

Abstract

The Arab Spring, a series of massive revolts against the incumbent regimes in the Middle East, heavily touched Syria. Despite of the strong internal and international pressure, the president Bashar al-Assad refused to resign and violently thwarted peaceful protests, pushing the country to the bloody and devastating civil war. Since the start of the demonstrations in Syria, the incumbent government has been benefiting from the robust political, military, financial and diplomatic support from Russia. This thesis provides a thorough recount of the Russian impact, strategic interests, policy and actions prior and during the transformation phase of the protests into the war. The study reaffirms the conclusion of other scholars that Russian negative impact on the eruption of the Syrian Civil War has been substantial, as the Kremlin significantly enhanced the regime's positions outside and inside Syria, making it capable to withstand the pressure. Additionally, in pursuit of the answers on the main research questions of the thesis, namely, finding out why was the Russia's policy in Syria successful, the dissertation offers an exhaustive and coherent explanation of the Moscow's accomplishment in saving the violent regime from fall. Based on the analysis of the accessible material, the thesis concludes that the main reasons behind Russia's achievement in keeping Bashar al-Assad in charge have been historically strengthened positions in Syria, lack of unity and a viable alternative to Assad in the opposition, strong international allies like Iran and China, ineffective response from the West, avoidance of the same blunders as in Libya, active involvement in the processes from the very beginning of the demonstrations, and an extra motivation to succeed derived from the foreign and internal interests.

