**THE REVOLUTION IN RUSSIA’S MIDEAST STRATEGY**

**ABSTRACT**

The article analyzes the guiding imperatives behind Russia’s grand strategy in the Mideast, including both its domestic decision-making institutional idiosyncrasies and the wider geopolitical considerations at play. It discusses the evolution of Russian strategy after the so-called “Arab Spring” events and into the present day, taking care to individually analyze Moscow’s most important bilateral relationships. The review begins by addressing Russia’s anti-terrorist intervention in Syria, before progressing to some words about the two competing foreign policy factions present in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. After outlining the key differences between the Liberal and Military-Security camps, the work then broadly explains how their rivalry figures into the formulation of Russia’s overall grand strategy in the Mideast. Following that, it logically proceeds to examine the other bilateral relationships that are of significance to Moscow, beginning with Turkey, Iraq, and ‘Israel’, and ending with Saudi Arabia and Iran. The goal of the research is to establish a very general understanding of how Russia’s foreign policy is presently practiced in the Mideast, how and why it got to where it is today, and forecast on the prospects for its further development. In doing this, the article relies on empirical observations and references several under-discussed news items that have evaded wider scrutiny. It also makes use of a few academic sources in proving that the geopolitical environment in which Russia conducts its present foreign policy was largely shaped by the US’ legacy of Hybrid Wars on the region, which in hindsight created fertile ground for the revolution in Russia’s Mideast strategy. In summary, Russia seeks to replace the US as the Mideast countries’ most preferred and trusted partner, capitalizing off of Washington’s decline in regional influence brought about by the disastrous rise of Daesh and the controversial perceptions over the Iranian nuclear deal in order to fill the strategic void that’s been created in America’s wake, and as of the end of 2016, Moscow has been wildly successful.

**KEY WORDS**

Russia; Mideast; grand strategy; War on Terror; Syria; Turkey; Iraq; Israel; Saudi Arabia, Iran