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**Russian policy in the Middle East**

**in the context of the Syrian crisis**

**(OPPORTUNITies AND ChALLENGES)**

Since the Soviet Union’s collapse the Russian Foreign Policy in the Middle East wasn’t active. During 90-es Russia lost the influence in this region by the reason of the aspiration to develop the strategic cooperation with the USA. Thus many contemporary regional events were unexpected for Moscow such as “Arab spring” or the “Libyan crisis”. Only the Syrian crisis and the factor of DAISH returned Russia in the region of the Middle East. But fist six months of the Syrian crisis Russia didn’t strive to be involved in the decision of this problem. In this time Iran had tried to negotiate with Russia on this issue. The “Moscow platform” for the intra-Syrian negotiations was created in 2015. The Russian VKS (aerospace forces) operation began at the end of September 2015 and don’t finish yet.

There are some opportunities for Moscow:

* to play the key role in decision of Syrian crisis
* to save the significant place in the Middle East’s region
* to decide own domestic problem with terrorist activity in the North Caucasus and another.

There are some challenges also:

* Russia was involved in long-term conflict
* long military operation is required a significant financial resources
* Russia has an amiss reputation in western Media
* Anti-Russian sanctions have a negative influence on Russian economy.

This paper is the attempt to analyze the evolution of the Russia’s approach to the Middle East region; Russian interests in the Syrian crisis; the opportunities and the challenges. Author concluded that during the armed conflict in Syria, Russia has significantly upgraded its role and status both in the Middle East and beyond the region. And now Russia is not only the participant of the Middle East’s process but mainly the manager of the regional agenda.