

## The Return to Military Politics against Coexistence and Stability in Libya: Causes and Development

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### ABSTRACT

Libya is the most inclined to internal divisions and instability. At the same time, it's also the only North African state failed to do away with the political divisions and tribal barriers, and to create a national coexistence. The main barrier to achieving this goal has been and still is geography and wealth along with the tribal segmentations in the country. This article presents current state of affairs in Libya after the uprising which led by the NATO' campaign in March 2011. In other word, the analysis is based on the context of the "Arab Spring", in which we under the aspects of the current Libya is military politics, and analyzing the prospects of the ongoing democratic control and the transitional attempts from the revolutionary to the institutional state status. The paper argues that Libya's agony not caused so much by the civil war, as it is by the internal problems left unresolved by the previous rivals that ruled the state after 2011.

**Keyword:** Development, politics, developing regimes, Islamists, Fundamentalists

### INTRODUCTION

Libya is the most inclined to internal divisions and instability. At the same time, it's also the only North African state failed to do away with the political divisions and tribal barriers, and to create a national coexistence. The main barrier to achieving this goal has been and still is geography and wealth along with the tribal segmentations in the country. This article presents current state of affairs in Libya after the uprising which led by the NATO' campaign in March 2011. In other word, the analysis is based on the context of the "Arab Spring", in which we under the aspects of the current Libya is military politics, and analyzing the prospects of the ongoing democratic control and the transitional attempts from the revolutionary to the institutional state status. The paper argues that Libya's agony not caused so much by the civil war, as it is by the internal problems left unresolved by the previous armed factions that appeared and ruled the state after 2011.

The war, in Libya, simply discovered a series of weaknesses and vulnerabilities, which had remained more or less dormant for decades. Moreover, it is almost impossible to solve these problems anytime soon, especially since the political rivals do not have supporters, so we can expect a weak, divided and on the edge-of-

survival Libyan state for many years to come. In short, Libya will be the most predisposed to internal divisions and instability. At the same time, it is also the only North African state to have failed to do away with the ethnic and tribal barriers and to create a national identity. The main barrier to achieving this goal has been and still is geography and energy along with the political segmentations in the country. At the most basic level, Libya needs to re-engage in the politics of mutual recognition. The more secular, Gaddafi-era officers, politicians and technocrats need to recognize their role in provided the support to state institutions and renounce ties with violent extremists and the need to recognize that not all former regime functionaries can be excluded from that order of development. This paper examines the return to military politics against coexistence and stability in Libya including its causes and development.

### OIL AND ENERGY

First, by now we familiarized with the idea that geography<sup>1</sup> plays usually, if not always, the determining role in how a state evolves internally. The difference between states is that

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<sup>1</sup>Libya poses a huge area, with 80% desert land, it constitutes of 2 million Km squire, including two thousands km of its Mediterranean coastal line

for some geography has disadvantaged, its territory having no major sources of water, no mountains or fertile areas (like the other North African countries have for example) which to enable large-scale agriculture. It is simply a desert. In the absence of a geographic element which to inhibit ethnic and tribal differences, isolated communities have persisted (usually formed around sources of water) each with its own identity, in some cases dating back hundreds or thousands of years.

Above the last nine years, Libya has extremely changed. After the “Arab Springs”, the widespread instability engendered a power vacuum that led mainly by factions. The emergence of the Islamic State as a regional actor fostered the process of Tran’s nationalization of the fundamentalism networks. This volume analyses the current geopolitical scenario and the potential consequences of these spectacles on the energy sector. In order to investigate the relationship between history and energy, the consequences of the Libyan turmoil on the energy sector compared to the potential repercussions of a prolonged revival in this failed state. Here we discuss the hypothesis underlying the article is that the Libyan instability could lead to completely different consequences. The choice of analyzing the two phenomena together responds to the need of increasing the awareness of the potential evolutions in the relationship between political stability and energy in Libya.

In addition, the only important resources of the country are oil (which for example is of higher quality than the Russian oil) and gas, but neither of those did nothing to contribute in a positive way in homogenizing the Libyan population, mostly because they were always under the control of a small group of people. In contrast, energy resources have deepened the division within Libya due to the emergence of two producing regions, one producing mainly oil and the other producing mostly gas, each with its own bureaucracy and infrastructure.

Libya is a major exporting oil country in the region In fact; Libya holds approximately (46.4 billion) barrels of oil reserves, the largest in Africa and in close proximity to Europe<sup>2</sup>. In 2010, Libya produced an estimated (1.8 million

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<sup>2</sup>John, R. B. *Libya: Continuity and Change*. Milton Park, Abingdon, and Oxon, England: Routledge. Joyce, C. (2011, February 25).

barrels) per day bbl. /d of the worlds 88m barrels a day of oil of which (1.5 million bbl. /d) exported<sup>3</sup>. The ousted regime had planned to up its production to 3 million barrels a day by 2020, and further develop its natural gas sector in an effort to stimulate economic recovery against the backdrop of US and international sanctions during the 1980s and 1990s<sup>4</sup>.

France, Britain, Italy and Spain accounted for nearly (85%) of Libya’s oil exports. Of these nations, Italy received over (28%) of its total oil imports from Libya which amount to (370,000 barrels) of oil per day<sup>5</sup>. Italy’s role<sup>6</sup> was also outstanding as Silvio Berlusconi’s government offered the use of seven air and navy bases for the Libyan operation at the early stages of the military operations<sup>7</sup>.

Regarding France, it receives (17%) of its oil from Libya, along with Britain who receives (8%) of its oil from Libya as well<sup>8</sup>. It is also interesting to point out that France, UK and Italy were the first NATO countries that undertook sorties and military logistical assistance across Libya as part of collective efforts to enforce a no-fly zone during the initial phases of the intervention. Furthermore, Libya is, also, awash in natural gas resources with an estimated capacity (of 55 trillion cubic feet) (TCF) of proven natural gas reserves<sup>9</sup>.

According to the International Energy Agency, prior to the upsurge of popular revolt, Libyan production by 2012 increased by as much as 50 percent if planned pipelines and gas-fired power plants built. However, this not happened due to

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<sup>3</sup>Kaplan, Robert. ‘Libya, Obama and the triumph of realism’, *The Financial Times*, 28 August 2011, retrieved on October 26 2011, from <http://www.cnas.org/node/6891>

<sup>4</sup>Nick Meo, ‘NATO admits civilians died in Tripoli bombing raid’, *The Daily Telegraph*, 19 Jun 2011

<sup>5</sup>US Energy Information Administration (US EIA), ‘Oil Statistics for Libya’, last updated February 2011.

<sup>6</sup>Nathania Zevi and Stacy Emietory, “Italy Suspends Friendship Treaty with Libya,” *Wall Street Journal*, 26 February 2011.

<sup>7</sup>‘Libyan oil: Relying on Libya’, *The Economist*, 25 February 2011, Retrieved 27 October 2011 from [http://www.economist.com/blogs/dailychart/2011/02/libyan\\_oil](http://www.economist.com/blogs/dailychart/2011/02/libyan_oil)>.

<sup>8</sup>US Energy Information Administration (US EIA), ‘Oil Statistics for Libya’, last updated February 2011.

<sup>9</sup>US Energy Information Administration (US EIA), ‘Oil Statistics for Libya’, last updated February 2018.

the conflict over the oil ports of (Zwetina) and (Ras Alanowf), in the east part of Libya<sup>10</sup>.

The natural resources of Libya attracted NATO members to organize and lead a major military campaign in the binging of the second decade of this century. Certain advanced questions remained without imperative answers; and how such NATO's intervention<sup>11</sup>, in supporting Libya's revolt that created a large amount of debatable political and economic impacts on Libya's affairs? The above arguments could explain why the wealth factor in Libya is important as the geographical one.

### THE EMERGED FRICTIONS

One of the ways in which internal divisions resurfaced was the emergence of various well-armed militias in cities like (Musrata, Benghazi, Dirna, Sabah, or Zentan and Tripoli). While Kaddafi was still alive, they had a common goal and therefore posed no threat, but when he physically eliminated (possibly since before that) differences between these groups and differences between the militias and the new leadership in Tripoli started to take birth. Ironically, the new government in Tripoli was originally forced to turn to the militias for maintaining internal order, which otherwise would not have been possible. Gradually though, they became the biggest obstacle in the way of achieving internal stability and in restoring the government's authority.

Moreover, given the large number of weapons the militias possess - weapons, which originally belonged to the Libyan army. It is unlikely that the regime in Tripoli will be able to disperse the militias too soon, not without massive external support. In a limited manner, the General National Congress (the body that theoretically governs the country) managed to put the militias in a position of financial dependence, but this did not prevent the occupation of governmental buildings when pressure on the government needed.

Moreover, it is worthy to note that since before the civil war Italy was hinting to a possible split in two of the country (*as* it had had happened in the past) and the NATO commandment suspected that the militias would refuse to disarm themselves. So the countries that granted aid to the rebel

cause were aware of the existing divisions in Libya, so what followed the civil war came as no disclosure.

However, most of the Libyan population divided into four major ethnic groups: Arabs - the bulk of the population (Berbers, Tuaregs and Taboo (Tibbs)). Of these, the Berbers and Tuaregs were the ones with the greatest freedom of action, even during the Kaddafi era. That is because it is virtually impossible to control a group which when it feels threatened can simply pass the border into Mali or Niger or take the road to the Sahara Desert, and later return unhindered. Again, geography prevented effective control, especially in the southern territories. Such an effort would require the continued presence of substantial military forces, which Libya never had. This did not prevent Gaddafi to recruit and equip Tuareg militants into his army in order to fight against the rebel forces.

In fact, the Tuaregs came into possession of large quantities of weapons, which after the fall down of the Kaddafi regime, they used to foment a rebellion in northern Mali and perform operations in Chad. It took a direct military intervention by France to push the Tuareg militants out of Mali.

The above-mentioned problems amplified by the existence of two centers of power, one in the west - Tripoli - and one in the east - Benghazi. In parallel, both military and intelligence services affected by the internal conflict and thus have a very limited operational capacity. In addition, even within the General National Congress there are competing factions. Alternatively, in the lack of a single powerhouse with effective instruments for the exercise of authority, it is very difficult to solve these internal problems.

In short, the authority of the General National Congress (elected 2012) in Tripoli further worn by the fact that within its administration there are people who were once part of the Kaddafi regime. On the one hand, this is due to corruption, but also because Libya simply does not have many people with administrative skills. In another words, not many who can actually governs the country.

### THE SPLITTING STATE

Furthermore, the splitting up of the state, the lack of a capable central power and the persistence of large numbers of heavily armed militias with often-conflicting interests led to a general state of insecurity. Moreover, Libya has become an access strip for arms and drug

<sup>10</sup>Rosen, Laura. 'In "Sarkozy's war" in Libya, a not-so-hidden hand', *The Envoy*, published 4 April 2011.

<sup>11</sup>Was the NATO intervention of Libya to free the people? On the other hand, to free. *Www.facepunch.com/threads/1134142* -

traffickers, who can move in virtually any geographical direction and in any neighboring country they desire.

Ironically, the Islamist threat is quite low due to the militias and tribes. However, it may not stop the Islamists to use the isolated territories (particularly those in the south and south / west), as launching pads for attacks in neighboring countries. For this reason Algeria, Mali, Egypt as well as Chad have increased the number of patrols and monitoring operations at their borders with Libya.

The movement of Qaddafi-era officers reveals this clearly. Haftar (Libya's former chief-of-staff Gen. Khalifa Haftar)<sup>12</sup> and many of his core supporters are from Benghazi or other eastern towns, which explains why the Special Forces and Air Force have declared for him, while Farnana<sup>13</sup> claims to represent the (Nafusa-Zintan)<sup>14</sup> militia-based "Western Regional Military Council." Together they organized the series of "extraordinary conferences of the Libyan army" that resulted in the formation of the Assembly of Free Libyan Officers in April 2013, and most recently announced the establishment of a Supreme Military Council to rival the general staff headquartered in Tripoli.

The emerging military politics clearly revolve in part around formal posts such as that of the chief of staff, who acts as one of several interfaces between various armed groups on the ground, the ministry of defense, and the General National Congress. The same dynamic also applies to the third camp that has formed since 2011, centering institutionally on the ministry of defense, but also comprising various militias. Qaddafi abolished the ministry in 1991, but since its resurrection in 2011, (Zintan) and their affiliate militias have largely controlled it, while the post of deputy minister has been held by (Sadeq Mabrouk and Khaled al-Sharif)<sup>15</sup>.

In short, as in 2011, the Libyan armed forces splinted and fragmented, and their ability to decide the balance of political power is far from

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<sup>12</sup>He led the military campaign launched on May 16 by to oust the Islamist factions that dominate the country's parliament, and the fighting still continuing during 2014.

<sup>13</sup>General Farnana is chief-of-staff Gen of the Libya Military Police, based in Tripoli.

<sup>14</sup>Nafusa-Zintan: Nafusa is a mountain in the Western part of Libya inhabited by Barbar tribes.

<sup>15</sup>Both former leading members of the militant Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG, founded in 1995).

certain. However, the weaknesses and disunity of the country's civilian governing bodies suggests that resolution of divisive debates about the distribution of power and wealth will be driven by military politics, much as in the transition from the monarchic era to the republic in 1969. These remain very much in flux, and greatly complicated by the addition of powerful revolutionary militias to the mix.

### REBUILDING AND TRANSFORMATION BARRIERS

In the times of transformation and transition of any giving society, priorities should established. State building process takes longer time and further collective understanding and agreement because of the political currents and their role. In addition, reality and limited potentials impose themselves forcibly, and the post-revolutionary government (PRG) has to draft a list of priorities that needs to start with, not only to meet necessary daily requirements for all the people. In fact, it is for the production wheel to start anew in the right direction, and to realize a speedy return to satisfy the biggest number of the people, especially the needy and those of limited income.

Nevertheless, to start projects to rebuild the state on new revolutionary bases and with determined priorities needs huge of funds; even if there have been already feasible studies, which in turn cost a lot of money and time. However, with some deterioration in productive sites that generate incomes such as tourism, exports and services, thinking to allocate necessary funds as soon as possible starts. The only available financial source of Libya is energy income. Loans from international donors, if it is a soft ones with grace periods and less costly than domestic loans are encouraged.

### THE MISSED PATH TOWARD COEXISTENCE AND DEVELOPMENT

- A matter of fact, a great importance and sensitivity is that the revolution erupted in protest to certain rejected practices in the international politics. Such as the necessity to have independent national decisions, and the necessity to provide means of living and basic needs for a people who is aspiring for improving their economic and social levels in the light of its sacrifices to achieve the Revolution's objectives.
- To draft a plan for development priorities needs understanding of available resources to help realize desired results. Local resources



can be either local or international. Availability of resources may be an important factor in the necessity to put down priorities, and that needs field research and studies.

- Moreover, national development strategy usually includes security matters, good governance and economic development, as well as regional and international cooperation. Most important is to work for political reconciliation with the society's spectra.
- Paradoxically, it is crucial that the government is committed by a national strategy for development, and that one of its objectives is to empower the citizens and institutions to provide better services, to create job opportunities and sustainable development, to allow NGOs of the civil society to participate and to protect citizens' rights<sup>16</sup>.
- The development priorities' list is important as it:
  - Explains to the people the government's efforts to legitimize them and to secure stability to help implement its plans.
  - Improving incomes, public services, providing more job opportunities, and strengthening capabilities for good governance.
  - Government's control of the development's agenda in all fields.
- Preparing a list of priorities and implementing it will spread a feeling of satisfaction for the Libyan citizens and the international community that there are serious efforts exerted to realize development, and not be satisfied with slogans only. The list includes good governance, providing security and peace, developing the private sector, developing human resources, developing infrastructures and agricultural and rural development.
  - Developing human resources includes (developing skills, education for all, high education, women's affairs and capacity building in health affairs)<sup>17</sup>.
  - Development of infrastructures includes generating local resources, industries, energy programs and urban development.

- Development of the private sector includes trade facilities, small and medium enterprises, using Egyptian and Tunisia labor force and not exported ones.

- Good governance includes economic and financial reform, transparency and accountability, rule based on efficiency and efficacy, local good governance, justice for all, respect of human rights.

### THE NATIONAL ROAD MAP

In the main time, there is need to draft a national road map to transform these concepts to tangible practical plans that can be implemented according to the available budget. Accordingly, all concerned ministers put down their proposals concerning these resources. Each proposal has objectives for the program and its component, and a definition of the strategy to achieve these objectives, with a timetable and explanation of the obstacles of each program may face and how to overcome them. It is important to devise a system for accountability to give warning indications monitoring the stages of implementation and development priorities that will offer benefits to all citizens.

### THE MAJOR DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES<sup>18</sup>

Good governance: and improving responses and accountability as well as the services provided by the government or the institutions, besides the local governments bodies.

- Participation and social integration, which leads to the individuals and societies' ability to participate in the decisions that affect their lives.
- Health: improving the quality of health care and access to the services that aim at promoting the health of those who physically, mentally and socially marginalized.
- Education: quality of education that improves the ability of formal and informal educational institutions to provide educational opportunities that contribute in alleviating poverty, and giving priority to provide job opportunities, alleviate poverty, decrease cost of living, and combating corruption.
- The Judiciary's Independence: Independence of the Libyan Judiciary system means that the

<sup>16</sup> Based on ongoing research for Libya and the Need for Road Mapping toward Transformation, Project at the National Libyan Academic Council, Libya (2013).

<sup>17</sup>Rhiannon Smith, "Women Left behind as Libya's Constitution-Drafting Moves Forwards", Open Democracy.net, 22 July 2013, <http://www.opendemocracy.net/rhiannon-smith/women-left-behind-as-libyas-constitution-drafting-moves-forwards>.

<sup>18</sup>Priorities for Political Development toward Rebuilding New Libya, Milad ELharthi, Gelisim Istanbul University, Turkey Political science And International Department, IJRDO - Journal of Social Science and Humanities Research ISSN: 2456-2971, 2019.

Judicial Power<sup>19</sup> should be isolated from any other powers of the government. This would mean the courts should not be subjugated to any influence of any institution, body or council in the state or any persons or parties.

- There are several means to realize that, including selection of the judges and their appointment for life to enable them to concentrate on establishing justice and to judge in all cases according to the law rules.

However, national development priorities differ from Libya to another state. In fact, Libya should be confined, as a whole, to abolishing unemployment, providing job opportunities, alleviating poverty, reducing living costs, combating corruption. Moreover, availability of food, combating crime and violence, treating political instability, providing daily services are the most essential requirements. Furthermore, establishing security and acceleration of economic development is one of the priorities in rebuilding Libya after the revolution, and building a safe and stable society where the people own the country's wealth.

As a result, it is necessary to aim all classes of the society with fixed programs by providing real job opportunities that maximize the role of human resources in upgrading productivity and good quality to be able to export the surplus of products. It is vital to convince members of the society by the Media and seminars that development is for their own interests and that will assert by asking every individual to play a role in that development, and equally benefit of its results.

Here is no doubt that putting citizens' basic needs at the top of the national development priorities, broader popular participation in decision-making process, exposing economic, social and cultural policies to more studies through open public debates, will lead to the best use of human resources, and make access to data and information, provide transparency in economic transactions, limelight all aspects of flaws and inefficiency in governmental departments and economic institutions and combat of corruption. All these should undertake it in a framework of democracy. Development process not only affected by democracy but it also affects it. Democracy avails the framework that constitutes an intensive development.

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<sup>19</sup> Andrej Zwitter, "The Rule of Law in Times of Rise of Crisis": A Legal Theory on State of Emergency in Liberal Democracy", *Archives for Philosophy of Law and social Philosophy* 98, no.1 (2012): 107.

Economic growth, which includes a high degree of industrialization and value added, contributes in transformation to democracy much more than selling or exporting raw material. Returns of raw oil sales do not per se lead to that transformation in the required speed and depth. Oil returns accumulated by the state, and consequently increase the state's power and bureaucracy as happens in some oil producing and exporting states.

Libya, in the first election, after half a century to elect the members of the General National Conference (GNC)<sup>20</sup>, the results were in contrast to the expectations of most analysts who betted on the Islamists' victory as happened in both Egypt and Libya, as the general trend of the Arab Spring was in favor of the Islamists.

In contrast, the Libyan results came to rectify the political comps and correct the course of the completely Arab revolts, and proved that the Islamists were not the only ones in the ground. These elections returned confidence of followers of the democratic civil state, stressing that not Libyans are in favor of the Islamic rule. They are looking forward to a prosperous future for the modern Libya state: the state of institutions, a democratic constitution, a rule of the law, justice, rationality and living in peace with themselves and the world, as a state of stability, construction and development. In short, this is how the agony of military politics and coexistence illustrated.

### CONCLUSION

To conclude, Libya's agony caused so much by the civil war, as it is by the internal problems left unresolved by the rivalries. The war simply revealed a series of weaknesses and vulnerabilities, which had remained more or less dormant for decades. And it's almost impossible to solve these problems anytime soon, especially since the House of representatives does not have too many human and financial resources, so we can expect a weak, divided and on the edge-of-survival Libyan state for many years to come. In short, Libya will be the most predisposed to internal divisions and instability. At the same time, it is also the only North African state to have failed to do away with the ethnic and tribal barriers and to create a national identity. The main barrier to achieving this goal has been and still is geography and wealth along with the

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<sup>20</sup>The General National Conference elected in June 2012, and the election of 2014 produced a new legislative body (the House of Representatives).

tribal segmentations in the country. At the most basic level, Libya needs to re-engage in the politics of mutual recognition. The more secular, Gaddafi-era officers, politicians and technocrats need to recognize their role in provided the support to state institutions and renounce ties with violent extremists and the need to recognize that not all former Gaddafi functionaries can be excluded from that order.

Today, Libya threatened by two projects that complement each other: the project of American and Western internationalization of the Libyan crisis and conflict, and then the continuation of the conflict scenario of the Eastern Mediterranean gas and oil region.

In addition, what the religious extremist groups have done in some countries neighboring Libyan depth during the past years, only contributed to serving the two projects together in the absence of Libyan national projects. Moreover, if the Libyans cannot stop the sins of their wars and their internal struggles, let them, at least, better describe these conflicts as not to serve their true enemy and its international, regional, and local branches!

Perhaps the most dangerous descriptions of wars and conflicts occur when ethnic, political or sectarian names are exploited to describe wars, conflicts, and disputes that are purely their reality and goals, and this is what usually happens in civil wars in which all weapons, including the weapon of political sectarianism, are harnessed. The actor now in the Libyan crisis is a group of regional and international parties whose interests may vary, but they agree on the goal of making the crisis and the internal conflict take political and ethnic dimensions by virtue of the external link with this or that party. It is true that there are many differences between the parties to the Libyan conflict, on the one hand, and a group of regional and international parties, but what is the Libyan interest in describing these differences with political, ethnic, regional, or separatist names? The dangers currently present are not only the followers of this or that doctrine but also rather the dangers facing all of Libya, including the neighboring countries of Libya. Consequently, victims of the economic, financial, health, and social crises, and the armed violence now taking place in Libya, from whatever source was the source of this violence; belong to different countries, regions, religions, and sects. Recently, mercenaries arriving in the Libyan conflict

areas, and at the hearing of those Arab and international parties, for example, have recovered and benefited from these descriptions of local or regional political conflicts, even by some who speak against them in form and implicitly support, even if unintentionally, the justifications for their presence when they are heading. Speaking to their other enemy, and here he may be from another sect or another sector from another country, which contributed to giving excuses for the presence of mercenaries and their practices on behalf of those regional and international actors.

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