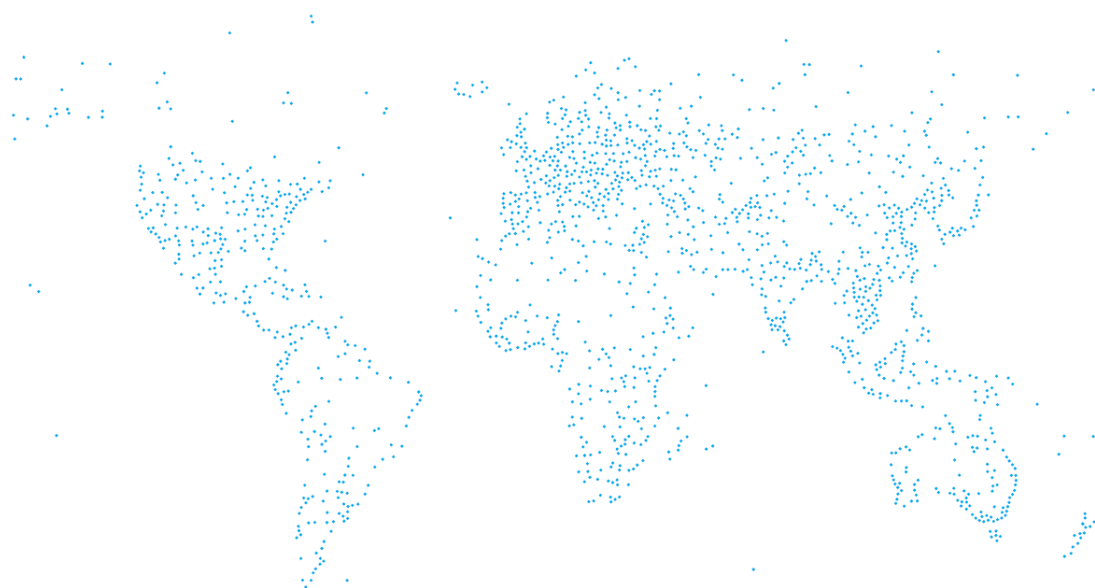


# Russia's Great Game in the Middle East

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**Oxford Analytica Client Conference Call**

**Tuesday, 13<sup>th</sup> October 2015, 15:00 UK Time**



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## Russia's Great Game in the Middle East

Russia's military intervention in Syria has changed the rules of the game, not just for the outcome of that country's civil war, but also for the balance of power in the region.

By coming to the aid of President Bashar al-Assad's regime, Moscow is seeking to save its last client state in the Middle East, and increase its power and diplomatic leverage on the world stage. Its intervention comes at a critical time for Assad, helping shore up his hold over core areas in western Syria in the face of rebel advances.

Moscow's intervention is a high-risk gamble with major potential dividends:

- By expanding its military presence and playing a direct military role in Syria's civil war, Russia is seeking to ensure that it has a major say in deciding the outcome of the conflict.
- Its priority is to ensure that any regime that follows Assad favours Russian interests, in particular by allowing it to hold onto its military bases that provide it with a strategic foothold in the Middle East.
- Moscow's intervention pose a major challenge to US dominance in the region, and provides it with increased leverage against the West in the stand-off over Ukraine.

However, the gamble also entails major risks for Moscow. Its currently limited intervention could quickly escalate into a much deeper and open-ended operation that incurs huge costs for Russia itself. It also threatens to damage Moscow's ties with key regional players, the Gulf Arab states, Turkey and Israel.

Join our Client Conference Call on October 13 at 15.00 BST to understand the implications of these changes for regional stability.

We will assess the implications of Russia's intervention for:

- Russian political stability and the economy;
- Russian Middle East policy;
- the outlook for the Syrian civil war;
- the international fight against Islamic State group
- the United States' role in the region;
- the risk of accidental conflict with Turkish, Israeli and US air forces;
- the Gulf states; and
- the stand-off between Moscow and the West.

## Chair

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### **Paul Maidment, Director of Analysis and Managing Editor, Oxford Analytica**

Paul Maidment joined Oxford Analytica in December 2014 as the Director of Analysis and Managing Editor of the Oxford Analytica Daily Brief.

He is an award-winning journalist who founded the New York-based digital editorial consultancy Bystander Media in 2010. A pioneer in combining digital and print journalism, he was previously Editor of [Forbes.com](http://Forbes.com) and Executive Editor of Forbes, transforming a magazine website into the leading online destination for business, finance and up-scale lifestyle. Before joining Forbes in 2001, Paul was the founding Editor of the Financial Times' award-winning web site [FT.com](http://FT.com) and Assistant Editor of the newspaper. His early career as an editor and foreign correspondent encompassed The Economist, the Asian Wall Street Journal and the BBC in the U.K. the U.S. and Asia — a depth of journalistic experience and breadth of media that gives him a unique perspective on the changes transforming publishing and the world economy. Paul was inducted into the Digital Hall of Fame in New York in 2010.

## Panellists will include:

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### **Alex Pravda, Fellow, St Antony's College, University of Oxford**

Alex is a Senior Research Fellow, School of Interdisciplinary Area Studies, University of Oxford; Emeritus Fellow, Russian and Eurasian Studies Centre, St Antony's College, Oxford; taught at universities in the UK and held visiting appointments at US universities; has advised corporations involved in business with Russia and has served as specialist advisor to the House of Commons Foreign Affairs Select Committee.

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### **Sune Haugbolle is Associate Professor in Global Studies at Roskilde University, Denmark**

Sune holds BA and MA degrees in Arabic and Middle Eastern Studies from Copenhagen University and a D.Phil. in Modern Middle Eastern Studies from the University of Oxford. He has published widely on culture and politics in the contemporary Middle East and is the author of War and Memory in Lebanon (Cambridge UP 2010) and co-editor of The Politics of Violence, Truth and Reconciliation in the Arab Middle East (Routledge 2009), and Visual Culture in the Modern Middle East: Rhetoric of the Image (Indiana University Press 2013). He currently directs a research group on Secular Ideology in the Middle East and is Review Editor for the Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication.

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### **Brigadier General (Ret) Mark Kimmitt, Expert Contributor, Oxford Analytica**

Mark was the Assistant Secretary of State for Political-Military Affairs from 2008 to 2009 and Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Middle East Affairs from 2006 to 2008. From 2004-2006, Deputy Director for Plans and Strategy at US CENTCOM, the headquarters responsible for planning and executing military operations in the Middle East. He is both a graduate of and former Assistant Professor at the United States Military Academy. He served as Deputy Director for Operations and Chief Military Spokesman for US forces in Iraq from 2003 to 2004 and later acted as Deputy Director for Plans and Strategy at Central Command. He is currently president of a defence consulting firm.

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