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**THE STATE OF RELATIONS BETWEEN THE COUNTRIES OF
THE FORMER SOVIET UNION AND ITS FORMER CLIENT STATE
OF SYRIA: HOW HAVE THE RELATIONSHIPS CHANGED AFTER
THE BREAK-UP AND WHAT DOES IT MEAN?**

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**The State of Relations Between the Countries of the Former Soviet Union
and Its Former Client State of Syria: How Have the Relationships Changed
After the Break-up and What Does It Mean?**

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ABSTRACT

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The Soviet Union was heavily involved in providing armaments and training to Syria and other Arab countries during the 1960's, 70's and 80's. It was this support that gave Syria what it believed sufficient military strength to go to war with Israel twice during this period. It was this support that was the impetus for them to continue to oppose Israel's right to exist and sponsor state terrorism. It was this support that allowed the leadership to remain in power. And it was this support that prompted them to continue to oppose what they perceived as Western/U.S. hegemony in the region and an unswaying support for Israel. Even today, the larger of these countries still maintain a large inventory, albeit aging, of Soviet weaponry. It has been almost ten years since the breakup of the Soviet Union. What is the nature of the relationships between Syria and the countries of the former Soviet Union? Has Russia assumed the relationships of yore or have the countries resulting from the breakup established their own military ties? How are these relationships different from the Cold War era? This paper will exam the current state of relations between Syria and the various countries of the former Soviet Union and assess the current and future impact on regional relationships.

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THE STATE OF RELATIONS BETWEEN THE COUNTRIES OF THE FORMER SOVIET UNION AND ITS FORMER CLIENT STATE OF SYRIA: HOW HAVE THE RELATIONSHIPS CHANGED AFTER THE BREAK-UP AND WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

The West and the Soviet Union opposed each other for over forty years during the Cold War. Each side had its client states who depended on their benefactor with whom they traded, purchased weapons, and, if need be, who intervened on their behalf. In the Middle East, although the Soviet Union initially supported Israel in its war for independence through arms shipments, the re-emergence of Russian/Soviet anti-Semitism severed this link. The West and the U.S. from 1967 onwards armed Israel while the Soviet Union armed Israel's Arab neighbors. Two wars involving Syria were fought in the Middle East (1967 & 1973) under this rubric as well as the 1970 Jordanian crisis. Egypt and Jordan, two of Israel's immediate neighbors, signed peace treaties with Israel but little progress was made with Syria which remains on the frontline of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Syria bought, borrowed and bartered for Soviet arms and equipment to outfit its armed forces so it would present a credible threat to Israel. Even now, over 90% of the weapons in the Syrian military are either Soviet or Russian-made. By current Russian calculations, the Syrian army has over 4,000 tanks of various models and over 500 combat aircraft (Mig-21, Mig-23 and Mig-29 fighter planes), which were made in the Soviet Union and then Russia.¹ Then it all came tumbling down. First the Berlin Wall fell and then in December 1991, the Soviet Union itself fractured and disappeared. In its place stood 15 newly independent states made up of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Estonia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, Russia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan.

COMMONWEALTH OF INDEPENDENT STATES

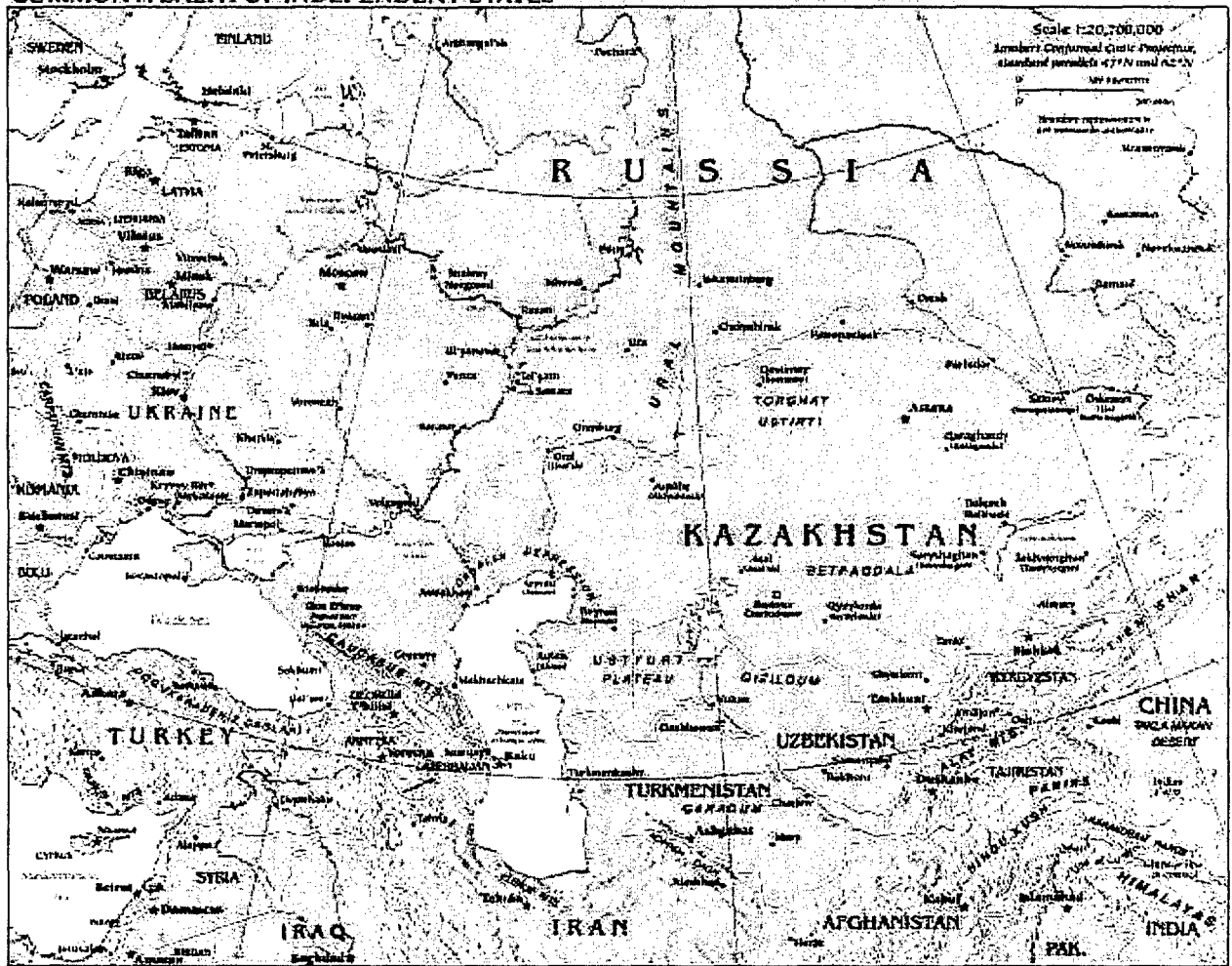


FIGURE 1 - COMMONWEALTH OF INDEPENDENT STATES

This sudden end to the bi-polar world as we knew it was replaced by an uncertainty as to what the future of world relations was going to look like. More specifically, Syria was now faced with a great deal of uncertainty as well. Its benefactor had disappeared. What would the future hold? One would expect that Russia, as the largest and most powerful successor state, would absorb the relationships of the former Soviet Union with Syria. But what of the other fourteen countries: Would they settle to live in Russia's shadow or would they change direction and set out on their own? One would expect that a bit of both would naturally be the case, yet, there is little in the current literature about the state of relationships of the countries of the former Soviet Union (FSU) with Syria, nor what role they have chosen for themselves. After the final disintegration of the Soviet Union in late 1991, the resultant countries turned their attention inward to consolidate their respective governments and establish control over the populations. By the mid-90s, their focus, though still inward, had begun to look out. Estonia, Latvia and

Lithuania went over to the West European camp opting not to be a part of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and will therefore not be discussed. It is from this point that this paper sets out to examine the development of the current state of relations of Syria with these relatively newly independent CIS states some ten years since the fall of the Soviet Union and end of the Cold War. How have the relationships developed and where do they appear to be heading? What is the status of the diplomatic/political, economic, and military relations? With the exception of the Stans which will be discussed together, each country's relations with Syria will be addressed in turn in order to ascertain what conclusions can be drawn from these relationships pertaining to what was in the past called the global balance of power?

ARMENIA



FIGURE 2 - ARMENIA

Armenia and Syria relations are based on shared ethnic Armenian populations as well as a shared opposition to Turkey. There have always been relationships between the two regardless of the political structure for this reason. Initial contacts after the fall of the Soviet Union were minimal as Armenia was concentrating on building its internal structures. Syria set out in 1996 to reinvigorate its ties with Armenia. To that end, Armenia's then Foreign Affairs Minister Vahan Papazyan received a Syrian delegation headed by Secretary of the National Assembly Muhammad Niyad Mushantand to discuss increasing cooperation between the two countries. "The parties stressed ties between the two countries will become closer after Syria's Embassy opens in Armenia."²

Nevertheless, formal diplomatic relations seem not to have increased the level of cooperation in any sphere between them significantly. Pro-forma visits to exchange pleasantries and normal embassy activities appear to be the norm. In May 1999, an Armenian Foreign Ministry delegation headed by First Deputy Foreign Minister Shagen Karamanukyan visited Syria. He met with Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar'a where they discussed the Syrian view on the Middle East peace process as well as the Armenian view on the dispute between Azerbaijan and Armenia over the Nagorno-Karabakh autonomous region.³ They also discussed the possibility of further developing Armenian-Syrian bilateral relations both politically and economically.⁴ Little change has been observed since Syrian president Hafiz al-Assad died in June 2000. The two appear to have a reciprocal relationship in their dealings. When Armenia was hit by a severe drought during the summer of 2000, Syria pledged 10,000 tons of grain and 500 tons of potatoes in humanitarian aid.⁵

Economically, a land bridge of sorts was put in place in the summer of 1997 when an agreement was signed to open a Yerevan-Aleppo-Yerevan bus route.⁶ This was the first overland communications route between the two but other than it being a first, it is not economically significant.

Based on available economic data through 1996, trade between them is minimal. In 1993, exports to Syria were \$900 thousand whereas from 1994 to 1996, Armenian exports to Syria were never more than \$300 thousand in any given year.⁷ Interestingly, brandy is among the exports from Armenia that Syria buys.⁸ Imports from Syria were negligible the first few years. For 1995 and 1996, imports jumped to over \$600 thousand and \$400 thousand respectively. The Armenian envoy in Syria, Levon Sarkisyan, and Syrian Agriculture and Agrarian Reform Minister As'ad Mustafa signed an agricultural cooperation agreement on 20 September 2000 but this is unlikely to amount to a major increase in trade between them.⁹

Militarily, there are no indications that Armenia and Syria have discussed or undertaken any bilateral military cooperation or other military activities to date. Armenia has very little, if anything, to offer to Syria in this area.

AZERBAIJAN



FIGURE 3 - AZERBAIJAN

During December 1997, Azerbaijan established formal diplomatic relations in Syria in an effort to step "up political and economic interstate contacts." As stated previously, Azerbaijan and Armenia are at odds over the Nagorno-Karabakh region physically located within Azerbaijan territory. Due to the relatively harmonious relations between Syria (as well as Lebanon) and Armenia, the Azerbaijan government was obviously concerned that its feud with Armenia would be detrimental to relations with Syria. To address this issue the head of the Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry said the press that "We have assurances from the leaders of these countries that their warm relations with Armenia will not affect the friendly character of their relations with Azerbaijan. These relations are based on the principles of respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan," and that a number of meetings between the two governments resolved "all the existing issues."¹⁰ Nevertheless, the level of diplomatic activity is relatively low given that the Azerbaijani ambassador works out of the embassy in Cairo, Egypt.¹¹ After the death of Syrian president Hafiz al-Assad, Azerbaijani president Heydar Aliyev sent the foreign minister Vilayat Guliyev to represent the country at Assad's funeral which could indicate a closer relationship than believed.¹² Although it is more likely that the fact that Azerbaijan is a Muslim country was more of a factor in this case. Still, given the apparently better relations Syria has with Armenia, a ninety percent Christian nation, the issue is intriguing although not within the scope of this paper.

Azerbaijan and Syria do carry out trade relations although still not on that large a scale. For the years 1992 to 1996, total exports cumulative to Syria were just over \$100 thousand.

Imports from Syria were just over \$600 thousand coming in the years 1995 and 1996.¹³ In 1998, trade between them totaled \$700,000 and \$1 million in 1999. Interestingly, the trade balance is in Syria's favor with Azerbaijani trade deficits running \$500K and \$600K (believed to be foodstuffs) respectively although in the big picture, this level of trade is only 1/10 of a percent of the Azerbaijan's overall trade.¹⁴ As with Armenia, there appear to be minimal, if any, military to military relations between them.

BELARUS



FIGURE 4 - BELARUS

In the past couple of years, Belarus has started concentrating more of its diplomatic and political efforts toward the Middle East as opposed to being solely European focused. Belarussian President Alyaksandr Lukashenka made an official visit to Syria in March 1998 to better relations between the two countries. As described at the end of this visit, he stated his opinion that the western market was firmly controlled by Western corporations and there was not any sense in focusing Belarussian efforts to compete in an overcrowded market. To this end, there were plans made to open a Belarussian diplomatic representation and a trade mission in order to improve the opportunity for Belarussian trade.¹⁵ Belarus now has full diplomatic relations with Syria with the ambassador resident in Damascus as a result of these steps.¹⁶

Belarus, as one of the better endowed of the countries of the former Soviet Union, has been trading with Syria since 1992 although not on a grand scale. The data for 1992 to 1996 indicates that with the exception of 1993, where exports were \$7.8 million and most likely

attributable to arms transfers, exports to Syria were typically less than one million dollars in each of the other years. Imports from Syria were significantly less with only 1994 and 1995 showing any trade activity (\$900 thousand and \$100 thousand respectively).¹⁷

Trade between Syria and Belarus for the years 1998 and 1999 resulted in a trade surplus for Belarus. Belarus exported to Syria \$1.4 million and \$1.8 million respectively, while Syria exported \$1.1 million and \$300,000 in goods for those same years.¹⁸ To put these amounts in perspective, they represent less than 1/10th of one percent of Belarussian trade. What is not known is whether these statistics take into account the barter arrangements although they probably do not. For example, on 23 May 1998 it was reported that Syria and Belarus had reached agreements on some commodities exchanges. Specifically, the report said that Syria had agreed to ship to Belarus 5,000 tons of cotton, 2,500 tons of vegetable oil, 2,000 tons of tobacco, and 2,000 tons of tomato paste. The estimated value for these commodities was \$30 million with delivery dates in the June 1998 timeframe. Belarus exported \$194,000 worth cars to Syria in the first quarter of 1998 as well. Although Syria had not agreed on what commodities it wanted in exchange for the aforementioned goods, Belarus was offering "farm and road building machinery, motor vehicles patterned on MAZ and MZKT trucks, cable for electric transmission lines, and metal cutters."¹⁹ So these figures apparently do not show the real value of trade between the two countries and the actual amount is probably closer to \$60 million for the year 1998.

Lukashenka signed a number of agreements with Syria in his March 1998 visit to Damascus. In addition to military and technical cooperation agreements, the two countries signed agreements on "establishing trade, economic and technical ties, on mutual protection of investments and on avoiding dual taxation."²⁰ Due to the shortage of hard currency, Belarus and Syria agreed to trade on a barter basis in 1998. Along these lines, Belarus was interested in importing (swapping) cotton, tobacco, vegetable oil, fruit and vegetables, oil and condensed gas and in exchange for Belarussian machinery, electronic equipment and equipment for oil and gas developing industries.²¹ In trying to encourage trade relations, Lukashenka referred to the trade union between Russia, Belarus and the Ukraine indicating that what the trade union actually meant was that anything Syrian going to Belarus could be sold throughout most of the FSU and therefore it was in their interest to trade with Belarus.²²

Additionally, Belarus has been targeting all types of manufactured/industrial products for export. As reported in a March 1999 Food and Agriculture Report, the Minsk Tractor Works was exploring the possibility of having its MTZ-321 tractors assembled from kits in Syria. The report went on to state that the market in Syria for this size tractor was approximately 8,000-10,000.²³

President Lukashenka has not shied away from courting Syria and other Arab countries to do business in Belarus. In February 1999 he spoke to all Arab ambassadors accredited to Russia telling them that "The development of relations with the Arab world is one of the priorities of Belarussian foreign policy." He pointed out his visit to Syria and Egypt in 1998 and the years of cooperation with the Soviet Union of which Belarus was a part. He told them that there needed to be multiple centers of power, and that they (the Arab states) had to rely on more than just the United States and the West for their needs.²⁴ The relationship between Syria and Belarus is not a one-sided affair. In May 1998, Syria signed an agreement to develop a GSM cellular system in Belarus. Overall, the agreement was to be worth \$100-million with the Syrian company SB-Telecom providing the funding for most of the project.²⁵

Belarus, like the other countries of the former Soviet Union, was and is in need of hard currency. One way of earning this foreign currency is to sell arms. Along these lines there have been various rumors and allegations that Belarus has tried to sell or has sold nuclear technology or arms to Syria (as well as Iran) after visits to these countries in 1998. Belarussian President Lukashenka vehemently denied these allegations 17 March 1998, saying that "Nuclear technology remained in Belarus after the collapse of the Soviet Union," but that "Belarus has removed all nuclear warheads from its territory."²⁶ Although possible, it is unlikely that such a transaction took place based on the agreements reached in March 1992 between Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan (with strong backing by the U.S./NATO). Belarus as well as the Ukraine, Kazakhstan, agreed to "transfer all short-range nuclear weapons to Russia by July 1" (1992). Then again in May these countries "pledged to give up their long-range weapons in a treaty they signed, in tandem with Russia, with the United States."²⁷ Lukashenka did allude to the future potential of conducting arms sales with Syria during this press conference. Specifically, he said that "Belarus may begin supplying other countries with spare parts for Soviet-produced arms" or "to export services for upgrade of armored vehicles and aircraft." "If we want to sell arms that we have the right to sell, we will sell extras that we have left over" as well as what Belarus produces domestically such as optical equipment and electronics.²⁸ On 11 March 1998, just a week earlier, Lukashenka told the trade and industrial chamber in Damascus that Belarus was ready to "cooperate with Syria in the military and technical sphere" because Belarus had a great deal of experience maintaining and servicing Soviet-era aircraft and weapons, the same equipment that is widely used in Syria.²⁹ Taken together, Belarussian statements about undertaking arms deals with Syria indicate a concerted effort to open the Syrian market. Moreover, it should be noted that the Belarussian military has

gone from 250,000 to 85,000 since 1992.³⁰ A reduction of that size would provide ample spares or surplus to sell on the international arms market.

GEORGIA



FIGURE 5 - GEORGIA

Georgia has official diplomatic relations with Syria but as was the case with Azerbaijan, the ambassador is also accredited to Egypt and is resident in Cairo, Egypt.³¹ There is very little interaction between the two governments with neither actively courting the other. No mention was made whether Georgia sent a representative to attend former Syrian President Hafiz al-Assad's funeral in June 2000 nor have there been any reports of high-level Georgian contact with Bashar al-Assad.

Syria and Georgia have trade relations although on a very small scale. For the period 1992 to 1996, CIS statistics indicate that Georgia either did not export any goods to Syria or the levels were below the thresh-hold for tracking or Georgia did not keep the necessary statistics to track this data. Syria's exports for the period 1992-1994 were also below the thresh-hold. In 1995 and 1996, Georgia had imports worth over \$300 and \$400 thousand with Syria.

In 1998 trade grew slightly with Georgia importing \$700K worth of goods from Syria while only exporting \$600K in goods. The balance flip-flopped in 1999 when Georgia only imported \$500K but exported \$3.9 million in goods.³² Most likely the trade was in non-precious metals and their manufacture although the sale of a piece of excess military equipment (main battle tank or the like) cannot be totally discounted. Overall the exports in 1999 amounted to 1.6 percent of the total exports but if looked at compared to trade with non-CIS countries the total

Georgia exported to Syria was actually closer to three percent of total exports outside the CIS.³³ As with Armenia and Azerbaijan, there appears to be minimal, if any, military to military relations between Georgia and Syria.

THE STANS

Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan: the "Stans" of the FSU stand out for their lack of interaction with Syria, a brother Islamic country but that is relatively easy to understand. Given the relative poverty in each of these countries (other than potential natural resources), they do not have much to offer Syria. A brief survey of each should suffice to confirm this.



FIGURE 6 - KAZAKHSTAN

The Republic of Kazakhstan has formal diplomatic relations with Syria although its ambassador is also accredited to Egypt and is resident in Cairo.³⁴ Trade between them was minimal up to 1996 when exports to Syria jumped to \$6.1 million.³⁵ There does not appear to be any type of military-to-military relations between them.



FIGURE 7 - KYRGYZSTAN

Kyrgyzstan does not have formal relations with Syria. According to the CIS Statistical Committee, it had no exports or imports to/from Syria from 1992 to 1996.³⁶ No record of official visits back and forth were found nor were there any military to military relations.



FIGURE 8 - TAJIKISTAN

Tajikistan and Syria do not have formal diplomatic relations. There is very little trade between them. The data for the years 1992 to 1996 is blank for both imports and exports.³⁷ For the years 1998 and 1999, the level of trade was so small, if there was any at all, that no numbers were associated with the trade statistics for either export or import. Although it could be supposed that an error was made in the data, trade data is listed between Tajikistan and the UAE as well as Israel which would lead me to believe that the data is accurate.³⁸ There are no indications of any type of military cooperation.



FIGURE 9 - TURKMENISTAN

Turkmenistan and Syria do have formal diplomatic relations with an embassy in Damascus although there were no news items that would indicate any exchange visits ever took place.³⁹ Syria did not import any goods from Turkmenistan for the years 1992-1996. There were exports to Turkmenistan in the years 1993-1995 with the level reaching \$3.7 million before dropping back down to the \$200 thousand range.⁴⁰ There were no indications of any military cooperation between them.



FIGURE 10 - UZBEKISTAN

Uzbekistan and Syria do not have formal diplomatic relations nor have there been any news reports of exchanges or official visits. Initially, there appeared to be a low level of trade between them with Syria importing \$4.3 million, \$400 thousand, and \$600 thousand in goods from 1992 to 1994. Imports dropped below thresh-hold reporting in subsequent years. Syria, on the other hand, exported \$25.2 million worth of goods to Uzbekistan in 1995 but then dropped below thresh-hold again.⁴¹ There are no indications of any military cooperation.

MOLDOVA

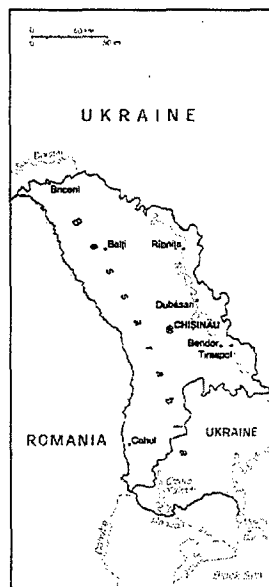


FIGURE 11 - MOLDOVA

Moldova and Syria appear to have growing relations although the two currently do not have relations at the ambassadorial level. On the 13th of January 2001, the governors of the respective capitals signed a friendship and cooperation agreement in order to develop trade as well as economic, scientific and cultural exchanges. Interestingly, there are a number of Syrian

students in universities in Moldova. Of the 1,900 foreign students in the country in 1999, eighteen percent, or approximately 340 were Syrian.⁴²

Another outcome of the January 2001 visit was the decision to establish a joint Syrian-Moldovan Chamber of Commerce to improve the economic and trade ties between them. Based on current realities, the Moldovans expect to sell Syria farm products (Syria is currently Moldova's fifth leading importer of its nuts) while attracting Syrian investment in its power infrastructure.⁴³ In 1994, Moldova exported approximately \$900 thousand of goods to Syria, most likely farm products.⁴⁴ Military cooperation between them was not noted.

RUSSIA



FIGURE 12 - RUSSIA

"Since Russia, even deprived of the other fourteen former Soviet republics, accounted for over half the former Soviet Union's populations and three-quarters of its territory, what happened there was the major story of the immediate post-Soviet era."⁴⁵ What Russia accomplished, with U.S. and European backing, was to assume control of all long and short-range nuclear warheads in Belarus, Kazakhstan, and the Ukraine which effectively took these countries out of the picture as significant world players. In short, Russia effectively staked its claim as the inheritor of what was the Soviet Union. This is the basis for the high degree of contact at the upper levels of government between Syria and Russia. The embassies that were already established in Moscow as the capital of the Soviet Union remained in Moscow, now the capital of the Russian Federation. What was the Soviet embassy in Damascus as well as a

consulate in Aleppo were now Russia's.⁴⁶ Although relations between the Syria and Russia became somewhat strained after the collapse of the Soviet Union, nonetheless, Russia did not completely abandon Syria or vice versa. Official visits continued to take place in order to try to mend the rifts. But in 1995, Russia recognized that its relations with Syria, its traditional client, if not ally, had altered dramatically. In March of that year, the foreign minister while visiting Damascus said that Russia was not happy with the state of relations between them given their historically friendly ties. Along these lines he proposed some new initiatives for the peace process.⁴⁷

This has been the pattern of the relationship, Russia has continued to treat Syria as one of its clients or good friends; never missing the opportunity to offer congratulations and take the opportunity to stress the relationship between them with Syrian sentiment expressed in a similar vein. For example, in February 1999, then-President Yeltsin sent a congratulatory message to Hafiz al-Assad on his latest election victory saying that he had confidence that the "traditional relations of friendship and cooperation between Russia and Syria" would only get stronger and that it was Syrian-Russian cooperation that helped to keep "the balance of forces and stability in the Middle East."⁴⁸ Official state visits between them after the first few years were fairly frequent. Syrian President Hafiz al-Assad visited Russia in July 1999.⁴⁹ Russia also has tried to act as an intermediary and interlocutor on Syria's behalf on a number of occasions since the fall of the Soviet Union. In October 1998 when tensions were flaring between Syria and Turkey, Moscow, urging restraint, offered to assist in reaching a peaceful resolution of the issue by using its contacts in both capitals.⁵⁰ After Bashar al-Assad was formally elected as president of Syria on 10 July 2000, President Putin sent a congratulatory message in which he indicated his desire that the previous relationship held under his father, Hafiz al-Assad would be continued under the new leadership. He also stressed Russia's role as a co-sponsor in the peace process, pledging to work toward a just and lasting peace based on UN resolutions and the land for peace principle.⁵¹

As it stands, Russia is the only country of the former Soviet Union to actively engage in the Middle East peace process and has assumed the role of the former Soviet Union as it pertains to this process; especially with regard to the Syrians. Further, it has consistently emphasized to the world that it is a co-sponsor just as was the Soviet Union. As early as 1994 while most of the FSU countries were still looking inward, Russia's Foreign Minister at the time, Andrey Kozyrev, visited Damascus to try to give some impetus to the Syrian-Israeli track although discussion of Syrian debts to the FSU was also an agenda item. Significantly, this was the first official visit to Syria since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.⁵²

Israel-Syria peace talks broke off in February 1996 but Russia did not abandon its efforts vis-à-vis regional peace. During an on-going April 1996 meeting of the G-7 in Moscow to discuss nuclear safety issues, Israel was on the ninth day of an offensive against Hisballah fighters in southern Lebanon with reports that Israel had fired artillery on a U.N. refuge camp killing over 100 Lebanese civilians. President Yeltsin immediately dispatched his foreign minister, Yevgeniy Primakov, to hold talks with Syria, Lebanon, and Israel to try to calm the situation, saying that as a co-sponsor for the peace process, the situation concerns him very much.⁵³ He also called on Israel to end its offensive claiming it violated Lebanese sovereignty. Other world leaders, such as Canadian Prime Minister Jean Cretien, acknowledged that "Russia can play a role with Syria because of their long and very special relationship with the Syrians."⁵⁴ In April 1999, the Russian Foreign Minister, Igor Ivanov, visited Syria as the final stop on a Mideast tour. In his comments he said that "peace cannot be achieved in the region without Syria" and that the whole basis for progress to date. Accordingly, the return of the Golan to Syria is in keeping with this principle. He supported the restarting of Syrian-Israeli talks at the point where they were broken off.⁵⁵ Again in December 1999, Russia sent its presidential envoy for the Middle East peace process, Deputy Foreign Minister Vasily Sredin, to visit Syria to further its efforts to co-sponsor the process and achieve peace.⁵⁶

After the announcement of the Israel Defense Forces impending withdrawal from the south of Lebanon in May 2000, Russia sent Pavel Kratozov as their new peace envoy to talk with Israeli officials. Russia believed that after the IDF withdrawal there was the opportunity to revive the Israeli-Syrian talks. Moscow's mantra was "a full withdrawal in return for full peace."⁵⁷ Yet again in August 2000, Russia continued efforts to move the Middle East peace process along after the Camp David talks stalled. As in the past, Russia, in its discussions with Syria emphasized the need for Syria and Israel to resume the negotiations "on the basis of the Madrid conference principles (land for peace) and UN Security Council resolutions 242 and 338" in order to achieve a lasting peace.⁵⁸ Unfortunately, this avenue was never fully explored as the breakdown in negotiations on the Palestinian track and subsequent Palestinian violence since late September 2000 precluded Syria from acting unilaterally. Nevertheless, after the Palestinian violence erupted in Jerusalem after, now Prime Minister of Israel, Ariel Sharon visited the Temple Mount, the Russian Foreign Minister made a trip to Syria to confer with the Syrian president and foreign minister. Continuing to try to play an active role in the peace process and cater to Syria and the Arab world, Russia in a joint communiqué with the Syrians condemned the actions of Ariel Sharon as provocative in nature and the resultant response of the Israel Defense Forces to Palestinian violence as the cause of loss of life and had the

potential to leading to escalation in the region.⁵⁹ Even the U.S. has supported and recognized Russia's efforts to rekindle the Middle East peace process such as when the State Department announced that Secretary of State Albright would attend the Russian-initiated multilateral talks between all parties in Moscow on February 1, 2000.⁶⁰

Russia, as the successor to the Soviet Union, assumed most of its debts as well as accounts payable of the second and third world countries that were its clients and customers. Based on this it says that Syria, although not the largest debtor, owes it more than \$12 billion dollars from loans and other arrangements granted during the Soviet era.⁶¹ Syria disputes this amount but trade between them continued despite this difference of opinion. Russia and Syria conduct a significant amount of trade in general terms. From 1992 to 1996 total trade averaged \$150 million per year.⁶² By 1998, bilateral trade between them had climbed to \$174 million. In contrast, trade between the two prior to the collapse of the Soviet Union was a billion dollars. However this is not an entirely accurate indicator as much of this level of trade at that time was due to Syrian debt repayment under their barter agreements.⁶³ Syria exported a wide variety of goods to pay back this debt. Upon the collapse of the Soviet Union, Syria stopped making these barter payments (along with quite a few other countries) to pay back the debt. Trade and business has slowly resumed as Russia decided to disassociate settlement of the Soviet-era debt from current trade needs. As of 1999, Syria exported "confectionery products, fruit, sewing machines, knitwear, perfumes and cosmetics" while Russia exported aviation technology, machinery and equipment, tools and spare parts, iron and steel rolled goods and timber as well as certain fuels.⁶⁴

According to the Russians, economic and technical cooperation with Syria started in the 50's. Thus far, there have been over 80 projects undertaken by Russia in Syria. Of these, sixty had been completed by July 1999 with the result being that they provided 20% of the electricity, 30% of the oil and water for irrigation of more than 65,000 hectares (2.47 acres per hectare) of land.⁶⁵ Russia is also looking to increase its level of participation in construction projects in Syria. According to Russian data, between 1993-1998, Russian companies won thirteen international tenders for projects worth \$55 million for building oil pipeline and oil storage facilities, electrical power line construction equipment, equipment and spare parts for trains, as well as aviation technology and mining equipment.⁶⁶ A state-owned Russian company, Tyazhpromexport, built a 187-kilometer oil pipeline from Homs to Aleppo worth \$30 million with an anticipated handover to Syria in April 2001. The same company is competing for two other contracts to build oil storage facilities in Aleppo (\$5 million) and Beniyas (\$10 million).⁶⁷

In 1997, Russia and Syria also planned to increase cooperation on the peaceful applications of nuclear energy which would also boost revenues. Based on Russia's Atomic Energy Ministry's proposal to increase cooperation, the proposal was vetted by the Foreign Ministry, Ministry of Foreign Economic Relations and Trade, the State Atomic Energy Inspectorate, the Federal Security Service, and the Foreign Intelligence Service.⁶⁸ On 23 February 1998, at the conclusion of one of the sessions of the Russian-Syrian commission for trade, economic, scientific and technical cooperation in Damascus, Russia and Syria signed additional agreements on the peaceful use of nuclear energy and on bilateral cooperation in the energy sector, tourism, investment and avoidance of double taxation.⁶⁹ Nevertheless, Syria's debt to Moscow (estimated \$10 billion at the time) hampered full economic cooperation between them. Then again in May 1999, the two countries signed another agreement on cooperation in the peaceful use of atomic energy that expanded on the other agreements. According to the Russian Minister of Atomic Energy, Yevgeny Adamov, a number of nuclear facilities had been built in Syria with Soviet assistance so this agreement paved the way for continued cooperation with Russia. As the Syrians saw it "the agreement will further expand good relations between Russia and Syria. It is laying the foundation of Syria's infrastructure for the 21st century."⁷⁰ In July 2000, the state-owned company Tyazhpromexport initialed on a contract, worth \$700 thousand, with Syria's Tishrin thermal electric station for the delivery of equipment and spare parts.⁷¹ Additionally, the Russian automobile manufacturer, Avtovaz, entered the Syrian (as well as Algerian) market in the year 2000 and for the whole year doubled its overall exports.⁷²

Russia and Syria continue to expand their economic relationship at all levels. In January 2001, the Syrian Minister of Irrigation Taha al-Attrash and the Russian Minister of Natural Minerals signed a cooperation agreement which supplements an economic and commercial agreement signed in April 1993. This joint protocol outlines steps to promote and enhance irrigation systems, dam construction, and farming research. Essentially, Russia intends to look at Syrian plans and studies to determine economic feasibility for Russian participation. A key aspect of this agreement would be the study by Russian experts on the feasibility of the upgrade of the electrical power stations located on the Euphrates and Baath dams.⁷³

Russia, as with the other countries of the FSU, was (and still is) in need of hard currency to boost its economy. Yet, the breakup of the Soviet Union and reduced east-west tensions necessitated an overhaul of the military industrial complex. The reduced internal demand for military hardware required the industries to diversify into consumer products in order to remain viable and yet retain the capability to produce weaponry if needed. For example, the Orsk Mechanical Plant in Russia, which was a producer of defense products to include artillery

systems diversified to production of consumer appliances, was as of May 2000 producing eight different types of refrigerator for public consumption, and yet the majority of its income still came from the export of artillery systems to Syria, India and Libya.⁷⁴ Given the excess equipment from drawing down and the potential capability of Russia's military industrial complex, it would only be natural for it to continue arms sales as a means of bringing in foreign exchange. Nevertheless, from 1991 until late 1995 the arms industry in Russia deteriorated rapidly. In fact, overall output at the end of 1996 was just one-eighth of what it had been at the end of 1991.⁷⁵ Some of this drop was due to budgetary constraints within the Russian armed forces as procurement dropped significantly. For example, in 1991 the armed forces received over 400 aircraft whereas in 1995 they received seven and none in 1996.⁷⁶ During the same period, military exports dropped from \$7.1 billion to approximately \$3.5 billion.⁷⁷ Armament exports to traditional trading partners such as Syria also plummeted as Russia attempted to recover Soviet-era debt from them.

In 1997, Russia seemed to decide that it was going to begin to aggressively pursue exporting armaments and reinvigorate military relations. Syria figured prominently in its calculations. Even though Syrian orders for Russian military equipment and assistance virtually dried up for a few years, the two countries still had amicable military to military relations. For example, in late September 1997 they conducted joint air defense exercises in Russia. A Syrian air defense regiment participated in the exercise to include firing S-200 air defense rockets at airborne targets.⁷⁸ After the Gulf War there was a significant increase in arms sales to the region. With the exception of the sale of Smerch multiple rocket launchers and BMP-3's to Kuwait and the UAE in 1997, Russia made little headway selling its weapons. Some blamed this poor performance on the perceived dismal record of these systems during the Gulf War but for whatever reason, this brought about calls for Russia to once more begin to sell weapons to Syria and Iran (and Libya and Iraq in the future) lest it be shut out of the arms market entirely by the United States, Britain, China and France.⁷⁹ A spokesman for the state-owned arms exporter Rosvooruzhenie said that Syria is considered "Russia's main strategic ally in the Middle East. We have been supporting Syria and will unambiguously continue to do so." Although said indirectly, its view is that if Syria is not supported, Israel will always feel it can impose its will by force of arms, whereas a strong Syria can bring Israel to the bargaining table.⁸⁰ Furthermore as noted by Michael Clarke, director of Defence Studies, King's College, London, "The Russians don't see why they should be restrained when the market is sewn up by the U.S. and the British. Russia has an incredible need for foreign currency, and arms are one of the few things it has that other people want."⁸¹ Accordingly, in 1997 Russia began to be more aggressive in its

offering to assist Syria modernize its armored forces by upgrading its older tanks to T-72 performance for a fraction of the price of new purchases which would save Syria billions of dollars.⁸² Nevertheless, it was not entirely successful.

Russia has stated that it will not be bound by U.S. domestic restrictions against trading with Syria. Although they were willing in April 1999 to abide by the Gore-Chernomyrdin agreement that limited the amount of military and technical cooperation Russia had with Iran, it sees Syria in an all-together different light and Rosvooruzheniye, the government-backed arms export company, views Syria as a "full-fledged partner and deals with it without any limitations."⁸³ Even as far back as 1997, there was sentiment in Russia that the West was attempting to strangle or complete the destruction of Russia. The leader of the Russian Liberal Democratic Party, Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, expresses this view best because he believes that the West is trying to complete the destruction of Russia economically. He sees the NATO expansion as the West's wanting to benefit from Russia's economic difficulties. He even went so far as to propose a military bloc that Syria would be a part of to counterbalance NATO.⁸⁴ By 1999 Russia still saw Syria as a potentially lucrative purchaser of Russian military equipment but as of 1999 had not fully re-opened it as a market for its military equipment but expected to do so with possible aggregate annual revenues between it and Libya in the \$300-\$400 million range.⁸⁵ Syrian President Hafiz al-Assad visited Yeltsin in Moscow 8 July 1999.⁸⁶ Allegedly, Russia agreed to all Assad's requests to include a \$2 billion arms deal which would include T-80 tanks and SU-27 fighters. According to a Syrian official, Russia agreed to the deal because it understood Syria's security needs and the sanctions against Syria were U.S. rather than U.N. imposed, so Russia is not obligated to adhere to them.⁸⁷ When the U.S. reacted negatively to news of the deal with comments indicating concern about the Russian arms sales to Syria. Syria responded by saying "Arabs were astounded by Washington's deep concern over any Russian arms sales to Syria...." Given what the U.S. supplies to Israel. While the Russians said that "We have more than once brought it to the attention of the American administration that attempts by the U.S. to give supranational character to its own laws to the detriment of Russian interests undermine international law and create new irritants in Russian-American relations."⁸⁸ In August 1999, the Russian "Defense Systems" industrial group showcased its Pechora-2 anti-aircraft missile system at the MAKS-99 air show in August 1999 and announced it had already delivered a prototype for it as well as the Pechora-1 to Syria and 34 other countries.⁸⁹ On 23 September 1999, a senior Russian delegation met with Syrian Defense Minister to discuss how to develop cooperation between the two militaries.⁹⁰

The Russian ambassador to Syria in a press conference on 19 October 1999 stated that his country was ready to offer whatever Syria needed in military technology as well as modernizing its old Soviet-built equipment as there were no international embargos imposed on Syria.⁹¹ And then in October 1999, Promexport, a state export enterprise, sent out proposals and contracts for supplying military communications equipment to Syria as well as a number of other countries.⁹² Overall, sales to Syria grew by 40% in 1999 and accounted for 1.7% of its exports according to a November 2000 announcement by the Russian arms exporting company Rosvooruzhenie.⁹³

Since Vladimir Putin assumed the office of Russian president, he has set Russia on a course that focuses on Russia's economic interests more singularly than at any time during Yeltsin's tenure. As one writer put it, "Putin's foreign policy is characterized by the search for leeway, the attempt to not settle on one option, the Western one."⁹⁴ Although Yeltsin did not discourage arms sales, he did not pursue them to the same degree as Putin. In January 2000, Russian Deputy Foreign Minister and Presidential spokesman for the Middle East indicated that Russia intended to continue its military cooperation with Syria. In his view, it would hurt the peace process overall if Russia were to withdraw from the armaments market in the region while others continued to sell arms.⁹⁵ This is obviously in direct reference to U.S. sales to Israel. He went on to point out that there is no contradiction in seeking a settlement while selling weapons, as self-defense is every nation's right. Syria, which has traditionally looked to Russia for these weapons, is entitled to the same rights. The sale of military technology to Syria strengthens stability in the region, a primary concern of Russia, and is in the economic interests of both countries.

President Putin has sought to revitalize the Russian military industrial complex by making deals with any country willing to buy Russian arms and barring that, he has sought deals in the power generation, gas or oil sectors. On 25 February 2000, the Syrian Minister of Defense and a senior Russian defense official held talks on increasing military and technical cooperation but likely focused on maintaining and upgrading Soviet-era equipment.⁹⁶ To this end, the rapprochement between Syria and Russia has really begun in earnest. In September 2000, President Putin sent another message to Syrian president Bashar al-Assad speaking about the their mutual interests and how the potential and desire exists to increase the level of relations between them for both their benefits. He emphasized that doing so as one would work in a positive way to influence the situation in the Middle East and serve to create a truly multi-polar world as well as building on the economic relationships that have already been established with Russian help.⁹⁷

President Putin has been seeking to regain a semblance of the Soviet prestige that was lost when the empire collapsed. For example, while the U.S. was still wrestling with the presidential election results, Putin scheduled a trip to Cuba which was to "underline the 'assertive but positive' attitude" Putin, and Russia, intended to adopt with the new administration. In fact, this is more about the new Cold War of seeking economic advantage. Russia has quite a way to go in this regard but it is seeking out its Soviet-era clients in order to recover some of the old debt but more importantly to re-open or open new markets to rebuild the Russian economy. Arms sales to Syria as well as other traditional clients are yet another area where Russia has continued to expand after contraction in the early 90's.⁹⁸

UKRAINE



FIGURE 13 - UKRAINE

After the fall of the Soviet Union, the Ukraine, like the rest, focused its efforts to transform itself internally into a viable country. But even after the first couple of years, its primary outlook was to the West. Not until the latter part of the century did it increase efforts in the Middle East. In June 2000, the Ukraine sent an official delegation to attend the funeral of Syrian President Hafiz al-Assad. Upon the return of the official delegation, President Leonid Kuchma of the Ukraine instructed the government to take steps to increase trade/relations with Syria. Up to this point, there was no political reason that the two countries did not have better relations both economically and politically.⁹⁹ Another Ukrainian delegation headed by Ukrainian First Deputy Prime Minister, visited Syria in October 2000 trying to improve the level of cooperation between them. It was during this visit that the Ukrainian embassy in Syria was officially opened.¹⁰⁰

Even though the two countries did not have relations at the ambassadorial level until 2000, they did trade with each other fairly extensively. For the years 1992 to 1994, imports from Syria ran \$2.3 million, \$3.5 million and \$1.7 million respectively. In 1995 imports jumped to \$11.6 million and then dropped again in 1996 to \$2.9 million. Correspondingly, exports to Syria

increased each year through 1996 culminating in \$196 million.¹⁰¹ Although not able to be confirmed, levels of this magnitude are likely the result of transfers of military hardware, construction, or maintenance services of some type. For 1999, Syrian imports fell 9% from 1998 levels to \$78.74 million while Syrian exports were up 3% to \$1.03 million.¹⁰² Typical exports from the Ukraine were grain, sunflower meal and perhaps sunflower oil as well.¹⁰³ Additionally, the Ukraine's AvtoZAZ-Daewoo (joint venture between Korea and the Ukraine) tried to enter the Syrian market, exporting Tavria model automobiles to Syria in the year 2000 although the scale was less than a thousand vehicles.¹⁰⁴

The Ukraine inherited a good deal of the Soviet Union's military industrial complex. This, combined with the excess military hardware it possesses, gives it the potential to be a significant trading partner with Syria. To date, this has apparently not transpired. This is not to say that the Ukraine is not vying for business in the arms trade. However, a new development which could increase the Ukraine's market share in the arms trade is the possible cooperation of the Ukraine with Russia to sell arms and associated services. To this end, on 12 February 2001, the Ukraine and Russia signed a cooperation protocol with the result that the Russian Agency for Conventional Weapons proposed the two countries cooperate in repairing and modernizing main battle tanks in Syria as well as a number of other client states that use T-54 through T-72 main battle tanks. This could potentially involve Ukraine's Malyshev Plant, the Omsk-based plant Transmash, and maintenance plants of both countries.¹⁰⁵

CONCLUSIONS

This paper set out to look at how the relationships changed between Syria and the countries of the FSU since its collapse. The relationship of Syria with the countries of the former Soviet Union/Commonwealth of Independent States has not undergone any significant change since the collapse of the Soviet Union and the creation of the CIS. The Baltic States (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) have opted not to become members of the CIS. Rather they have chosen to orient toward the remainder of Europe. Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Moldova all trade with Syria and have the semblance of relations but are in no position to offer Syria anything substantial. Their relationship could actually be categorized as nothing more than trying to conduct normal trade or economic relations for the betterment of their respective economies. Relations between Syria and its fellow Islamic countries of Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan are of a similar magnitude at times barely registering as a relationship. So that leaves Belarus, Russia and the Ukraine as the potentially dominant

players. Each, to a certain extent, has the potential to offer more to Syria than it gets in return from the relationship.

Belarus is making fairly aggressive attempts to increase its market share in the Middle East since it believes the Western market is saturated. It also has an excess of military equipment that it could sell or barter with Syria for food and other products. Moreover, it also possesses the expertise and the desire to assist Syria repair, upgrade, or maintain its inventory of aging Soviet era equipment. It has the capability to substantially increase its relations with Syria on this basis but it does not possess the economy nor infrastructure necessary to bring Syria solely to its camp.

The Ukraine has also begun to focus more on the Middle East and Syria as a potential market for its products. Although relations with Syria do not appear to be as advanced as with Belarus, the Ukraine has similar capabilities, if not significantly better, when it comes to various manufactures and production, repair, and maintenance of Soviet-era military equipment. Before the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Ukraine accounted for approximately twenty percent of total Soviet defense output. Even though the defense industry has contracted upon independence, the capability is still there.¹⁰⁶ The cooperation agreement with Russia to work together in maintaining/upgrading Soviet-era equipment can be construed as an acknowledgment of this capability. Additionally, it also possesses a large number of excess military equipment that it can sell or use as it sees fit. But, in the long run, it also is deficit in its ability to significantly benefit Syria.

Syria then has Belarus and the Ukraine as options in order to keep its military maintained and somewhat of a threat to Israel albeit a small one.¹⁰⁷ For these two countries, business with Syria could mean major trade beneficial to their respective economies but they do not compare to Russia. They are instead bargaining chips Syria can use to get what it wants from Russia at better rates.

Russia has relations at all levels; from fairly regular head of state visits to cooperation in nuclear energy to combined military exercises. The sheer magnitude of Russian relations and capabilities has kept and will keep Syria soundly in its camp as a client. Diplomatically, Russia assumed the Soviet mantle with Syria. Export and import volumes are generally ten times the total for all CIS countries with the exception of the Ukraine; this during a time when Syria refused to recognize the Soviet debt as being still valid. Russia has wholeheartedly taken on the role of being a co-sponsor of the Middle East peace process, and more importantly still a firm supporter of the return of the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights to Syria. As such, it is important to note that Russia is the only remaining country from the FSU to possess nuclear

weapons, and as such, is the only country that has the real ability to effectively intervene on Syria's behalf whether it be concerning the Middle East peace process or in the likelihood of war with Israel. Although military relations took a downward turn during Russia's introspective period, they did not cease.

As stated above, the relationship appears not to have changed much at all. In fact, from the perspective of supporting states not entrenched in the Western camp, it can be said that the Cold War has not ended with regard to Syria. Russia has for all practical purposes assumed the role of the Soviet Union with regard to support for Syria vis-à-vis Israel and the West. What has changed is that neither Russia nor any of the other CIS members are willing to give Syria open-ended concessionary arms deals. Cash is the preferred method of payment although loans at standard interest rates are more likely to be the norm. Russia and the other countries of the CIS are struggling to raise their economies from the shambles of Soviet-era economics. Supplying military equipment and assistance to Syria is but one example of the pursuit of this objective. Although these sales are no longer viewed in the light of Communism over capitalism/democracy, they are indicative that the Russian political leadership still operate on the basis of a "zero-sum" view of the world that holds if a country is not with the West, then it has to be against it. Russia and the others are taking advantage of this to sell weapons to Syria for their economic as opposed to political benefit. In this light, nothing has really changed.

WORD COUNT = 8,654

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⁵⁹ "Russian, Syrian Foreign Ministers Discuss Middle East Situation," *Moscow Interfax* in English 1424 GMT 9 Oct 00 in FBIS-SOV-2000-1009 [database on-line]; available from World News Connection from NTIS, U.S. Dept of Commerce

⁶⁰ "US Backs Russian Initiative on Moscow Mideast Talks," *Moscow ITAR-TASS* in English 2257 GMT 6 Jan 00 in FBIS-NES-2000-0106 [database on-line]; available from World News Connection from NTIS, U.S. Dept of Commerce

⁶¹ "Russia: Interfax Food & Agriculture Report" *Moscow Interfax* in English 1625 GMT 10 Sep 97 in FBIS-SOV-97-295 and "INTERFAX Financial Report" No. 38 (303) dated 26 September "Russia: INTERFAX Financial Report 26 Sep" *Moscow Interfax* in English 1936 GMT 24 Sep 97 in FBIS-SOV-97-267 [database on-line]; available from World News Connection from NTIS, U.S. Dept of Commerce

⁶² *Official Statistics of the Countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States*, Interstate Statistical Committee of the CIS, STATPROGRESS, 1997 (on CD-ROM)

⁶³ Barter increases the trade totals. For example, if Syria imported a piece of military equipment worth \$1 million, under a barter arrangement, Syria would export goods worth a million to pay for it. Statistically, it would look like total trade is \$2 million. In a normal transaction, Syria would just pay for the item so trade total would only be \$1 million.

⁶⁴ "DAILY BUSINESS REPORT," *Moscow Interfax* in English 1921 GMT 7 Jul 99 in FBIS-SOV-1999-0707 and "Russia: Oil, Gas, Coal Report for 30 Jan-5 Feb" *Moscow Interfax* in English 1434 GMT 28 Jan 98 in FBIS-SOV-98-028 [database on-line]; available from World News Connection from NTIS, U.S. Dept of Commerce

⁶⁵ "DAILY BUSINESS REPORT," *Moscow Interfax* in English 1921 GMT 7 Jul 99 in FBIS-SOV-1999-0707 [database on-line]; available from World News Connection from NTIS, U.S. Dept of Commerce THIS IS A REPEAT CITING....CITED FURTHER ON IN PAPER

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⁶⁷ "Daily Business Report for 11 Mar 01," *Moscow Interfax* in English 0828 GMT 09 Mar 01 in FBIS-SOV-2001-0309 [database on-line]; available from World News Connection from NTIS, U.S. Dept of Commerce

⁶⁸ "Russia, Syria To Step Up Cooperation in Nuclear Energy" *Moscow Interfax* in English 1828 GMT 23 Dec 97 in FBIS-SOV-97-357 [database on-line]; available from World News Connection from NTIS, U.S. Dept of Commerce

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⁷³ Sami Moubayed, "Moscow offers development expertise to help Damascus," *Daily Star On-Line*, Beirut, Lebanon, 25 January 2001, [database on-line]; <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/>

⁷⁴ "Interfax Communication & Electronics Report for 25-31 May 2000," *Moscow Interfax* in English 1620 GMT 30 May 00 in FBIS-SOV-2000-0530 [database on-line]; available from World News Connection from NTIS, U.S. Dept of Commerce

⁷⁵ Julian Cooper, "8. Arms production, Section IV, *SIPRI Yearbook 1997: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1997, pp. 254-5

⁷⁶ See note 46 in Julian Cooper, "8. Arms production, Section IV, *SIPRI Yearbook 1997: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security*, p 255.

⁷⁷ Julian Cooper, "8. Arms production, Section IV, Table 8.9, *SIPRI Yearbook 1997: Armaments, Disarmament and International Security*, p. 257.

⁷⁸ "Russia: Joint Russian-Syrian Air Defense Exercises Scheduled," *Moscow Interfax* in English 0941 GMT 16 Sep 97 in FBIS-UMA-97-259 [database on-line]; available from World News Connection from NTIS, U.S. Dept of Commerce

⁷⁹ "Russia: Performance in World Arms Markets Analyzed *Moscow Rossiyskaya Gazeta* in Russian 16 Sep 97 pp 2, 7 in FBIS-TAC-97-260 [database on-line]; available from World News Connection from NTIS, U.S. Dept of Commerce

⁸⁰ "RUSSIA: Moscow Hopes To Sell \$2 Billion in Arms to Mideast," *Moscow Interfax* in English, 1435 1 Feb 97 in FBIS-SOV-97-022 [database on-line]; available from World News Connection from NTIS, U.S. Dept of Commerce

⁸¹ Jessica Berry, "Russia sells bargain-price armaments," *Calgary Herald*, September 21, 1997, Final Edition, p.A10 [database on-line]; available from Micromedia Limited

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⁹⁹ "Presidential Bulletin for 15 Jun 00," *Moscow Interfax* in English 1604 GMT 15 Jun 00 in FBIS-SOV-2000-0615 [database on-line]; available from World News Connection from NTIS, U.S. Dept of Commerce

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¹⁰⁷ It is not the fear of Syria defeating Israel that is the issue here, rather it is just the threat of being able to launch an attack that could be very costly to Israel. Most experts agree that Syria does not have the capability to defeat Israel.

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