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Great Powers' Proxy Wars in Middle East and Difficulty in Transition from Cold War to Cold Peace

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***Abstract*—**The developments in the Middle East region have activated the involvement of a numerous diverse state and non-state actors in the regional affairs. The goals, positions, ideologies, different, and even contrast policy behaviors had procured the spreading and continuity of crisis. Non-state actors varying from Islamic organizations to *takfiri*-terrorist movements on one hand and regional and trans- regional actors, from another side, seek to reach their interests in the power struggle. Here, a research worthy question comes on the agenda: taking into consideration actors' contradictory interests and constraints what are the regional peace and stability perspectives? Therein, different actors' aims definition, their actions and behaviors, which affect instability, can be regarded as independent variables; whereas, on the contrary, Middle East peace and stability perspective analysis is a dependent variable.

Though, this regional peace and war theory based research admits the significant influence of trans-regional actors, it asserts the roots of violence to derive from region itself. Consequently, hot war and conflict prevention and hot peace assurance in the Middle East region cannot be attained only by demands and approaches of trans-regional actors. Moreover, capacity of trans-regional actors is sufficient only for a cold war or cold peace to be reached in the region. Furthermore, within the framework of current conflict (struggle) between regional actors it seems to be difficult and even impossible to turn the cold war into a cold peace in the region.

***Keywords*—**Cold peace, cold war, hot war, Middle East, non-state actors, regional and Great powers, war theory.

I. Introduction

FROM the past recent years of upheavals and uprisings in the Middle East, different backgrounds, actors, process and outcomes have taken place. On the one side national and internal backgrounds of state, like economic inefficiency and political deadlock, being major reasons of today's crisis, on another side, parallel to crisis the appearing of new actors on the stage, which are not related in any case to dissatisfied elements and popular demands, was witnessed. Popular uprisings in the Arab countries of Northern Africa and Middle East regions had overthrown political power structure and, thus, have generated the situation of chaotic transitional period.

During this transitional period, various state and non-state actors possessing different ideologies, interests and various strategies are seen active in the region and those are focusing on their own interests according to the center of origin. A group of actors confronting in the fluctuating atmosphere of the Middle Eastern region had created provisional or longstanding coalitions with regional states or other actors presented on the arena. Another factor influencing regional events is the presence of non-state actors, especially those called armed Islamic formations. Alongside with these actors, actors outside the region, but possessing regional interests and preserving those as well as interests of their regional allies with accordance to the trajectory of ongoing events, have entered the scene and, in other word, have launched a new Great Game.

Disorder and instability of some regional governments has become a reason for intervention from the side of actors outside the region; moreover, the actions of non-state actors have created number of concerns and doubts on the future order and war-peace perspectives in the Middle East. On the one side, these concerns are related to the future positions of confronting regional state and non-state actors and, on the other side, are bounded to the level of effectiveness and influence of trans-regional actors. The following questions are to be answered: is the violence seen in the region rooted in the regional and national structure and cultural, social and economical inefficiency of Arab countries? Or is it an outcome of intervention of regional actors and those actors outside the region? Additionally, there is necessity to take into consideration the question of if there is a possibility of transition from state of war and conflict in short or long term or the continuation of violence and conflict inside and between states is to be expected. In order to answer aforementioned questions, we need to examine behaviors, goals, positions of state and non-state actors, look into roots and background of Middle Eastern crisis and analyze the perspectives of war and peace in the region. Moreover, it is important to determine the independent variable, which is power of regional and trans-regional states, and dependent one, which is regional security and safety. The main objective of this research is to investigate the transgressive regional horizon by using the deductive explanatory method and secondary sources, through examining the existence and raise of actors such ISIS, discussing the roles of different actors in the current regional crisis, analyzing new regional Great Game and roles, interests, goals and influences of such transregional actors like U.S. and Russia in it.

II. Theoretical Framework

Different theories are used in order to analyze the confrontation and power competition among states within the field of International Relations studies. The most significant of them, focusing on the concepts of war, instability and

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international competition, is Realism; although, Balance of Power theory, liberal theory and Copenhagen School have their own approaches to the concept of security. Here it is important to mention that major classical theories analyze Great Powers' competition, war and peace on the global level. Thus, in order to explain the regional war, peace and instability in Middle East it would be advantageous to use different theories and while examining system-influencing factors, the national ground of regional war and peace would be taken into consideration. In accordance to this, this research is based on the "regional war and peace" theory of Benjamin Miller. It is important to state that there is common disagreement between realist and liberal views and approaches towards concept of war, in general, and regional war, in particular. This deficiency is a result of negligence to the political contents of the war like nationalism, territory and borders, which are usually the main reasons of regional conflicts. Additionally, taking into account that majority of post Cold War era wars are not directly related to the competition of great powers, the necessity to put forward the theory explaining regional wars becomes obvious.

In order to develop a theory of regional war and peace there is a need to provide answers to two questions: the first one, what are the main factors of emerging regional war and peace; and the second one, if those factors are emerging on the global level and are system-oriented, or do they emerge on the regional level and are locally-oriented ones? To answer this question it is essential to establish a link between global and system-oriented factors and regional, locally-oriented ones, and differentiate between various types of war and peace, influenced by the mixture of those factors. The hidden logic behind this association is that diverse causal factors (global or regional) generate various regional outcomes and appear as hot war, hot peace, cold war or cold peace variations. Some of regional war and peace theory assumptions can be determined as follows: regional/local factors generate "hot" outcomes and global factors are the reasons of the "cold" outcomes. Orientations and policies of Great Powers have its impact on the regional war and peace, but the area of influence is one half of the possible regional outcomes, so the cold war and cold peace should also be understood. Another half of those outcomes, named as hot war and hot peace, are more likely to emerge in the framework of local structures and regional actors' motivations and interests. The extra-regional Great Powers cannot enforce regional actors for a hot war or hot peace.

Cold war and cold peace are positioned in the center of spectrum, whilst hot war is on one side from it and hot peace is on another one. Under the conditions of cold war the international relations are not characterized by violence, but there is always possibility of war eruption any time, while hot war is a situation where parties involved in the dispute use power to solve it. Cold peace situation is characterized by the decreased degree of conflict, but still its unresolved status; reduced war threat, but still remaining possibility of war emergence depending on the behavior of actors. During the hot peace conditions, parties hardly involve use of power regardless of the disputes. The probability of war is rising proportionally to the influence of revisionist and nationalistic powers, and in inverse ratio to the low state solidarity power. "The key factor is the state-to-nation balance within the region. The state-to-nation balance refers to the degree of congruence between the division of the region into territorial states and the national aspirations and political identifications of the region's peoples. This balance also refers to the prevalence of strong versus weak states in the region. There is a state-to-nation imbalance when there is a lack of congruence between states and national identifications and some of the regional states are weak states" [1]. Two "products" of state-to-nation imbalance, like revisionist nationalism and incoherent states, are strengthening the destabilizing effects of each other. When as a revisionist state has tendency towards nationalist and irredentist ideologies, those ideologies are used for the state's interest and in case, if neighboring state is unstable and fragmented, it would be more weakened and less resistant towards unsatisfied elements and foreign intervention. State-to-nation incongruence is the main factor creating conditions for a regional war and giving rise to security problems and power competition in the region. However, if state-to-nation incongruence and war-proneness ratio are constant, another variable that plays an important role in determining the outcome of the regional conflict is great powers intervention and involvement into the conflict; but, still regional wars reflect the problem of state-to-nation imbalance and not global strategic interests, competing great powers affect the intensity, scope and duration of regional wars, but do not determine their outbreak [1, p. 661]. The intervention of great powers has an impact on the regional conflict degree and level of violence, thus, the theory of regional war can better predict the outcomes of the conflict by using different levels of analysis [2].

Great powers' intervention in the regional balances occurs in four different types: competition, cooperation, disengagement, hegemony. Consequently, hot war, cold war, cold peace, and at high level warm peace are the outcomes of various combinations of those. If not to take into consideration the type of intervention of great powers, if national borders are generic and states are assumed to be powerful, warm peace is likely to emerge. On the contrary, when national and political borders are not generic, Great powers' intervention type and features is shaping the outcome of conflict. Thus, hegemony and Great powers' cooperation will lead to the cold war, while competition and disengagement will be resulted in a hot war or a cold war. Especially, the conditions, when state-to-nation congruence concurrently takes place with Great powers' competition or engagement, would provide a favorable background for the cold or hot war. That is why none of the variables can sufficiently explain the phenomenon of conflict on its own and maybe simultaneous interaction of all those factors will give us a clearer picture of situation. Having at foundation the differentiation between weak and powerful state it is possible to identify the following types of states, which is highly relevant for regional and neighborhood wars-the most frequent type of wars in international system [3]:

1. Status Quo states or powerful states, homological by its nation: this group of state are characterized and the one preserving status quo and regional disputes and conflicts arising between states from this group and tended to be settled by using peaceful methods
2. Frontier states or weak states, homological by its nation: these states are regarded as borders-oriented and borders-passing ones. Conflicts occurring between these kinds of states are generally those on the issues of borders and territory.
3. Failed states or unstable regions: some weak states and non-homological regions are called as unstable ones. This type of states are failed ones, fighting civil war, thus becoming a suitable background for the territorial intervention from the neighbors
4. Revisionist states or nationally incompatible and non-homological powerful states: those states usually start armed conflicts based on revisionist and nationalist ideology [2, p. 372-373].

III. Sunni- Shi'a Schism on the Basis of Non-State Actors

The course of events in the Middle East, instability and civil wars, interstate conflicts and frictions are the outcomes of the regional "basement". In other words, local and regional stratums are preparing the ground for the bloody hot wars and foreign intervention from the outside of the region. Therefore, it is necessary to determine and define those "blood shedder" regional stratums. Moreover, in order to analyze the power equations and forecast several processes and trends in the fluctuant region, there is a necessity to go beyond analysis of state actors, their objectives and actions, but focus on the investigation of non-state groups, organizations, independent or semi-dependent groups and areas of their influence and actions. Certainly, in the Middle East region, where most of the states are regarded as non-democratic ones, the actions and influence of non-state actors vary. Expansion of processes and waves of democratization and globalization throughout the world had led to the rise of role and influence of non-state actors. The important part of non-state actors in the Middle East is presented by Islamic groups and movements, which had developed on the basement of domestic despotism and foreign colonization. The essential moment is that these Islamic groups and movements have roles next to the state actors and are interconnected with competing governments and transregional state actors. It would also be important to look at these organizations from the perspective of competing governments with erratic tactical view and strategic approach. It would be suitable to divide Islamic groups according to ideological and pragmatic features, degree of revolutionary moods and from the point of view of other regional state and non-state actors. The most obvious distinction on the aforementioned points then can be named the one between Sunni and Shi'a groups. From the perspective of transregional foreign actors, Sunni and Shi'a groups are reflecting the non-democratic Arabic states and regional pivotal actors, like the Islamic Republic of Iran, respectively, which are differentiating between each other, and, therefore, in the critical moments and historical turning points are being used by competing or foe states. Such points like: shaping of Islamic groups and periods of their activities, specifications of different Islamic groups, the balance of power of those groups in the region, competition, foreign actors' approach and views on the groups and possibly, provisional support towards them with the aim to control and manage regional political and security environment, will be discussed in this research.

From the historical point of view, one of the main reasons of strengthening of Islamic movements and emergence of a new wave of transformations is in fact an inner, local pursuit of culture, which can produce feelings of honor, self esteem and religious values. In fact, secular ideologies, which Islamic society elite stratum believe in, generally, did not provide anything to the middle and low stratums, rather than creating a feeling of contempt, both culturally and technologically. Thus, middle and low stratums, seeing their praised ethic values disappearing, had found themselves in a danger [4]. The majority of theorists see the attempts of Muslims to turn back to their natural Islamic identity, Islamic awakening and new movements in the Islamic societies as the manifestation of civilization self-awareness and challenge of Western culture. In reality, various Islamic currents have tried to assert an appropriate identity and thinking based on spiritual, cultural and Islamic civilization aspects, which became a stroke to the analysis of globalization theorists. Consequently, concepts such as Islamic fundamentalism, political Islam, Islamic traditionalists, Islamic Jihad started to be used frequently in the political literature, so that to shape different views and approaches to the Islamists identity through these concepts [5].

On the other side, various Islamic groups are the important elements of fighting against dictatorships and foreign colonization in the Middle East. Sunni and Shi'a groups' distinction is important from that armed operations standpoint. Ideology-based and with no state-sponsorship Sunni groups differ from Shi'a ones with distinctive ideology views and supported by governmental organizations and institutions. This distinction became more obvious after the Iranian Islamic revolution in 1979. Post-revolution Shi'a Jihadism had had a diplomatic face, and this feature made it easier for secret actions and armed intervention to be performed; when as, Sunni Jihadism emergence and activities tracks are able to be seen in the non-state units, mostly, mosques [6]. The important reasons of the distinction between Shi'a Jihadism and Sunni groups' armed activities were found to be enrooted in the US- Iran challenge. Comparing the non-theological ideology of state-sponsored Shi'a Jihadism with the ideological characteristics of Sunni groups, it is understood that conflicts and operations of Shi'a groups a related to a certain situation, rather than is seen as an outcome of any transitional wave of Islamic society. In other words, once speaking about Islamic terrorism, Shi'a terrorism is not meant. Iran, relying on Hezbollah and other Jihadi organizations, has coordinated their armed activities in order to achieve and protect its foreign policy priorities. According to Lynch, a representative of Brookings Institute, who had been assigned a

military duty in the Middle Eastern region in the past, merchants, academicians, diplomats were chosen as targets for Shi'a groups and Iran state projected activities, which makes difference with the comprehensive and universal terror activities of Sunni, Salafist and takfiri groups. U.S. and alliances joint military operations against Iranian nuclear facilities will cause Iranian paramilitary actions, which will weaken and make U.S. vulnerable in its fight against Islamic Jihadism; thus, U.S. and its regional allies have to examine and analyze all possible reactions of Iran and size of its potential, prior to any actions against it (large-scaled intelligence cooperation). Thus and so, in order to reduce the risk of physical conflict with Iran U.S. and its allies have to deepen their intelligence and counter intelligence cooperation and to evaluate the worst outcomes of military operations beforehand [6, p. 65].

The perception and views of the West towards Sunni and Shi'a groups is another aspect which sheds light on differentiation between those groups. The downfall of Saddam regime in Iraq in 2003 had caused a misbalance between Sunni and Shi'a and had a durable effect in the region prolonging from Lebanon to Pakistan. For the first time in the history, an Arabic state came under a Shi'a control and changes and transformations in Iraqi state affected positions of regional actors. From the period of Islamic revolution onwards, Iran had played an important role in the mobilization, reflection of identity and agenda determination of Shi'a. The behaviors of Iranian state were aimed at the revival of Iraqi Hizbul Dava, Hizbullah, Lebanese Amal Movement, and Islamic Unity Party of Afghanistan (Hizb-e Wahdet) by providing a strong support to those. Regardless of the past, the new developments in Iraq have taken Iranian attention this time. According to this perspective, supporting Shi'a groups and cooperating with Al-Sham region, Iran was preserving the anti-American lines in its policies in 1980-1990ss. At the same time, this stance became a reason for the hostile behavior from the side of Sunni Arab states, first and foremost, Saudi Arabia, and this sensibility towards Shi'a remained actual until the emergence of Al-Qaeda and American hostility [7].

In another saying, during the aforementioned period, the sensibility of the West shown towards Iran and supported Shi'a groups was not a case of Sunni groups and their supporters; it was opted for silence and connivance. Hostage-taking, revolution, suicide bombers and anti-American activities became the synonyms of Shi'a militarism. However, with time Shi'a movements' essence decreased, and, contrary to this, Sunni movements started to create alternatives to it. At one dimension, it can be said that Sunni militarism emerged as the response to the Iran revolution and its supporting groups. For certain, Iraqi events and changes were the continuation of competition between Sunni and Shi'a groups in all the corners of the region in the past years. The roots of this competition had a deep ground and their reflections were seen in the attacks on Shi'a in Afghanistan and Pakistan. It would be possible to state that the increasing flame of Wahhibism and Sunni militarism, which is rigid, ideological and anti-American, by nature, was a greater danger to the USA than Shi'a revolutionarism. Leastwise, in the beginning of 2003 it was claimed that Iran and Shi'a Iraq are more ready to get on the way of democratic and economic development comparing to other neighboring countries (besides Turkey) in the region [7,p. 38]. Quiet so, according to another opinion, so called Arab Spring transformation became a manifestation of West preference towards Sunni groups rather than Shi'a movements.

The differences and contradiction between Sunni and Shi'a groups possess the potential to influence their common issues and objectives and disseminate seeds of conflict in the region. From this perspective, the intervention of the West and other transregional actors sets up another framework. During this period, majority of Middle Eastern countries, especially Jordan and Saudi Arabia, were the proponents of the continuation of Sunni-Shi'a distinction, which, in fact, is short-term interests aimed narrow approach, creating a pressure under which it is hard to control that. Current activities and movements and general tendencies of Sunni groups against Shi'a would continue to become more negative than before, an even the Shi'a reaction might be expressed as it happened in Iraq. It also might be possible that in case if feelings and positions of Sunni-Shi'a mutual enmity are not prevented, new sectarian conflicts would erupt in Lebanon, Iraq and Persian Gulf regions and networks, like Al-Qaeda, would become a party of those conflicts [8].

The most prominent example of Shi'a organization, which is influencing changes and transformations as well as taking part in state-actors power relations, is Lebanese Hizbullah organization. One of the major concerns of the Syrian transformation processes in the past years is the position of Lebanese Hizbullah within the Syrian conflict and its reaction to the instability in country. The opinion prevailing in the neighboring countries and the West is that Iran and Syria, as the main supporters of Hezbollah organization, have established an additional cooperative alliance (to those already existing) aimed at achieving the objectives of Lebanese Hezbollah. Following this idea, it can be assumed that downfall of Assad's regime in Syria will have negative outcomes for Iran and Hezbollah.

Taking into consideration the complexity of Syrian crisis, Lebanese Hezbollah has supported political reforms promised by Assad, however, has distanced itself from the military intervention into the conflict. Hence this situation lasted only until the siege of the Syrian town of al-Qusair in May 2013 that time Hezbollah officially announced its involvement is Syrian war on the side of President Bashar Assad. The cautious position of Lebanese Hezbollah in the beginning of the conflict and non-intervention policy can be linked to dual objectives. On the one side, this organization was opting to show its resistance towards Israel and the West; on the other side, starting from 2005, it was in priority of organization to protect its political position as a legal political party. Another factor that prevented Hezbollah from entering war in Syria was the threat of losing the competition with March 14 Alliance in Lebanese Parliament. Moreover, if Hezbollah had

intervened Syrian conflict it would inflame Sunni-Shi'a confrontation in Lebanon once again. In general, if referring to the elections of 2013, the instability within Lebanon would cause the threat to Hezbollah victory on the elections, thus intervention became out of agenda. With the time and alongside with ISIL territorial expansion, Hezbollah found intervention in the conflict inevitable. The reasons for intervention can be named as follows: firstly, in the announcement on the intervention the main reason for that was the issue of resistance and Assad regime in Syria as the basic arm of it; secondly, the sectarian reason and protecting of Shi'a Holy places in Syria, which existence were threatened by ISIL; thirdly, ISIL, Al-Nusra Front and etc. approach towards Lebanese borders: Hezbollah intervening Syrian war next to the Lebanese border (southwest of Homs) have played a crucial role in cutting off the weapons logistics along borders between different Islamic elements fighting in Syria and Lebanese Sunni elements, and, on the other hand, had protecting Shi'a population leaving in Beqaa Valley. It is important to state that Hezbollah was the first organization from Lebanon that openly declared its direct intervention into Syrian conflict that corresponds the framework of Iran's policy towards Syria.

In summary, historically Syria and Lebanon have been entangled both tribally and religiously. Due to this, this bias is hardly to be separated. Lebanese sectarian groupings are essential for its politics. Foreign actors are supporting various political and sectarian groups in Lebanon. In fact, in the last years Hezbollah has gained the support of non-Muslim elements in Lebanon, but the stream of events in Syria is affecting position, role, and even future of Hezbollah; especially if the situation will be resulted in the strengthening of Sunni groups in Syria, reflection of this will have an effect on both Iran and Hezbollah. Burhan Ghalioun have stated: "The collapse of the 40-year-old Assad regime in Syria would radically change the politics of the Middle East, reducing the influence of Iran and its Islamist proxy Hezbollah in Lebanon; Syria would align itself with the Arab League and the Gulf" [9].

On the other side, there are attempts to present the role of Hezbollah in Syrian event in an exaggerated degree. Israeli state, being anxious of the status and position of Hezbollah, have used as propaganda the possibility of Hezbollah to obtain access to the Syrian chemical weapons and risk of Syrian missiles to be taken by organization to the Lebanon. Arms trafficking to Assad's regime opposition or illegal passage of the members of terrorist organizations, such Al-Qaeda, through the Lebanese border attach more sense to such propaganda [10].

IV. ISIL as the New Hypostasis of Islamic Radicalism

Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, being a new non-state actor, had emerged in the core of the regional disorder forming the opposition to the Shi'a and, shortly, had become an instrument of hostile and competitive actors. This non-state actor had influence the approaches of state actors towards regional power balances and security issues, and, for that reason, its rise became a turning point for Middle Eastern countries security matters. Within a period of time, ISIL exteriorized the strategic, cultural and individualistic emptiness of wavy course of salafi-takfiri society in the shape of Islamic. Contemporary structure of what is known as Islamic Caliphate has been formed under the leadership of Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi in 2003. This group has been bound officially with Al-Qaeda in 2004, but was named as ISIL after the death of Al-Zarqawi in 2006. From Al-Zarqawi period onwards and due to the link with Al-Qaeda, this group had put forward its distinction and through "sectarian war" against Iraqi Shi'a society and non-human methods, suicide attacks, and beheading made these distinctions more explicit [11].

In order to impose its power in other Sunni areas of the region and to leave another rival tribes out of ranks, aforesaid group had performed most of their action without consent of that time's Al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden. From that time onwards, supporters and members of the group started to attribute it as "state" or "caliphate", what naturally, was underrated by rivals. Additionally, Islamic State had its impact on the formation of Al-Nusra Front in 2011, a group close to one of Al-Qaeda. However, the natural link between Al-Nusra Front and Islamic State was broken by infighting and competition on the leadership level. In April 2013, Islamic State leader Al-Baghdadi has declared that al-Nusra Front will be taken under his command and Islamic State's Syrian and Iraqi braches will be known as ISIL (DAES) from here onwards. Refusing the new name, leader of Al-Nusra Front, Abu Mohammad Al-Julani, has declared the independence of organization from the Islamic state. Indeed, Al-Julani's objection on unilateral declaration of the state was based upon two arguments; one of those was the priority of state functionality rather than name, and second, the possibility to create an Islamic state only in cooperation with Assad opposition groups. Al-Julani was opposing the salafi-takfiri Islamic State, intrinsically adopting the strategy of Al-Qaeda' s leader Al-Zawahiri, which was totally antagonistic to the proposals of Islamic State and contradictory on the top level. Once Al-Julani has proclaimed his loyalty and devotion towards Al-Zawahiri, Al-Qaeda leader has declared Al-Nusra Front as one of the Al-Qaeda's wings. Later attempts of Al-Zawahiri, Al-Baghdadi and Al-Julani to mediate and conciliate had not given any results; the segregation of two groups became inevitable and Al-Qaeda had no choice rather than disapprove Islamic State. By July 2013, both Jabhat al-Nusra and the ISIL are separately active in Syria, and the latter also in Iraq, however, and in many areas Jabhat al-Nusra and the ISIL seem to work together. Relations with other rebels vary from location to location, but the ISIL seems to be viewed with more suspicion due to its foreign connections, perceived extremism, and dominant ambitions suggested by its self-designation as a "state" [12]. Up to the end of 2013, Islamic State was one of the most influential groups in the rebel-dominant areas; it had formed and shaped the senses of respect, fear and even enmity in the anti-governmental groups in Syria. Military power, structuralizing and planning, success in finding the sources of financing were the factors that had

provided opportunity for rapid development of the organization. By the end of August 2014 ISIL controlled and area bordering on Turkey and Jordan that spread from northeastern Aleppo, Syria to Jawala, in eastern Iraq, a mere 38 km from the Iranian border. ISIL declared the establishment of caliphate in these areas, an act which turned ISIL from an organization into a governing entity [13]. Most particularly, the presence of foreign, non-Syrian fighters and formation of camps on the territory of Iraq were the impetus for the rapid expansion in Syria. The attitudes and approaches seen before in Iraq, by time, became obvious in Syria as well: execution of opposition, barbarous interpretations and applications of Sharia, formation of political authorities frequently were seen in the repressed areas of Syrian state. In Aleppo kind cities, the rise of ISIL became an issue of disputes between political activists and paramilitary rebels. Here, the question to be answered was the one how to benefit from the tactical cooperation with ISIL in line with short-term interests; whereas, this organization (ISIL), in defiance of other groups, was tending to expand area of its influence. ISIL extremist ideology and arbitrary tendencies were creating discontent; however, due to the absence of any power that can defeat it and prevent expansion, ISIL had shown the superior power in the rebels-dominated areas and those ones outside of Syrian government control [11].

Understanding the course of the events in Iraq and Syria, the growth if ISIL as an actor and forecasting the future of the organization would be impossible without analysis of positions and approaches of foreign actors involved. The rise of ISIL and comprehensive danger built-up in the region has provided opportunities for Iran to fight regional anti-Iranian entente. Lately, the financial, military and intelligence support provided to ISIL by Turkey and Saudi Arabia have contributed to the expansion and empowerment of the organization. Moreover, the invasion and hostage-taking of Turkish consulate in Iraqi Mosul can be regarded as the tactical act aimed to cover up Ankara's support to ISIL. Turkish consulate in Mosul had played role of ISIL command center and, in reality, ISIL was responsible for the security of consulate personnel; those who, actually, were providing missiles and heavy weapons to ISIL. Furthermore, military and financial propaganda opportunities used against Iraqi state in Saudi Arabia had played an important in supporting ISIL. Additionally to the Saudi Arabia supported media groups, some institutions and organs in Turkey had an active role in the expansion of ISIL as a revolutionary power and creating an acknowledged perception of it by the Arabic tribes in the region through the method of "psychological war" - planned use of propaganda and other psychological operations to influence the opinions, emotions, attitudes, and behavior of opposition groups [14]. As an example, while broadcasting the news on the invasion of strategic Tal Afar city (on the way between Mosul and Syria), the rapid expansion of ISIL was presented as cause-effect of the popular support towards organization. The primary axis of this propaganda is continuation of the illegal aid to ISIL and, as the result, obtaining victory in this sectarian war by interconnecting ISIL actions and Sunni-Shi'a rivalry in Iraq [15].

Complex situation in Syria has an impact on various actors' roles and with parade of ISIL and its interactions with other terrorist organizations, have impacted those as well. Perchance, Western world was affected by decline of ISIL and support provided by Russia and Iran to Syrian government, and increased its financial and moral aid to non-salafi and non-takfiri rebels even more than before. From the perspective of Syria and Iraq opposition groups, in order to weaken ISIL, actors like Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and U.S. have to increase their financial and military support towards non-salafi opposition and, at the same time have to count on how to react on Russia and Iran under the conditions of weak ISIL. In any case, opposition supporting transregional actors, have to address the request to Russia and Iran to be consistent in and not to ignore possible cooperation with opposition while combating against ISIL as a common enemy, as well as not to express any dissatisfaction on the transregional support towards opposition. If Syrian government and foreign actors supporting it would accept such proposal, opposition forces have to guarantee the cooperation, yet more, collaboration with organizations like Al-Nusra Front, against ISIL. West and opposition supporting regional powers have to generate pressure to achieve this objective [16]. The last sentence shows, that at least at the official level, the support provided to ISIL by West is seen as legitimate one. Even though West has ignored that expansion of ISIL organization in the very beginning, it is obvious that no support should be provided by West, and especially, United States, to ISIL terror activities aiming to weaken Russia, Iran and Assad forces. Declaration of support for ISIL as an illegal action will leave ISIL and similar takfiri organization supporting countries, such as Turkey, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, in a difficult situation. This situation will repeat the one Pakistan was in during the war against Taliban in 2001. It is possible that forces that support the ISID financially and spiritually will be forced to change positions, but in this case the situation will be difficult for Riyadh and Ankara, which tactically benefit from the ISID in their aim to weaken Iran. Russia Federation, on one side, fighting extremism in the Northern Caucasus, on another side is confronting West in the Ukraine; in this situation, it is in Russia' interests to combat ISIL. The activities of the West next to the Russian western borders and European-American embargoes created a situation of dissatisfaction; therefore, Russia, at one point, is trying to take the conflict away of its borders and, on another side, to increase its influence in Middle East and ensure the continuation of it by protecting Assad's regime in Syria. All these, alongside the fact that most of ISIL foreign fighters are of Caucasus origin, generate adequate reasons for Russian involvement in the fight against ISIL.

It is also necessary to remember that some of the regions are favorable for conflicts and wars, whereas some are those enhancing the peace. Middle East region with its inter group ideological contradictions, transitional periods of regional patrimonial and despotic regimes, energy resources issues and

out-of-region foreign actors' interests is regarded as first kind, where conflict and war are rendered [2, p.131]. Since impact of all these factors is still actual one, the transition period of regional states and regimes and out-of-region power rivalry is still going on, unofficially supported non-state group, like ISIL, will continue to emerge and grow.

V. Great Game in the Middle East and Cold War

Of the utmost importance is to take into consideration the regional actors and other parties of Middle Eastern crisis as well as the activities and roles of the out-of-region big powers involved in. The interests and objectives of the great powers became the reason of their contradictory and antagonistic actions and positions. The situation turned to be a new Great Game of the region, and even it would be possible to speak on the current Cold War among the rival states. Certainly, there is no direct cause effect of the out-of-region power on eruption of current crisis resulted from the past mass awakening. This fact reminds on the relative autonomy of the intraregional events. For instance, the opinion of Islamic Republic of Iran is that the Islamic Renaissance was surprising even for US. According to the Supreme Leader of Iran, Khamenei, regional revolutions cannot be a project of United States, since there would not be better partners for US in the region, rather than Bin Ali and Hosni Mubarak. Therefore, US would not have any benefit in supporting any mass movements in the Middle East. According to Khamenei, contrary to the Islamic Awakening, the enemy's strategy was to create the conflict among Muslims and by doing so to seize popular revolutions, which, in fact, were the outcomes of popular awakening [17]. This situation shows that the role of external actors in the Middle East should not be exaggerated and closer attention should be paid to the instability and disorder of the basement of the region and internal solutions for it.

At the same time, it is obvious that Western world have instrumentalized and used activities of Islamic groups and movements in the Middle East with aim to increase and strengthen its influence in the region and balance regional and external actors presented in the region. Islamic Republic of Iran is an actor directly involved in the conflict with the West and its allies; however, the principal rival of the West in the region is Russia, which plays a significant role in the current events in the region parallel to the involvement in the processes of transition and transformation. For this reason, it would be feasible to reach more complete picture of transition and transformation map by focusing on the role of Moscow in contemporary events in the Middle East. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia remained the only state active in the issues of the Middle Eastern region, attempting to preserve its independent role. However, there are some pragmatic reasons orienting Russia towards Middle East, besides those traditional ones molded within the history. One of the most important ones is the proximity of the Middle Eastern region to the southern borders of Russian state. According to many politicians and researchers, Middle East is seen as "soft underbelly" for the Russian interests. Moreover, the main argument behind the security approach of Russia towards Middle East is the Muslim minorities residing on the territory of Russian Federation, which constitutes almost 15-20 % of the population. This issue is crucial and vulnerable for Russia, especially when taking into consideration the role of the West, in particularly the one of US, in the region and its influence on the Central Asia and Southern Caucasus republics, which belt Russia and time to time face strategic contradictions with it. The defense mechanisms used during the Soviet period are not relevant anymore and economic situation does not provide the facilities to modernize those, thus the favorable conditions for increasing risk of convergence of extremist groups and rival external powers are created [18]. Russia has determined the support for its Middle Eastern partners as a strategic tool to preserve its security concerns (especially, after 9/11 events) and interests against the influence of the West [19].

Russian Muslim societies inhabited areas develop more rapidly than any other region of the Russian Federation and, consequently, Moscow's objectives in convergence with the Arab states are related to the avoidance of Arab states supported idea of extremism and separatism in the Caucasus region. In line with these attempts, Russian-Middle East relations and cooperation is developing in a way that preserves Moscow's international influence, supports multi-polar world concept and multidimensional arrangements, and at the same time aiming at the joint fight against extremism in all its manifestations. Another essential factor of Russian presence in the region is possibility to develop relation with energy-producing countries and establish new economic and commercial ties in the region.

The presence of great powers in the region could also be explained from the Spykman's geopolitical approach. While Mackinder was presenting the continental power geopolitical model, and Mahan the sea power one, an American political scientist, Professor of the University of Yale Nicolas Spykman (1893-1943), had developed a new model of geopolitical thinking, called "Rimland Model". Spykman drew his attention on the geopolitical importance of Inner or Marginal crescent on the Rimland. Rimland was to be a buffer zone between sea and continental powers, as well as the competition zones of influence between states, where most of the conflicts occur [20]. With regards to the aforementioned, the theory of Mackinder was revised by Spykman and the conclusion became as follows: "who controls the Rimland rules Eurasia; who rules Eurasia controls the destinies of the world" [21].

"Spykman played at the time an influential role in reorienting American Foreign Policy from "isolationism" to "interventionist globalism" [22]. The major works of Spykman "America's Strategy in world Politics" and "The Geography of the Peace", which were written in the years of WWII, 1942 and 1944 respectively, became the basis for Allied Power' future policies and a part of American policy of "containment" – "preventing any consolidation of the Rimland by the enemy" [23]. Thus, this approach can be applied to the current situation the Middle East region, which is in fact the

"Rimland", Russia protecting its "Heartland" and US trying to prevent consolidation of Middle East by Russia.

In the analysis of US-Russian rivalry as well as in the analysis of US relations with any of its rivals in the Middle East, it would be mistakenly to conceive that extremist Islamic organizations have generated threat and enmity towards US. Washington's tactical and instrumental approach towards takfiri groups gains meaning and logic during the periods of crisis and danger of increase in operational powers from the side of US rivals and foes in the Middle East. In the past period, United States has provided educational, logistics, military and armament aid to the jihadi movements in Afghanistan against Soviet Union, so as those movements turned to be the primary enemy of Washington in time [24]. Naturally, in the post-Cold War years and with the disappearance of America's rival pole, Islamic ideologies, radical movements and state of Iran, supporting those, have started the buildup process of American state financial and ideological enemy. Suspicious approach towards Iranian objectives, nuclear facilities issue, and the expansion of Shi'a Islam in the Middle East has determined positions and behaviors of US and Arab regimes [25]. At one sense, it can be claimed that Western powers had strong endeavors to turn regional economic, social and political situation into a chaos by forming, educating and providing military support to the extremists' groups, what in fact is one of the reason of violence in the region. Regional disorder is an outcome of the colonialism, which is reflected by ethnic, sectarian and border disputes/disagreements and weakens the sovereignty of regional states. From this perspective, the intervention of colonialist interests can be considered as the principal variable influencing emergence and development of internal problems in the Middle Eastern countries and causing political polarization, violence and sometimes revolution. Weakening of the regional states central governments was chosen by West as a tactic in order to facilitate the fragmentation of regional states and following that to bring Western influence to the Middle East region [26].

This tactical approach example can be seen in the reaction of West towards regional role of Iran. Dating from the rupture of diplomatic relations between Tehran and Washington, America perceived Iran as the source of extremism and instability, and this perception even strengthened in the post Cold War years and, notably, after the Washington declaration of "war on terror". From the historical perspective, Reagan and George H. W. Bush governments have identified Iran and Shi'a extremism with Hizbullah organization perceiving it as threat, and this perception had laid down the foundation for the George W. Bush fight against terrorism in the following years. In fact, up to the 9/11 attacks, America did not apprehend Sunni groups as foes, instead, Washington was financially supporting groups possessing a negative image, like the one of Gulbeddin Hikmetyar, for example [27].

Nevertheless, the shaping of the Great Game in the Middle East has resulted in unprecedented polarization and higher level of intervention of external actors to the regional transformations. Regional conservative regimes, leaning to the West, were trying to increase their influence in Iraq and Syria hence creating conditions for increasing Iran-Russia cooperation in the anti-Western pivot. There are no doubts that the ideological Cold War and sectarian conflict between Iran and Saudi Arabia can be transformed into a persistent enmity and actors, like Russia and West, are completely aware of the Tehran-Riyadh proxy wars conditions. United States, taking advantage of the Iran-Saudi Arabia competition and Shi'a-Sunni conflict, has provided support to the Saudi Arabia positioning it as Arabic balancer in the region. This approach has been justified by the opinion that Arabic states of Persian Gulf region are positioned on the one side, and Iran is on the other side of regional strategic equation and leaders, supporting pro-Saudi Arabic states, balance Iranian regional influence and dominance [28].

The main specific of Islamic Caliphate is that in comparison to the past it provides more opportunities to Russian involvement in to the regional affairs, what is disadvantageous for the West. This opportunity, affected by Russia-West confrontation over Ukraine, has focused on the option to pull strategic challenge away of Russian borders. On the other hand, ISIL is concentrating on the transnational objectives; the fight against Shi'a groups influence and Iran is understood while fighting Assad regime. This has constituted the tendency among foreign fighters in Syria that, in fact, is escalating the conflict with their own national governments. As an example, Caucasian fighters have no potentiality of effective war against Russian government on their own territories, thus perceiving Syria as Russian representative they attempt to strike great blow with the support of other organizations. These fighters believe that after the downfall of the Assad regime, their comrades from another country also fighting in Syria will move to the Caucasus in order to fight against Russian government. This tendency is increasing fighting motivations of those governments combating separatism and extremism [14].

According to the views of Western specialists, United States, while fighting ISIL in Iraq, has to focus on the attrition of the organization in Syria as well. Additionally, the reconstruction of Iraqi forces and formation of a comprehensive government with no Shi'a monopoly in it should be also taken into consideration; Washington should be engaged with new strategic powers active in the region. According to the Cordesman, Washington has to transform the structure of its de facto synergy with the major Arabic countries in the region and focus its attention on the competition or the Great Game with Russia and China [29]. Regional countries are reluctantly facing rivalry, ethnic-sectarian conflict and refugee waves within this Great Game; whilst America is engaged with disorder, increasing rivalry with Russia, various security cooperation and different types of military intrigues. On another side, it is expected that extinguishment of ISIL in Iraq and Syria would continuously push those states towards repressive/tyrannical government. Not taking into account Iraqi and Syrian governments might lead to the increase of regional instability and tension in the Shi'a-Sunni conflict through bringing Russia-Iran and US-

Arabic states over against each other. The rivalry over the influence in the region has resulted in the Russia and Iran political and military support towards Iraq and Syria. The return of Iraqi military aircrafts from Iran, where those have been held since 1991 and Russian SU-25 military aircrafts provided to Iraq, became the indicators of that tendency. With the escalation of conflict over Ukraine, Kremlin was tending to develop its relations with regional states from Syria and Iraq to Egypt and Libya; whilst Western intervention to the region within this period was perceived as similar to that of "colorful revolutions" in the Russia's near abroad times ago [29].

Additionally to this, the method of combating against Syrian terrorrist para-military groups is reming of Russian methods used against extremist Islamic groups in Afghanistan and Chechnya. This fact has relieved Russia's role in protecting Syrian government. Within this method, mostly inhabited areas and strategic roads are defended. Some of specialists are pointing attention to Iran and Russia's different priorities in Syria. According to their opinions, the main reasons of Iran supporting Assad's regime in Syria are ties with Alevi population and Palestine, whilst Russia found protection of Syrian state and its institutions to be important for preserving status quo international equation and prioritizes position of Syrian Christians and fight against terror [30]. If this statement is correct one, it would be possible to say that a task sharing was done between Russia and Iran in their confrontation with anti-Assad coalition.

For a long time, leftist Syrian government was considered to be ally of Soviets and later Russia. Post- Soviet Russia, with a pragmatic approach, have tried to expel its influence in Middle East through supporting its partners, like Syria. Syria had supported Russia's base line in its policy towards Chechnya and had welcomed pro-Russian Chechen leader Ahmet Kadyrov to power [31]. Economic and commercial relation between Moscow and Damascus have enlarged spectrum of relations, however, still the "backbone" of those relations were foreign relations and security. The preserving of Russian influence in the Middle East can be possible through protecting the existence of state like Syria and Kremilin's participation in the peace-making process in the region is likely to be through Arabic players close to Russia. Moreover, as well as with whole region, Russia also takes into account its relations with Syria in the issue of prevention of radical fundamentalism in Northern Caucasus and fighters reqruitment from the region to Middle East. The rising influence of West in the Middle East, West coming closer to Russian borders, the synergy between Russia and Syria in military and economic terms are the reasons of friendship and close ties between Kremlin and Syrian Ba'ath Party. Russia has always been concerned with attempts of the West for regime change in Syria and Iraq; it had supported internal reforms rather than regime change as an outcome of outside pressure. Another Russian concern is the support of its own neighbours towards West, particularly, United States on the issue of Middle East changes, and fear that this "wind of changes" would come closer to Russia itself. From 2005 onwards, financial and political support gathered by U.S. from ex-Soviet republics, had resulted in Kremlin's vulnerability and critics [31].

VI. The Proxy Wars in the Middle East and Difficulties of Transition from Cold War to Cold Peace

Taking into consideration the presence of transregional actors in the Middle East, it can be assumed that proxy wars held in the region at the moment are the primary factor complicating process of transition from cold war to cold peace. United States of America are considered to be one of the most active transregional actors in the Middle East, being in the position benefiting from the changes and transformations in the region, thus, playing a role in shaping influential movements and groups of those transformations or combating them. The intervention of the West, and especially, the American position and interest in the some of the Middle East regimes changes in the past years should be understood as one of the main factors of instability and ethnic-sectarian conflicts in the region. Moreover, the "Greater Middle East" project, reflecting the expansion of American favorable democracy, is also an essential determinant of inflammation of ethnic-sectarian grievances in the Middle East. According to Goldberg, the military intervention of the West to Middle East has become a cause of ethno-sectarian based conflicts over the politico-ideological activism among regional powers. Western intervention has scales up the threat of conflicts escalation and ethno-sectarian separation has raised the risk of regional states fragmentation [32].

Notwithstanding to the crack down on ISIL, the theoretical focus of White House, especially during Obama second term presidency, was the decrease of the America's role and activism in the Middle East. Provided that, it is possible to assert a claim that, American priorities in the following years are to prevent popular dispositions against American existence in the region and rapprochement and interaction with Islamic groups leadership involved in the power struggle. Concurrently, we need to point out that while diminishing its presence and expenditures in the Middle East, United States has established a solid basement for the active partnership development in the Far East and Pacific region. United States had strengthened its positions in the Pacific by basing 2, 500 US Marine Corps in Australia, and continued to move towards its objectives in Myanmar, placing chasing of China as an objective. Considering this and assuming the shift of America from Middle East to Southern Asia will create a wide area for Russia and China in the Middle East. These two countries, possessing essential roles in the issues of Iran and Syria will continue to maintain their influence in the region. The decrease in the American role in the Middle East will lead to the convergence to its European partners. As it was seen in case of Libya, America's influential role was possible due to the consent and participation of Europe and the results of Libyan state formation and democratization as well the intervention costs had been ascribed to United States. The assassination of Christopher Stevens, American ambassador to Libya, in 2012 have recalled Washington to be more cautious

and deliberate in the matters of intervention to regional developments. The incident of assassination generated a wave of critics toward Obama's performance. Obama administration had been accused for creating a hazardous spiral and providing an opportunity for radical groups' activation against Libyan state; hence, it is worthy to mention the France initiative in intervention to Libya and US' reluctance to enter the war [33]. US prudential position on the intervention in Syria in the past years could be explained through discontent and suspicion of regional population towards American presence in the region and difficulties to preserve the interests of Washington, regional states and another several actors in their interactions; of course, this matter is also affected by the coalitions formed on the international arena. The difficulties to reach a consensus upon the Syrian issue, absence of direct intervention and priority to held continence of not taking grave responsibility in the Middle East (contrary to the George W. Bush administration policies), have resulted in the development of monitoring and anticipation policies of the White House. On the assumption that US is more active in Asia and Pacific and withdraws itself from the heavy expenditures in the transitioning Middle East the formation of area for maneuver and performance for American counterparts becomes a reality. Certainly, the White House can still preserve its position in the region by establishing the relations with newly formed states, providing financial aid or entering dialogue with regional Islamic and secular movements. However, even under these conditions, more moderate and soft American policy is presumed to be taken in the following years and US new position towards region will be determined afterwards the regeneration of stability and balance in the Middle East and Northern Africa [33]. Sure enough, United States will not be able to isolate itself from the security matter in the Middle East. According to the of Chicago Council on Global Affairs opinion poll results 69% of American respondents believe that US operations in Iraq and Afghanistan has not ensured American security against terrorism. Obama administration, within the framework of "Sustaining US Global Leadership: Priorities of 21st century Defense" program in January 2012 and following the assassination of Osama bin Laden and strikes against Taliban and Al-Qaeda, had put across the combat against wings and sub-groups of non-state organizations in different geographies and countries like Afghanistan, Yemen, Pakistan, Somalia, where those are extremely active [34]. Consequently, notwithstanding to the rising importance of Asia and Far East, American withdrawal and disengagement from the issues and threat concerns in the Middle East region is less contingent. In addition to this, Sunni extremism and Iran nuclear issue still are seen as threat creating challenges for the coming years. In conformity with regional circumstances, overthrow of Assad regime in Syria and prevention of deterioration of monarchies in Jordan, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, and Gulf state, are another priority issues [35]. For these reasons, the Great Game or proxy wars of regional and transregional actors in the Middle East are more likely to continue in the forthcoming years.

The impact of instability in the Middle East on the re-definition of the transregional actors' roles can be examined once again on the case of Syria. The differences and concerns among big powers over Syria, alongside those determined by differences in supporting parties and approaches, are generally related to suspicion of the West on the issue of direct intervention to Syria, lack of military capabilities and undetermined decree of Western safeguards. In another saying, if West was more confident on the issue of direct military intervention in Syria, Russia and China would not support Assad regime with such persistency. United States, avoiding direct military intervention as an option, had opted for illegal armament, ammunition and support of Assad opposition and put it into practice. The establishment of National Coalition for Syrian Revolution and Opposition forces followed by Assad opposition Doha meeting in November 2012 had provided a clear realization that no direct military intervention of the West will take place and Syrian crisis will be directed and finalized from without. For this reason, it could be stated that American embargo imposed to Syria alongside with another factors demonstrate unwillingness of the West to direct intervention. The embargoes announced by the U.S. Department of Treasury against Iranian and Belorussian companies are aimed at those groups, which supply weapons and armament to Syrian military forces and assist scientist in the chemical weapons production and development. According to U.S. Department of Treasury Terrorism and Financial Intelligence counselor David S. Cohen, the main objective of Washington embargoes is to prevent arms transmission and decrease the use of weapons/ armament by Syrian Army in the civil war [36]. There are different opinions on foreign intervention in Syria; in 2011, before Syrian crisis scale has widened, some researchers were defending the view that in case if Syrian state would intensify use of military power against opposition or would exercise aircrafts and artillery in its operations, UN Security Council will have all means to interfere and no-fly zone would be applied; but, in fact, the past years has shown that complexity of Syrian issue have created nothing rather than confusion and astonishment of UN Security Council reaction to the events [37]. The friction of the interests of Russia and the West in the region is one of the main reasons of UN Security Council deadlock and confusion on the issue, however, matter is not over. The uncertainties of the post-Assad period in the region have "seized by the collar" western decision-makers and detained them from transparent and clear policy attitudes. In reality, Western countries clearly know what they do not want, but have distinct views on what they would like to obtain and through which ways they will reach their objectives. One of the concerns is presented by extremist groups, like Al-Qaeda, which complicate the position of U.S. in countries such Afghanistan and Iraq and challenge Israeli interests and security in the region. Such concerns, anxieties and suspicions are those factors postponing the direct foreign intervention in Syria up to now; when as, there was an opportunity to persuade China, a permanent member of UN Security Council, to develop and apply an intervention

strategy of West and China, which would go parallel, since China is in need of tight relations with Gulf countries and Syria, in particular, does not signify any interest in China as such [36]. In fact, the argument that had affected Russia's continuous position on the issue was the capacity of states like Syria for asymmetric strategies against United States, which actually is one of the dimensions pushing Washington towards safeguards and preventing its military intervention. These asymmetric strategies, taking United States into a defile, reduce U.S. maneuver capabilities. Believed that, it would be possible to state that American intervention in countries like Syria, Pakistan and North Korea is not worthwhile, since costs and outcomes of it will exceed profits and, for this reason, American policies of priority are those determining the destinies of aforementioned states through their internal developments and events [38]. The evidence of this U.S. policy preference is reflected in the expression of required overthrown of Assad regime, harsh attitudes of Turkish Republic and Erdogan towards Syrian government, U.S. soft critics on it and "cordial welcome" of Turkey's military operations on the Syrian territory. It would be possible that the outcome of such policy preference will be the settlement of Syrian issue through internal developments and opposition activities rather than UNSC and Western powers intervention. On the other side, this policy preference would culminate with Turkey adjustment, since according to the statement of Turkish president Recep T. Erdogan, Ankara places importance on the UNSC decisions and resolution on the NFZ over Syria should be applied solely under the umbrella of UN Security Council [39].

Aforementioned disputes and conflict of interests are sources of motivation and even existence of non-state groups in the region. These movements and groups play representative and proxy roles in the rivalry and confrontations of state actors; in other words, antagonism between Iran and its regional rivals and U.S. support towards later ones have expanded to the area of Islamic movements. Moreover, United States of America defined terrorism as an instrument used by Iran in it foreign policy objectives achievement. For the last thirty years, terrorism alongside with export of revolution has been claimed to be as facilitating methods of Iranian national goals derivation. In the CIA report disclosed in the end of 1980s, terror activities promotion by Iran, aimed at country's interests in Kuwait, managing Hizbullah group and explosive materials trafficking to Saudi Arabia has been clearly stated. The conclusion of the report comprises the statement presence of United States in the Persian Gulf and potentiality of its attack on Iranian crafts/ vessels and oil facilities in the basin, had positioned U.S. as the ultimate goal of terrorism manifestation of Iran and its representatives [40]. According to American argument, once the dissatisfaction in the Iran-West relation is increasing, direct or vicarious violence-based activities are more likely to happen. Tension over the attack on Iranian passenger airliner and Salman Rushdie case had increased the unrest over the aforementioned argument in the end of 1980s and this can be traced even today; current circumstances and instability in the Middle East, Iranian nuclear proliferation issue, Iranian dissatisfaction from the international embargoes imposed and attempts of the West to overthrown regimes in Syria and Iran are seen as factors influencing terror activities in the region and beyond it [41].

During the analysis Sunni-Shi'a differentiation and reactions of the Arab regimes towards the increasing influence of Hizbullah, the following key point should be taken into consideration: restlessness and concerns of totalitarian regimes takes its roots in the nature and objectives of Islamic movements. In 2004, leader of Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, King Abdulla II of Jordan has expresses his anxiety of the Shi'a crescent in the Middle East as well as former president of Egypt, Hosni Mubarak, has claimed that Shi'a population in the region have been more faithful towards Iran than to their own countries.

Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Egypt have criticized the Hizbullah and Hamas war against Israel, naming it as reckless adventure. In such cases, it becomes obvious that in order to place aside the impact of Islamic movements, there is an attempt to expand and set on fire the Sunni-Shi'a conflict, which is not actually based on the differences between two groups. In order to prove it with an example, we should remember 33-days war: in the meantime of the final stage of the conflict Shi'a leaders, Nasrullah and Anmedinejad were very popular among Sunni Muslims in Egypt, and thus the contradiction is might be not between Sunni and Shi'a, but between autocracy and revolutionism. Terms like Iranian ambitions, Shi'a patent and Islamic fundamentalism were used frequently by despotic Arab regime during that period in order to legitimize antidemocratic political regime and, at on other side to gain American support. Hence the real contradiction is framed within autocracy and reformation spirit and herewith some Islamic movements are more close to democracy then autocratic regimes [42].

Sunni Arab government reached a consensus over almost all aspects of rising threat of Iran and Shi'a groups related to it, the difference is only in approaches of some states on how to prevent expansion of this threat. Some states were opting for the rapprochement with Iran while others were supporting more rigid methods and attitudes. The reactions of Iran, like destabilization of region by Islamic groups, especially Shi'a ones, or break of Iranian nuclear deal, depend on the American policies in the region. The exsanguine and reconciliatory way in the relations with Iran is laid down in the approach supported even by some circles in U.S., however, according to Brzezinski, in case if U.S. does not endeavor for a diplomatic resolution or diplomacy does not bring the intended results, the downgrading disagreement with Iran will be resulted in opened confrontation with it [43]. In fact, the parallelization of common interests and hope for the coordinated actions of Israel and Arab leaders against Iran are the outcome of rising popularity of Shi'a groups and expansion of Iranian sphere of influence. Martin S. Indyk is referring to the pre-awakening period tacit alliance between Israel, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Lebanon and Palestine, which was formed upon the common discontent of Arabic

leaders against the Iranian Shi'a-oriented leadership in the Middle East and is confronting the established axis of Iran, Syria, Iraq and Hizbullah. He assumes the repudiation of the war with Israel by the majority of Arabic leaders and sees the expansion of Shi'a as an opportunity for peace between Arabs and Tel Aviv [44].

Additionally, it is necessary to mention that the Islamic movements' identity and probability of its alteration is related to Israel and United States and such situation creates obstacles to Iran in realization of its termed politics and opts for the struggle against Iran rather than it representatives. Ethnic, resources, territory, political power based conflicts are bind to national identity and national survival. Threats to national identity, especially if that one is interpreted within the sectarian framework, are forming the barriers in the conflict resolution. Even if conflict had ended up with a peace agreement, there is no guarantee for rapprochement, cooperation and stability unless the condition of establishment of relations based on mutual respect towards national and sectarian identity is fulfilled. Referring to this, Israel-Palestinian conflict constitutes one of the examples; in this case, in order to change the identity an action has to be performed. For the groups involved in the longstanding conflicts, identity is a function of a conflict and is formed by it, and many factors related to identity are configured by conflict objectives. In the process of identity alteration, the rapprochement with former enemy and new relations with it is important, since those will compose a part of new identity [45]. Hereby, Islamic and unyielding identities based groups and organizations present the barrier to regional peace and conflict resolution, or, at least, are seen to be such. It is necessary to mention that it is almost impossible to change their approaches and views and, in this context, the negative glance on these groups has prevailed.

The reconciliation and intersection of U.S. interests with those of conservative Arab regimes have become more dramatic parallel to the rise of position and influence of Iran in the region. The emergence of the Shi'a Crescent in the region during post Iran-Iraqi war period and rapprochement between Bagdad and Tehran has referred Iran to change the strategic balance in the Middle East. Tehran was not contended only with request of acknowledgement of its regional position and interests, but claimed for recognition of its influence and power by regional states, thus challenging U.S. strategic dominance in the region. According to Seymour Hersh, this became a reason for more close and deep cooperation between pro-Western Arab states like Egypt, Jordan and Saudi Arabia against Iranian influence in the region [46]. The anti-Iran front was the matter of pre-Islamic Renaissance and Arab Spring period of 2011. Evidently, the reflection of Islamic revolution on the conservative monarchy ruled states was done in such a form of comprehensive revolutionary movement, so that would recline their political boundaries in a short time. If this stream had expanded within Middle East region, majority of Gulf region states, Jordan, Morocco, and Saudi Arabia would remain defenseless to similar awakenings [47].

It should be remembered that Iran and the American opposition is reflected in their approach to Islamic groups and regional states. Iran is challenging the U.S. position and influence in the region and, in this case, the substratum of the United States preserved position are unlovable and nation broken-off Arabic leader, which in fact is shaken and unreliable basement. Definitely, within mass popular uprisings regional Arab regimes have become more unstable and while approaching Iran more suspiciously and distrustfully are strengthening their ties with U.S. The existence of a common enemy like Iran was the main argument of continuity of American support to regional antidemocratic and unstable governments. In terms of Islamic movements, competition between Shiite / Sunni organizations is assumed to be the main factor in the analysis of politics of the U.S. and Arab regimes. In the past years, Sunni organizations were perceived as foes by the U.S. and although they were the focus of the U.S. war on terrorism, the changing conjuncture in the Middle East, the anticipation of the rising threats of Shi'a Iran and consolidation of repressed Shi'a in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia, have directed U.S. and its regional partners to support and arm extremist Sunni groups and organizations. This approach had found its egress in case of Syria. The U.S. temporary and volatile policy shift towards extremist Sunni organization has created an opportunity for the Arab regimes to push back their old rival Shi'a Iran [48]. It is worth to remember that during the "War on Terror" period, regional Arab regimes had no opportunities for official military support of Sunni groups, and if Sunni groups get a chance to obtain U.S. support within new regional environment, it would mean that a ground for Sunni Arabs' victory in Iran and Shi'a versus Arab regimes and Sunni rivalry is formed. From historical analysis perspective, long-termed oppression and marginalization of Islamic organizations increases the probability of their consolidation and power acquisition within a democratic environment [43, p. 147-148]. Furthermore, the attempt to justify the support provided to extremist Sunni groups will increase the possibility of their consolidation in the post political transition period in Syria and, in its essence/true nature, supports those groups in their rivalry with Iran and other organizations. In this situation, the democratic mechanism used previously for the devastation of the West in Shi'a inhabited countries like Lebanon, Iran and Iraq can be now used to reduce Iran influence for the benefit of the West. From this perspective, notwithstanding to the program of withdrawal from the Middle East affairs and focus on the relations with Far East and South Asia, naturally or forcedly U.S. will still keep its influential role in the Middle East.

In total, the tactics of benefiting and instrumentalizing the potential of armed Islamic organizations and even those elements determined as radical extremist and terrorist ones, is formed and shaped in the context of states contradictory and incompatible strategies; in fact, the recognition of these strategies is necessary and desirable in order to analyze the future positions of Islamic groups and identify regional intergovernmental power configuration. Even Israel, notwithstanding to its tenant borders with Syria and pragmatic

relations with it, yet acknowledging the risk of Islamic organizations power seizure, has opted for the regime change in Syria and elimination of Syria-Iran axis, hereby making the shift towards new period in its regional politics. In this respect, a common approach towards Iran has emerged among Israel and Syrian Sunni leaders. Iran-supported Assad regime and opposition forces supported by Saudi Arabia and Qatar have drew the attention towards current proxy war between Shi'a Iran and Persian Gulf Sunni Arabs in Syria [49]. Under new conditions in the region and within the framework of struggle for power and influence between actors, Iran, Iraq and Turkey spheres of influence came to the state of buffer zone, which is affected by Turkey from the North and Iran from the South. The tracks of sectarian aspects can be followed in the confrontation between non-Ba'ath Shi'a Iraq, Ba'ath Alevi Syria and their Sunni enemies [50]. Within these processes and beside the realities of conflict areas in Lebanon, Iraq, Syria and Yemen, the expansion of Iran area of influence becomes obvious; thus, discontent of regional states over Iran position in the region is increasing. In this context, current status quo opponents and their international partners have shown the tendency towards formation and support of non-state extremist organizations and as a result, the nature of power rivalry has changed and entered a new phase. Finally to be said, strategic and political conflicts are reflecting semantic competition of various discourses, in other words, semantic competition of various discourses have shown its transfiguration in strategic and political conflicts. The success of a discourse in any field, for example economic one, will result in the consolidation of this discourse in another area as well, for instance political one; and failure of a discourse will lead to strengthening of rival discourses' positions [51]. The resistance of regional and transregional actors shown in contrast to the activities of rival actors to large extent is related to semantic and discursive competition, and regional stability restoration should re-determine position of Islamic, democratic, secular and patrimonial discourses.

VII. Conclusion

Undoubtedly, the continuing unrest in the Middle East has strong internal roots and backgrounds. Political deadlock of oligarchic and patrimonial regimes, serious economic inefficacies, and difficulties in relations between governments and civil society and civil society organizations are few of those themes. It is not surprisingly, that uprisings and violence has erupted in the core of those dissatisfactions and tensions. The acceleration of those violent events in Northern Africa and Middle East was so high that regional and transregional actors were taken by surprise. Even United States, country which opted for "Greater Middle East" project and supported re-designing of the region, democratization and nation-state building, had been plunged into shock by violent uprisings and overthrown of some Arab leaders and was forced to adapt itself to the new circumstances and be involved into the process management. In a similar manner, other powers, trying to protect their position and interests, had found themselves in the core of events. In the Middle East and Arab countries events analysis, national and regional origins of actors and affairs, is essential. Transregional actors, such as the United States, Russia and the European countries, have had an undeniable role in the political and security equations in the Middle East in the past years, however, the emergence and expansion of the so-called Arab Spring or Islamic awakening phenomena, its evolution into civil wars and interstate conflict are enrooted in political, economic and security environment of the region, and, from this perspective, the transition from the current situation to the state of peace and cooperation is, in fact, laid down through the regional solution algorithm.

In this research, taking advantage of Benjamin Miller's concepts of "war" and "peace", an effort to present two assumptions was put forward. On the one side, takfiri-terrorist groups and organizations, like Al-Qaeda and ISIL are the results of unstable region and chaotic environment, and, in fact, this kind of structures are responsible for civil hot wars, interstate tensions and regional cold wars (in form of rival alliances confrontation and proxy wars). On another side, transregional actors, notwithstanding to their presence and influence in the region and, even, support towards conflicting regional actors, an environment neither of interstate hot war no of hot peace and cooperation was established. The roles and influence of transregional actor can be explained from standpoint of cold war and cold peace. The proxy wars between competing parties in the unstable regions, like Syria and Yemen, are read as the Russia-U.S. "Great Game", but seen as manifestation of the regional cold war, resulted from regional actors' conflict of interests and intervention of transregional sponsors. The transition from cold war to cold peace could be expected under conditions if rivalry between powers will take tendency towards conflict declination and reducing of level of violence and tension and it would be the common objective of all parties. However, taking into consideration actors' disagreements and disharmonious strategic and ideological themes, there is no chance to expect a common objective formation and transition from cold war to cold peace. Under current circumstances, the road to regional hot peace is tough and troublesome.

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