

# **Geopolitical Analysis of the Syrian Crisis and its Geostrategic Dynamics in the Wider Middle East**

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## ***Introductory note-Summary***

The power vacuum that was created after the beginning of the syrian crisis (March 2011), attracted as a magnet all the regional aspirations of the centers of power of the system, but it also emerged as a source of risk and instability to the broader system. Since late 2012, the Syrian crisis has surpassed the limits of Syria and it was transformed into a regional war with international implications. The escalation of the Syrian War resulted in the formation of a new power grid of competition of power in the Middle East system. Despite the geopolitical and ideological differences, the Syrian War provided the Sunni centers of power of the system -Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Qatar- a geopolitical breach to bring a major blow to the cohesion of the Iranian power within the core of the Middle East system. As a result, the regional

antagonism contributed catalytically in the rapid escalation of the Syrian War, the annulment of the territorial integrity of Syria and the emergence of a new wave of Islamist militarism, in the form of organizations such as the "Islamic State." In early 2013, in the light of the territorial losses of the Assad's regime, the Islamist regime of Iran that is the key strategic partner of the syrian regime in the wider Middle East, deepened its involvement in the Syrian War, mainly through Shiite non-state actors, particularly through the Lebanese Hezbollah and other Shiite militias in Iraq. The "upgrading" of the Iranian involvement in the Syrian War has resulted in the preservation of Assad's regime in Damascus and in the western Syria. Another phase of the Syrian War began in September 2015, after the direct military involvement of Russia in the Syrian war-field. Moscow, a traditional strategic partner of Damascus, coordinated her military engagement with Iran and the Shiite non-state actors, seeking a catalytic redistribution of power in the fluid syrian war-field in favor of the Assad's regime, having as epicenter of the military operations Aleppo and central Syria. The effect of the syrian crisis directly affects not only the regional redistribution of power, but also the entire function of the Active Supra System. However, the energy aspect of the crisis has not been described and analyzed sufficiently. Indeed, the Geopolitical Factor of energy definitely has an increased weight on the creation and influence of the developments. Particularly for the European Union, which heavily depends for its energy security on the russian natural gas imports, the design of a pipeline that will supply natural gas from the geopolitical system of the Middle East, and specifically from the Persian Gulf, would be an extremely beneficial venture, for leading it to its partial energy disengagement from Moscow. However, the design of the two competing pipelines undermines the regional security decisively, since their planning enhances the traditional conflict between Sunni and Shiite Islam, while the International Pylons of Power and influence of the Active Supra System endeavor to promote the most beneficial pipeline for their national strategic interests.