical realities and they are a byproduct of Russia transactional approach and non- ideological approach. Therefore, Russian seeks to develop and maintain the relations with the on-state and the

state actors across the Middle East nation. This was the similar approach that was adopted Moscow which managed the relations with Israel and other Gulf states (Dannreuther, 2015). However, the adoption of this approach created an array of contradiction between the policies and it has constrained the behaviour of Russian. For instance, when Moscow seek an effective relationship with Iran and Israel then they also reported the temporary halt of S-300 anti-aircraft missile system due to intense pressure from Israel government on Iran. Therefore, the use of pragmatic and non-ideological approach in the Middle East limits Russian relation with the West (Goldschmidt, 2018).

Trade and Investment among Russia- Middle East – The strategic objective of Russia is to protect and promote its economic relationship and interest with the Middle East countries. The Middle East countries currently account for the small portion of total Russian exporting activities which is not a critical market (Öniş, 2014). Therefore, according to the Moscow regional policy, the economic activities tend to gain more monetary gains and the economic activities provide the Russian opportunity to increase its influence and enhance regional presence. The economic interest among the Middle East and Russia are growing and the Russian Direct Investment funds (RDIF); Russian Sovereign Wealth Fund have entered in the co-investment with the sovereign wealth fund of UAE, Qatar, Bahrain, and Saudi Arabia (Laqueur, 2016). These investments are the border in nature and stretch across multiple sectors including agricultural, infrastructure and commercial enterprise (Dannreuther, 2015).

Chapter 5: Discussion

From the analysis conducted by gathering secondary data, it was found that the Russian intervention in the Middle East was the result of the rising intervention and military involvement of the West in Arab Peninsula. The West, especially the U.S. interventions have changed the entire dynamics of the Arab region, which not only affected the economic as well as political stability of the region, but created many challenges for the cross-border countries to maintain its internal security and stability. Russia, being the strongest economic and political power in the region confronted various challenges in the past right after the fall of the Soviet Union. Being the communist country, Russia focused on its economic growth by creating employment and trading opportunities for the people to maintain its sustainability. Besides, the West does not support the communist communities due to its capitalist approach. Due to this, the intervention of the West in the Middle East created mistrust for Russia because the military interventions in the past affected the entire dynamics of the region (Krueger, 2016; Goldschmidt, 2018).

From the analysis, it was also found that the reason for the political and the economic dimensions of the Russia to intervene in the Middle Eastern region is to declare its power over the West so that the interventions of the West can be controlled over the close allies, the close areas of the border of Russia and within the country. Besides, Russia mainly carry out its trade through the Caucasus and Black Sea area, which is also shared by Turkey; therefore, to ensure its sustainable trade execution through this passage, it is essential for Russia to keep this route away from external influence (Kardaş, 2010). Besides, in the future, Russia is planning to expand its economic ties with China (which was another communist country and U.S. is against of various Chinese political and economic policies) by expanding its silk routes to arctic zone because of continuous ice melting and global warming. However, Russia and China find it as a new door to expand its trade because the route can help to give a shortcut to the shipping to the rest of the top

world. Hence, Russia has major plans by 2030 to utilise Northern Sea routes for trading. One of the major reasons to look forward the Northern Sea is that the turmoil in the Middle East is affecting much of trading of Russia and other major political players; hence, exploring new route can be effective for the region. Perhaps, the political stability of the Middle East is essential for Russia to ensure the regional economic development because the future development plans and their execution is much dependent on the political conditions of the region so that a strong ally can be formed to support positive economic development (Johnson, and Standish, 2018).

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Chapter 6 : Conclusions and Policy Implications

Conclusions

The paper concludes that the Russian intervention in the Middle East involves a concrete history and the involvement is not only because of the demand of petroleum from the Middle Eastern region, but due to major involvement of the U.S. in destabilizing the internal security of the region. The history of Russia witnessed wars and various challenges to its security, which made the country to strengthen its political and military fields. However, Russia's involvement in the Middle East helped to create positive influence in ensuring internal stability for which Russia intervened in Syria and refused to give any military support to create instability within Syria. Besides, the economic intervention in the Middle East is to ensure the security for its trading across the world in order to maintain its economic and regional development (Kozhanov, 2018).

Based on the information gathered in the paper, it was found that the involvement of allies in the Middle East was due to the intervention of the closer ties of Saudi Arabia with the U.S. whereas Russia is against the western policies. On the other hand, the communism followed in Russia in the history was much criticized by the capitalist economies, which made Russia to share policy statements against the U.S. This altogether made Russia to ensure its political and economic intervention in the Middle East so that the political and economic stability of Russia can be stored. War has changed the notion of various major economies and made them to rethink the strategies to restore their reputation back. Russia, after facing much of political instability since after the fall of the Soviet realized the need to secure the national interest by strengthening its economic and political arenas. Forming closer ties with Iran declared their perspective of ensuring its military power. Hence, its intervention in the Middle East was not considered as negative, but one of the ways to secure the cross-border interest based on Russia's own interest.

Policy Implications

Following are the policy implications in order to ensure positive intervention of Russia in the Middle East. To enable the stability in the Black Sea region for the Middle East as well as Russia, there is need to form much stronger ties with Turkey, and to focus on repairing relationship with Azerbaijan and Armenia. There can be a military-to-military interaction done in order to avoid the naval interventions in the Black Sea.

MENA and Russia share approx 60% to 63% of the oil and gas reserves to the world and approx 40% of the worlds' gas. Hence, the strong cooperation between MENA and Russia can play a significant role towards the distribution of oil and gas. This can be done when there is internal stability in the Middle East is restored to ensure economic development.

The rising global challenges and the pressure on increasing the oil prices per barrel by the U.S., lack of technology and alternative sources of technology affect the oil production, and the economies that are fully dependent on oil production suffers among which the Middle Eastern region is the one. Hence, ceasefire against the war and harmonizing the war situation in the Middle East can be one of the ways to ensure economic growth and social stability in these regions. For this, the role of Russia can be pivotal where instead of exerting its power there is need to ensure that dialogues can help to find ways to overcome the political differences.

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Appendix A: Trade Volume Since 2010 to 2017

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	Jan-Sep 2017 (↑/↓)
Algeria	1,337	2,486	2,785	1,589.6	863.2	1,997	3,974	2,899 (↑)
Bahrain	2.5	5	13.9	15.8	20.1	n/a	n/a	n/a
Egypt	2,191	2,820	3,555	2,946	5,400	4,089	4,156	4,002 (↑)
Iran	3,651	3,755	2,329	1,602	1,700	1,281	2,184	1,116 (↓)
Iraq	-	99.6	286	379	1,695	1,807	917	240 (↓)
Israel	2,588	2,857	2,917	3,578	3,400	2,345	2,189	1,870 (↑)
Jordan	148	350	426	181	529	259	175	97 (↓)
Kuwait	132	357	83	34	48.2	406	480	512 (↑)
Lebanon	239	406	202	530	801	640	539	464 (↑)
Libya	171	124	260	386	222.5	183	74	110 (↑)
Mauritania	37.8	54.4	33.1	31.7	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Morocco	932	1,810	1,848	1,426	1,525.6	1,014	1,291	918 (↑)
Oman	13.3	39.3	42.1	59.4	87.7	n/a	n/a	n/a
Qatar	14.6	54.6	40	41.4	53	31	59	47 (↑)
Saudi Arabia	366	852	1,359	1,078	1,133.1	926	492	667 (↑)
Sudan	-	172	154	129	189	139	232	289 (↑)
Syria	1,158	1,991	656	376	589.5	313	193	339 (↑)
Tunisia	530	1,155	594	361	521	367	466	400 (↑)
United Arab Emirates	1,019	1,489	1,487	2,516	1,970	1,246	1,244	1,067 (↓)
Yemen	168	163	234	218	260.8	208	156	217 (↑)
Algeria	1,337	2,486	2,785	1,589.6	863.2	1,997	3,974	2,899 (↑)
Bahrain	2.5	5	13.9	15.8	20.1	n/a	n/a	n/a
Egypt	2,191	2,820	3,555	2,946	5,400	4,089	4,156	4,002 (↑)

Appendix B: Trade Percentage in 2016

	Total trade volume	Exports	Imports	Share of Russian trade (%)
Algeria	3.974	3.966	0.008	0.8
Egypt	4.2	3.8	0.4	0.9
Israel	2.2	1.5	0.7	0.5
Iran	2.2	1.9	0.3	0.5
Morocco	1.3	0.7	0.6	0.3
Turkey	15.8	13.7	2.1	3
UAE	1.2	0.9	0.3	0.2

Source: Compiled by the author using data from the Russian Customs website (customs.ru) and the Vneshnaya Torgovlya Rossii [Russian Foreign Trade] website (<http://russian-trade.com/>) (accessed 19 Jan. 2018).