

Received Date: 2023/12/09      Accept Date: 2024/03/11

 10.27834/CSIW.2311.1315.4.31.6

## **The Formation of the Zone of Possible Agreement (ZOPA) between Iran and Turkey in the Syrian Crisis**

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### **1-Introduction**

The Syrian crisis serves as a prime example of a global crisis, with regional powers such as Iran, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia each playing a role in accordance with their own interests, ideals, and goals. However, there was a noticeable competition between Iran and Turkey throughout this crisis, with Turkey seeking to weaken the Kurds and the Syrian regime, while Iran supported the Syrian regime and aimed to preserve Bashar al-Assad government. As a result, the Syrian crisis can be described as an arena for power competition between these two countries, as they sought to demonstrate their superiority and increase their influence. This research focuses on the competition between Turkey and Iran, as influential regional actors in the Syrian crisis, to explain the reasons for the reduction of differences and points of agreement between the two sides after almost a decade of this crisis. The main question addressed in this research is: What are the reasons and points of agreement for the Zone of Possible Agreement (ZOPA) region between Iran and Turkey, as influential actors in the Syrian crisis? The research hypothesis is that the changing situation in Syria has led to Turkey's inclination towards creating a zone of agreement.

### **2-Method and Theoretical Framework**

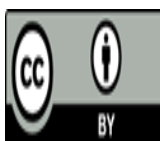
Our research is analytical in nature and utilizes descriptive-qualitative data and information. The method of data collection is primarily through the library

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and documentary sources, both written and electronic. The theoretical framework used is the ZOPA Model, which suggests that negotiators must establish a common ground in order to reach a mutually beneficial agreement that satisfies all parties' interests. This common ground, also known as the potential agreement area or bargaining range, is the foundation of the ZOPA Model. It is a range in which conflicting parties can find common ground and reach an agreement by incorporating some of each party's ideas. Therefore, ZOPA can be seen as an environment or overlapping area of interests between two or more parties in negotiations, diplomacy, contract closure, or any other situation. In the context of international relations and global politics discussions, ZOPA is actually the potential area for agreement formation among players involved in a crisis who engage in dialogue about almost common issues to avoid ongoing conflict, direct confrontation or war. In summary, the ZOPA zone is the range that enables parties to reach an agreement based on their interests.

### **3-Discussion**

Iran and Turkey, two powerful regional countries, have been engaged in a competition in various dimensions within the Syrian crisis. This rivalry between the two actors has been evident since the beginning of the crisis, with Turkey aligning itself with the Arab-Western bloc and Iran aligning itself with the Russian bloc. However, the most significant aspect of their rivalry has been over the fate of Bashar al-Assad. While Turkey sought his downfall, Iran supported his preservation as the most crucial regional ally of the Islamic Republic. These two countries have had conflicting interests, political views, and strategic perspectives in the Syrian crisis, leading to competition between them. However, in recent years, both countries have taken steps towards creating agreements and cooperation to end the crisis. These agreements include the remaining power of Bashar al-Assad, reconstruction of Syria and the return of Syrian refugees.

### **4-Conclusion**

The changing landscape of international relations, including the rift between Turkey and the US and the weakening of the Arab-Western alliance, as well as internal shifts within Turkey, have prompted Ankara to turn towards cooperation with Iran and Russia, the dominant forces in the Syrian conflict. On the other hand, the Islamic Republic of Iran, wary of the growing Turkish-Russian alliance, saw Turkey's inclination as an opportunity to avoid being sidelined in Syria. Despite their fundamental differences, the two countries

ultimately reached agreements through a series of meetings regarding Syria. These agreements, reached under the Astana process, include maintaining Assad in power, preserving Syria's territorial integrity, preventing the creation of autonomous regions within the country, supporting the return of Syrian refugees, and ultimately rebuilding Syria. These points highlight the areas of agreement between Iran and Turkey after nearly a decade of discord in the Syrian crisis.

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