



RESEARCH PAPER

Russian Foreign Policy towards the Middle East under the Leadership of Vladimir Putin

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study investigates that within the Middle Eastern context, the political leadership of Russia has demonstrated a commitment to a particular set of ideological principles. Subsequent to the dissolution of the Soviet Union, and notably during the tenure of Vladimir Putin as President, Russia's foreign policy principles underwent a significant shift, moving away from ideology and adopting a more practical approach that prioritized safeguarding Russian national interests in the Middle East's geopolitical landscape. This shift was particularly evident in Russia's dealings with Syria, Turkey, Iran, and Saudi Arabia. Russia's foreign policy endeavors to advance its national interests through the establishment of novel relationships, competition and cooperation with other nations, reassertion of influence in regional energy and economic matters, and safeguarding of alliances, and that the relationship was mutually beneficial for both parties.

KEYWORDS Iraq, Middle East, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey

Introduction

Throughout the Cold War period, Russia consistently played a prominent role as a participant in Middle Eastern conflicts, including those in Yemen, Iraq, Syria, Ethiopia, and Afghanistan. The support provided by Saudi Arabia to the Islamic rebels during the onset of the Afghan conflict in 1979 serves as a significant illustration of this conflict. The 2003 intervention of the United States in Iraq serves as an instance of foreign intervention. Russia perceived this intervention as an act of aggression, given that Saddam Hussein was a key ally of Russia at the time. The intervention's financial implications on the energy market yielded significant benefits for Saudi Arabia and Russia, leading to a reduction in conventional tensions (Yasmann, 2006). The genesis of this narrative can be attributed primarily to the proliferation of Russian interest in gaining access to the temperate waters and the market of southern Asia. History. The origins of Russian-Turkish relations can be traced back to the reign of Peter the Great, during which he engaged with the Ottoman Empire in the Greater Black Sea region. Additionally, it is widely believed that Nicholas II's decision to enter World War I was driven by his desire to extend Russian influence over the strategically important Bosphorus and Dardanelles waterways. In the context of World War II, Stalin initiated communication with the Turkish leadership (Ustun, 2016). Following the cessation of hostilities, negotiations between the two parties continued and culminated in the Russian government's request for certain privileges pertaining to the Turkish strait. This was motivated by the strait's significance as a crucial conduit for Russian trade with its

European partners. Following World War II, the United States established and maintained a positive relationship with Turkey. During the Cold War period, Turkey aligned with the United States, and as such, the U.S. provided support in the form of modernized weaponry to Turkey (Li & Yuan, 2010). The diplomatic ties between Russia and Turkey have endured for centuries and have experienced numerous fluctuations. Throughout history, the Russian Empire has frequently placed significant emphasis on the expansion of the Ottoman Empire, and the interactions between Russia and Turkey have been frequently impacted by conflicts waged by both nations and their antecedents. Following the Bolshevik Revolution and the Bulgarian War of Independence, a phase of collaboration and reciprocal cohabitation occurred amidst the Russian Civil War. Yusuf Stalin requested for Turkey's territorial demands and proposed a shared administration of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles (Trenin, 2010).

The Russian-Turkish War, which occurred during the Empires era encompassing the Ottoman Empire and the Russian Empire, commenced in the mid-1800s and persisted until the latter part of the 19th century. Following the formation of the Republic of Turkey in 1925, the country promptly became a signatory to a bilateral treaty with Russia that was characterized by its assertive nature and mutual consultation. The Montreux Convention of 1936 was a significant point of contention that necessitated a reevaluation of the Russian Conventions in the context of the Second World War. Turkey acceded to the membership of two adjacent nations in 1952. Following the conclusion of the Cold War, Turkey endeavored to address a range of regional issues pertaining to cultural, political, and military relations (Balooch, 2009). The Russian government has expressed apprehension regarding the aforementioned policies. It is noteworthy that the recorded value of official trade between the two nations has escalated to 3.5 billion dollars (Ustun, 2016). The estimated value of the official luggage trade ranges from 6 to 10 billion dollars. In the 1990s, Sezer³ implemented a strategy that involved a fusion of geopolitical rivalry and economic collaboration, which resulted in a state of near parity (Trenin, 2010). During the 1990s, the diplomatic ties between Russia and Turkey underwent significant turbulence, marked by instances of backing Turkey's Chechen national separatism and extending support to the Russian terrorist group PKK. In the mid-1990s, the Chechen Declaration of Independence was issued, accompanied by visits from Chechen leaders (Lo, 2018). This event was marked by controversies and a growing sense of dissatisfaction with the Chechen group's occupation of the Eurasian space in 1996. The opposition demonstrated a willingness to engage in political maneuvering by leveraging the Russian Kurdish population, as evidenced by the presence of Russian government officials at a meeting convened by the PKK in Moscow. Following the dissolution of the former Yugoslavia, Russia and Turkey were engaged in a conflict that persisted until the late 1990s. The Russian government provides support to Serbia, while the Turkish government extends its support to Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo (Ustun, 2016).

It is evident that both the Russian Empire and the Soviet Union recognized the value of Iran. The objectives pursued by the actors in question are not consistently aligned with politically correct principles. Moreover, there exists a significant distinction between establishing a buffer zone between the British Empire and Russia and instituting a Soviet government in opposition to the activities of Iran and the United States within the Middle East region (Schneider, 2012). However, it is noteworthy that these objectives are consistently articulated in a transparent manner within the confines of the nation. The aforementioned enables the Russian leadership to enact a coherent approach towards Tehran with the aim of expeditiously attaining their objectives (Ustun, 2016). During the 1980s, Russia prioritized the establishment of a constructive dialogue with Tehran, which ultimately proved successful. This effort facilitated Iran's

development of positive relations with its neighboring countries and contributed to the eventual stabilization of the region through repeated attempts. Prior to the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the government established a robust framework for diplomatic ties with the Arab world and Iran (Trenin, 2010). However, Russia has not fully realized its potential to cultivate these connections since 1991. In the absence of severance, the political and economic connections are comparatively restricted. There exists both a material and ideological basis for this phenomenon (Mirzayan, 2014).

The nature of Iran's relations with China and Russia has experienced significant transformations in recent years, particularly during the 1960s and 1970s. The extensive economic relations between the two countries can be attributed to Iran's geopolitical and geo-economic position (Götz & McFaul, 2021). This situation is distinct or exceptional. Following the demise of the Communist regime and the prevalence of Western perspectives on Russian foreign policy, the notion of the Islamic Threat posed by Iran was rebranded as Central (Yasmann, 2006). However, the concept of "New Eurasia" subsequently emerged, highlighting the utilization of Russian capabilities to foster diplomatic ties with Iran, thereby promoting an autonomous political approach. From this perspective, the region has been regarded as a crucial territory for Russia. For more than three hundred years, Russia and Iran have shared a border (Li & Yuan, 2010). Due to the amicable relationship between the two nations, Iran has been a comparatively subordinate partner in terms of military prowess, global standing, and overall magnitude. The aforementioned relations were impacted by the competitive dynamics between Moscow and Western nations. During the 19th century, Iran became a site of intense rivalry between Great Britain and Russia amidst the ongoing Great Game. Iran aligned with the Western bloc during the Cold War and exerted significant influence in the East-West conflict (Balooch, 2009).

Throughout history, Iran has been a dependable ally of the United States. The USA established a checkpoint on the Soviet frontier and considered joining the Baghdad Treaty, as well as other similar treaties with neighboring countries in both the western and eastern regions of the Soviet Union. Following the momentous encounter between Khrushchev and Kennedy in the early 1960s, Iran assumed the role of the pioneer in testing the concept of Detente. Iran has entered into several technical and economic agreements with the Soviet Union (Li & Yuan, 2010). The primary objective of said collaboration was the establishment of energy infrastructure, specifically pertaining to Iranian natural gas, through the assistance of the Soviet Union. It is noteworthy that no Western legislative body has established a strategic industry within Iran (Trenin, 2010). The initiation of this project can be attributed to the Soviet Union. Following the Islamic Revolution In 1979, Iran underwent a shift in its geopolitical alignment, transitioning from the Western sphere of influence to that of the Soviet Union. During the crisis in which Iran and Iraq were engaged in provocation, the United States and its Western allies provided assistance to Iraq, leaving Iran in a state of isolation. The presence of a third force is contingent upon the nature of the relationship between Tehran and Moscow. Following Iran's growing international isolation, Tehran began to view Moscow as a potential ally in opposition to the United States. Certain notable members of the Iranian government, who were perceived to have been weakened by the Soviet war during the 1990s and early 2000s, posited the notion that they could establish strategic partnerships to counteract Russia, India, and the Western powers (Mirzayan, 2014).

Literature Review

During the 1990s, Russia's export potential was limited by domestic economic and political tensions, which prompted foreign policy focus on domestic policy matters.

The loss of the Ukrainian port, which served as the primary trade crossing point between the Soviet Union and the Middle East, was a direct consequence of the collapse of the USSR. During the mid-1990s, Arab nations became a significant component of Russia's yearly commerce. Furthermore, the constructive advancement of diplomatic relations with the Middle East challenged the ideological stance of the emerging Russian elite, which was initially disinclined to engage in diplomatic overtures with the Western world (Tudoroiu, 2015). This topic concerns the comparison between Western and Soviet approaches to development, particularly in terms of their respective levels of activity and engagement. Consequently, in the event of a lack of connections to the Middle East, Russia's level of interest towards the region would be relatively low. During the 1990s, Israel was perceived as the Western enclave in the Middle East, which was deemed advantageous for the country (Balooch, 2009). The linkage between Syria and the Soviet Union in 1970, facilitated by Hafez Assad, is considered a contributing factor to the growth and development of the Soviet Union. Syria possesses an autonomous economic and military infrastructure and is presently attaining self-reliance from Russia. During the 1980s, the Soviet Union provided comprehensive military and economic support to Syria. This period corresponds to the reign of Hafez Assad. On October 8, 1980, subsequent to the Camp David Treaty. The diplomatic ties between Russia and Syria have been a longstanding component of the foreign policy agenda of the former Soviet Union. The Russian submarine base located in Tartus serves as a means of safeguarding Russia's presence in the region. Despite adhering to established Russian protocols, Putin has recently recommenced his approach of reverting to historical strategies in order to foster positive relations with Syria (Mark, 2006).

Currently, Russian interests in the Middle East are bifurcated into two distinct groups. Initially, it encompasses the conventional concerns of the security discourse. In general, these measures can be summarized as aimed at preventing any instability that would ensure the protection of the Russian border from various types of threats (Ustun, 2016). The presence of military threats, foreign troop concentrations, civil unrest, frequent interactions, clashes, and acts of terrorism may give rise to Russian apprehensions regarding the spread of radical ideologies and their proponents across the regions of Caucasus, Volga, and Central Asia, in order to secure an exceptional status for Russia. The second category pertains to the concerns of the Russian Federation, which espouses a distinctive stance on worldwide and local issues and has the capacity to pursue an autonomous course of action. Furthermore, it is involved in the areas of regional development, military operations, and industrial sectors. The sentiment of anti-Westernism among Russians can be attributed to political opportunism during the Cold War period, extending beyond mere cultural distinctions. The rising trend of paternalism in Russia, among other concerns, may be interpreted as a reciprocal action in reaction to Western policies. Place trust in established customs, traditional values, conservative ideologies, and religious beliefs. Hence, certain experts from Russia hold the belief that the Islamic world is a credible entity (Schneider, 2012).

Research Methodology

The present study involves the collection of data from secondary sources such as books, research papers, journal articles, and newspapers. The deductive research method is employed to interpret data and formulate arguments in support of the hypothesis that the geopolitics of Middle Eastern nations, namely Iran, Turkey, Syria, and Saudi Arabia, serve as independent variables, while Russian foreign policy is the dependent variable in the context of preserving interests in the region. The outcomes are deliberated in a manner that causes disturbance. The bilateral ties between Russia and Saudi Arabia are founded upon their respective interests in the energy market and the

constantly evolving geopolitical landscape of the Middle East. The Russian foreign policy is geared towards safeguarding its national interests and navigating the complex geopolitical landscape of the Middle East. The objective of Russia is to establish its foothold in the Arab world through the reconstruction of its reputation and authority as a significant force in the area (Lo, 2018). Furthermore, the assertive approach of the United States in pressuring Russian influence in the Middle East and Central Asia has compelled Russia to restructure its geopolitical stance, resulting in heightened negotiations with Europe and the United States. Simultaneously, it is evident that Russia seeks to restore energy production and distribution in the Middle East. The establishment of close ties with major oil producing countries can yield benefits from shared interests in energy exports. The United States has a close association with Russian political influence over Hamas and the Middle East in the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict, which diverges from Israel's policy (Li & Yuan, 2010).

Results and Discussion

Russia has encountered a challenging predicament as a result of its direct involvement in the Syrian conflict. Historically, Syria has been a crucial country for Russian foreign policy. Therefore, it is imperative for Russia to prioritize maintaining positive relations with Syria in order to safeguard its national interests within the region (Ustun, 2016). During the Soviet era and the initial stages of the Russian Federation, the country refrained from engaging in local and regional conflicts. Specifically, it avoided involvement in disputes between Hezbollah and Israel, Iran and Saudi Arabia, the Assad government, and the Arab regime in the Gulf. Mark Katz is a renowned authority in the field of Middle Eastern studies and has been recognized for his proficiency in cultivating amicable relationships with individuals from diverse backgrounds (Balooch, 2009). The Russian stance regarding the conflict has culminated in significant engagement in the Middle Eastern region. The exacerbation of the conflict in the Middle East has resulted in heightened tension in certain areas due to Russian backing of the Syrian government and its cohorts. Similar to other prominent nations, the area boasts abundant reserves of oil and gas. Satisfying the demands of the global market and ensuring economic stability. The Middle East has historically served as a crucial intersection for trade routes linking Europe with South Asia, Southeast Asia, and East Asia. The impact of geographical location on the internal security of Russia is a matter of concern. The presence of radical Islamist factions and instances of violence in the Middle East are both tangible and ethical in nature. Russia holds a prominent position in the Middle East, particularly in Syria, and maintains robust diplomatic ties with other regional actors such as Saudi Arabia and Israel (Li & Yuan, 2010). The potential strategic alliance with Iran may face significant weakening due to opposition from the global Muslim Sunni majority, potentially resulting in internal political ramifications for the Russian Federation. According to Nematullah Izadi, the inaugural ambassador of Iran to the Soviet Union, a recent altercation occurred. The formation of a strategic alliance between Tehran and Moscow may not be feasible, however, it is imperative to devise strategies to govern their relationship (Götz & McFaul, 2021).

Oil for Goods

As per media sources, following the agreement, Russia is expected to generate a daily yield of 5 million barrels. In Russia, the direct utilization of oil is not feasible, as it is commonly sold to China via Iranian ports. In 2013, Rosneft entered into a contractual agreement with China to provide a total of 360 million tons of oil to the nation over a period of 25 years. Nonetheless, the extant reserves of the East Siberia and Pacific Pipelines in Russia are inadequate to ensure a reliable supply (Lo, 2018). According to the Primorsky Krai, the financial estimate for Iranian operations has increased from 15

billion dollars to approximately 20 billion dollars. However, the political significance of the matter extends beyond its economic impact. The accord ought to serve as a fundamental aspect for fostering collaboration between Iran and Russia. Currently, there exists a dearth of significant economic initiatives that necessitate political collaboration between Moscow and Tehran (Gorenburg, 2019). An agreement was reached between the two nations in May of 2017, and it is currently in effect. According to Alexander Novak, the Energy Minister of Russia, the country intends to engage in the exportation of one million barrels of oil from Iran to other nations. Per the oil barter agreement, an annual allocation of 5 million barrels of oil will be dispatched from Iran to Russia. Per the agreement, Iran will utilize currency to procure steel, wheat, and oil products from Russia. Russian equipment and goods are used in exchange for oil. The daily exchange of 300,000 barrels of oil between the Caspian Sea and Persian Gulf is a well-established fact (Mirzayan, 2014). As per the statement made by Alexander Novak, the Energy Minister of Russia, the current bilateral agreement entails the delivery of 100,000 barrels of oil to Russia, either through physical security or replacement. According to Kardor's statement, Iran is expected to receive 50% of the euro currency as well as various goods and services. A memorandum of understanding has been signed by Russian oil and gas corporations, namely Lukoil, Gazprom, and Zarubezhneft, with Iran for the purpose of developing the Paydar Qarb, Abteymour, and Mansuri deposits. According to Seyed Saleh Hendi, the intelligence chief of Iran's National Oil Company (NIOC), discussions are currently underway with several Russian oil companies including Lukoil, Zarubezhneft, Tatneft, Gazprom, and Gazprom. Distribute the memorandum of the agreement to over ten entities operating within the oil and gas industry. Iran. An agreement has been reached for the refining of Iranian oil over the course of the next five years. On Monday, Russian authorities announced their intention to provide Iran with food, equipment, and construction materials in exchange for goods or services, and to formally approve the agreement made by the Kremlin (Gleeva, 2021).

New Market for the Arm Sales

In the context of this economic partnership, Russia is poised to derive advantages from the arms and nuclear sectors through the provision of these commodities to Saudi Arabia. Procuring Russian armaments for the Saudi Arabian military could serve as a potentially advantageous tactic to counterbalance the longstanding dominance of US-based weapons manufacturers in the Saudi Arabian arms market (Cornell, 2016). The impact of nuclear technology on Saudi Arabia has been significant, and the potential for Russian involvement in the country holds promise for both parties. The policy of Russia towards the Middle East has played a significant role in fostering the growth of bilateral relations. Russia endeavors to maintain a delicate equilibrium in its diplomatic ties with both Iran and Saudi Arabia (Gleeva, 2021). The Russian President, Vladimir Putin, has attempted to leverage the rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran as a means of facilitating the sale of weaponry to both nations. The extent of Iran's involvement in the Russian nuclear energy program is contingent upon the nature of Russia's diplomatic ties with Saudi Arabia. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has made a strategic decision to allocate a substantial amount of 10 billion dollars towards investment in the Russian economy. The topic of discussion pertains to the shipment of weapons vessels originating from Saudi Arabia (Said, 2017).

During the period of 2006-2007, Russia's military equipment exports to various Middle Eastern nations amounted to 1.2 billion US dollars. This included the provision of 29 TOR-M1 missile systems and three Su-25UBT aircraft. Furthermore, the repair of the foreign diesel power 877EX was aided by Russian engineers, alongside the modernization of the SU-25MK close-range support aircraft (Li & Yuan, 2010). The

government of Moscow has consented to enhance the Soviet 2K12 "square" mobile surface-rocket system by providing additional missiles to the Syrian military. The process of "reconstruction" between the United States and Russia, initiated in 2009, resulted in the restoration of diplomatic ties between Russia and Iran. As previously mentioned, Putin made a visit to Tehran in 2009 during which he entered into five export agreements for S-300 missile composites. Re-establish diplomatic ties with Iran by the autumn of 2011 (Tudoroiu, 2015). Syria has been a significant regional partner of Moscow and has been the recipient of substantial military and economic assistance. Throughout the initial three-year period of his tenure, Hafiz made a total of six visits to Moscow. In 1977, the Soviet Union exported weaponry to Syria, with a total value of \$825 million. This amount increased to an average of \$1 billion annually, reaching a peak of \$2.3 billion in 1985 (Gorenburg, 2019). Overall, the Soviet Union furnished military equipment valued at \$25 billion and dispatched close to 10,000 Syrian officials. Hence, the backing of the Soviet Union and Syria's support of Assad have played a crucial role in elevating a feeble nation to a dominant political and military force in the region. This competitor in Israel is considered to be one of the most complex rivals of Damascus, and its significance cannot be overstated. The verdict of Assad was actually weakened during the war that took place in 1973. Within the framework of the Cold War, the Soviet Union has historically maintained an anti-Western stance in Syria (Tudoroiu, 2015).

The nation of Russia provides an identical response. The employment of asymmetrical measures by both the USA and NATO prompted Moscow to respond with a military and political challenge to its adversaries in the region. As previously stated, the plan aims to enhance collaboration between the United States and European dissidents. The Russian-Iranian relations are widely recognized as a prominent illustration of Putin's foreign policy characterized by assertiveness and prioritization of national interests (Trenin, 2010). The suspension of military equipment exports to Iran has been brought about as a result of an agreement between the United States and Russia. Following the mid-2000s, the bilateral agreements between Moscow and Washington, particularly the treaty signed in 2000, served as a catalyst for Russia to refrain from augmenting military exchanges with Tehran. In 2006-2007, discussions were held between Iran and Russia in an attempt to recuperate losses incurred as a result of the 2000 treaty between Moscow and Washington (Said, 2017). Following the recent agreements, Russia has proceeded to sell military equipment of Russian origin (Schneider, 2012). Yilang engaged in the exportation of various armaments, including 29 TOR-M1 rocket systems, three 25UBT close-support aircraft, and a modernized Su-25MK close-air support aircraft. Additionally, Yilang imported Russian engineer repair and diesel technology for an 877EKM submarine. The total value of these exports amounted to 1.2 billion dollars. The government of Moscow has consented to the modernization of the Soviet-era 2K12 "Square" missile system by means of re-equipping the mobile Zenith-Missile missile systems. Prior to the Tehran export contracts and the agreement to re-establish relations with Iran, there was a period of re-reconciliation between the United States and Iran. In 2009, the US and Russia signed a "re-sign" agreement pertaining to five S-300 missile batteries (Tudoroiu, 2015).

The act of supplying Russian armaments to Syria and Iran has elicited significant apprehension from both Israel and the United States. In response to international pressure, Putin ultimately prohibited the trade of the Iskander-E tactical missile within the confines of Damascus. The alteration in question has the potential to shift the equilibrium of influence within the given geographical area (Freedman, 2001). However, it is worth noting that Syria persists in supplying surface-to-air missiles to its own territory, which have been readily intercepted by Strelet (SA-18) and subsequently furnished to extremist groups. Russia places significant importance on Middle Eastern

countries. The Russian government made the decision to vend 30 TOR M-1 air defense systems to the capital city of Iran. In addition to Syria and Iran, Moscow has entered into an agreement with Sudan (Li & Yuan, 2010). Furthermore, Moscow persists in the sale of small arms and helicopters to the government of Palestine, which is currently subject to boycott by both Washington and Jerusalem. Overall, it is recommended that Russia engage in the sale of weaponry valued at \$4 billion to Iran, \$2 billion to Syria, and \$400 million to Sudan (Yasmann, 2006). In recent years, there have been high-level negotiations regarding the arming of Syria. Since 2003, the sale of Iskander-E high-precision surface-to-air missiles, Iгла SA-18 shoulder-rectangles, Strelets missiles, S-300 PMU2 and Tor-M1 aircraft and air defense system has been observed. The King of Saudi Arabia and Russian President Vladimir Putin convened in the Kremlin to discuss the deteriorating state of relations between their respective nations. Putin characterized the arrival of the King of Saudi Arabia as a noteworthy occurrence (Cornell, 2016).

The joint investment agreement was welcomed by the Delegation of the King despite the low oil prices. Apart from the procurement of S-400 air defense missiles, Saudi Arabia is making arrangements to acquire the Cornet anti-tank missile system and multiple missile shields. As per the statement made by the Saudi Arabian Military Industrial Organization, the aforementioned agreement is expected to significantly contribute towards the advancement of military and defense systems within the country (Schneider, 2012). During the visit, King Salaman expressed his anticipation for a strong alliance with Russia, citing peace, security, and global economic development as key factors. Bashar al-Assad has held the position of leadership in Syria for over a decade and currently maintains his position of power in the country. King Salaman expressed his opinion that the involvement of Putin in the Middle East conflict would not be advisable. The United States continues to serve as the primary source of arms and a significant partner for Saudi Arabia. However, the recent agreement has brought attention to the increasing influence of Russia in the Middle East (Li & Yuan, 2010).

Arise of Nuclear Energy Market

Despite the objections of the United States regarding the Iranian nuclear matter, President Putin persists in the construction of nuclear power facilities. The Russian nuclear power plant was under the control of Putin until the imposition of international sanctions on Iran's nuclear matter. The position held by Putin. In the event that Iran is subjected to heightened economic sanctions, it is plausible that Russia may experience apprehension towards Iran, thereby prompting Iran to engage in diplomatic negotiations with both parties involved (Said, 2017). The Russian nuclear industry is acutely aware of the decline in the market for outdated nuclear technology. In light of this, the signing of a 10 billion dollar agreement in July 2002 to provide Iran with six nuclear reactors is viewed as a pressing imperative for the industry. Ankara is currently making efforts to augment its nuclear energy capacity (Mark, 2006). However, Turkey has been outpaced by Energy, Russia, and Japan, with whom it has already reached an agreement. A consortium of French entities established a pair of nuclear power facilities situated along the Mediterranean coastline, as well as another facility located in Sinop along the Black Sea coast in close proximity to Mersin, Turkey. Efforts are underway by Turkish authorities to revise the current nuclear legislation and regulatory framework in the country (Li & Yuan, 2010).

The Turkish nuclear program's prospects are contingent upon the implementation of the "Build, Operate, Own" (BOO) framework and the political agreements with the Russian Federation. The current Minister of Energy in Turkey is Berat Albayrak, who has a notable background as the former CEO of Calik Holding and a pioneer in the development of nuclear energy. It is worth noting that Minister Albayrak

is also the daughter of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. The Turkish government has initiated discussions with the Russian government on a bilateral basis. In 2010, two parties devised a plan to construct four VVER-1200 reactors in the Gulf of Akuku, located in close proximity to Mersin. The price was reduced by Rosatom to 12.35 dollars. The value of cents experienced a decrease of 58 percent (Said, 2017). The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has announced its intention to construct as many as 16 nuclear power facilities by the year 2030, to be located within the Scientific Atomic Energy Research and the Research Institute for Renewable Energy, commonly referred to as KACARE. According to Abdulghani Melaibari, the estimated value of the project exceeds \$100 billion. According to recent statements made by Saudi officials, the deadline has been extended to 2032 and an anticipated cost increase of \$11.2 billion is expected. There is currently no existing nuclear agreement between Saudi Arabia and the United States. The city of Riyadh has expressed a desire to broaden its supplier base, and in this regard, Russia appears to be well-positioned to secure contracts from Saudi Arabia. The political ties between Moscow and Riyadh have recently undergone an expansion with the aim of providing support and resolving the ongoing crisis in Syria, in conjunction with Egypt. The Milestone Nuclear Power National Infrastructure Development is guided by the Nuclear Energy Program of the Saudi Arabian NG-G-3.1 recommendations (Freedman, 2001).

Direct investment in Russia from Saudi Arabia

In 2007, the President of Russia, Vladimir Putin, undertook a visit to Saudi Arabia with the aim of enhancing the commercial relations between the two nations. The establishment of direct flights between Saudi Arabia and Russia in 2006 resulted in an enhanced bilateral relationship. Both stakeholders are invested in this procedure. In order to ensure sustained economic growth and stability, Russia is seeking foreign investment and exploring the possibility of a secure and stable economic zone in Saudi Arabia (Götz & McFaul, 2021). Hence, it is feasible for both parties to enhance the level of reciprocal commerce and investment. The primary focus of the Russian economy's penetration into Saudi Arabia is centered on the energy industry. Mutual agreements have been signed between Russia and Saudi Energy. However, it is possible that the potential of this alliance may be constrained. Saudi Arabia has a diverse range of imports, which includes commodities such as arsenic, barley, peat iron, and gilded copper, sourced from various countries including Russia. Nonetheless, these nations possess political motivations to exacerbate and allude to oil collaboration whilst endeavoring to tackle the broader economic and geopolitical predicaments (Said, 2017).

Conclusion

When examining Putin's approach to Iraq, Iran, and Turkey - the primary nations of significance to Moscow in the Middle East - several shared elements can be identified. The primary objective is to advance Russian commercial interests, which may include the exploration of oil fields (in Iraq), the marketing of nuclear reactors (in Iran), or the distribution of natural gas (in Turkey). The second factor pertains to the inclination of certain countries, either through lawful means (as in the case of Iran and Turkey) or through illicit channels (as in Iraq), to engage in the trade of armaments. As the Russian elections approached, there was a noticeable change in the Russian stance towards the United States, moving away from the previously close relationship established after the 9/11 attacks. This shift in position was perceived as a politically advantageous move for Putin. Furthermore, the prolonged crisis in Iraq contributed to the maintenance of high oil prices, which in turn had a positive impact on the Russian economy. Chechnya continues to be a significant concern for Putin. The improvement of relations with Turkey and ongoing collaboration with Iran on arms and nuclear reactor sales, albeit not

regarding the Caspian, have contributed to the subdued political stance that both Turkey and Iran have taken with respect to Chechnya. The impact of 9/11 on Russian-American relations was positive, albeit temporary, until the U.S. invasion of Iraq. However, it did not significantly alter Russian policy towards Iran, Iraq, or Turkey. Russian behavior and goals towards these countries remained consistent with the pre-9/11 period. It is worth noting that Iran disapproved of U.S.-Russian cooperation in Central Asia and Georgia, while Iraq objected to increased U.S.-Russian cooperation on the sanctions issue and Resolution 1441 prior to the war. Despite the occurrence of the 9/11 event, it can be argued that it had a negligible impact on the Russian approach towards the Middle East. However, the conflict in Iraq, which resulted in a clash between Russia and the United States, may have had an unexpected outcome of compelling Moscow to adopt a more stringent stance towards Iran concerning the Bushehr reactor.

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