

ABSTRACT

The study is concerned with the history of Russian strategy towards the Middle East region in general, and Syria in particular throughout the Russian history (the Tsarist, Soviet, and then federal), dealing with the most devastating crises through which the region has gone, and particularly the persistent Syrian crisis from March 2011 until the time of my writing this thesis. The study discusses Russia's role in manipulating the crisis in the interest of its higher strategies in the political, economic, security fields, and the key mechanisms put into use by Russia in achieving those goals. The study also deals with exploring the future of Russian manipulation of the Syrian crisis in terms of potential scenarios to end it and in light of the results achieved on the ground. The study is divided into four Chapters, apart from the Introduction and Conclusion. Chapter One is devoted to the theoretical framework for the study. It deals with the concept of "manipulation" and "strategic manipulation" as well as other related concepts. It also goes over the concept of "crisis" and its overlap with such concepts as "problem" and "disaster." Besides, the Chapter deals with the concept of the Middle East, the historical origin of the term and the political motivations behind it. Chapter Two highlights the history of Russian strategy towards the Middle East over its Tsarist, Soviet, then Federal stages, the Russia's strategic goals in each of its governance stages and the mechanisms used in achieving those goals. Chapter Three discusses the place of Syria in Russia's strategy at the geographical, security and economic, and even religious, levels, and how great that place's role it plays in promoting Russia's attempts to restoring its status as a great power. Chapter Four addresses the Syrian crisis in terms of its definition, its key stages through which it has gone and the local, regional and international variables that have contributed to shape those stages. The Chapter also discusses the Russian strategic manipulation of the Syrian crisis from political, economic, and security aspects, and the most important prospective Russian strategy for manipulating the crisis in light of expected scenarios for its end. The study is also included the findings of the researcher, as well as conclusion.