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DOI:

[10.1093/jogss/ogz034](https://doi.org/10.1093/jogss/ogz034)

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*Document Version*

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

*Citation for published version (Harvard):*

Siniver, A & Lucas, S 2019, 'Understanding tacit security regimes', *Journal of Global Security Studies*, vol. 4, no. 4, pp. 510-525. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jogss/ogz034>

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# Understanding Tacit Security Regimes

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## Abstract

More than three decades after the concept of international regimes was introduced, the study of why and how states may choose to cooperate, particularly around security, remains contested. While the field has evolved considerably over that time, there remain significant puzzles in the literature concerning the emergence of different types of security regimes. We aim to address these issues by developing the concept of a *tacit security regime* (TSR) literature. We define a TSR as an interest-based, limited, and informal mechanism of cooperation between states for the purpose of deconflicting their respective interests over a specific security issue. We illustrate the usefulness of our concept in the two contemporary cases of Russian-Israeli and Russian-Turkish security cooperation over the Syrian crisis (2015–2018).

**Keywords:** Middle East, regime theory, security regimes

## Introduction

More than three decades after the concept of international regimes was introduced, the study of why and how states may choose to cooperate remains as contested as ever. While the field has evolved considerably, there remain significant puzzles in the literature, not least ones concerned with how to define and classify regimes—from Susan Strange’s early dismissal of the scholarship as a “fad” to Nicholas Onuf’s attack that “as defined, regimes resemble grab bags, stuffed with this and that” (Strange 1982, 8; Onuf 1998, 176). One puzzle which remains unresolved concerns the paucity of regime classifications that are case-based as well as theoretically and epistemologically justified. A second puzzle, which follows from the first, is the relative lack of systematic and comparative analysis of international regimes (Lipson 1995).

Why do states create security regimes that do not adhere to a clearly defined set of “principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures rules,” per Krasner’s classic definition (1982, 185)? Under what circumstances are such regimes likely to form and what are the necessary conditions for their effectiveness? In this

article, we first introduce the notion of a Tacit Security Regime (TSR) as a distinct category of security regime that has hitherto been insufficiently conceptualized in the literature. Whereas traditional regime definitions emphasize the mutual acceptance of certain procedures and behaviors, we propose that a TSR is an *interest-based, limited, and informal* form of understanding between states whose normal state of relations is more adversarial than ally-like. Under these conditions, the primary purpose of the regime is not overarching cooperation but the deconfliction of its members’ interests over a shared security issue. Second, we test our conceptualization of a TSR by applying it comparatively to two contemporary cases: the Russian-Israeli and Russian-Turkish “understandings” over the Syrian crisis from 2015–2018. These cases have received considerable media attention in recent years, primarily in regard to the motives behind the emergence of these two relationships. There has been little scholarly attempt, however, to study them as distinct types of security regimes. While the two cases are concerned with a similar security issue over a relatively short period of time, we suggest that they offer comparable insights into how tacit security regimes

come into existence and interact with their environment. Moreover, there are fewer contemporary security issues that are more protracted and more resistant to third-party collaborations than the ongoing Syrian conflict and the political-military vacuum that it has created. Methodologically, we use process tracing and comparative case study analysis to draw causal inferences about the emergence of tacit security regimes and their maintenance.

This paper proceeds as follows: in the first section, we identify key puzzles and approaches concerning regime typologies that might address our concern. We then introduce our own conceptual framework of a tacit security regime as an interest-based, limited, and informal understanding and place it in relation to existing contributions in the field. In the second and third sections, we apply our conceptual framework to the case studies of Russian-Israeli and Russian-Turkish understandings over the Syrian crisis. We point to three key findings that are evident in both cases and are worth further investigation in future research: first, while these regimes are “only” tacit, they become more resilient particularly during episodes of friction between the regime members. At the same time, we show that the functional nature of these regimes hinders their transition into more embedded and comprehensive alliances. Second, we suggest that while the historical evolution of Russian-Israeli and Russian-Turkish relations is far from similar, the mechanisms that have sustained these tacit security regimes since their emergence are very similar in essence and purpose. Rather than promoting collective security, these regimes are designed to ensure maximum maneuverability while minimizing the chances of misunderstandings between the parties. Third, and following on from the other findings, we suggest that the survival of these regimes is largely dependent on the commitment of strong leaders who keep them alive. In other words, the limited potentiality of the tacit regime necessitates the personal investment of a certain type of national leader, which in turn enshrines informality and a certain degree of secrecy at the highest level, at the expense of the regular workings of the foreign policy and security bureaucracies. Finally, while it is difficult to predict the future trajectory of these regimes, we argue that their informal and interest-based nature suggests that they are more likely to reach their natural demise rather than morph into norm-based regimes. We conclude by pointing to the need for future research to treat TSRs as a distinct category of security regimes by systematically and comparatively studying their emergence and maintenance and their effects on their regional environments.

## Locating Tacit Security Regimes

The term “international regimes” was coined as early as the 1970s (Haas 1975; Ruggie 1975; Keohane and Nye 1977), although it did not gain prominence until the publication of a 1982 special issue of *International Organization*, in which it was defined by Stephen Krasner as “principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures around which actor expectations converge in a given issue-area” (1982, 185). While this definition remains the consensus in the literature, several studies have challenged some of its basic premises, from Susan Strange’s powerful critique, in the very same issue, of faddism and the concept’s normative bias and state-centric focus, to subsequent criticism of the definition’s vagueness in distinction between “principles, norms and rules,” to the operationalizable merit in the application of the definition to the accumulated knowledge on regimes, and even to the usefulness of the very term “regime theory” (Strange 1982; de Senarclens 1993; Milner 1993; Peterson 2012).

Nevertheless, the continued relevance of regime studies is evident in the ongoing attempts by all major IR traditions to explain certain aspects of international regimes (Hasenclever, Mayer, and Rittberger 1997; Gale 1998; Arts 2000; Peterson 2006; Young and Zürn 2006; Alter and Meunier 2009; Drezner 2009; Garcia 2011; Stokke, 2012; Young 2012; Hynek 2017). Realists explain the emergence of regimes as a by-product of an anarchical international system, typically through the prisms of hegemonic stability theory and the pursuit of relative gains (Grieco 1988; Powell 1991; Mearsheimer 1994/5; Morrow 1994; Lake 2001; Thompson 2006), while neoliberals posit that states are primarily concerned by absolute gains, meaning that they will join a regime if it benefits them, instead of calculating their benefits in relative terms to other states (Axelrod 1984; Keohane 1984; Keohane and Martin 1995; Hurrell 1999; Aalberts 2004; Van Kersbergen and Verbeek 2007). Cognitivist approaches attack realists and neoliberals alike for ignoring intersubjectivity in forming and shaping regimes. By focusing on social structures and the role of ideas in informing, interpreting, and responding to changes in the regime’s environment, cognitivists argue that regimes are not power-based (realist) or interest-based (neoliberal) but knowledge-based (Goldstein and Keohane 1993; Mayer, Rittberger, Zürn 1993; Wendt 1999; Koremenos, Lipson, Snidal 2001; Detomasi 2006; Alter and Meunier 2009; Hynek 2017).

The question of what forms of cooperation among states merit consideration as regimes thus depends on one’s ontological and epistemological persuasions. As

Ruggie notes, the concept of regimes can be defined and redefined only to a degree, as ultimately “there exists no external Archimedean point from which regimes can be viewed as they ‘truly’ are. This is so because regimes are conceptual creations, not concrete entities” (Ruggie 1998, 87.) In the absence of a unified agreement on where one regime ends and another begins, scholars have settled for the classification of actor-dependent, issue-dependent, goal-dependent, and functionality-based typologies of regimes. This does not solve the issue of generalization about regime antecedents and behaviors from a small number of cases, and neither does it address the problem of identifying a priori useful criteria to distinguish regimes in a systematic manner. Nevertheless, self-awareness of one’s theoretical and epistemological approaches is a good opening position (Krasner 1982; Donnelly 1986; Stokke 2012; Hynek 2018). Whatever these persuasions may be, most regime scholars have preoccupied themselves with one or more of the following broad research themes: how (and why) are regimes formed, their relationship with their exogenous regional and geopolitical environment, and the effects of regimes domestically on national policies (Levy, Young, and Zürn 1995).

Attempting to “concretize” Krasner’s definition to accommodate different conceptualizations of regimes, Levy, Young, and Zürn suggest that the debate revolves around two basic dimensions, namely the degree of formality of the regime’s norms and rules and the degree of expectation convergence among the regime’s members. Taken together, these dimensions are based on a matrix to display the basic definitions of regimes. Disregarding the category of low-formality and low-convergence as a nonregime, we are left with three basic definitions: dead letter regimes (high formality and low convergence of expectations), classic regimes (high formality and high convergence of expectations), and tacit regimes, described by low-formality and high-expectations, whereby “informal rules are common along with behavior that is consistent with some independently inferred rules” (Levy, Young, and Zürn 1995, 272).<sup>1</sup>

1 Rules, especially, in informal settings, are a matter of perception. As noted by Stein, the four key attributes of regimes (principles, norms, rules, and decision-making procedures) vary in their level of specificity. While principles can be defined as general, abstracted beliefs, the distinction between norms and rules is not immediately evident. Norms are “standards of behavior,” while rules are “specific proscriptions or prescriptions with respect to action,” though as Stein concludes, the two “may merge at the margin” (Stein 1985, 603).

This typology, albeit not issue-specific, is particularly apt for the study of security regimes, where the notion of formality is often correlated with the endurance or resilience of the regime. Security regimes are traditionally understood as encompassing formalized decision-making procedures and institutional arrangements to address shared threat perceptions (Stein 1985; Nye 1987; McGwire 1988; Chalmers 1993; Krasner 1993; Jones 1998), with historical precedents such as the Concert of Europe used as common lessons for historians and political scientists alike (Jervis 1982, 1992; Mueller 1989–90; Kupchan and Kupchan 1991; Betts 1992; Bennett and Leggold 1993; Miller 1994).

There is little agreement, however, on the conceptual boundaries of this historic example. This lack of consensus points to a broader confusion in the literature regarding the constitutive parts of (tacit) regimes. Are they institutional or procedural? Are they actor-specific or issue-specific? For Jervis (1982, 357) the Concert of Europe provides “the best example of a security regime,” implying “not only norms and expectations that facilitate cooperation, but a form of cooperation that is more than the following of short-run self-interests.” Levy, Young, and Zürn (1995, 272), however, cite the system of the European balance of power in the nineteenth century as a prime example of a *tacit* regime, thus emphasizing low formality and high expectations. Klieman (1995, 129) argues to the contrary, suggesting that a tacit regime must pertain to “non-superpower, non-hegemonic, non-Western, non-contractual, and non-institutionalised cooperation.” Other attempts at categorizing tacit regimes do not alleviate the conceptual confusion: Evron (2004) classifies security regimes based on their degree of institutionalization, whereby a tacit security regime consists of a set of informal understandings between states; a *bilateral* security regime builds on more formal agreements; and a *multilateral* security regime consists of formal arrangements supported by multilateral agreements and mechanisms for the regulation of strategic and military relationships. Naveh (2005, 5) defines a regime as a “process” in which states “have a shared interest in co-operating with one another in order to solve a common problem which threatens their security, or, possibly, very existence.” Others place security regimes along a spectrum of state responses to the security dilemma, from self-help strategies of deterrence and the application of military force, through “soft” levels of cooperation such as confidence-building measures, to various forms of cooperative mechanisms, culminating with the creation of normative security communities in which the prospect of regional war is considered obsolete (Adler and Barnett 1988).

We suggest that Susan Strange's critique of the "woolliness" and "imprecision" of the concept of international regimes is equally pertinent to the notion of tacit security regimes. While this is somewhat unavoidable given the above-mentioned "puzzles" in the field, there seems to be relatively little effort to define TSR as a distinct type of security regime that is more than the anathema to "traditional" or "classic" security regimes. Our starting point toward reconceptualizing tacit security regimes builds on Janice Gross Stein's assertion that a security regime is "an uncomfortable place to be" (Stein 2004, 6)—though we maintain that a security regime is a more comfortable place to be than a tacit security regime. Despite the conceptual confusion in the literature, there seems to be a distinction between "classic" security regimes, which are more formalized and comprehensive, and "tacit" security regimes, which are more limited in scope and "hard" mechanisms. We thus suggest that the emergence, maintenance, and evolution of such arrangements in the latter case are often anathematic to the very nature of the relationship between states, who on any other level view their relationship as adversarial rather than ally-like.

A second challenge to reconceptualizing tacit security regimes is identified by Ruggie in his critique of regime analysis more broadly, namely the limited potential for generalizability from noncomparative case-based studies: "How many cases of nuclear bipolarity have there been, on the basis of which one could say with some assurance that it caused this or that pattern in international regimes? . . . How many cases of hegemony are there 'like' Britain in the nineteenth century or 'like' the United States in the postwar era?" (1998, 86). Accordingly, with TSRs, how many cases are there like Israel and Jordan, or Israel and the Gulf States, and can we draw any general observations from these cases about how TSRs may emerge and behave at least under certain circumstances? Klieman's definition of TSRs as "non-superpower, non-hegemonic, non-Western, non-contractual, and non-institutionalised" tells us what a TSR is not, rather than what it is. Similarly, Jones and Guzansky's (2017) added criteria that a TSR is not defined by geographical contiguity seems to primarily accommodate the case of Israel and the Gulf States rather than having an epistemological validity of its own. Levy, Young, and Zürn's definition of tacit regimes, whereby "informal rules are common along with behavior that is consistent with some independently inferred rules," seems the most operationalizable, however it does not speak specifically to security-based regimes.

Our concept of a tacit security regime builds on Levy, Young, and Zürn's understanding that "tacit" refers not

only to informality of rules but also to the independent inference of such rules by members of the regime. We also accept Jones and Guzansky's assertion that TSRs are primarily single-issue regimes along which adversarial parties may converge their interests, but the potential for a positive spillover onto other areas is limited. This probably makes a tacit security regime an even more uncomfortable place to be than Stein's depiction of a security regime, where reciprocity is not only assumed but is a fundamental requirement for the regime's survival. On the other hand, we do not view geographical proximity, clandestinity, or nonhegemonic bilateralism as necessary and sufficient conditions for the emergence or survival of tacit security regimes. Importantly, the essence of the tacit security regime also concerns the limited expectations that the parties have of each other—the convergence of expectations may be "high" as per Levy, Young, and Zürn's typology, inasmuch as each party expects the other to do its part, but the expected level of cooperation is more likely to concern minimizing the likelihood of "accidents" and misunderstandings over a security issue, rather than developing a convergence of norms and unified decision-making procedures.

We define a tacit security regime as an *interest-based*, *limited*, and *informal* process that is not based on reciprocity, modified national behavior, or the achievement of shared long-term objectives. Such a regime is tacit because its *raison d'être* is implied in the behavior of the parties toward each other and toward the security issue over which they choose to cooperate. Unlike "classic" security regimes, a tacit regime is not bound by a more formalistic set of principles, written agreements, or normative agendas. This is an *interest-based* rather than power-based regime because the aim of the parties is to coordinate on a clearly defined security issue, not necessarily for relative gains compared to other states but to achieve absolute gains on that specific issue. The parties to the regime are still "rational egoists who care only for their (absolute) gains"; however, the approach here is of bounded institutionalism to the extent that their behavior is exogenous to "rule-governed practices or institutions" (Hasenclever, Mayer, and Rittberger 1997, 4), similar to Levy, Young, and Zürn's understanding of a tacit regime, whereby rules are "independently inferred." This regime is *limited* not because it is born out of a specific security-based necessity around which the parties agree to cooperate—this does not distinguish it from "classic" security regimes—but because its potentiality for transforming the relationship beyond the particular security issue to an embedded normative community is very low. It is more likely to be isolated from the wider environment of the relationship between the regime

members, which may well be adversarial or at the very least nonallied. Although the regime may be limited to a regional security issue, it is distinguished from Buzan's notion of a security complex, whereby shared regional security threats are sufficient to bring several states together to the point where "their national securities cannot be realistically considered apart from one another" (Buzan 1991, 190).

Accordingly, the limited potentiality of the regime combined with the limited cooperation between the regime members on other issues also makes the life of the tacit security regime limited. By this we do not mean that it is short-term (this would disqualify Klieman's and Lipson's respective cases of decades-long Israeli-Jordanian and American-Soviet tacit cooperation), but rather it has limited functionality: once the regime has fulfilled its function, for example by removing or reducing the threat to the parties, it will become superfluous to requirements and cease to exist.<sup>2</sup> Finally, the informal nature of the regime does not require much explanation, as it follows from its tacit nature; by definition, regimes with high degree of formality cannot be considered tacit, as they are not prescribed in a clear system of rules and norms (Onuf 1998). Informality may involve a certain degree of secrecy; however, that in itself is not a defining feature of the regime. Since the functionality of the regime is not formally institutionalized or enshrined in standard operating procedures, it is more likely to be shaped by personal relationships between national leaders or their respective security chiefs, although the bureaucracy, and in some cases even the public, may be aware of these processes. Importantly, we propose that the functional, informal, and limited potentiality of the tacit regime necessitates the personal investment of national leaders. It is through such personal interactions that the TSR is first initiated

2 On this point, we also distinguish a TSR from Wallender and Keohane's typology of security institutions (especially of the exclusive type), which "emphasize the importance of institutionalization for the actual operation of security coalitions." While the typology of security institutions draws on the degree of institutionalization, the threat/risk the state is facing, and degree of participation, it differs considerably from a TSR in that it expects successful security institutions "to develop institutionalized rules and practices," thus negating the critical element of "tactiness," which we develop in this study. It also emphasizes information gathering/sharing as a primary motivation for states to invest in institutions (in order to reduce uncertainty), whereas we view this as an incidental benefit of a TSR, rather than a primary reason for its formation. See Wallender and Keohane (1999, 28–30).

and then sustained outside the regular workings of the foreign policy and security bureaucracies. As is evident in the cases examined here (and the other cases of TSRs we allude to), their very existence is dependent on the ability of national leaders to shield these arrangements from public scrutiny and bureaucratic politics.

Unlike "classic" security regimes such as North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the Organization of American States (OAS), or the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), a TSR is not comprehensive, institutionalized, or formalized. Rather, it is functional with a limited scope for expansion to other issues beyond the immediate aim of addressing a specific set of shared security concerns. States form a TSR to maximize their respective operational maneuverability over a security issue that is independent to the nature of the relationship between them, essentially making it a "live and let live" regime. Yet it is more than an ad hoc short-term collusion between states whose regional and geopolitical agendas may be at odds. Rather, it is guided by implicit (tacit) understandings over a specific security issue that brings the parties to agree on what Keohane defines as "functional expectations"—these provide a causal explanation for the emergence of the regime in the first place. In other words, a particular regime *had* to emerge because of its expected contribution to the welfare of the parties concerned (Keohane 1984, 75–80).<sup>3</sup>

The following analysis of the Russian-Israeli and Russian-Turkish cases is structured along three parameters: (1) how (and why) the TSR emerged; (2) how the TSR manifested itself as an interest-based, limited, and informal process; and (3) how the TSR can be understood within the regional and geopolitical environment, as well as the domestic setting. We suggest that, in both cases, the appearance of a new security threat necessitated a response by two actors who have different, if not opposing security designs, but agree to come together in a limited and informal framework to deconflict their respective policies. Much like Keohane's "functional

3 Neither should a TSR be confused with Snyder's military alliances due to occasional ad hoc and rationalist arrangements. Unlike our TSR, Snyder's alliances are "formal associations of states for the use (or nonuse) of military force . . . Their primary function is to pool military strength against a common enemy," while the odd cases of "loose" alliances in nineteenth century Europe are not sufficiently theorized as a distinct type of alliance. Moreover, Snyder himself concedes that his "historical theory" (drawing on the period 1978–1914) has limited applicability to the more dynamic and less predictable post-Cold War era. See Snyder (1997, 3).

expectations,” these TSRs *had* to emerge because of their expected contribution to the respective interests of Russia, Israel, and Turkey. Regarding the second and third parameters, we propose that the regional power vacuum that was created by Washington’s disengagement with the regime-opposition dimension of the Syrian crisis, coupled with the signing of the Iranian nuclear deal, created further impetus for the emergence of a TSR. Domestically, while our sample of cases is very modest, it is noteworthy that in both cases the TSR had been the brainchild of three security-orientated “strong” leaders.

### The Emergence of a Russian-Israeli TSR

In September 2015, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu traveled to Moscow to meet with President Vladimir Putin, in what was described as “one of the most significant geopolitical moments in recent years.” Hyperbolic reports in the Israeli press on the meeting pointed to a post-American era in the Middle East, not least because Netanyahu had been widely regarded as the most “American” of all Israeli leaders: “Not that long ago, it would have been nearly unthinkable that an Israeli prime minister could ask for, and receive, an invitation to an emergency summit with the president of Russia, in much less time than it would take him to obtain a similar invitation to meet the president of the United States” (Pfeffer 2015). Nine months later, following their fourth meeting, Netanyahu spoke of common ground over “the challenges to all civilized countries such as terrorism and radical Islam,” while Putin referred to Israel and Russia becoming “unconditional allies” (Lazaroff 2016).

Some observers of Middle East politics, caught off-guard by the turn of events, fell upon the superficial explanation that the “thawing” Israeli-Russian relationship was driven by a personal affinity between the two leaders. The *Washington Post* described a blooming “bro-mance” between the Russian president and Israeli prime minister—an even more compelling account when juxtaposed with the record of mutual hostility between President Obama and Netanyahu, who paid only one visit to the White House during the same period (Eglish 2016). Other analysts pointed to more mundane reasons for the warming of Israeli-Russian relations. These included the existence of more than one million Russian-speaking Jews in Israel (including the Moldovan-born defense minister, Avigdor Liberman), Moscow’s interest in Israeli technology, and a marked increase in bilateral trade between the two countries, which more than tripled between 2005 and 2014 to approximately \$3.5 billion (Borshchevskaya 2016; Kampes 2016).

We suggest that these factors have limited explanatory power. The root causes of the emergence of a TSR were the dual regional catalysts of the Iran nuclear deal, agreed in July 2015, and the Syrian civil war, then in its fifth year. Netanyahu was driven to reach an understanding with Putin—even though Russia was one of the 5 + 1 Powers that agreed to the deal with Tehran—by the uncertainty both of the deal’s outcome for Israel’s security (at least in Netanyahu’s eyes) and of the possibility of an Iranian presence in southwest Syria. Indeed, under these conditions, *only* a TSR could have emerged between Russia and Israel, since their broader disagreement over the Iranian issue and other regional security issues would have prevented them from developing a comprehensive and formal “classic” security regime.

Netanyahu and Putin, with their advisors, were pursuing an interest-based, limited, and informal security regime based on the intersection of their interests in the summer. Cooperation would be established both over the definition of areas of operations—Israel accepting Russian military intervention on behalf of the Assad regime throughout much of Syria, and Moscow accepting the Israeli objective of keeping Iranian and Iranian-supported forces out of southwest Syria near the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights—and over the specific aim of “deconfliction,” minimizing the likelihood of accidental clashes between Israeli and Russian forces operating in Syria’s land, sea, and airspace.

The conclusion in July 2015 of the nuclear deal between the 5 + 1 Powers (the United States, UK, France, Germany, China, and Russia) and Iran, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, effectively buried Netanyahu’s six-year effort to block the accord, including his threat of a military strike on Tehran. Meanwhile, Israel faced multiple concerns over the course of the Syrian conflict. Spillover across the border into the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights could spur the prospect of a confrontation between the Israeli Defense Forces and pro-Assad units, including Hezbollah and Iranian-led foreign militia. Assad’s fall from power—a growing possibility throughout the spring and summer, with the rebel takeover of much of the northwest and parts of the south—brought the uncertainty of Islamist groups among those taking charge in Damascus (Liebermann 2013; Al Jazeera 2015). Israel had no interest in Assad’s survival, given his increasing dependence on Iran and Hezbollah; however, it was wary of a political and security vacuum that could be filled by an even worse alternative (Williams 2013). The Netanyahu Government chose to continue to calibrate its military response, carrying out a series of raids on the Assad regime’s facilities, convoys, and warehouses to prevent the transfer of rockets and missiles to Hezbollah,

while refusing to comment publicly on Bashar al-Assad's future. Meanwhile, Russia was on the verge of a sharp escalation in its military intervention to prop up the Assad regime. Moscow had provided advice, including the confirmation in 2011 by Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov that the Kremlin would accept fifty thousand killed if order was restored. It had forestalled a Western military response to the regime's sarin attacks near Damascus in August 2013 that left at least fourteen hundred dead, and then led the United States down a political track in which Washington pulled back on plans for the removal of Assad from power (Brinkbauer 2013). But this was not enough to secure the regime: in the face of the series of defeats by rebels in spring 2015, its depleted military forces—even with the involvement of Hezbollah and the Iranian-led foreign militias—were at breaking point, as Assad publicly acknowledged during the summer (Lucas 2017).

With Russia preparing to invest its air force, ground advisors, weapons systems, and armor to prevent Assad's fall, Netanyahu asked for—and received—his emergency meeting with Putin in Moscow. On September 21, 2015, the Israel prime minister and his top military and intelligence advisors met Russian counterparts to discuss the establishment of lines of communication over the situation in southwest Syria near the Golan Heights. Netanyahu also hoped that Moscow could exercise some restraint over Hezbollah and direct its attention to the fight against Syrian rebels, rather than harassing Israel across the border with Lebanon. Putin's response was encouraging: "Our main goal is to protect the Syrian state. Nonetheless, I understand your concern and I am very glad you came here to discuss the issue in detail" (Ravid 2015).

Nine days later, Russia launched the first of thousands of sorties, bombing positions across Syria in support of the Assad regime and its forces. More than 80 percent of the strikes were on opposition-held territory, with only a small minority on the Islamic State, the publicly-declared target of Moscow's operations. Israel took no military action in response and made no diplomatic objection to the raids, despite their mass killing of civilians and destruction of infrastructure, medical facilities, schools, mosques, and markets (Williams 2015).

In the space of a few weeks, Israel and Russia had defined a security regime based on the acceptance of each other's key interests in Syria and the ability to operate, uninhibited, to defend them. This was a territorial arrangement: Russia staked no claim on the Quneitra area in southwest Syria and offered no support for the Assad regime's operations, including confrontations with rebels, near the border; in return, Moscow had freedom

of action throughout the rest of the country, as it moved from defense of regime territory to the essential bombing needed for the recapture of areas held by the opposition since 2012. This was an operational arrangement: Russia had no limits on its tactics, including the use of incendiary munitions and cluster bombs as it attacked civilian sites; Israel could operate beyond the southwest to interdict arms supplies for Hezbollah as well as restrict the Assad regime's stocks and development of missiles (Tsvektova 2015).

This was an organizational arrangement, with militaries and intelligence services exchanging information to ensure there was no confusion over the territorial and operational dimensions in a "deconfliction mechanism . . . aimed at preventing any accidental engagement between Israeli and Russian forces" (Keinon 2017). It was supported at the highest level by further high-level discussions: between September 2015 and March 2017, Netanyahu and Putin met four more times in Moscow, with phone calls in between the face-to-face encounters (Keinon 2016). Russian Prime Minister Dmitri Medvedev traveled to Israel in November 2016, and Russian military and diplomatic officials, including Deputy Foreign Minister Gennady Gatilov, consulted Israeli colleagues in Tel Aviv (MID 2016; MFA 2016b).

The development of this interest-based, limited, and informal framework was designed to manage expectations, minimize misunderstandings, and maintain channels of communication, while remaining short of a formalized and comprehensive security agreement. In each subsequent discussion, Putin and Netanyahu sought further recognition of each side's political and military interests. Russia would be assured that Israel would keep its distance from any political efforts to remove Assad from power. Conversely, the Israelis were assured that Assad—and, more importantly, the Iranians working with him—would be contained in their ambitions and operations. The southwest front was to be secured by the Israelis—an official in Moscow summarized, "Israel is naturally fighting organizations jeopardizing its security" (Fishman 2017; Houry and Cohen 2017)—while Moscow led the Assad regime to concentrate on northwest Syria, including Aleppo city, and the Damascus suburbs (Trinen 2017).

By June 2016, this Israeli-Russian TSR was fully in operation, with invocations of general interest to buttress the specific arrangement. Netanyahu publicly hailed the "continued coordination between our two militaries in the region" and spoke of "the challenges to all civilized countries such as terrorism and radical Islam," while Putin referred to the two countries' alliance in fighting international terrorism (Metzel 2016). The two leaders



also alluded to wider, nonsecurity dimensions of the relationship, such as economic and cultural ties. Netanyahu assured Putin that no legal limitations would be placed on Russian firms wanting to participate in Israeli energy projects. Putin upheld “historical relations between our countries,” as the Israeli prime minister inaugurated an exhibit at Moscow’s main exhibition hall, “Open a Door to Israel,” on innovation and technology: “We are marking 25 years since the resumption of relations between us, and not only in culture and technology, but in so many other fields as well” (MFA 2016a). However, these areas were independent of the emergence of the TSR between the two countries—cultural, technological, and business ties had increased in volume for more than a decade, long before the emergence of the Syrian crisis or the Iranian nuclear issue. Moreover, despite Putin’s celebration of these areas of nonsecurity bilateral cooperation, none of them had ever manifested into a summit meeting between the Russian and Israel leaders. In other words, the TSR would have emerged over the Syrian crisis irrespective of the extent of bilateral cooperation in other areas.

The establishment of processes of coordination, operating according to functionality, did not entail a total, unconditional agreement over all security matters. For example, Russia indicated its red lines on Israel’s aerial raids outside the southwest of Syria: When Israeli jets ventured into central Syria to hit targets near Palmyra, reportedly in response to Assad regime activity near the Golan Heights, the Russian Foreign Ministry summoned the Israeli Ambassador for an explanation. Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov subsequently said, “We will judge not by their statements, but by their actions, to what extent our Israeli partners are sticking to these agreements” (Cohen 2017). Even if the chidings were only for public appearance, they displayed Moscow’s line that the TSR was not comprehensive or open-ended. Israel’s reaction in turn pointed to a TSR in which differences would not be allowed to break cooperation, using public as well as private channels. Days after Lavrov’s message, Israeli Intelligence Minister Yisrael Katz delivered a similar message to emphasize the joint understanding over the mechanism to coordinate military activities in Syria (Al Masdar 2017).

As a limited rather than a comprehensive arrangement, the TSR has been challenged and will continue to be challenged by the political and military complexity of the Syrian conflict and of the multiple actors—some in alliance with either Russia or Israel, some in opposition, some in an uneasy tension with one or both actors—within it. Periodic consultations will be required to adjust the regime to take account of evolving, or devolving, conditions and the effect on interests. For example, on

January 29, 2018, Netanyahu made another journey to Moscow to press his central concern, an expansion on the prohibition of Iran and its allies from southwest Syria to a demand for its retraction throughout the country. His approach was spurred, paradoxically, by Russia’s confirmation of Assad—or at least the regime—in power for the foreseeable future, with the seizure of much of the opposition territory across Syria: while this had eased Israeli worries about a vacuum in Damascus, it carried the corollary of a long-term Iranian presence in Syrian political, military, and economic affairs. Netanyahu recounted after the meeting: “Will Iran entrench itself in Syria, or will this process be stopped? I made clear to Putin that we will stop it if it doesn’t stop by itself. We are already acting to stop it” (Keinon 2018).

With Russia focused on the same day on its ill-fated Sochi conference seeking a Syrian “national congress,” Putin was noncommittal on Netanyahu’s expanded demand, while paying tribute to cooperation with Israel; as Russian State outlet RT summarized, “The reaction of the Russian president to [Netanyahu’s] statements . . . remained a mystery” (Shemtov 2018).

Less than two weeks later, the TSR was tested by Israel’s most extensive airstrikes inside Syria since the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982. Having intercepted an Iranian drone in Israeli airspace, the Israeli air force carried out a “complex surgical strike” against the Iranian control center in central Syria overseeing the drone launches. Then, as an Israeli F-16 was downed in northern Israel by an Assad regime anti-aircraft missile, the IDF raided another twelve targets—eight Assad regime and four Iranian—including anti-aircraft batteries and sites near the Presidential Palace in southern Damascus (Ensor 2018). While insisting that they did not seek a wider confrontation, Israeli ministers restated their central demand covering all of the country, not just the southwest: “The Syrian army will find itself under fire if it continues to cooperate and allow Iran to position itself on Syrian soil.” Moscow did not respond directly to this; however, its statement was telling in its exclusion of the Assad regime, Iranian, and Iranian-led forces from Russian protection against further Israeli strikes: “It is absolutely unacceptable to create threats to the lives and security of Russian servicemen who are in Syria at the invitation of its legitimate government” (Khalili-Tari 2018).

Almost three years after the emergence of this TSR, Russia and Israel had successfully utilized this informal and limited mechanism to protect their respective interests and mitigate the rising tension over Israeli operations outside the southwest of Syria. The informal Russian-Israeli understandings borne out of this TSR were not

just constructions of an almost decade-long conflict—they were reshaping the contours of that conflict and the territory in which it is taking place for the foreseeable future.

In spring 2018, the Israeli-Russian TSR reached a possible breaking point in a process that promised an Assad regime move toward consolidated rule of much of Syria but also a widened confrontation involving Israeli forces. Having recaptured all areas around Damascus, the regime looked toward the conquest of the remaining opposition territory in southern Syria, along the Jordanian border and near the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights (Loveluck and Morris 2018). A day after the fall of East Ghouta, Israeli warplanes again attacked the T-4 base, with its Iranian personnel, in central Syria. Three weeks after that, they struck regime and Iranian positions near Damascus and in the northwest (Hubbard 2018). Once again, Russian forces did not engage the Israeli Air Force with advanced air defense systems. Following consultations with the Israeli defense minister in Moscow, on May 29 Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov finally confirmed an “understanding” between Russia and Israel on how to end the brewing crisis: “The zone of de-escalation is expected to consolidate stability and that all non-Syrian forces must be pulled out of that area” (TASS 2018). While Lavrov envisaged the eventual return of the Assad regime’s authority—“a situation in which troops of the Syrian armed forces will be stationed alongside the Syrian border with Israel”—he indicated this would occur through a political process rather than military operations (Al Jazeera 2018). Moscow may have been unhappy with the Israeli strikes on Iranian targets, but it redrew the red line for the assurance that Russian personnel would not be caught up in the attacks. In return, Netanyahu and his advisors had to accept—at least for the near-future—that Tehran’s officials and military personnel will not be ejected from Syria, even if Russia is maneuvering to ensure an economic ascendancy for its interests rather than those of the Islamic Republic (Ensor 2018). The underlying tensions point to the TSR as an “uncomfortable” place to be—Avi Dichter, the former head of the Shin Bet intelligence service and chairman of the Knesset’s Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, referred to the adversarial relationship between the two countries over broader regional security issues:

The gap between us and them is large and disturbing. Russia thinks and acts as a superpower and as such it often ignores Israeli interest when it doesn’t coincide with the Russian interest . . . [The Russians] view Hezbollah positively as the errand lackey of Iran in Syria and Lebanon, (and) they are backing the Shi’ite

militia activity in Iraq and Syria . . . Russia does not view Iran and its proxies according to the level of threat they pose or broadcast towards Israel. (Baker 2016).

From its initiation, this TSR has been sustained at the highest level by the personal investment of two strong leaders, particularly during times of emerging crises that threatened the sustenance of such tacit understandings over this area of operations. As long as these functional arrangements are sustained around clearly defined issues, then the TSR is likely to be maintained. However, if one side’s independence of operations is viewed as compromising or threatening the other’s security interests, or when the dynamics of the Syrian conflict no longer necessitate such Russian-Israeli cooperation, then the TSR will likely reach its natural conclusion and cease to exist.

### The Emergence of a Russian-Turkish TSR

On August 9, 2016, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan traveled to St. Petersburg at the invitation of Vladimir Putin. By the time Erdoğan returned to Ankara, the foundations of a TSR had been laid. Like the Russian-Israeli TSR, this one was orchestrated at the highest level around clearly defined areas of operations, although its basis was far different from that of the Netanyahu-Putin conversations. Whereas Israel and Russia had built up to the 2015 establishment of the TSR around a thawing relationship and convergence of interests, Ankara and Moscow had been in a cold war centered on their clashing involvements in Syria.

From the outset of the Syrian uprising in March 2011, Erdoğan and his ruling AKP party had supported a range of opposition groups and rebel factions, with the Turkish president calling on Assad from November 2011 to depart: “Without spilling any more blood, without causing any more injustice, for the sake of peace for the people, the country and the region, finally step down” (Burch 2011). That alignment placed Ankara on the opposite side from Russia, albeit in a tension that was limited by the official Russian position that it was not pursuing military intervention. Moscow’s pursuit of airstrikes against opposition territory from September 2015 turned this tension into confrontation, with Ankara protesting the escalation and warning Moscow of an armed response. On November 24, it carried out the threat, downing a Sukhoi Su-24, which was crossing Turkish airspace on its way to attack rebels in northwest Syria. The pilot was shot dead as he parachuted; a weapons officer was rescued by a Russian special forces operation (Gurcan 2015; Tattersall and Soldatkin 2015). Putin responded not only

with angry words—“a stab in the back, carried out by the accomplices of terrorists”—but with actions to punish the Turkish economy and push back Erdoğan’s assertion of authority (Shaheen et al. 2015). Russia barred the import of Turkish food and goods and denied visas to Turkish tourists, costing Ankara an estimated \$10 billion. It stepped up the air strikes on the Syrian opposition and warned Turkey that S-400 missiles, deployed near Russia’s main base in western Syria, would target Turkish warplanes (Fraser and Akkoc 2015; Girit 2016).

For nine months, Moscow maintained the pressure until there were signs of a climbdown by Ankara. Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu met Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov at the end of June 2016 in reference to “coordination” over Syria: “We can talk with Russia on every issue, positive or negative, because the dialogue that had been cut has been restarted and our relations have begun returning to old days” (Deutsche 2016). Russia confirmed its changing relationship with Erdoğan in mid-July, when it was the first foreign power to congratulate him on surviving a coup attempt (MINA 2016). Putin offered the prospect of eased sanctions, the resumption of charter flights, and the lifting of visa restrictions. He also made reference to the recent failed coup in Turkey to leverage Russia’s position on Syria, telling his counterpart: “We are always categorically opposed to any attempts at anti-constitutional activity. I want to express the hope that under your leadership the Turkish people will deal with this, and justice and legality will prevail.” The two leaders then turned to discuss the security situation in Syria: Erdoğan spoke of the “well-known incident last year,” while Putin referred to “the tragic incident involving the death of our servicemen” (Walker and Rankin 2016).

Putin and Erdoğan had embarked upon a TSR to supersede the political conflict and the prospect of a confrontation of forces in Syria. Organizational and operation arrangements were made for lines of communication for “deconfliction” on the ground, as well as avoiding any challenge to Russian and Turkish aerial activity (Hurriyet 2016a, 2016b). The territorial arrangement was established with Turkey’s acceptance of Russia’s deadly bombing and siege of eastern Aleppo city, forcing its capitulation to pro-Assad forces in December. Moscow assented to Turkey’s own military intervention, in an operation alongside Syrian rebels—launched three weeks after the Erdoğan-Putin meeting—that soon took part of northern Syria along the Turkish border from the Islamic State. Russia also began to approach Syrian Kurdish groups, which had established autonomy in parts of northern Syria, as it turned to an Erdoğan government that considered the Syrian Kurdish Democratic Party (PYD) and

its YPG militia as part of the “terrorist” Turkish Kurdish insurgency PKK (Frantzman 2017).

This sudden shift toward cooperation reconfigured the history of the Turkish-Russian relationship, characterized as nonbelligerent but nonally, with the two countries espousing different security-political regional aspirations while acknowledging the benefit of economic cooperation. Mutual distrust of the United States after the 2003 Iraq War offered scope for engagement, but Turkish and Russian views of “Eurasia” differed. Ankara’s view was balanced by its consideration of entry into the European Union, while Moscow looked to a leading position in Central Asia and the Caucasus, which might be a challenge to Turkish interests.<sup>4</sup>

The uprisings across North Africa and the Middle East from 2011 were a further source of tension. The Turkish leadership hailed the movements as a “grand restoration” of Islamic civilization and looked to the development of ties with groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood, which were taking power from Libya to Egypt to Syria, where Erdoğan soon called for the removal of Bashar al-Assad (Arcu 2011). In contrast, Putin was shaken by the downfall of Libyan ruler Moammar al-Gaddafi as his officials tried to bolster the Assad regime. Still, despite deepening concern over Turkey’s support of the Syrian political and military opposition, Russia avoided a conflict, as it focused on the need to restrict and even block US intervention. In September 2015, just before the Russian military intervention that would spark confrontation, Putin invited Erdoğan to attend the inauguration ceremony of a mosque in Moscow (Joobani and Mousavipour 2015). If the animating context for the Turkish-Russian case—antagonism over the region galvanized by Ankara’s downing of the Su-24—differs from the rapprochement before the Netanyahu-Putin encounter of September 2015, the trajectory of the two relationships has been similar. The frequency and high level of Russian-Israeli meetings has been matched by those between Moscow and Ankara, including recurrent discussions between Putin and Erdoğan. As with the Russian-Israeli channel of communications, regular consultations between Russia’s and Turkey’s officials have headed off conflicts. When Turkish-backed rebels closed in spring 2017 on the city of Manbij in eastern Aleppo Province—held by the US-supported, Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces—Russia stepped in to draw a line between the two sides (deGrandpre 2017). The consolidation of military zones of control has led to a political process through eight rounds of talks in the Kazakh capital Astana, also

4 For background, see Baev and Kirişçi (2017).

including Iran, the Assad regime's other essential ally (Al Jazeera 2017; Bonsey 2017; El Deeb 2017). These talks led to the proclamation of "de-escalation zones," further confirming the de facto partition of Syria, even as Russia broke the terms by joining the Assad regime in attacks on opposition areas. Turkey has conceded that Moscow will block any removal of Bashar al-Assad and his inner circle and prevent the dissolution of the regime's army. Russia has accepted that Turkey is the power overseeing not only northern Aleppo Province but also neighboring Idlib Province, most of which is held by the opposition (Butler and Karadeniz 2017).

In contrast to the Russian-Israeli case—where Israeli ground troops have remained outside Syria—the Turkish involvement on the ground in the country could have been a possible source of instability in the TSR. The Assad regime's reentry into Idlib Province in winter 2017, accompanied by Russian airpower, brought its military and Iranian-led allies close to the Turkish-backed rebels (Sheikhi 2017). Yet far from breaking the TSR, the presence of both Turkish and Russian forces has led to an accommodation that, far from envisaging a reclamation of all territory by the Assad regime, points to the partition of Syria in the near future. After the Turkish-rebel offensive seized almost all of the Kurdish Afrin canton, Ankara established a ring of twelve observation posts around Idlib Province and parts of neighboring northern Hama and western Aleppo Provinces. President Erdoğan declared the completion of the perimeter, with his hope that "the situation in Idlib will normalize" (Sputnik 2018). Russia periodically joined the regime in bombing civilian areas across Idlib Province, on the pretext of striking the jihadist bloc Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham, and continued to attack northern Hama just outside the Turkish ring. However, in a sign of the acceptance of Ankara's sphere of control, the Russians established their own set of ten observation posts opposite the Turkish positions. The Defense Ministry announced on May 22, "These observation points are being used to monitor the ceasefire between government troops and armed opposition units" (Badra 2018).

In summer 2018, Russia considered an offensive with the regime to overrun Idlib and northern Hama. However, when Turkey refused to give way—thrice rebuffing high-level approaches by Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and Putin—Moscow faced a critical decision: break the TSR or support it and push back the Assad regime's pledge to retake "every inch" of Syria. The Kremlin chose the latter: on September 17, Putin and Erdoğan declared a demilitarized zone between the regime and opposition areas in the northwest (Higgins and Gladstone 2018; Lucas 2018). The fundamentals of the Russian-Israeli TSR also hold true for the Russian-

Turkish case: these are interest-based, limited, and informal security regimes, enhanced particularly during episodes of friction and sustained throughout by the commitment of two leaders to deconflict their states' respective security agendas in Syria. That this TSR has remained strong despite Russia's backing of the Assad regime and Turkey's support for opposition groups, points to the advantage of maintaining a limited and functional regime over a comprehensive and formalized regime that is unlikely to be sustained given the parties' opposing political and security interests in the future of the Syrian crisis. Like the Russian-Israeli case, however, this TSR is likely to reach its natural conclusion and cease to exist once the security situation in Syria no longer necessitates its maintenance.

### Conclusions: Understanding Tacit Security Regimes

There are no hard and fast rules on how security regimes emerge, evolve, consolidate, and die. Europe has opted for an institutionalized and formalistic approach to regional security, which has consolidated into NATO and the European Union, while the countries of Southeast Asia organized themselves in a less-structured and normative manner to form ASEAN as a regional security community (Rittberger, Efinger, and Mendler 1990; McCalla 1996; Charillon 2005; Collins 2007; Acharya 2014). These examples of regional associations require a range of mechanisms and procedures to ensure transparency, normative responsibilities, and a new sense of collective identity, but this is by no means a linear and consistent process—some regimes live long and prosper, while others are short-lived and implode due to internal or external pressures (Krasner 1982; Levy, Young, and Zürn 1995; Mitchell 1998).

Several observations can be drawn from our analysis of the Russian-Israeli and Russian-Turkish cases concerning the life cycle of tacit security regimes. Both cases represent relationships that were previously neither ally-like nor outright hostile, and the formation of the TSR is unlikely to change this *because* it is limited and informal. Similar answers can also be found in the two cases in relation to the question of how regimes attain their goals. Although the histories of Russian-Israeli and Russian-Turkish relations are very different, the TSRs have followed similar trajectories toward attaining the objective of maintaining maximum maneuverability in Syria while minimizing any "misunderstanding" between the respective forces. It is worth noting that all three countries are led by "strong men" whose grip on power seems unshakable; Putin, Netanyahu, and Erdoğan have held power

for a combined total of more than 45 years, and none of them is threatened by an effective opposition. While there is insufficient evidence to suggest that this characteristic alone is sufficient and necessary for the emergence and maintenance of a TSR, there is no doubt that the leadership style of these leaders has facilitated their security-first approach to regional affairs. There is also an element of mutual respect between such strong leaders, which substitutes for the need for formalized agreements, although this should not be confused with more entrenched personal affinity that may be developed between allies. In this regard, the extent of the personal relationship between the leaders mirrors the boundaries of the TSR that they orchestrated: it is functional and has limited potential to extend more comprehensively to other issues. In both cases, the goals of the TSR were first formed between the leaders in a series of direct meetings, and, subsequently, they met again to defuse the potential of localized incidents to spill over and endanger the TSR.

By its very nature, a tacit security regime is less likely to evolve into a norm-based security community or beyond given its informal and limited nature. Once the source of the perceived shared threat has been removed, either through internal or external dynamics, the *raison d'être* of the TSR becomes superfluous to requirements. At the same time, it is impossible to predict the likely consequences of the emergence or presence of a security regime on other environments, given the multitude of forces in play. For example, the tacit security regime between Israel and Iran that emerged in the 1950s was replaced by mutual hostility following the 1979 Islamic Revolution, whereas the TSR between Israel and Jordan that emerged in the 1960s facilitated certain processes, which culminated in the 1994 peace treaty between the countries.

It is thus difficult to predict the likely effects of Russian-Israeli and Russian-Turkish TSRs beyond the immediate future. There are no embedded historical, cultural, and ideological links for a comprehensive and formalized alliance. There is little evidence to suggest that either of the parties is sufficiently interested in transforming such an informal and limited arrangement into a normative-based alliance. Because of their functional and limited nature, these TSRs seem to be largely isolated from other regional issues, such as the impact of the US-Israel special relationship or the Turkish rivalry with Saudi Arabia, which has been fueled by the murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi, even as Russia tries to exploit the opportunity for closer relations with Riyadh (Melman 2016; Suchkov 2018). For example, neither TSR has been affected by the regional policies of the Trump administration, despite the launch of two US

airstrikes against the Assad regime in April 2017 and again in April 2018 (the latter with the UK and France), which at least on the surface would seem to have pointed to a more proactive US engagement with the Syrian crisis for the first time since 2012 (Gordon, Cooper, and Shear 2017; Cooper, Gibbons-Neff, and Hubbard 2018).

Treating these two relationships as simply marriages of convenience over the situation in Syria, though, ignores some important lessons about the conditions under which a particular type of security regime may emerge and be sustained by states whose broader relationship cannot be described as ally-like. Therefore, the causal mechanism behind the sustenance of these TSRs can be found in Keohane's abovementioned "functional expectations"—these TSRs *had* to emerge in these instances because of their expected functionality as processes of deconfliction and cooperation over a limited area of security between these parties. The two case studies also point to the informality of the TSRs as a function of personal understandings between "strong" leaders such as Putin, Netanyahu, and Erdoğan. Unlike "classic" security regimes, which are formally institutionalized by state bureaucracies and in some cases are underpinned by common normative goals and expectations, these cases suggest that a tacit security regime is likely to emerge when a more individualized style of leadership is present. This, in turn, raises the question of whether the demise of these TSRs will follow the demise of the national leaders who orchestrated them. Finally, while the trajectory of TSRs is less predictable in terms of these relationships, as well as in the context of the future realignment of regional politics, rather than dismissing these regimes as exceptional, ephemeral, or nonoccurring cases of security regimes, future research should attempt to answer in a systematic and comparative manner questions about the emergence of TSRs, their maintenance, and their effects on their regional environment.

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