

# Syrian Crisis and Its impacts on Iran-Russia Proximity

Hussein Moein Abadi<sup>1</sup>, Zahra Shojaei<sup>2</sup>

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## Abstract

In recent years, Syria crisis is one of the important issues that international society pay attention to it. This crisis because of the activities of political system's adversary groups and terroristic groups deploy and become one of the international society concerns. Because of Syria's geopolitics and geostrategic importance, since formulation political crisis in this country, various regional and foreign actors play role in this crisis and each actor as for their rent and interest, adopt various positions about Syria crisis. Among this actors can point to Russia as one of important foreign actors and Iran as one of affective regional actors. The cause of depiction this article is answer to this question that what's effective of Syria crisis on Iran and Russia's convergence. Due to Syria's position on Iran and Russia's foreign policy and economic and political links, these countries must maintain Syria against internal demonstrators and international tensions. The utilization method in this research is descriptive-analytic method and use convergence theoretical frame for analysis research's textures.

**Keywords:** Crisis, Syria, Iran, Russia, Convergence

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<sup>1</sup> Assistant Professor of Shahid Bahonar University of Kerman,

<sup>2</sup> Master Student of Diplomacy and International Organizations of Shahid Bahonar University of Kerman

Email: moeini@uk.ac.ir

## **Introduction**

Middle East as geopolitics and geostrategic region is one of the most critical region in the world and the evolution in this region impress international and regional equations. Moreover regional country that want high position in region, foreign county also want to perform role in region and try to control region's evolution and go to prevent from outbreak crisis or providing outbreak crisis, halt it or decrease negative effective. As resolution of Middle East problem is not impossible via unilateral methods, the necessity of regional and foreign cooperation feel. Multilateral cooperation about contrast with crisis and resolution regional problem can predispose convergence in other districts.

In recently years, Syria crisis and increase terroristic activities in this country underlie tension and unrest in Middle East. Due to Syria depth strategic for regional and foreign countries and concern about extension this crisis to other regional countries, multilateral cooperation accomplish for resolution Syria crisis and battle with terroristic groups. Among, active regional country about Syria crisis can point to Iran and among foreign country can point to Russia.

In this article, writers want to answer this question:

What's effective of Syria crisis on convergence in Iran and Russia's relation?

### **1- Theoretical Frame**

Either we can describe convergence as process and or condition. Convergence condition means qualification that actors reach to a new community. Naturalized process or processes consist of instruments and implements that through those, community formulation occur (Moshirzadeh, 2010: 40). The best form for analysis convergence is a process, because it's a dynamic for increase cooperation between states (Qavam, 2009: 44).

The most important element for formulation of convergence is public consistence and unit's consensus (Dehghani Firozabadi, 2010: 28-29). At the first we can point to economic theories like customs union. Further theories are static and don't attend to dynamisms of convergence like changing in norms and policies commanding on regions. Maybe we can account Dutch's communication theory in convergence ground subsidiary exchanges and trade theory. Dutch regard to convergence in various levels of tentative and scientific (Moshirzadeh, 2010: 40-41).

Dutch point to relevance between communications and political society convergence (Doerti and Faltzgraph, 1997: 671).

Intent of political convergence is convergence in institutions and various political union's policy. In political society convergence book, this kind of convergence account as stabilizer of internal communication in society, identification and self-awareness (Kolae, 2000: 156). In their viewpoint, this concept relate to collective action for improvement and gradation polar interests. In political viewpoint to convergence enforce to characteristic and punitive dimension. The most famous political convergence theory is functionalist and neo functionalist. The most functionalist theorist is David Mitrany. In his belief, origin of strife between states is existing political break and can't get on this break through legal adaption. We aim that we can divide economy and politics. Whatever related to economy and social life stand in low or soft politics arenas and can cooperate in it (Moshirzadeh, 2010: 60).

But some putative of functionalist base a new statement or theory as neo functionalist and it's relating to Ernest Hass's name. Neo functionalist's goal was specify this problem that why and how states abandon their sovereignty and sovereignty mingle and new tactics compass for resolution strife between countries. Hass unlike Mitrany don't spot economy and politics absolutely apart and confess to importance of political and economic issues. In one side convergence entail existence super national and transnational institutions in regional level. In other side, nominee groups and political parties are inside of countries that follow interest in convergence. These also generally have transnational links. In this removal of convergence underline interest. Ladenburg regard to convergence as interaction of multilateral process that must be reconnoiter, compare, assay and analysis (Doerti and Faltzgraph, 1997: 687).

But whatever is important in convergence is process that seems that can help to extension convergence. Every action fir convergence create situation in apart that entail cooperation in other parts and convergence overflow from one part to another part and this procedure be continue. This procedure entitles "partial convergence" by Hass (Moshirzadeh, 2010: 63-64).

### **Syria**

Syria is a little country with 185180 km space and 22 million population. Toward 85 percent of Syria population belong to Sunnite

Muslims. Other spectrum of Syria's Muslims with 13 percent total constitute of Elysian, Shia and Esmaeili. 10 percent of Syrian populations are Arab and the biggest ethnic minority with 6 percent of population constitute of Kurds. Before formulation crisis in Syria, leastwise 1 million Iraqi immigrants and 500 thousand Palestinian live in this country that with Kurds include 7/9 percent of all population. Syria neighbors with Turkey from north, with Iraq from east, with Lebanon from west and Mediterranean and with Jordan from south. This country has 14 provinces. Although Arabian Republic of Syria is 77<sup>th</sup> country in world because of its width, but it's important due to its geographic situation many of experts entitle Syria is as the biggest but little country in world, Maybe because of the extraordinary importance of this country in Middle East (Valadani and Nejat, 2013: 147-148).

Syria geopolitics give to this country a particular situation, because standing Syria in connection point for Asia, Europe and Africa locate this country in center of industrial Europe (Ajourloo, 2011: 56).

Syria is a geopolitical actor that have geopolitical importance and particular role because of three factor, including: locating in Middle East, locating on Mediterranean eastern edge, enjoying from 186 km beach and neighboring with Palestine, Lebanon, Turkey and Iraq. This country can be important course for export Iran and Iraq's oil and gas to Persian Gulf, Suez Canal and even Turkey through "Bunyas" and "Tarsus" seaports. This situation is one of arousing Turkey's competition sense. Playing role in Lebanon's political equations and locating Damascus as Islamic resistance's supporter state increase Syria's particular situation. Because of geographic and particular situation, Syria be known as one of important country in Middle East that in next decade can play an important role in region's evolution procedure. Therefore every changing in this country's system, can changing Middle East's geopolitics (Valadani and Nejat, 2013: 148).

Crisis is a situation that strongly transformation proceeds in system and with unreliable conclusion imperil system's stabilization and balance and necessity of action feel for recession or establishment order (Mostaqimi, 1992: 177). Since 2011 January Syria stand humanity protest that some deal in react from Middle East's political evolution. Peaceful demonstration that wanted some political and economic reformations, after a while roughen because of non-replication to humanity demands and foreign ingredient interference (Tabasi and others, 2013: 88). Syria's

internal governmental model is one of the last models that is alive from police instrument with ideological detonator. During last semi- century Syria's system have a few capacity and sufficiency for doing applicative reformation with universal evolutions (Moosavi, 2010: 3). In other side in recent Syria's event, Salafies role must not disregard. As for wahhabies influence in Syria in recent year, some deal defiance ground accrete from Sunnite and in this ground partial media's role unfold for actuating people (MoosaviZadeh, 2011: 50). Alongside Syria's system aliens must reminisce Syria's free military and national council that everyone try to transforming Syria's system and emitting power control from Bass party and Assad's clan. Syria's free military are group of elusive soldiers that in 2011 August hail with Riyaz Assad's commander (Phillips, 2012: 3). Accordingly internal and external ingredients make a crisis in Syria that if it don't control and restrain, it endanger international order and security.

- **Iran's role in Syria crisis**

- **Iran and Syria's relation**

Iran and Syria are two allied. International system's variable and social ingredient and characteristic traits performance an important role for accession these countries. International system's problem against Syria and isolation these country from west have an important role for approximation these country. This thesis is most honest for Iran because Iran state hasn't any situated excluding Syria (Omidi, 2007-2008: 129).

Interrelation between Damascus and Iran established in 1946 after Syria's independence. In second mid-1940s and first mid-1950s, two country's term stand in low level because of Syria's various nature system and imperial system in Iran. Political system's difference and various foreign positions were most important reason for coldness term between these countries before Islamic Revolution. While Iran's government was royal and Elysian to west and recognized Israel, Syria's government entirely stand against Iran. This country has parliamentary republic system and closer to east bloc. Moreover Syria treat Israel as Syria's main enemy. But Iran and Syria's term gradually outreach after Islamic Revolution and two countries actually be particular allies (Niyakoe, 2012: 162).

After Islamic Revolution victory, changing in Iran's viewpoint from confederation with America and Israel to contrast with these counties was pleasure for Syria and this country naturally stand besides Iran (Ezadi and Akbari, 2011: 43). Of course another important factor for

tendency these countries to each other was existence common enemy, means Iraq. In 30 years ago Iran and Syria's confederation was necessity, not selection and this necessity feel more then ago after 11 September event and increase America's pressure on Iran and Syria and Islamic Resistance (KeshavarzShori and Sadeqiyani, 2013: 87).

Since 1980 Iran's government was outbreak in war with Iraq and for depredating this conception that Iran and Iraq war is a war between Arab and Pension, require to telling this theory off through nearing to Syria and can supply a part of their need to armament through Syria (Niyakoe and Behmanesh, 2012: 129).

In three decade ago Iran and Syria's term was crenelated and increasing. Syria has upmost level term as an Arab country with Iran. Uppermost this crisis, Iran firms its viewpoint on two element: restraint from war and acceptation people's votes through suffrage (Afshar, 2012: 3). Uppermost Syrian crisis, Iran tries to evaluate and explicate this crisis in regional arrangement format and restrain foreign actor's irresponsible interference (Goodarzi, 2014: 41). During crisis, Iran send multilateral helps to its particular allied (Valadani and Nejat, 2013: 170). To statement of American and European's official and Syria's oppositions groups, Iran assemble these case for Syria: material aid, addressing soft weapon and ammunition and other military material, technology that can stop and control internet and cell phone network's connections and anti riot material for repressing opponents (Niyakoe and others, 2013: 134).

- **Iran's advocating reasons from Syria**

**A. Keeping regional balance of power**

Uppermost Islamic Revolution, one of Iran's preferences about Syria was political problems and regional balance of power. During Syria crisis's evolution, Iran's regional powers adversary like Turkey and Saudi Arabia deprecate existent position and want to change regional balance of power. This actors try to separate Syria (as one of Iran's particular allied in region and connection bridge between Hezbollah resistance groups and Hamas) from Iran and change balance of power pro itself (Valadani and Nejat, 2013: 171).

Accordingly, keeping existent status in Syria, eliminating crisis and fixing Bashar Assad's government are important for Iran and Iran try to achieve these goals through aids and various instrument, because change in Syria's power structure means increase a regional enemy and lose an important allied for Iran.

### **B. Iran's strategic isolation in region**

New government in Syria can seclude Iran through security and economic initiative in its new strategy mean more relationship with America, Arab governments and international society and encourage America's effort for abounding Iran's selection. Variation and evolution in Syrian means appear a government that side from America, Europe and Saudi Arabia that this issue castrate Iran's position in Syria and make Iran's hard isolation in region (Niyakoe and others, 2013: 131-132).

### **C. Syria as particular allied for Iran in region**

Common point in Iran and Syria's regional policies make this country be resistance axis's basic element. During three decade ago, Syria was only Iran's important allied in Middle East and Iran and Syria experience particular connection and cooperation. Iran try to pursue interests that based on negation foreign actor's domination in region particularly America and reinforcement resistance axis because of friendly relation history with Syria and this country's role in Iran's influx fixation (Rogers, 2012: 4).

Since premier months of outbreak crisis in Syria and for evaluation this country's internal events, Iran give its biform estimation about this crisis. Iran's biform estimations from Syria's population a long side extra social and political evolution in Middle East and South Africa, have legitimately demands that Syria's government must attend to these demand and give fit answer to these demand. It's first mood of this adventure. Syria crisis's second mood, accordingly to Iran's advertent evaluations from Middle East's status procedure, was that America during less than one year, lose its two strategic allied means Egypt and Tunisia government through social revolution and now want to offset absence of its two allied and keep appease contact lines with Israel's security domain and castrate resistance domain through make crisis in regional resistant domain means Syria (Moosavi, 2012: 7).

Iran account Bashar Assad's debacle as west and Israel's demand and believe that must resist with America and Saudi Arabia's programs particularly about Syria due to Syria's protection from resistance progress. Iran want help to Bashar Assad for reformation and remain in power (Sharifiyan and others, 2012: 170-171).

### **- Russia's role in Syria crisis**

- **Russia and Syria's relation**

After disbandment Soviet Union, in first security doctrine of this century in 1993, didn't give particular attention and notability to Syria because of attention to western pattern and values and recede from Middle East's countries; accordingly Syria like other Middle East's countries face with coldness from Russia (Melikhov, 1993: 35). In next year's, spread Nato to east and cancellation Ballistic Antimissile agreement by America were two important category that coerce Russian to pay attention to supply its national interest and security through subjective instead of pay attention to national security through cooperation in international security. Therefore second Russia's security doctrine was published in 2000. Because defensive of this doctrine and trying for contrast with west avarice, Russia's foreign policy changed and attract relative attention to Middle East's countries particularly countries that were their interests and viewpoint against America therefore connection improve with Syria (Mansoori, 2013: 178-179).

In 2010 February new Russia's doctrine namely "Russia's National Security Strategy Until 2020" codify and publish. For realization this doctrine's interests, Russia follow realistic politics doctrine and important countries including Iran and Syria play serious role in this doctrine. Close relation between Russia and Syria after an inaction period begin with Syria's president travel. Russia's return to realistic and independent policies shows that relation between these country stable on strategic elements and has a sole consistency (Mansoori, 2013: 178-179-180). Russia's role in Syria crisis study and specify as for this country's particular and vital interests in Middle East and Damascus, Interests that found multiple importance as for ancient relation between Moscow and Damascus and Russia's direct military presence in Mediterranean.

- **Russia's avocation reasons from Syria**

**A. Political ingredient**

Changing government in Syria and downfall Bashar Assad's state disturb Middle East's Arabian domain equations and in this status mainly winner were Saudi Arabia and Turkey and this is a threat for Russia's interests; because Russia enjoy from Syria as a balance element versus Turkey, Saudi Arabian and other countries in region. Also Syria's government changing pattern can transform to a



procedure that transmit to Middle East and then to Caucus and Central Asia and even Russia (Ternin, 2013: 14).

The other Russia's interests in Syria is keeping influence domain and former great power's legacy in Mediterranean. Alongside this cases must point to keeping Russia's prestige and international place in world and particularly in Middle East. Russia try to show Syria crisis as an internal crisis until resist from interference other countries particularly west and America in its ancient domain. Russia try to solve Syria crisis through diplomacy. Either Russia gain prestige and restrain from development crisis and unsafety in its country (Adami and Akharaaldin, 2013: 56-57).

### **B. Economic ingredient**

Syria is one of Russia's strategic markets in Middle East. However someone be believe that Russia hasn't significant economic interests in Syria but must pay attention to long precedent in sale weapon to Syria and commercial cooperation and Russian company's enterprise in Syria's oil and gas industry.

In 2009 Russia passed 19 billion dollars enterprise in economy, energy and tourism industry. With spread investment Russia's state achieve to enjoy very scores in Syria's oil and gas industry (Sajedi, 2013: 149).

### **C. Military ingredients**

One of reason for Syria's importance for Russia is "Tartus" military base. Since 1970s Tartus base tray conventional stand disposal Russia. This base is only Russia's base in Mediterranean and through this base, all Mediterranean stand in Nato's accessible. Although before outbreak crisis in Syria, use from this seaport for technical helps to Russia's navy but after outbreak crisis and inter America's navy and George Bush's nuclear battleship to Syria's beaches, Moscow and Damascus know this seaport importance (Adami and Akharaaldin, 2013: 58).

During recently years Russia and Syria's relation get up in military form and now stand disposal Syria, earn through this country commander's continual efforts with Russia's cooperation and now Syria receive modern weapon from Russia (Kiyani and Khanmohamadi, 2013: 102).

## **- Iran and Russia's convergence grounds**

### **A. Syria crisis**

Syria is one of the most important Middle East that in recently decade can play an important role in regional evolutions. Therefore every change in this country's political structure can change Middle East's geopolitics. As we pointed, Iran and Russia are among active regional and foreign actors in Syria crisis. Maybe we can said these countries actively cooperation during Syria crisis is an advertence point in these countries relation. Iran and Russia have important common points that make trying to control existence crisis in this country. Among this intersection can point to Iran and Russia's tendency for keeping Bashar Assad's regime in Syria. As we said if Bashar Assad overthrown in Syria, it is possible the next regime has tendency to west and will be an allied for Arab countries in region including Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Qatar. Such regime in Syria has some problems for Iran and Russia including the mast influence of west particularly America in region and change in balance of power pro Saudi Arabia in region. Accordingly Iran and Russia want to keep Bashar Assad due to keeping Syria as resistance axis, keeping balance of power in Middle East and preventing of west influence in region.

Another factor that impress on Iran and Russia's convergence in Syria crisis is champion with terrorist. Iran and Russia always stress on champion with terroristic movements and strongly stress on repressing such actions because of these action make disbanding order and security in Middle East. Terroristic groups activities in Syria can infect to other countries and depredate economic and energy security pro Iran and Russia.

Economic links and connection chains in energy domain between Iran, Russia and Syria are causes and factors for Iran and Russia that try solving Syria crisis.

The factors that pointed upside as well as Syria's geopolitics position for Iran and Russia cause that these country follow an alliance to solve Syria crisis. We can say Iran and Russia's alliance can be most effective and strong alliance for solving Syria crisis because of geographic accession to Syria and these country have many interests in Syria and send extra helps to this country.

As we have seen one of Iran and Russia's convergence grounds in Middle East and east Mediterranean is Syria crisis. Syria crisis cause convergence in Iran and Russia's term as well as it can

reinforce convergence in other grounds or make convergence in new grounds.

### **B. Preventing America's influence**

Russia have long precedence in contrast with America in bipolar system. Russia's people and official see Soviet Union's tailspin as west and America's policies and have memories of colored revolution in Soviet Union countries and governed westernized states in their minds. Iran also have a complex and long struggle with America. America also go to creation problems in Iran.

West interventionist policies and America's unilateral actions is the cause of Iran and Russia's accession in Syria crisis. Syria located in Russia's influence domain as well as Russia have Chechen war's experience in its workbook and now Chechenians fight in Syria fight. Regeneration of Chechen war and transition of this model of vicarious war in that region have erratic expenditure for Russia. In other side Syria is a particular allied for Iran and invasion to Syria is as threat Iran's national interests and security.

Accordingly Iran and Russia with suitable perception of common threats think to increase their relations. Russia's common position with Iran in Syria crisis and Russia's clear and multilateral supports from resistance course and Bashar Assad is outcome of Russian official's correct perception from common threats and cooperation chances.

### **C. Security and defensive contracts**

Iran and Russia realize the necessity of close defensive and security cooperation because of long common borders, regional common interests in Middle East and Middle Asia and now this category transform to one of the most important parts of bilateral interrelation. Iran and Russia build basis of bilateral defensive and military cooperation. Defensive cooperation between Iran and Russia must continue because of Syria crisis, contact with terrorism, and opposition with America's existence and domination in region and Iran and Russia's common interests in Caspian Sea.

During Russia's defense minister visitation "sergeeshaygo" from Iran in 2015 January, sign agreement about technical and military cooperation. At declaration of Russia state's defensive craft company, Tehran and Moscow sign agreement of delivery defensive the site "S 300" to Iran. Also as for Iran's enthusiastic for built aerial

defensive the site, Russia can cooperate for delivery built technology of this the site to Iran.

#### **D. Economic technology**

Convergence in security and political grounds make convergence in economic grounds. In 11<sup>th</sup> Iran and Russia's economic common commission, sign 10 milliard euro economic project between Iran and Russia; also during in this meeting coalesce agreement in economic parts. Also during this meeting, Iran and Russia's commercial and economic common cooperation's agreement sign between Iran's petroleum minister and Russia's energy minister. One of the cases that sign in this agreement is financial exchange between Iran and Russia through national money.

#### **E. Champion with terrorism**

In past threats entirely have military aspect and encounter occur between states. Accordingly states face with specific threats and earn ability for counterview with threats through reinforcement military stamina. But now one of threats that strongly overhang states and is important factor for disband security, is terroristic threats. Terrorism has wide aspects because of communications and information revolution and simple accessibility to various weapons and contrast with terrorism is hard.

Whereas Persian Gulf is a sensitive and important region, terroristic activities in this region can depredate peace, security and order. Therefore controlling and preventing from terroristic activities in Persian Gulf is important for regional and foreign countries like Iran and Russia. Since contrast with terroristic threats is impossible through unilateral activities, regional and foreign cooperation necessity will be feel. Therefore one of other ground for convergence between Iran and Russia is contrast with terrorism. Iran and Russia use from all their instrument, abilities and potential for contrast with terrorism and establishment order and stability in region. Also these countries try to combat with terrorism.

#### **F. Oil markets and cooperation in gas domain**

Persian Gulf has rich sources of oil and gas. Mass of oil's accumulation is 3/736 milliard barrel that is equivalent 5/61 percent of total oil's accumulation in world. Mass of gas's accumulation is 4/2516 trillion cubic meters that is 6/39 percent of accumulation in world (Motaqi and others, 2014: 76-77). Iran is one of rich countries

in energy sources. Iran's oil accumulation is 5/132 milliard barrel that is equivalent 11 percent of oil's accumulation in world. Also Iran has 5/27 milliard cubic meters equivalent gas's accumulation in world (Latifiyan, 2006-2007:19). Beside Iran, Russia has considerable sources in energy domain. Russia and Iran together have toward half of gas's accumulation in world. Nevertheless spread modern technologies and nuclear powerhouse, until three decade toward, oil has no situated and countries want to have considerable oil's sources particularly oil's accumulation in west Asia and Persian Gulf. Clothing Iran and Russia's position and spread interrelation (like in solving Syria crisis) cause that these countries show up as energy powerful pole in world's events.

#### **G. Atomic debate and nuclear activities**

Russia want to return to universal great power class and gain prestige and international phase that this issue entail performance role and increase intervention in international issues like issues that relate to Persian Gulf. Russia has many interests in Iran and all of region's country. Russia has many cooperation with Iran in nuclear parts like agreement with Iran for supply Boushehr's atomic powerhouse fuel as well as this country attend afoot Iran's nuclear debate and checking Iran's nuclear activities although is a passive role but support. Therefore atom debate and nuclear activities is one of Iran and Russia's convergence points

As we have seen common policies and position between Iran and Russia and correct perception from cooperation point and trying for operation from cooperation chances. Make convergence in various grounds. We must concentrate that Iran and Russia's relations are very long and have up and down. Preventing from America's influence in region, ratification military and defensive agreement and economic cooperation, ratification agreement in energy ground and nuclear cooperation among Iran and Russia's activities that existence from past and various factors reinforce or castrate cooperation in these grounds.

One of recent issues that reinforce cooperation procedure between Iran and Russia is Syria crisis through peaceful ways. Maybe we can say approximation in Iran and Russia's position in Syria crisis cause of these countries convergence in other grounds. Of

course Syria crisis also reinforce convergence in cooperation grounds.

### **Conclusion**

Iran and Russia are actors that want to affection and solution Syria crisis. Iran due to trying for vocation regional position and gradation its position in region and Russia due to gradation its international position want to help to Syria's political system and try to solve this crisis.

Iran and Russia have important interests in Syria and Syria is a particular allied for Iran and Russia and if Syrian crisis be continued, Iran and Russia's interests will be threat. Whereas the necessity of multilateral cooperation stabilize for solving this crisis, Iran and Russia take common activities for contract with this crisis and confirmation political system in this country. Iran and Russia want to solve Syria crisis through peaceful ways and want to find solution for pause this crisis.

Iran and Russia's intersection like the necessity of Bashar Assad's confirmation in power, keeping balance of power in region, preventing from western countries and America's influence, reinforce these country's cooperation and create motivation for take suitable activities for solving this crisis. Existence of these common point and Iran and Russia's interests in Syria show that Iran and Russia's coalition can be a suitable way for solving Syria crisis and this coalition can be more efficient than western states and America's coalition:

We must concentrate that Iran and Russia's convergence don't limit only to Syria crisis. As for history of Iran and Russia's term, we can see convergence between these country in various grounds like contrasting with America's domination in region agreement, champion espousal military and defensive agreements, champion with terrorism, cooperation in energy ground and nuclear cooperation. Maybe we can say through convergence theory, Iran and Russia's convergence in grounds that we said upside, cause that convergence overflow to other grounds like Syria crisis and these country's positions close to each other. Of course we must pay attention to this point that also Syria crisis is convergence reinforce in other grounds.

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